

Candice D. Ortvals  
Lori M. Poloni-Staudinger

# Gender and Political Violence

Women Changing the Politics of  
Terrorism

 Springer

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ISBN 978-3-319-73626-6      ISBN 978-3-319-73628-0 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73628-0>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017964265

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland



*We went to graduate school at a time when classes were often predominated by men and there were few women professors for us to emulate. This is why the women professors we had became such a large influence in shaping us into the scholars we are today. We were lucky to be trained by some of the best women political scientists of their generation and we will be forever grateful for their mentorship, training, and support. Seeing their accomplishments motivated us to work harder and to be active scholars in our field. For this reason we dedicate this book to them: Dr. Karen Rasler, Professor Emeritus at Indiana University; Dr. Jean Robinson, Professor Emeritus at Indiana University; and Elinor Ostrom, Professor Emeritus at Indiana University.*

# Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge several people who aided in this book. Lori would like to thank Dominic Blaise Caudill for his assistance with the Chechnya case study and Shannon Rose for her help with early information gathering. Stefano Donati was instrumental in developing the cases on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sri Lanka, and Candice Cunningham provided a great deal of assistance on the Boko Haram case. Finally, Christopher Harrison was a life-saver with last minute formatting, editing, and research. Candice would like to thank Ryanne Gordon especially for her work on the Jersey Girls, the Manchester suicide attack, and the Murshidat. Kevin Gordon was essential to the editing process, and he also greatly contributed to analyses of deradicalization, the Hillary Doctrine, and the Murshidat. Esther Chung provided us with details and analysis of the Korean Comfort Women. Many students over the years honed our thinking on gender and terrorism and made this a better book. Thanks to all of you for your inquisitive minds, probing questions, and keeping us excited about learning. Finally, thanks to our families James, Etta, and Marian Wisner and Reinhold, Hannah and Liam Staudinger and our friends and colleagues for their understanding while we put many hours into this document.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction



“They say behind every great man is a better woman but try telling bin Laden that, in his case in front of every man is a worthy human shield. #humanshield” (Twitter May 2011).

On May 2, 2011, US counter-terrorism adviser, John Brennan, discussed the US raid of Osama bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan that ended in the death of the Al Qaeda leader. Brennan critiqued bin Laden, stating, “Living in this million-dollar-plus compound, in an area that is far away from the front, hiding behind a woman: it really speaks to just how false his narrative has been over the years” (Swinford and Rayner 2011 [para. 1]). The following day the White House retracted the account of bin Laden using his wife as a human shield, with an explanation that Brennan had confused the actions of the wife with those of a woman elsewhere in the compound. The narrative of bin Laden hiding behind a woman, however, enthralled the press for days to come, eliciting insights into the place of gender in a world wrought with terror.

The overwhelming sentiment in the media was that bin Laden’s life ended with a “final act of indignity” and cowardice (Elliot 2011 [np]). But why, as one commenter said, “is hiding behind a man better than hiding behind a woman?” (Echidne 2011 [np]). Why was the narrative of hiding behind a woman “indelibly imprinted in our collective consciousness despite being incorrect”? (Wilson 2011 [para. 4]).

Tweets with the hashtag #humanshield began discussing the gender ramifications of the bin Laden raid. The abovementioned tweet questioned whether a “great man” would use a woman as a shield when great men typically draw strength from a “better woman” who sustains him from behind the scenes. Another tweet bluntly added, “...Osama used his wife as a human shield.... What a f\*\*\*n disgraceful monster.” A blog dedicated to debates about masculinity, questioned why the White House portrayed bin Laden at “the height of unmanliness,” as a “pantheon-level wimp,” when “it should be enough that bin Laden was brought to justice” (Martin 2011 [np]). Why did the “human shield” story take hold? Why do notions of hegemonic masculinity (a concept discussed later in the book) cause us to react to bin Laden hiding behind a woman so viscerally and differently than if he hid behind a

man or if he went down fighting? How is gender and gendered assumptions wrapped up in all of this? These are the types of questions we address in this book.

Investigating the gender dynamics of violent politics, as found in the case of bin Laden above, is an important area of inquiry in international relations and political science. Scholars study, for example, gender during genocides (Jones 2006a, b; Kaiser and Hagan 2015; Turshen 2000), rape, sexualized torture as a tactics of war (Enloe 2000), and women terrorists (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015; Parashar 2014; Bloom 2011; Cragin and Daly 2009; Nacos 2005, 2016; Cunningham 2010; Allison 2003). There is also a growing academic interest in gendered approaches to counterterrorism (Giscard d’Estaing 2017; Satterthwaite and Huckerby 2013), media framing of women terrorists (Nacos 2005, 2016), and women’s and men’s public opinion about terrorism (Eichenberg 2016; Huddy et al. 2007). In the chapters that follow, we explain how we add to this literature as we investigate the perpetrators of terrorism, victims of terrorism, responders to terrorism, and public opinion regarding terrorism.

## Goals of This Book

Each of the chapters (detailed more below) elucidates one or more of the following five themes:

1. We investigate the presence or absence of women in violent politics and discuss if/how women have agency and why they act in the way that they do.
2. We show how women’s private lives as related to family and motherhood involve and position women in terrorism and genocide contexts, in terms of perpetrators of, victims of *and* responders to terrorism.
3. We explain how political actors, the media, and women themselves claim women possess special feminine qualities like maternal identities, preferences for peace, and feminine appearances *because they are women*.
4. We report how women influence violent politics through the framework of feminist activism. By feminists, we mean those who advance women’s status as well as fight the “political, social, and other power arrangements of domination and subordination on the basis of gender” (Beckwith 2000 [372]).
5. Because society, media, and women themselves understand gender and violence in various ways, we describe differences among women and between contexts in order to convey the varied landscape of political violence, including responses to terrorism and public opinion and policies surrounding it.

In order to address these themes, we practice a **gendered interpretation** of political violence, *meaning that we take gender into consideration when examining issues of violence*. A gendered interpretation acknowledges that states, political

institutions, and even democracies are comprised of “systematic gendered arrangements of [masculinist] power and privilege” (Beckwith 2005b [583]). Violent politics historically have been seen as a male domain, even more so than institutional politics, with men considered the perpetrators of violence, with power, and women as victims, without power. Whereas “men” and “masculinity” are associated with war and aggression, “women” and “femininity” conjure up socially constructed images of passivity and peace. The reaction to the “human shield” story above is directly related to these sorts of gendered assumptions. This bifurcation of men as aggressors and women as passive vessels treats women as “objects,” thus denying their voice, or their **agency**. Agency is defined as *individual actors having the capacity to process social experience and devise ways of coping with life* (Sjoberg and Gentry 2011).

A gendered analysis necessarily brings in discussions of sex and gender. **Sex** refers to the *categories of male and female and the biological characteristics and properties of bodies placed in these categories* (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012). New research suggests that sex is not binary, but fluid like gender (National Geographic 2017). **Gender** is “*the assignment of masculine and feminine characteristics to bodies in cultural contexts*” (Oudshoorn 2006 [8]). Gender uncovers how women, men, and non-binary people act according to expectations of what is feminine, masculine, and fluid, and it references what is expected of men and women. Gender is in flux as it emerges from assumptions that given cultures attribute to “being a man,” i.e., masculinity, or “being a woman,” i.e., femininity. In addition, gender is contextual and plural in a given culture in that the “meanings of masculinity and femininity vary across cultures, over historical time” (Kimmel 2010 [114]); thus, perceptions of women and actions by women, as related to political violence, will vary across cases (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012).

Additionally, one’s gender identity interacts with other personal identities, all the while interacting with gender structures. Thus, throughout the book, we attempt to elucidate intersectionality as it influences gender in contexts of violence. **Intersectionality** references *one’s interacting identities, such as race, gender, class, age, disability, and religion*. Each identity “intersect” and produce specific life experiences, many of which are experiences of discrimination (Crenshaw 1991). Intersectionality may impact findings on terrorism, for example, as scholars argue that age, social class, and religion influence participation in terrorist activities (Victoroff 2005); thus, women of various ages and religions may experience terrorism differently. This book follows Michael Kimmel’s suggestion to “account [for] these different definitions of masculinity and femininity constructed and expressed by different groups of men and women” (Kimmel 2010 [11]). That said, we prioritize the *experiences and actions of women* – and a variety of women – in given cultural and political contexts. Nevertheless, though the book focusses on women, we do discuss the ways in which gender, and particularly conceptions of masculinity, influence political violence.

## Definitions of Terrorism, Genocide, and State Terrorism

Political conflict often occurs without becoming violent, through political institutions or by way of peaceful protest. This book, however, focuses on violent political conflict, examining terrorism, state terrorism, and genocide as types of political violence. We focus on intersections between political violence and gender as well as the way in which gender influences responses to political violence through state and social movement actions related to memorialization, public policy, and counterterrorism.

**Political violence** refers to *a situation associated with politics in some way in which force is used as a means of inflicting harm on others*. **Terrorism** is a *subset of political violence*. In the late 1980s, a research study by Schmid and Jongman uncovered 109 scholarly definitions of terrorism (Schmid and Jongman 1988; Hoffman 2006; Laqueur 1977). Arguably the landscape of terrorism has become more complex since then, thus, like other scholars, we admit that no one definition of terrorism encapsulates the violent phenomena of which we are interested. Terrorism is difficult to define because it is discussed synonymously with terror as a political strategy, it is both a state and non-state strategy, and it implies normative assumptions. Many political acts, such as gang violence, war, and guerrilla tactics, provoke terror as an emotional response in a population (Griset and Mahan 2003); thus, terrorism's main impact is not exclusive to it as a strategy. Definitions of terrorism, therefore, must distinguish what terrorism is *not* (e.g., it does not include the combat actions of guerillas who engage regular, trained armed forces, although guerillas may use terrorism as a strategy at times).

Terrorism first appeared as a term in the 1790s during Jacobin rule following the French Revolution; later, in the late 1800s, European anarchists owned the term as they fought against autocratic states. During the interwar period of the 1930s and into the 1940s, terrorism again became associated with states, specifically with "great terror" waged by totalitarian states such as the Soviet Union. In short, terrorism is a strategy used by and against the state. Finally, the adage that "one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist" demonstrates the normative dimension of terrorism. Though Jacobins and anarchists once claimed the name of terrorism, organizations and states have disavowed the term since the twentieth century, as labeling an act as terrorism indicates that it is illegal and/or morally wrong. Thus, the definition and label of terrorism can become a game of naming who's right and who's wrong in national and international politics.

According to Schmid and Jongman (1988), the most common elements to appear in definitions of terrorism include acts of violent force that are political, provoke fear, and pose threats. The thirteenth most common element of definitions is that terrorism targets civilians and non-combatants. Admitting that demarcating "what is terrorism" is a scholarly puzzle, we define **terrorism** as a "*political activity that relies on violence or [credible] threat of violence to achieve its ends*" (Magstadt and Schotten 1993 [586]; Lutz and Lutz 2005). Like Dekmejian (2007), and we see state and non-state terrorism on a "spectrum of terror," running from genocide and state terrorism

**Table 1.1** Definitions of types of terrorism

Terrorism type	Definition
State terrorism	“Government activities that encourage violence against its own citizens by paramilitary groups and death squads...[used] as a horrific warning to [other citizens]” (Lutz and Lutz 2005 [10]).
Ethnonationalist terrorism	Terrorism with the objective(s) of “independence, autonomy, or the reunification of a splintered homeland” (Pluchinsky 2006 [40]). Sometimes also referred to as subnational terrorism.
Religious terrorism	Terrorism by “cults, sects, and chiliastic offshoots of mainstream faiths that are propelled by fundamentalist zealotry into the political arena to shape it through violence” (Dekmejian 2007 [13]).
Ideological terrorism	Terrorism “designed to achieve political goals that are determined by some patterns of political beliefs or theories” (Lutz and Lutz 2005 [11]). This terrorism may be left or right wing in orientation and can be at an international, national, or subnational level.
Individual terrorism	Terrorism by “persons who individually commit acts of violence against the state through assassinations, bombings, and any other means of sabotage and disruption available to them” (Dekmejian 2007 [11]).
Domestic terrorism	Terrorism by a national of a country against his/her own country or citizens of his/her country.
Narcoterrorism	“The use of extreme force and violence by producers and distributors of narcotics against a government or population, intended to coerce that body to modify its behavior in their favor” (Dyson 2012 [31]).
Transnational terrorism	Terrorism by groups that have “shifted the arena of violence from the national to the transnational level... [to target] embassies, diplomats, soldiers, or even citizens located in other countries” (Dekmejian 2007 [13]).
Acid terrorism	Acid terrorism includes threats or assaults using acid meant to punish, kill, and/or disfigure victims.
Machista terrorism	Machista terrorism pertains to situations of gender violence when masculine power is asserted over women to threat, injure, and/or kill them.
Counterterrorism	“Proactive policies that specifically seek to eliminate terrorist environments and groups” (Martin 2016 [169]).

to terrorism by subnational groups to acts by individual terrorists. Subnational groups may include ethnonationalist, religious, or ideological terrorists. Furthermore, we see connections between the violent actions of the state and subnational terrorists, for the terrorism of one often provokes the terrorism of the other (Dekmejian 2007). For example, a military junta in Argentina in 1976 justified state terrorism against all those connected to the political Left after Marxist groups chose terrorism as a tactic in the early 1970s. **State terrorism** is defined as *terrorism by states against “internal and external opposition groups”* (Dekmejian 2007 [14]). Table 1.1 lists definitions of terrorism and genocide used in this book (see also Fig. 1.1).

The definition of terrorism is even more complicated when one attempts to inductively define the term based on how it is used in cases worldwide. In earlier research, through interviews with politicians and social movement activists, the authors uncovered at least three usages of the word “terrorism” to describe the same case of



The diagram illustrates the spectrum of political violence. It is a 2x6 grid. The top row is labeled 'Direction of violence' and 'Magnitude'. The top-left cell contains 'Anti-State' and the top-right cell contains 'State'. A horizontal double-headed arrow spans the width of the grid. Below the arrow, the word 'Micro' is on the left and 'Macro' is on the right. The bottom row is labeled 'Type' and 'Perpetrators'. The 'Type' row contains six categories: Individual terrorism, Subnational terrorism, Transnational terrorism, State terrorism against domestic and transnational opponents, and Politicide and genocide. The 'Perpetrators' row contains bulleted lists of actors for each category.

<b>Direction of violence</b>	Anti-State					State
<b>Magnitude</b>	←-----→					
	Micro			Macro		
<b>Type</b>	Individual terrorism	Subnational terrorism	Transnational terrorism	State terrorism against domestic and transnational opponents	Politicide and genocide	
<b>Perpetrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assassins</li><li>• Bombers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethnic nationalists</li><li>• Religious militants</li><li>• Ideological radicals</li><li>• Hybrid organizations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transnational terrorist organizations and states</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secret police</li><li>• Special forces</li><li>• Military</li><li>• Paramilitaries</li><li>• Other state-sponsored groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secret police</li><li>• Special Forces</li><li>• Military</li><li>• Paramilitaries</li><li>• Other state-sponsored groups</li></ul>	

**Fig. 1.1** Spectrum of political violence (Reprinted with permission of the author from R. Dekmejian (2007). *Spectrum of Terror* [p. 10]. Washington, DC: CQ Press.)

violence in the Basque region of Spain. First, the term was used to describe ethnonationalist terrorism, i.e. the violence of ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) (ETA is discussed in more detail in future chapters) against state and non-state targets (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014). Second, it was used to denote state terrorism, i.e. the use of force by the state against Basque advocates and the way in which Francisco Franco under fascism and later the democratic Spanish state terrorized the Basque people (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014). Finally, the term terrorism was used to describe *terrorismo machista* or intimate terrorism, expressed as gender violence (sometimes called domestic violence) (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014).

In fact, research shows that intimate terrorism in the private sphere and ethnonationalist or state terrorism (or other forms of terrorism) in the public sphere are linked, particularly when examining “lone wolf” terrorists (those who operate alone even if inspired by a terrorist organization) and domestic violence. Take for example, Omar Mateen, the gunman involved in the Orlando Pulse nightclub attack in 2016 in Florida; his estranged wife detailed a history of intimate violence before she finally left him in 2009. We can also consider James Alex Fields Jr., a white supremacist and domestic terrorist, who on August 12, 2017 drove his car into a crowd of counter-protestors at a march organized by the KKK, neo-Nazis, and other white supremacy groups in Charlottesville, Virginia. Many considered his act to be one of right-wing terrorism, and news media later reported that Fields previously had been arrested for abusing his mother (Witte and Rankin 2017). Why do we see this link? According to Taub, “Intimate terrorism...rests on a broader spectrum of violence meant to preserve the traditional dominance of heterosexual men, and coerce those who are perceived as threatening that order. That spectrum, at the extreme end, includes mass shootings [or other violence]” (2016 [np]). Hudson et al. (2012) show that societal rates of gender-based violence are stunningly predictive of mass violence. In a wide-ranging study, Hudson et al. (2012) find that the single biggest

predictor of whether a state experiences civil war or war with its neighbors is not its GDP, its predominant religion, or even where it is located regionally, but how its women are treated and degree of gender equality. Thus, the intertwining between gender, sex and political violence is quite complex.

While terrorism is intended to strike fear in civilian and government targets, its ability as a tactic to elicit concessions from governments has been called into question (Klein 2015). Extremist groups use terrorism to preserve group health by radicalizing moderates and gaining human capital (i.e. combatants and supporters), which is a critical resource for any terrorist organization. Without dogmatists, terrorists cannot sustain organizational capacity and pursue ideological or political goals (Klein 2015). Therefore, “if we look at decisions regarding attack targets, timing, and size as motivated by strategic and deliberate recruitment and political mobilization goals (i.e. gaining publicity, recruits and calling attention to grievances)...we can understand why terrorism is not directly intended to and is ineffective in motivating government concessions” (Klein 2015 [np]).

**Genocide** is another subset of political violence. It is similar to state terrorism, but it is *a type of extreme political violence that escalates to the point of total or nearly total destruction of a group of people*. During the Holocaust in 1944, Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent, coined the term genocide, referring to the destruction of an ethnic group, for *genos* is Greek for family or tribe and *cide* is Latin for killing. Another view of **genocide**, and the one we use in this book, is broader, including *the intentional murder of people because of their group membership, where group membership can be ethnic, racial, political, religious, or economic*. A **democide** is the *intentional government murder of unarmed or helpless people for whatever reason*. It is a form of state terrorism, yet killing in democides is generally more indiscriminate and not based on a particular group characteristic.

The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) offers a legal definition of genocide. The UN defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” (Prevent Genocide International 2011). It is an international crime to plan, incite, conspire or be complicit in genocide, even before the killing starts. Political groups are notably absent from the groups protected under the CPPCG due to the influence of Joseph Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union at the time of treaty negotiation, who notoriously eliminated his own political rivals. *Targeted killing of political groups* is referred to as **politicide**.

## Organization of the Book

This book is organized around the various groups of women who influence and are influenced by political violence and terrorism. We are open to multiple methods of discovery, whichever one proves most telling for the subject at hand. For instance, to examine public opinion data, we use statistical methods to draw conclusions. To analyze the role of the media, we employ content analysis. We also use qualitative description and interviews as well as quantitative data. We believe these additional means of discovery set our manuscript apart in terms of richness of data and comparability across geographic cases. Lastly, we use many cases around the world, while anchoring the book with cases of the US and the Basque Country. This allows the book's themes to be covered in an in-depth as well as a comparative fashion.

In each chapter, we present an introduction to the topic and then discuss the topic in light of the case of the US and the case of the Basque Country in Spain and France, where applicable. To this we add a variety of comparative cases for illustration as appropriate by chapter. Why did we choose the cases of the Basque Country and the US? The US provides a nice jumping off point for our North American readers. It is also interesting because most Americans do not associate their country with terrorist acts but instead focus on terrorism inflicted on the US, most notably 9/11. The Basque region is useful as our other main case because of its long history with political violence. Additionally, case selection was opportunistic due to the authors' residence in the US and years of field work in the Basque region. Other cases are chosen to be illustrative of particular points we wish to make in each chapter. Readers should be aware that cases are chosen for illustrative purposes only and that this book does not strive for hypothesis testing through cases.

In each chapter, we ask three important questions:

1. Are women present (and/or perceived as absent) in political contexts involving political violence?
2. What is the gendered impact that war, genocide/state terror, and terrorism has on women and men?
3. How do women (and men) act in contexts of war, genocide/state terror, and terrorism (and, particularly, how women deal with gender assumptions, express gender identities, and frame their actions regarding political violence encountered in their lives)?

Framed by our questions, the book is both descriptive and analytical. We describe the ways in which women are present (or perceived as absent) in contexts involving political violence. We juxtapose this with the description of men's presence (or absence). We also analyze how gender assumptions influence the way in which men and women are portrayed in situations involving political violence, how women and men deal with gender assumptions, express their gender identities, and frame their actions related to violence. As such we are careful to not just view women as victims of political violence without agency, but recognize the gendered and complex nature of political conflict.

The above story about one of bin Laden's wives, Amal Ahmed al-Sadah from Yemen, elucidates how we approach description and analysis. First, the story illustrates women's presence and/or absence in terrorism politics. Bin Laden's wives were *perceived as absent* in the violent scenario of the raid. Commentators expected bin Laden to fight back, but did not expect his wives, or other "unnamed" women in the compound, to significantly act or intervene. Even though reports later suggested that al-Sadah or another woman fought back in the raid, the media and government officials initially discussed women as inanimate, a shield at most, without agency. This book aims to *describe* and problematize women's presence in violent politics, whether as victims/survivors of terrorism or genocide, perpetrators of terrorism or genocide, activists in social movements, political leaders responding to terrorist acts, or as the public with opinions that shape policies.

Second, we *analyze* how terrorism and genocide interact with gender to influence women's personal lives and political leadership, and how women *act* regarding gender assumptions and identities. In other words, we want to know how women's experiences are gendered and how women are "undoing gender" to challenge gender expectations (Deutsch 2007). By doing so, we seek to capture women's agency in international, national, and/or local politics. The media and public first saw Amal Ahmed al-Sadah as lacking agency and few stopped to ask how she would narrate her own account. At the moment, one blog commenter bluntly said about al-Sadah: "anyone bothered to ask HER what she was doing?" (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012 [2]). Although for many years one could only speculate on her account of that night, data from an interview she accepted over a decade later captures her thoughts: she refused to leave Bin Laden's side, she charged toward the Navy Seals, but she fell unconscious when she was shot in the leg. In other words, she was anything but an inanimate shield (Scott-Clark and Levy 2017). The larger point here is that we should care to capture women's stories, agency, and attempts to challenge gender assumptions, and that was not the case for Amal Ahmed al-Sadah in popular media for many years. We attempt to do this as much as possible in the following chapters.

The first part of the book examines women as perpetrators of political violence. Chapter 2 examines the way in which gendered assumptions influence our understanding of women's violent participation. This chapter begins by discussing women as guerillas, discussing roles and motivations. We cover women in the Spanish revolution as a pre-cursor to ETA terrorism in the Basque Country. Our comparative cases are Sri Lanka (Tamil Tigers), Colombia, and Nicaragua. We then turn to women as genocidaires, discussing the way in which gender influences popular and scholarly understanding of their roles and motivations. We explore women under Franco as a precursor to ETA and the comparative cases of women in Nazi Germany and women in Rwanda.

Our presentation of guerillas and genocidaires transitions into a section about women as perpetrators of terrorist violence. We not only discuss the way in which women participate in terrorism and their motivations for doing so, but we also examine the degree to which women's participation relates to their gender and other intersecting identities. In this section, we examine both women as leaders and foot

soldiers in terrorist organizations by focusing on ETA in the Basque Country and Weather Underground and women in right-wing groups in the US. We look at the Baader-Meinhof Gang (RAF) for a comparative case and also explore ISIS as both a US and comparative case. We argue that even when women act as violent agents, they often are on the margins of terrorist organizations, and only rarely become leaders of them.

Chapter 3 explores gendered interpretations of suicide bombing. In this chapter, we examine the evolution of women as suicide bombers and explore reasons why we women participate in suicide bombing in some countries but not others. We also examine motivations from the angles of both the bomber and organization and the way in which gendered assumptions influence public and media reactions to suicide bombing. This chapter goes on to investigate media framing around suicide terrorism. We observe the lack of suicide bombing in the ETA case and compare that to the PKK (Turkey) as a comparative case. Chechen suicide bombing also is used as a comparative case. Suicide bombing is not often associated with US terrorist organizations, and we discuss this as well. This chapter continues to explore ISIS in the US and abroad and it also presents Al Qaeda as a comparative case.

The next part of the book focuses on gendered victimization of political violence. In Chap. 4, we discuss women as “victims” of political violence and debate the degree to which women’s agency is compromised during times of war, genocide, and gendercide. The chapter explores rape as a weapon of war as well as international responses to gendered political violence. The chapter closes by weighing whether women consider themselves survivors and how they act to rebuild their lives. We examine the case of ETA as well as right-wing terrorism in the US.

In Chap. 5 we focus on women as victims of terrorism in particular. We gauge the extent to which women and men are mortal victims of terrorism of terrorist attacks. We also show how the victimization of terrorism is gendered in its treatment of women even when women are not mortal victims of attacks, and this becomes obvious as we look at the comparative case of Boko Haram as well as evidence regarding ISIS. We convey that terrorists target women and girls who seek education and they traffic women to help fund their terrorist organizations. We also see victimization in the form of acid terrorism, machista terrorism, and narcoterrorism (see definitions in Table 1.1 above). Furthermore, in considering the victims of counterterrorism policies, we analyze the gendering of US drone strikes. As with Chap. 4, we conclude by pointing out how women who have been victims conceive of themselves as survivors who act politically in order to empower other women.

Next, we look to responses to terrorism. Chapter 6 examines social movement responses to political violence. We focus on prisoners’ and victims’ rights groups in the Basque Country; 9–11 victims’ rights groups in the US; women in anti-violence, peace, and counter-extremism groups in the US and abroad; women fighting against narcoterrorism and femicide (also called femicide) in Mexico, and feminists fighting machista terrorism in Spain. We ask if women organize “as women” and we explore the extent to which gender constrains or enhances social movement responses to terrorism. We also explore the degree to which maternal and/or feminist

politics predominate the social movements' responses. Besides the US and Spain, the cases of Mexico and Pakistan help to formulate our analysis.

In Chap. 7 we analyze memory politics, focusing on memory as a political and gendered strategy related to genocide, gendercide and terrorism. We discuss various feminist counter-memory strategies as well. In this chapter, case studies detail two groups from the Basque Country, the Association of Victims Against Terrorism (AVT) and Victims of Terrorism Collective (COVITE), and the comparative cases of Mexico, Colombia, and Korea. We also review how the use of memory constructs national war myths of hegemonic masculinity in the US.

Chapter 8 shifts to a focus on elite responses to political violence. We present data regarding descriptive and substantive representation of women in government positions able to influence counter-terrorism policy as well the degree to which gender assumptions influence these women. We also ask whether violence against women politicians influences their ability to lead, and particularly with regards to political violence. We examine media responses to women elites with respect to terrorism. Cases in this chapter focus on Hillary Clinton's actions in the Situation Room at the time of the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound and her perceived ability to fight terrorism in the role of president as witnessed during the 2016 election campaign. As a comparison to media treatment of Clinton, we present the case of media coverage of Kurdish women fighters in Iraq and Syria. Though these women are not political elites in terms of being elected officials, they are considered elite forces who battle ISIS. What is more, in these fighters' counterterrorism capacity, they are framed similarly as women who are elected elites. Therefore, we debate how different women responding to terrorism encounter traditional gender assumptions.

Chapter 9 examines gendered public opinion related to terrorism. We look at research that examines the interactions between sex, gender, and support for terrorism. We also convey how voting behavior is influenced by sex, gender and terrorism as well as how these factors intersect to influence public support for counterterrorism policies. This chapter examines public opinion in the US and Spain and provides data on other countries in other parts of the world.

While touched on in earlier chapters, Chap. 10 directly focuses on types of counter-terrorism policy and women who undertake it in police, intelligence agencies, and the military. We ask if the actions of these women are gendered and how counterterrorism policies themselves are gendered. Our emphasis in this part of the chapter is the US, though we match the discussion of US counterterrorism with several comparative examples. In the second half of the chapter, we aim to uncover the motherhood focus of counterextremism measures. Put another way, we want to see if/how the state and NGOs are calling upon women *as women and mothers* to prevent children and others in their communities from becoming radicalized as terrorists. We also review deradicalization programs in several countries, and we find that they are more geared to men than women.

Finally, Chap. 11 provides summation for the book in a comprehensive conclusion. Our major conclusions are that women are very much present in situations surrounding terrorism. That said, they are often viewed as lacking agency or

**Table 1.2** Cases covered in the book

Case	Conflict years	Conflict summary
Argentina	1976–1983	In the early 1970s, left- and right-wing extremists carried out kidnappings and assassinations. Through a coup, a junta of military commanders began ruling the country in 1976. The junta stayed in power until 1983, but committed most atrocities to root out Leftist extremists in the Dirty War during the late 1970s. Between 9000 and 30,000 were disappeared and/or killed during the Dirty War.
Bosnia (Former Yugoslavia)	1992–1995	Though the communist dictatorship of Josip Broz Tito held together the disparate republics of Yugoslavia, his death in 1980 left the country's unity in question. President Slobodan Milosevic came to power in Yugoslavia in 1987, seeking a greater Serbia through Serbian nationalism. Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia resisted and fought against Serbia, which held the reins of Yugoslav military and state power. It is estimated that over 100,000 people died during this violent conflict, particularly Bosnians and Croats, from the early 1990s until the Dayton Peace Accords of late 1995.
Chechnya (Russia)	1990–ongoing	In 1990, Chechnya declared itself an independent republic and attempted to secede from the USSR. The Soviets opposed this move, as has Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The first Chechen War took place between 1994 and 1996 when Chechen guerrillas fought against Russian forces trying to regain control of the region. The conflict ended in a ceasefire and peace agreement in 1996. Full-fledged fighting resumed in 1999 under the Second Chechen War. After 1999, Chechen terrorists escalated violence and conducted their most well-known operations. Throughout the 2000s terrorist attacks by Chechen fighters took place, and they continue to occur as of 2017.
Darfur (Sudan)	2003–ongoing	Darfur, a region in Sudan, has experienced violent conflict since the 1980s. Conflict escalated in 2003 when two Darfuri rebel groups (the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement) began fighting the Sudanese, Arab-controlled government. The rebel groups argued that the government was unable and unwilling to protect those in the Darfur region from attacks by nomads, and the government responded to the rebels by arming militias, called Janjaweed, that attacked Darfur villages. This genocide has claimed over 400,000 lives and displaced over 2.5 million people. Peace agreements have been signed in 2006, 2010, and 2011, but not all rebel groups follow the agreements. Political violence is still very pronounced in the case, with many rapes and chemical attacks being reported in 2016 and 2017.



<p>Israeli-Palestinian conflict</p>	<p>Early twentieth Century—ongoing</p>	<p>Arabs in Palestine expected independence in the early twentieth century, but their expectations were not met. Arab nationalism grew in the 1930s and became tied to political violence. The Israeli state, established in 1948, crushed the Palestinians' dream of a homeland, and nationalism, along with armed struggle, increased. The first (1987–1993) and second (2000–2004) intifadas were mass rebellions of the Palestinian people. Hamas, having grown out of the first intifada, was established in 1987 and is the most well-known terrorist group in Palestine. Hamas seeks an Islamic state in Palestine and rejects the Israeli state. Peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine have yet to be successful, and violence peaked to full warfare during the summer of 2014.</p>
<p>Mexico (Drug War and Narco-Terrorism)</p>	<p>2006—ongoing</p>	<p>Felipe Calderon was elected president in 2006, vowing to take on the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico by using the military to fight them. Between 2006 and 2012, drug violence became bloodier and more brutal than before this time, with an estimated loss of life near 50,000. Politicians, journalists, and human rights activists have been assassinated, car bombs have been used, and kidnappings occur frequently. Many deaths, however, include members of the drug organizations. The drug organizations now function as domestic terrorists, engaging in narcoterrorism. Enrique Pena Nieto, elected to the Mexican Presidency in 2012, vowed to continue fighting drugs, but expressed a concurrent desire to reduce the intensity and violence of the fight. That said, the death toll from the drug war has exceeded 100,000 and homicides and other violent crimes remain frequent during the Nieto administration.</p>
<p>Pakistan</p>	<p>Twentieth Century—ongoing</p>	<p>Al Qaeda terrorists occupy the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially following the United States' offensives in Afghanistan that drove many militants across the border into Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan relates to the cases of transnational terrorists and the US war on terror (see below). Pakistan is believed to be a safe haven for terrorists in that terrorist training camps function in Western Pakistan and top leaders in Al Qaeda are thought to reside there (including Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and the former leader, now deceased, Osama bin Laden). The Tehrik-I Taliban, aka the Pakistan Taliban, also wage terrorist campaigns and are considered a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US State Department. The Pakistani government works with the US government to detain terrorists, yet it is considered less than successful in its counterterrorism efforts.</p>

(continued)



Table 1.2 (continued)

Case	Conflict years	Conflict summary
Rwanda	1994	The Rwandan genocide ensued after the airplane carrying Rwanda and Burundi's presidents was shot down on April 6, 1994, setting off a violent response from governing Hutu extremists against the country's Tutsi minority (which had been prominent in the country's colonial history and often were more affluent than Hutus). The government empowered and armed Interahamwe militias, along with ordinary citizens, to kill Tutsi men, women, and children. It is estimated that 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed during the genocide's 3-month time frame.
Sri Lanka	1983–2009	The Sri Lankan Civil War was fought between the government of Sri Lanka and a Tamil rebel group, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) (also known as the Tamil Tigers). The Tamils are ethnically distinct from the Sinhalese, the majority population in Sri Lanka. The LTTE started as militias of Tamil youth based upon tactics of assassinations of police and government officials. Hostilities eventually escalated into civil war. The Sri Lankan government is accused of committing human rights abuses during the war, and the LTTE is accused of engaging in terrorist activity. An estimated 80,000–100,000 people died during the course of the civil war. By 2009, the government had regained all territory and the LTTE was defeated.
United States (War on Terror)	2001–ongoing	President George W. Bush declared the US “war on terror” in the days following September 11, 2001. The war was intended to eliminate Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and other transnational terrorist groups. The war’s strategy relied on military action, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, which President Bush argued would occur with allies or unilaterally, if need be. Those associated with terrorism were to be defeated, whether abroad or at home, thus justifying increased domestic law enforcement as well. The war also intended to pursue the political and diplomatic goals of spreading democracy and curtailing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As of 2017 the US continues its operations in Afghanistan, making it the longest war in US history.
Transnational terrorism, Al Qaeda and affiliates	1989–ongoing	Al Qaeda, meaning “the base,” grew out of the 1980s mujahideen insurgency in Afghanistan against the USSR. Following the withdrawal of the USSR in 1989, Al Qaeda turned its attention to eliminating secular, Arab governments, and then focused its attention on the West, including the United States, which the network saw as supportive of secular regimes. Al Qaeda committed terrorist acts in the 1990s, most notably waged the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, and it continues to act, from central command in Afghanistan and Pakistan or through its vast network of affiliates in the Maghreb, Iraq, Indonesia, Somalia, the Arabian Peninsula, and in Southeast Asia. It also maintains terrorist cells in other parts of the world, including Europe. Al Qaeda related attacks have occurred, for example, in Spain and the UK.

Iraq and Syria (ISIS/ISIL)	2004–ongoing	<p>In 2004, the terrorist group AQI (Al-Qaeda in Iraq) was rebranded as Islamic State in Iraq (ISI) to gain local support. In 2010, ISI and an Al-Qaeda group in Syria merged into what is called ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria). In 2014, ISIS took control of cities in Iraq as well as Raqqa (a Syrian city that would become their headquarters). Later in 2014, President Obama authorized air strikes against ISIS and ISIS declared itself a caliphate. ISIS calls for “homegrown” terrorist efforts in the US. Boko Haram, a Nigerian terrorist group pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015. A series of attacks in 2015–2016 were carried out in Libya, Australia, France, Tunis, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Turkey, Indonesia, Belgium, the UK, and Spain.</p>
Colombian terrorist groups: Army of National Liberation (ELN), the People’s Liberation Army (EPL), the April 19 Movement (M-19), and the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC).	1946–ongoing	<p>Violence ensued in 1946 because of land disputes between the conservative and liberal parties, but, in 1958, the two groups agreed to split power. This truce lasted 16 years, but new groups formed in the 1960s including FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces), the National Liberation Army, and the People’s Liberation Army. In the 1970s a second generation of Guerilla groups emerged (the M-19 Movement, Worker’s Self Defense, and Worker’s Revolutionary Party). The drug trade became central to Colombia’s economy at this point. Many civilians, fighters, and judges have been killed since that time, including presidential candidates murdered drug cartels. Peace talks between FARC and the government began in 2000 and failed by 2003. To date, the conflict has left approximately 220,000 dead, 25,000 missing, and 5.7 million displaced. In 2016, Colombia reached a historic peace agreement and in 2017 FARC guerillas turned over weaponry. However, some violence is ongoing as of 2017.</p>
Kurdish workers’ party (PKK)	1970s–ongoing	<p>In their attempt to win independence from Turkey, the PKK used suicide bombing until the tactic lost public support. The geopolitical fluctuations of the Turkish government have caused the issue of an independent Kurdistan to become a bargaining chip domestically and diplomatically. Clashes between Turkey and Kurdish groups surged in 2016 and 2017.</p>
Northern Ireland	1910s–1998	<p>The Home Rule efforts of late-1800s Irish politics turned violent in the early twentieth Century with Ulster unionists and Irish republicans forming paramilitary and terrorist factions. Moving through several bloody armed struggles, the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement brokered a political resolution to end generations of turmoil.</p>
Cambodia	1970s–2003	<p>Following civil war, the Cambodian genocide of 1975–1979 attempted to reshape society by including the tactic of forced breeding. Along with victims of torture and killings, women suffered without any form of legal redress until an attempt to try and convict criminals began in 2003. The court proceedings have focused on state leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime, likely leaving many thousands of perpetrators to live without facing any formal charges.</p>

(continued)

Table 1.2 (continued)

Case	Conflict years	Conflict summary
Korea	1930s–1945	From the late 1800s, Japanese imperialist troops established “comfort stations” of coerced sex and rape on the eastern coast of mainland Asia. By the late 1930s, Japanese officials targeted Korean women to fulfill the institutionalized sexually abusive military outposts. The acts ended in 1945 with the defeat of imperial Japan; however, unresolved reconciliation continues to bring important social and diplomatic issues to the forefront of Korean history and Japanese international relations.
Spain (and Basque region which includes France)	1936–ongoing	The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) included fighters from Spain and a collection of international volunteers, with most outsiders joining the socialist effort to defeat fascist forces. With Franco’s dictatorship ending in 1977, several independence efforts led to terrorist activities. ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom) was founded in 1959 during the right-wing, authoritarian regime of Francisco Franco (Spain). ETA seeks independence and to retain local culture and language in the Basque homeland, which extends into France across the Pyrenees. More than 800 people have died in ETA violence, mostly police and politicians, but also those killed indiscriminately in bombings. ETA declared a permanent cease fire in 2011, leading many to presume the cessation of conflict in the region. However, ETA has declared cease fires before, only to break them later.
Germany; Nazi era and Red Army Faction	1933–1945, 1970–1988	Nazi Germany and collaborating Nazi-occupied European nations participated in terrorizing minorities, political opponents, and socially-constructed enemies of the mythologized Aryan culture. For 12 years, Nazi power grew out of institutionalizing abuses against underrepresented and vulnerable communities and individuals. A generation after World War Two, Germany underwent the reunification process through discourse on social and political issues.
Nigeria	2000s–present	A former British colony, Islam in Nigeria was suppressed by the British during colonial rule. Post-colonialization saw the growth of some Islamist groups. One such group is Boko Haram. Founded in 2002, Boko Haram seeks to create a society based on an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam known as Wahhabism and jihadī-Salafism, extremist Islamic sects that seek to purify Islamic worshippers and convert or exterminate ‘infidels’ and ‘apostates’ by any means necessary, including violence. The group engages in kidnappings and armed struggles to advance its goals.

essentialized as having particular characteristics *as women*. We find this occurs both to perpetrators of violence and responders to violence. Thus, the divide between terrorist and responder is broken down when viewed through the lens of gender.

Table 1.2 lists all the cases used in this book and provides a brief introduction to them.

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## Chapter 2

# Women Engaged in Violent Activity as Terrorists, Guerrillas and Genocidaires



### Introduction

“Diana Marcela, 28, has spent 13 years with FARC and hopes to finish high school and study photography after demobilising.”

“Johana, 19, has spent six years with FARC and wants to study nursing.”

“Rubiela, 32, plans to study dentistry after 10 years with FARC.”

(Qtd. in Vergara 2016 [np]).

An article published in *The Guardian* from September 2016 on the eve of the FARC’s (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) demobilization illustrates pictures of multiple women in battle clothing with a slide bar that can transform them from their battle fatigues into women in street clothes (Vergara 2016). The article talks about their plans as reintegrated citizens after many years with the guerrilla group. In their combat pictures, the women are stoic-faced in battle fatigues and pictured with multiple types of weaponry. In the “after” picture, they are portrayed in incredibly feminine clothing with makeup and a quote about their ambitions. These women illustrate the juxtaposition between the battle-hardened and feminine. Because of our notions of **hegemonic masculinity**, *practices that promote the dominant social position and aggressiveness of men and the subordinate social position and passivity of women* (Connell 2005), seeing women as violent perpetrators often jars with gendered expectations of femininity. This may lead some to dismiss women’s role in the process of FARC’s demilitarization. Women make up 30–40% of that organization; thus, their participation in the peace process is vital if it is to be lasting (O’Neill 2015) (Fig. 2.1).

In this chapter, we discuss women involved in violent politics – both directly and indirectly – as guerrillas, terrorists and genocidaires. This includes women who assist in violence from behind the scenes and those who act as violent perpetrators, like the FARC fighters illustrated above. We begin with a short historical review of women’s participation in violent politics. We then discuss women in terrorist organizations. The chapter closes by examining media reactions to violent women. We





**Fig. 2.1** FARC operative “Mayerly” being led into trial (Photo by Policía Nacional de los Colombianos 2013)

draw from cases in the US as well as the Basque Country, but also bring in many other comparative cases to illustrate our points.

Before proceeding, it is important to distinguish between guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and genocide (see Chap. 1 as well). **Genocide** is the *intentional murder of people because of their group membership, where group membership can be ethnic, racial, political, religious or economic*. **Guerrilla warfare** can take place during genocide or may be divorced from genocide. It is defined as *a type of unconventional warfare in which smaller groups of irregular forces, often civilians, use mobile tactics such as ambushes and raids to combat larger, better trained, and regular forces* (Poloni-Staudinger 2011). Terrorists are distinct from guerrillas in that guerrillas target regular military forces and terrorists typically target civilians or government officials. **Terrorism** is defined as *a political activity that relies on violence or [credible] threat of violence to achieve its ends* (see Magstadt and Schotten 1993).

## Women as Warriors, Guerrillas, and Anarchists

Violent women are not a new phenomenon, as women have been involved in political violence since Biblical times (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008). Jean Bethke Elshtain, in *Women and War*, call these women “the ferocious few,” “who have *actually* fought” rather than served in “auxiliary services, support, [and] noncombat duties” (1987 [173]). At many points in history, including the American Revolution, the American Civil War, and World War II (in Britain), women have dressed as men in



**Fig. 2.2** Women's LTTE brigade in Sri Lanka. The Women's Combat Force of Liberation Tigers (WCFLT) (Photo by Marietta Amarcord 2002)

order to fight in combat. Multiple women fought in battle throughout the Sri Lankan civil war, with an entire brigade of fighters made up of women in both the army and in the LTTE guerrilla group (Fig. 2.2).

Women in anarchist movements are forerunners to women as guerrillas and terrorists (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbals 2012). Anarchists were active in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mainly in Europe (although there are modern anarchist groups in the US and Europe as well), committing terrorism to pursue revolutionary change. For example, Russian anarchists wanted to end the autocratic regime of the czars. Women anarchists there were not motivated by feminism, yet gender relations framed their activism (Knight 1979). Russian society at the time expected women to stay in the home, thus, by joining anarchist groups, women rejected these gender expectations. Their activism, however, portrayed the female virtue of self-sacrifice, thereby confirming cultural expectations. Anarchists would receive a death sentence if caught, thus “the terrorist wing” of the anarchists required “the most crucial quality” of “selfless devotion – a trait that had been instilled in women as a traditional female virtue” (Knight 1979 [143]).

Women in guerrilla movements also served as forerunners to women terrorists. Women guerrillas in the twentieth century took on combat and support roles, in cases throughout Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. In Cuba (1950s–1960s) and Uruguay (1970s), women comprised up to 25% of guerrillas. Although women guerrillas often support operations through food preparation, intimate partnerships with men fighters, and/or the storage and transport of weapons, they are known to alternate between support and combat roles and have held leadership positions in some groups (e.g., Shining Path in Peru). Though some women seek gender empowerment through guerrilla activity (e.g., in Mozambique, 1977–1992), guerrilla activity did not lead to feminist emancipation in many cases, as women were expected to take up domestic responsibilities after fighting ceased (e.g., El Salvador after the civil war, 1979–1992) (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbals 2012).



**Box 2.1: Women of the LTTE**

Sri Lanka experienced decades of latent/low intensity conflict between the Sinhalese-dominated national government and the Tamil minority. In 1983 the confrontation erupted into a full-blown insurgency and civil war that ended only in 2009 with the total defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Conventional military operations, guerrilla warfare, state terror, and terrorist acts perpetrated by the LTTE at home and abroad claimed an estimated 80,000–100,000 lives. Both sides were responsible for violations of humanitarian law, war crimes, and crimes against humanity that included the targeting of civilians, torture and sexual violence, the summary execution of prisoners and LTTE's use of forced conscription of children soldiers.

The LTTE was especially keen on the participation of women and created a special all-female corps and political wing: the “Birds of Freedom.” According to Sylvester and Parashar (2009) women represented 20% of total LTTE forces and they were actively employed in all roles, including combat and suicide missions. Propaganda emphasized the contribution of women to the cause and female recruits were ostentatiously paraded through the streets as potential martyrs and publicly honored. LTTE leaders implied that women would become liberated by joining the fight. The mixing of nationalism and women's emancipation discourses in LTTE rhetoric exalted women's agency as fighters and martyrs, but reality was more complex (Imtiyaz and Stavis 2008).

While it may be argued that woman fighters found personal emancipation as fighters, as a whole, they were denied agency and instead exploited as cannon fodder. The LTTE leadership was composed entirely of men, and as a rule, women were excluded from decision-making. Women led the “Birds of Freedom” but their position was largely nominal and devoid of substantial authority. On the other hand, female suicide bombers provided a very effective tactical weapon as they could count on the element of surprise (more on this in Chap. 3). Furthermore, many families preferred to send girls rather than boys to imposed conscription, highlighting how women were considered inferior and expendable. Finally, the recruitment of women gathered pace as casualties increasingly took their toll on men fighters. From a symbolic point of view, the training and treatment of women did not correspond to official LTTE “liberation” ideology. Rather, they reflected traditional Tamil patriarchic values of feminine subjugation. Training aimed at stripping recruits of their feminine traits to imbue them with male attributes, for the martial virtues were considered intrinsically masculine. By contrast, women fighters were also expected to incarnate traditional feminine virtues of modesty and chastity, as “mothers” ready to give their life for the “birth” of the nation. Off duty, women militants were not allowed to interact with men, they could not drink or smoke, and extra-marital sex was prohibited. Women were constantly and everywhere subjected to male control.

While the role of women fighters in LTTE ranks has often been highlighted, women participated in the conflict on the government side too. Sri Lankan authorities never resorted to conscription, but in 1979 the Government raised the first battalion of the Women's Corps Regiment and five additional battalions were raised before the war was over. The role of women volunteers was declaredly subordinate to that of their men colleagues, as their commanding officers were mainly men and their mission was to relieve men of non-combat duties considered as less martial. Members of the Women Corps Regiment performed their duties with bravery and at least 25 died in the course of operations (Sri Lankan Women Corps 2017). Nevertheless, Sri Lankan authorities did not even nominally embrace notions of women's emancipation through their active involvement in the conflict. Women remained relegated to traditional, submissive roles. The treatment of women workers in the Free Trade Zones established in order to counterbalance the economic damages of the war testifies to this. Over 100,000 women from rural backgrounds were sent to work in these Zones under conditions that, according to de Mel (2009), amounted to forced labor and sexual subjugation to military men. Overall, Sri Lanka's attitude towards women in military service is stunning considering that during the war women held some key government positions.

### **Box 2.2: Resisters During the Spanish Civil War**

The Spanish Civil War took place from 1936–1939 with republicans and anarchists committed to a democratic state fighting against the nationalistic and aristocratic alliance led by Francisco Franco. The war began when a group of nationalist generals put forward a declaration of opposition against the democratically elected government of the Second Spanish Republic under the leadership of President Manuel Azaña and attempted a coup against it. The war became known for its brutality, involvement of Nazi (allied with Franco) carpet bombing against the Basques (allied in convenience with the republicans and anarchists against Franco) and presence of foreign fighters. Women were also involved in the war, including foreign, Basque and Spanish women. Involvement by Basque women – and Basque in general – set the stage for the armed resistance of ETA that was to come in the latter half of the 1900s (more on this below).

Women's depictions during the Civil War differed based on which side of the conflict they backed. Nationalist women were embedded in a strictly patriarchal society that championed women in the home and women who did not act with political agency. Women were tasked with domesticity, and they are often absent or invisible from historical nationalist accounts of this time. On the republican side, women were visible, yet their primary responsibility was

(continued)

**Box 2.2** (continued)

still one of homemaker and mother. Narratives surrounding republican women, though, allow for agency.

What did women do during the Spanish Civil War? On the nationalist side, women largely did not participate in the activities related to the war and mainly tended to the home front. On the republican side, however, women formed the backbone of the resistance. They were present everywhere - on committees, in the militias, and on the front line. In the early battles of the civil war, women fought alongside men as a matter of course (Orwell 1938; Willis 2010), and a women's battalion fought at the Battle for the Segovia Bridge and in the defense of Madrid. Women's participation front and center in the fight waned, however, after the early part of the war. As time went on, women faced discrimination on the front lines and became increasingly relegated to traditional and support roles.

Despite the sexism that crept into even the republican ranks, one woman stands out during the Spanish Civil War for her fight against fascism. Isidora Dolores Ibárruri Gómez, known as La Pasionaria (the Passionate), was a Basque communist politician and leader in the resistance movement. She is famous for her cries of *¡No Pasarán!* (They shall not pass!) during the Battle for Madrid in 1936. She was a known orator and gave many speeches and calls to arms during the Spanish Civil War, one of the more famous being "Better to die standing up than to live kneeling down!" La Pasionaria remained a hero to the anti-fascist cause while in exile in France and the Soviet Union during Franco's regime (1939–1975). She returned to Spain in 1977 after Franco's death. In La Pasionaria we see precursors to the Basque women who first resisted Franco and then the Spanish state through ETA (Fig. 2.3).



**Fig. 2.3** Delores Ibárruri, La Pasionaria in 1936 (Photo Courtesy of Creative Commons 2016)

Spanish women were not the only ones to participate on the republican side. Notably 80 American women defied the US government and joined approximately 2000 men to go to Spain as volunteers to serve, primarily as medics, in support of the international brigades. Most had a deep ideological attachment to fighting fascism, and at the time, Spain was the front line of the anti-fascist fight. Most definitely, these women acted with agency even though they played more of a support rather than direct combat role in the Spanish Civil War. These women's stories are told in Julia Newman's film *Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Newman 2007). In the film, one woman, Salaria Kea, explains her motivation for going to Spain. This is echoed by others in the film:

"I was not a political person, because you shifted too much. See, I didn't know about fascism. Here's the thing that brought everything to me. It was the way Germany was treating the Jews. I never really thought that white people do against white people, because we don't look at you as French or Italian. You're white. I have met a lot of Jewish people who had left Germany, and they told us about what Hitler was doing to them. It was like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). So now, we're matching what is happening in Germany to the Jews to us here in the United States. So, I went downtown to this meeting, and the meeting was all these people from foreign countries, and they said to me that they hoped to go to work with the republican side. So, they said, "Would you like to go with us?" I said yes. The next thing I knew, I was accepted to go to Spain." (Qtd. in Newman 2007 [np]).

Thus, the story of women in the Spanish Civil War, at least on the republican side, is one of agency. Most women participated in support roles during the war; however, other women, like *La Pasionaria*, took up combat positions.

## Women as Genocidares

If women guerrillas and anarchists clash with expectations of femininity, women as genocidares take notions of what it is to be a woman to a new level. Sjoberg and Gentry (2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015) point out that women are idealized as pure and incapable of mass murder. Women are stereotyped as life-givers, not life takers; thus, when they turn to violence we tend to be either captivated or horrified (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortobals 2012). Women's agency is also often stripped and violent women portrayed as being "caught up" in violence by happenstance or duped into it and manipulated to violence by a man (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015). In this chapter, we stress that women can be women, mothers, daughters, wives, and genocidares; i.e., they often act with agency when committing and participating in genocide. Three general tropes explain how women are portrayed when they act violently, and none of these address a woman's agency: the mother, the monster, or the whore (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015). Women are first and foremost seen as mothers – who give life and do not act violently. When they do act violently, they are sensationalized and trivialized as monsters (as a lesser aberration of a woman) or whores (motivated by a twisted sexual desire or for the love of a man).

## Motivations and Roles of Women Genocidaires

There has been little work focusing on women as genocidaires. Thus, it is difficult to cite generalized and comprehensive research into the motivations of women genocidaires. As discussed in the section below on terrorism, women are motivated to genocide for many of the same reasons as men. While they are often in “support” roles during a genocide, many examples of women as active genocide participants exist as well, most notably during the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide (see Boxes 2.3 and 2.4).

In support roles, genocidal women often are cast as slightly removed from violence as they perform more “feminine” tasks (Jones 2011). For example, in the Rwandan genocide, Hutu women denounced Tutsis or turned them over to the killers, and women supported men who carried out the killing by preparing meals, running errands, and bringing provisions to roadblocks (Hogg 2010). They also “looted the corpses afterward” (Jones 2011 [481]). Similarly, women during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany brought meals and other supplies to men involved in the mass murdering of Jews at concentration camps or in forests (Kershner 2010). Therefore, support roles carried out by women during genocide are similar to those carried out by women guerrillas or terrorists.

History also shows “the direct involvement of women” in violence, “joining men in attacking and pillaging refugee convoys (as Kurdish women did in the Armenian genocide); and actively involving themselves in ‘euthanasia’ killings and concentration-camp atrocities under the Nazis” (Jones 2011 [481]). When women directly participate in genocide, they “have often been regarded as ‘evil’ or ‘non-women’” (Hogg 2010 [71]), or, as “monsters” (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015). The “evil woman theory” purports that “real women do not commit crimes” and those who do or are “even worse than the male offenders” (Hogg 2010 [100]).

In most genocides, women are motivated for the same reasons as men. Like men, women can perceive sense of wrong or injustice in the genocidal milieu that creates an “us” versus “them” mentality. Usually, this is stoked by elites through propaganda and is exacerbated during times of crisis or resource deprivation (Straus 2006). Genocide is also wrapped up in identity. Perpetrators feel threatened in some way with a need to belong to something bigger than themselves. This serves to reinforce the “in group/outgroup” or “us/them” mentality (Straus 2006), and the only way the perpetrators of violence feel that they can regain their identities is to engage in extreme measures, including genocide.

Why do women participate in genocide? Referencing Rwanda, Hogg (2010) identifies two reasons why ordinary women were complicit in the genocide. First, women were scared. They report that they were “forced” by the killers to disclose the hiding places of victims and were afraid that if they did not comply, they or their families would be killed. The second reason is “the effect of ...hate propaganda and the ‘trumping’ of ethnicity over gender” (Hogg 2010 [86]). Hutu women were

incited, mainly through the radio, into believing that Tutsis *needed* to be killed. Men *and* women radio personalities and leaders instigated the propaganda.

Some women participate in genocide to prove their commitment to the cause. A famous story to emerge from the Holocaust was that of Ms. Petri, who was married to an SS officer. Stories of Ms. Petri focus on her marriage and her status as a mother. She murdered six Jewish children, ages 6–12. “She came across them while out riding in her carriage. She was the mother of two young children, and was 25 at the time. Near naked, the Jewish children had apparently escaped from a railroad car bound for the Sobibor camp. She took them home, fed them, then led them into the woods and shot them one by one” (Kershner 2010 [1]). The idea of Ms. Petri killing children when she herself was a mother clashes with the ideal of the peaceful mother, yet she was motivated because of her belief in the Nazi cause and her desire to prove her devotion. (More on women genocidaires during the Holocaust can be found in Box 2.4).

A final reason why women participate in genocide relates to “intrafemale rivalries” (Jones 2011 [482]). Adam Jones explains that in Rwanda, “Hutu women had long been depicted as less attractive and desirable than their Tutsi counterparts. Many Hutu women accordingly took pleasure in Tutsi women’s ‘comeuppance,’ and proved more than willing to assist in inflicting it” (2011 [482]). With the excep-

### **Box 2.3: Pauline Nyiramasuhuko of Rwanda**

On June 24 2011, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda convicted Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, former Rwandan Minister for Women’s Empowerment, of genocide for her role in ordering rape and killing during the Rwandan genocide. Nyiramasuhuko became the first woman convicted of genocide and genocidal rape (earlier convictions during WWII were of war crimes). Genocides begin with the vilification and dehumanization of individuals based on their particular group characteristic. Women as well as men participate in this process. In Rwanda, women actively participated in the propaganda machine used to dehumanize the Tutsi population (Gulaid 2011). Rwanda is typical of women’s roles and motivations during genocides. According to Adler et al. (2007) women worked as the main architects of the Rwandan genocide and also participated as individual killers in small communities. While direct killing by women occurred less frequently, women were instrumental in denouncing victims and looting victim’s homes as well as their bodies. Approximately 3000 women, representing about 3.4% of the Rwandan population, participated in the Rwandan Genocide (Adler et al. 2007 [212]).

Nyiramasuhuko went beyond the genocidal actions of other women in advocating for rape of Tutsi women. She is alleged to have told Hutu militiamen, “before you kill the women, you need to rape them” (Zimbaro 2008 [13]). She was also accused of ordering her men to take cans of gasoline from her car and use them to burn a group of women to death, leaving surviving rape victims as witnesses (Harman 2003). Nyiramasuhuko was found guilty in 2011, 17 years after the Rwandan genocide. She is serving life in prison for her crimes and is eligible for parole in 2036.

**Box 2.4: Women as Nazi Genocidares**

Irma Grese is one of the most notorious women of the Nazi regime. At Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where she served as the women's warden, she brutally beat and mentally and physically tortured female prisoners, inflicting pain to the point of dehumanization of her victims. She would group them together and randomly select who should be gassed (Wolford 2016). She also served as an SS guard at Ravensbrück and Auschwitz. Overall, about 10% of the guards in concentration camps were women (Willmott 2015).

Much has been made of Grese's actions, and she has been simultaneously characterized as a sexually depraved nymphomaniac using "whore" language and as a sadistic "monster." This is despite the fact that Grese acted the same way as male concentration camp guards. Her actions as a genocidaire have been constructed as a betrayal to fellow women. She is considered an example of a woman void of empathy rather than as a Nazi war criminal. In actuality, Grese acted as many Nazi guards did during the Holocaust (Wolford 2016) (Fig. 2.4).



**Fig. 2.4** Irma Grese awaiting trial, 1945 (Photo released by the Imperial War Museum)

Irma Grese was convicted of war crimes for her role in the Belsen camp. She was executed in 1945 together with 2 other women, Johanna Borman and Elizabeth Volkenrath, and eight men. Her last word was "Schnell" (quick) indicating how she wanted to be hung (Mirror 2012).



Grese is unique in that she was convicted and executed for her genocidal crimes. Approximately 3600 women worked in concentration camps during the Holocaust; only sixty were put on trial during the tribunals after World War II and twenty-one of them executed (Wolford 2016). More typically, women genocidares are attributed less agency and blame than men and instead are constructed as acting due to the wishes of a man, as a “whore” or as an abhorrent “monster” woman devoid of agency (Fig. 2.5).



**Fig. 2.5** Ilse Koch, before trial (Photo courtesy of Herbert Stolpmann)

Ilse Koch has been similarly portrayed as a “monster” and “whore” for her actions as the wife of the commander of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Most notably, Koch is known for having a penchant for human skins and shrunken skulls, and reports from Buchenwald immediately after liberation discuss her turning human skins into handbags (Przyrembel 2001), although these charges were never proven in court. Koch is described as riding scantily clad on horseback around the camp choosing prisoners with tattoos to be killed and skinned, with skins later used to make lamp shades and other materials. In trials, Koch was characterized as an abhorrent mother who left her children to the care of others in order to carry out unspeakable acts of vio-

(continued)



**Box 2.4** (continued)

lence. She was also, like Grese, characterized as sexually deviant and hypersexualized in her pursuit of torture against Jews held in the camp. At her trial, Koch announced she was pregnant. This may have resulted in her receiving a reduced sentence. She was retried a second time and sentenced to life in prison. She committed suicide in 1967.

tion of this final reason, men and women tend to participate in genocide for similar reasons – out of fear and incitement and/or to prove loyalty.

## Women as Terrorists

“Baby-faced, she looks barely a teenager. But the pistol she is holding suggests the violent path she would choose: strapping on an explosive belt and blowing herself up in a subway station in Moscow during the morning rush-hour.” (Levy and Barry 2010).

“These images turned the three Bethnal Green girls, as they have become known, into the face of a new, troubling phenomenon: young women attracted to what experts...call a jihadi, girl-power subculture” (Bennholdaug 2015).

In the first story, Levy and Barry describe Dzhanel Abdullayeva as a young, 17 year old with a willingness to kill. Abdullayeva was a Black Widow suicide bomber whose attack killed 40 people in March 2010. Why was she motivated to kill? The article explains that her husband was a Chechen insurgent killed by Russian troops in 2009. Other than this, we know very little about Abdullayeva except that she was married to a terrorist. Media reports from the time did not grant her agency but focused on her love of a man (à la the whore narrative) to explain her motivations. As the below section suggests, women do act with agency in terrorist organizations even as the general public and media tend to think of them as passive or incapable of committing terrorism on their own accord. In Chap. 10, we explain that to ignore women’s agency in terrorism is to be short-sighted about counter-terrorism policy that seeks to stymie perpetrators before they act.

The second story tells the tale of Khadiza Sultana, one of three London teens who left their Western lives behind to travel to Syria in support of the Islamic State. Why did Khadiza leave a seemingly normal life behind in support of violent jihad? The article paints the picture of a relatively “normal” British teen, who listened and danced to pop music and even wore perfume, presumably actions considered appropriately feminine. In this article Bennholdaug (2015) highlights an often-discussed phenomenon of Western girls and young women defecting to Syria to become “wives, mothers, recruiters and sometimes online cheerleaders of violence.” The Western news media has been enamored with the thought of young girls leaving



**Fig. 2.6** Leila Khaled with Attorneys, early 1970s (Photo courtesy of Creative Commons)

their homes and traveling to support the Islamic State. While the stories of Abdurakhmanova and Sultana captivated the media, this is not a new phenomenon.

In 1969, a 25-year old woman hijacked a TWA flight out of Rome to Athens, and a year later she helped hijack an El Al flight from Amsterdam to New York in one of four simultaneous hijackings. This woman, Leila Khaled, became known as the “poster girl” of Palestinian militancy. Khaled was a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and in her later life was a member of the Palestinian National Council. Today she lives in Jordan. She captured the world’s attention not only because the multiple hijackings appeared sophisticated, but because she was a young, beautiful *woman*. News media focused heavily on Khaled’s looks, something common in portrayals of public women, be they terrorists or political leaders.

The world continues to be mesmerized by women terrorists, and the majority of research on gender and terrorism details women as terrorists (rather than, for example, women as responders to terrorism) (Alison 2009; Bloom 2011). Some researchers investigate and describe why women – perceived as a fairly unified social group – commit acts of terror (Bloom 2011; Cragin and Daly 2009). Sjoberg et al. (2011), representing another approach, critique the view that motivations are common to all (or most) women solely because of shared sex or gender identity. They argue women experience varying gender relations and social structures worldwide; thus, motivations for terrorism will vary from woman to woman (Fig. 2.6).

The history of women’s participation in terrorism is well established, and scholars are certain women have been central to terrorist organizations and that

their numbers and roles are growing (Talbot 2000/2001). In Peru's *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), women accounted for as much as 20% of the fighting force throughout the 1980s. Moreover, every terrorist organization in Western Europe, with the exception of the loyalists in Northern Ireland, has used women combatants (Talbot 2000/2001). Cunningham (2010) concurs, reporting rates of women's participation of 20–30% across many organizations; for example, women were 20% of Italian terrorists in the 1960s and 1970s. Terrorist organizations composed of large numbers of women also included the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) in Sri Lanka (sometimes classified as guerrilla and sometimes terrorist organization) and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in the Basque region of Spain and France.

Women have participated in terrorism in the United States as well. The Weather Underground, a Marxist-based US terrorist organization of the 1970s, had a women's unit called the Women's Brigade. This group was comprised of approximately 70 women who pledged to "build a militant women's movement that commits itself to the destruction of American imperialism" and exploit "the man's chauvinism" as a "strategic weakness" (Berger 2006 [143]). While their rhetoric tended to be as radical as their male partners, Women's Brigade members mainly served support roles in the organization as sympathizers and spies (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). Today, women make up large portions of right-wing terrorist organizations in the US (discussed more below).

Growth in women's participation is especially evident in Islamic terrorism today. Al Qaeda used women in operations because of the shock value they bring, even as the network claims a lesser role in society and politics for women than men. ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) has been less willing to use women as active combatants, but women appear to play important support roles in the organization (Chatterjee 2016), particularly as mothers, wives, and propagandists for the Islamic State. As discussed in the introduction to this section, recruitment of women and girls into ISIS extends into Western countries as well.

While less common, women sometimes rise to positions of leadership in terrorist groups. ETA provides a good example with women taking leadership of key missions as well as the organization. For example, in 1973, Genoveve Forest Tarat, a women ETA operative, helped orchestrate the assassination of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco (Cragin and Daly 2009). Until her arrest in France in 2015, a key leader in charge of ETA operations was a woman, Ixrate Sorzabal Diaz. Sorzabal continued to play an important role in the organization even after ETA announced a ceasefire in 2011. Women have operated at an elite level in the IRA (Irish Republican Army) as well. For example, from 1990 to 1995, Eibhlin Glenholmes, a senior woman member of the IRA, acted as an envoy to Castro's regime in Cuba (Moser and Clark 2001).

One of the more infamous women leaders of a terrorist organization was Ulrike Meinhof, leader of the Baader-Meinhof Gang or the RAF (Red Army Faction). Meinhof, together with Andreas Baader formed the RAF in 1970. The RAF was a group motivated by an extreme left ideology and labeled a terrorist organization by the German state. This adherence to left ideology was a primary motivator behind the radical egalitarian and feminist nature of the group. Meinhof began as a journalist for a left-leaning news magazine. In the late 1960s, she broke with the magazine

because she thought it was becoming increasingly commercial, stating “Protest is when I say this does not please me. Resistance is when I ensure what does not please me occurs no more” (Meinhof 1968 [np]).

Meinhof captivated the world because she was an educated woman at the helm of an organization known for bank robbery, assassination, kidnappings and police shootouts. She was the mother of two small children at the time she joined with Baader, which led many to speculate that she joined because of a love or obsession with Baader. As such media discussion of Ulrike Meinhof strongly incorporated the whore narrative discussed above. The fact that Meinhof left young children behind to serve with the RAF meant that she is discussed as an abhorrent woman and a monster; she was considered the worst sort of mother who would abandon children for a violent cause. Meinhof died in prison in 1976 while on trial for her involvement with the RAF. Her death was ruled a suicide by the authorities, but this explanation has been disputed by her family, friends, and comrades.

## What Motivates Women to Terrorism?

What are women’s motivations for joining terrorist groups? In Meinhof’s case it was ideology and her belief that the German state was increasingly slipping into capitalist control, with former fascist leaders at the helm. However, Bloom argues “women across a number of conflicts and in several different terrorist groups tend to be motivated by [the four Rs]...revenge [for death of a family member], redemption [for past sins that have damaged their self image], relationship [with insurgents, such as a father or husband], and [desired] respect [from their community for their dedication to the cause]” (2011 [235]). To this she added a fifth R (rape), arguing that in some locations once raped, women will try to regain agency and redemption by joining terrorist organizations (and as discussed in Chap. 3, giving their lives through suicide terrorism) (see also O’Connor 2010). For example, in Sri Lanka, women who are raped cannot reenter society, so many of them joined the Black Tigers, the suicide wing of the LTTE. Bloom’s Rs are remarkably similar to the 3 Rs developed by Louise Richardson (2006) to explain motivations of terrorism in general: renown [making a name for oneself], revenge [of a perceived slight], and reaction [provoking a reaction or overreaction in the target]. In other words, though Bloom’s Rs are geared toward women, they are motivations that could drive any terrorist to action. Thus, as Sjoberg states, women “participate in terrorism as terrorists...who happen to be women” (2009 [69]).

Women also have been motivated to join terrorist groups because of deep attachment to the ideological or cultural goals of the group, desire for emancipation, and security concerns and coercion (Morgan 2002; Cragin and Daly 2009). Like men, women are dedicated to the goals of terrorist groups. Ulrike Meinhof, discussed above, is a prime example of someone motivated in this way. Many women are politically motivated to become terrorists as a way to end their own suffering and that of their people. Interviews with failed suicide bombers in Palestine reveal that

women and men alike participate in violence “for revenge of the Jews” (Berko and Erez 2005 [611]). Sixta agrees, stating, the “new women” terrorists of today “are committed to public activism.... [they] want social reform to preserve their own cultures and religions from the invading and increasingly intrusive Western culture” (2008 [262]).

While women often participate in terrorism for the same reasons as men, Gentry explains that motherhood may motivate women terrorists in a way different from men’s motivations. Women terrorists are sometimes women who “did not or could not have children” or are violent mothers who “can be a martyr after giving birth to martyrs” (2009 [244]). She calls this a type of “twisted maternalism” (Gentry 2009 [242]).

Gender equality is another motivation different for women than men. Women may seek gender equality through their participation as terrorists. Some have argued that emancipation accompanies women’s involvement in terrorist groups (Georges-Abeyie 1983). For example, women like Tamil LTTE leader, Thamalini, have achieved respect through terrorist participation. On the other hand, while the Women’s Brigade of Weather Underground framed participation in terms of feminism, critics point out that women in the group were required to have sex with all male members of the group, and revolution was considered to be the top priority; therefore, new mothers were required to give their babies to lower-ranking members if they appeared to be overly distracted from their political goals (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). Ulrike Meinhof also claimed women’s emancipation through terrorism. However, O’Connor (2010) argues that women’s liberation does not motivate many terrorists, as only three terrorist groups – the German RAF, the Red Brigades in Italy and the Shining Path in Peru – were strongly committed to gender equality. Moreover, after a struggle is over, women can face trouble reintegrating into society as they are confronted with **patriarchy**, *a social system in which men hold power over women and children* (Morgan 2002).

## What Do Women Terrorists Do?

Women act as sympathizers, providing assistance and resources to others in the terrorist group (Griset and Mahan 2003). They serve as lookouts, drivers, suppliers, spies, decoys, or messengers (Griset and Mahan 2003). For example, IRA women in the 1970s–1980s deceived British soldiers and lured them into traps, “by having the girls offer to take them to a party...” (Mitchell 2000 [55]).

Women also act as warriors, conducting hijackings or detonating bombs (Griset and Mahan 2003). Finally, some women have held leadership roles, making decisions for the group and interpreting the group’s ideological stance (Griset and Mahan 2003). The case studies below show how ETA women participated in violent operations and as leaders and the role of women in right-wing terrorist organizations in the US today.

**Box 2.5: Women's Role in ETA**

ETA was established in 1959 and found its roots in the resistance of Basque men and women during the Spanish Civil War, but its first moment of public prominence occurred in 1970 at the Burgos military trial. Sixteen ETA members were tried for the assassination of a San Sebastián police inspector, Melitón Manzanás, in August of 1968. ETA chose Manzanás as its first assassination because of his reputation for torturing ETA detainees in Spanish prisons. Through the defendants' presentation of evidence against the Franco regime, the members of ETA "acquired human faces and names for scores of Basque and Spanish citizens watching and reading coverage of the trial" (Hamilton 2007 [78]).

Academics disagree about the importance attributed to the women defendants in the trial. Carrie Hamilton (2007) claims that the three women defendants (Arantza Arruti, Jone Dorronsoro, and Itziar Aizpurua) are largely overlooked in commentaries on the Burgos trial, and they predominantly appeared as "'pretty faces' in the courtroom, or are recorded as the wives of other defendants" (Hamilton 2007 [82]). John Sullivan (1988), however, believed that Itziar Aizpurua was critical in setting the mood of the trial. Aizpurua "described how her political consciousness was awakened by observing both the hardship suffered by [non-Spanish] immigrants... and discrimination against the native [Basque] population by the refusal to allow children to speak *Euskera* (Basque) in school and by the authorities' prohibition of Basque cultural events" (Sullivan 1988 [96]). María Aránzazu Arruti was absolved of crime, but the other fifteen ETA members faced long-term imprisonment and six men faced death sentences, though Franco later commuted the sentences.

Early in 1973, ETA began planning a kidnapping of the Spanish vice premier, Luis Carrero Blanco, in the hopes of forcing the Spanish government to release 150 Basque fighters from prison (Sullivan 1988). After Carrero Blanco's promotion to prime minister and an increase in Spanish security forces in the Basque country, ETA decided to attempt an assassination rather than a kidnapping. In late 1973, ETA perpetrated several small-scale attacks to distract from the impending assassination attempt on Carrero Blanco. On 20 December 1973, ETA assassinated Carrero Blanco, using underground explosives to blow his car over a five-story high wall, instantly killing Carrero Blanco, his driver, and his bodyguard. Two days later, ETA claimed responsibility for the assassination (Sullivan 1988). A woman named Genoveve Forest Tarat helped orchestrate the attack, though most ETA women at this time performed logistical tasks, such as smuggling weapons or bomb-making materials (Cragin and Daly 2009).

Following Franco's death in 1975 and the subsequent democratization of Spain, ETA increasingly used violence to seek an independent Basque state. Although three Basque provinces were granted political autonomy as a

(continued)



**Box 2.5** (continued)

Spanish region in 1979, ETA's violence increased because independence was desirable over autonomy and four provinces remained outside of the autonomous region's ambit (one in Spain and three in France). Political autonomy "was simply seen as a barrier to full independence from Spain" (MacDonald 1991 [5]). From 1978 to 1980, it is believed that ETA's actions claimed the lives of 234 people, with 1980 being the bloodiest year on record.

Although ETA traditionally had been a male-dominated organization reflecting the patriarchal nature of Basque society itself, after 1980 it became more responsive to women's issues, integrating women into the organization and incorporating issues of gender equality into its political platforms—in part because of women in leadership positions (MacDonald 1991). A *BBC* radio report on the ETA operative Yoyes (María Dolores González Katarin), discusses how this first woman to achieve higher rank ETA was motivated by feminist ideals and recognized the sexism within ETA's structure. She was known for her intelligence and tactics. She worked to try to stop sexism in the organization. Yoyes eventually left ETA because she was growing disillusioned with what she saw as violence for violence's sake from the group. ETA labeled her a traitor, and in 1986 she was shot in front of her son while in the market square (Watts 2016). According to the interview, Yoyes's death had a sexist element. "There is a saying in Spanish 'I killed her because she's mine.' ETA thought they owned her life, so they killed her." (Watts 2016 [np]).

In 1985, ETA formed a women's group, *Egizan* ("Act Woman"). González-Pérez (2008) argues, "the traditional stereotype of women as non-terrorist enabled them to become more effective than their male counterparts.... As more women began participating on the same level as men...their male comrades began to change their own stereotypical views of women" [104]. Thus, participation created a way for greater emancipation but was also tactically beneficial to the group.

Jerald Post (2005) explains that the typical pathway to involvement in national-separatist terrorism is through the family. Terrorists "are carrying on the mission of their parents and grandparents... they are loyal to families that are disloyal to the regime" [619–620]. However, women's recruitment to ETA often occurred during their participation in Basque amnesty and prisoners' rights groups (discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7) and after initial exposure to the violence of Spanish security forces (MacDonald 1991). Women in amnesty groups witnessed violence against prisoners, and then responded with violent action.

With many women in support roles, the few ETA women engaging in violence gained notoriety. In 1994, France arrested María Idoia López Riaño, who had been linked by Spanish police to 23 killings. She is the most mythologized gunman for ETA and served a 30-year jail sentence. López Riaño was released in June of 2017. López Riaño's sexuality became a large part of

her myth. Stories suggest she would pick up young police officers in discotheques for one-night stands, only to kill other officers days later. The media portrayed her as having an extreme desire for violence, claiming that “during one attack in Madrid she was detailed to cover another commando member as he opened fire on a car full of army officers. She could not, however, resist spraying it with bullets first” (Tremlett 2009 [np]).

Women became operational leaders of ETA for the first time in the group’s history in 2000. From 2000 to 2004, María Soledad Iparraguirre Genetxea was a military leader of ETA, along with her partner Mikel Albizu (Cragin and Daly 2009). Iparraguirre began her career in ETA as a teenager, working to conceal explosives, gradually scaling the organization through participation in assassinations and attacks with assault weapons (Gonzalez-Perez 2008). In 2004, Iparraguirre and Albizu were arrested in France. The percentage of women arrested for their affiliation with ETA steadily increased during the 2000s. “In 2002, only 12% of ETA-affiliated prisoners were women. By 2009 that figure has risen close to a quarter. If the latest arrests are any indicator, the proportion among recruits is nearer a half” (Tremlett 2009 [np]). In the 2000s, ETA also placed women in high-ranking positions as leader of the strategic and logistical committee and as active service unit leaders (Gonzalez-Perez 2008).

In the mid-2000s, experts believe two women took over leadership of ETA, Iratxe Sorzabal and Izaskun Lesaka (Lesaka). Sorzabal travelled from the Basque region to Norway in 2012 after the ETA cease fire. In 2015, she was extradited to France where she was tried. Lesaka was arrested by French police in 2012. Like many other women in ETA, Sorzabal began as a spokeswoman for prisoners’ rights and later transitioned to violent activities. In addition to Sorzabal and Lesaka’s leadership, two women are wanted for leaving bombs in women’s lavatories in two restaurants at a shopping center in Majorca in 2009. The locations of the bombs made the involvement of women critical (Rosario 2009). In January 2011, ETA and the Spanish government entered into peace talks culminating with the declaration of a ceasefire by ETA on 20 October 2011. Though it is unclear what ETA’s next move will be, women certainly will be central to the organization’s structure.

### **Box 2.6: Right Wing Movements in the US and Gender**

Far right terrorism in the US finds its roots in many different ideologies, primarily fascism, anti-communism and anti-abortion orientations. In 2009, Johnson argued that right extremist movements were on the rise; this continues to be the case as of 2017 (Perliger n.d.). Core to the movement in the US are neo-Nazis or skinheads, yet the far right movement in the US is complex made up of several groups, with some groups not considered as terrorist, some

(continued)



**Box 2.6** (continued)

groups skirting terrorism and some groups squarely engaging in domestic terrorism. The alt-right movement “calls for limited immigration, mass deportations and a new state for whites only” (Hayden 2017 [np]).

While not exhaustive of right wing terror groups, most scholars include the KKK, Identity Evropa, The Traditional Worker’s Party, and the alt-right in discussions about right wing terrorism in the US. The KKK is considered a terrorist organization, and Identity Evropa, a new organization which is similar to the KKK, preaches a white supremacist ideology and primarily engages in propagandistic efforts (Ellis 2017). The degree to which they engage in terrorist activities, through incitement or action, is lesser known and disputed. The Traditional Worker’s Party is a far-right Christian group. While not always engaging in violence, they are known to have been involved in several stabbings at rallies (Ellis 2017). The Alternative-Right or alt-right, has not been classified as a terrorist group. Under the leadership of Richard Spencer, this group of people ranges from neo-Nazis willing to engage in and advocate violence and racially motivated extermination to run-of-the-mill white supremacists who espouse racism but are unwilling to engage in violent acts (most of these people are referred to as alt-light).

It is not surprising that many far-right extremist groups find common roots with the KKK. This is because right-wing terrorism and violence has a long history in the US and finds its roots in the racially motivated violence of the Reconstruction Era after the Civil War (Michael 2003). In contemporary times, racial violence is manifest in the KKK, in the other aforementioned groups, and in increasing incidences of antisemitism seen in 2017 (ADL 2017). While left wing terrorism (see The Weathermen discussed in this chapter) was more prominent in the US throughout the 1960s and 1970s, by the 1980s and 1990s right wing terrorism began to outpace leftist terrorism in the US (Michael 2003). In fact, the concomitant rise in right wing terrorism can be traced alongside the rise in Islamic terrorism throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Choueiri 2010). As of July 2016, the New America Foundation placed the number killed in terrorist attacks in the US (since 9/11) as follows: 94 killed in jihadist terrorist attacks, 50 killed in far-right attacks, and 5 killed in far-left attacks (Bergen et al. 2001). Most of the right-wing attacks have been perpetrated by “lone wolf” terrorists, namely those acting on their own, yet they are motivated by rhetoric coming out of the groups discussed above.

Right-wing terrorism is causally related to a few different factors in society. The first is racist and xenophobic attitudes associated with unemployment. Narratives form around “others” as “taking” jobs of “native” citizens (Falk 2016 [np]). Right-wing populism, related to issues of unemployment and using anti-immigrant, racist narratives is also associated with right-wing terrorism. This fits in with the consequences of humiliation discussed below. If white men feel humiliated due to lack of employment or perceived slights

from women or minorities, radicalization becomes easier. In short, ideas based on hegemonic masculinity of what it is to “be a man,” and falling short of those ideas, engender right-wing terrorist motivations (discussed in more depth below).

Women’s role in right-wing terrorism in the US is less researched and understood. Though a census of membership in terrorist organizations is difficult, it is believed that in the US, the highest proportion of women in terrorist groups are in right-wing organizations (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2012). For example, women have historically been a part of the KKK although their participation has shifted from that of a support role in a women’s-only KKK organization to full-fledged members in modern times. Women can also serve as leaders in the organization (Kerbawy 2007). Women have also been prominent in some anti-abortion groups. The alt-right includes in its ideology deep attachment to misogyny. Thus, it may seem difficult to recruit women. The women who do participate, often help to promote the cause of the group through blogging, yet themselves hold deeply misogynistic values and appreciate the alt-right’s focus on “protecting women”(Hayden 2017). According Janet Bloomfield, an alt-rightblogger, “women shouldn’t have the right to vote, and [she] has blamed young girls who dress and act suggestively for their own cases of sexual abuse (Hayden 2017 [np]).

Where we see gender most significantly manifested in right wing terrorism is less with women’s involvement and more with ideas of hegemonic masculinity wrapped up in the “lone wolf” attacks of the 2000s. Between the 9/11 attack and 2015, white, right-wing terrorists killed almost twice as many Americans in homegrown attacks than radical Islamists have (with the Orlando and San Bernardino shootings, jihadist terrorism surpassed right-wing in casualties, although with the Las Vegas attack of October 2017 still under investigation at the time of print, these statistics could change). All of these shootings have been carried out by white men, with the exception of two women who acted in concert with men (Bergen et al. 2001). This has led some to speak about issues of masculinity tied up in white supremacist and far right thought. According to Kimmel (as cited by Conroy 2017), humiliation underlies the experiences of many men who join far-right groups. He refers to this as “aggrieved entitlement”; if one feels entitled but has not gotten what he expected, the recipe for humiliation is present (Conroy 2017; Kimmel 2017, 2018). A way then to avenge the loss of masculinity and entitlement is to engage in violent acts; acting as part of the far-right community gives these men a sense of purpose. In this way, not much separates the far-right extremist from an Islamic extremist when it comes to humiliation. Osama bin Laden often talked about avenging the humiliation the West caused to Islam; reinstating the caliphate became a way to reinstate traditional masculinity. In much the same way, asserting white supremacy and patriarchy also becomes a way to reinstate traditional masculinity.

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**Box 2.6** (continued)

Another area where gender emerges regarding far right terrorism is in abortion clinic bombings and assassinations of doctors who provide abortion services. Since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal, there has been an organized campaign by anti-abortion extremists associated with the far right (National Abortion Federation 1977). Until 1993 this violence took the form of abortion clinic bombings. In 1993, the first abortion provider was murdered (National Abortion Federation 1977). Since 1993, there have been 11 murders and 26 attempted murders at clinics or of doctors, with 2015 being the deadliest year with three people killed 2015 marked a height of violence with multiple cases of arson against clinics (National Abortion Federation 1977). The Army of God, a Christian terrorist organization, is partially focused on abortion. Formed in 1982, the organization is responsible for much of the violence associated with far-right, anti-abortion terrorism. Most notably, they praise Scott Roeder, an Army of God terrorist, who murdered George Tiller, an abortion provider, in 2009 (Army of God n.d.).

## Women in Islamic Terrorist Cells

Historically, women have been less involved in Islamic terrorist organizations and networks, such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, than in other terrorist groups; however, Islam sets a precedent for women's involvement in jihad. *Jihad* is Arabic for what can be translated as "struggle," "effort," or "to strive," "to exert," and/or "to fight." The Quran calls for equality and equal jihad responsibility for men and women (Busool 1995). Though jihad can mean "holy war," having military connotations, it also references an individual's personal struggle – the internal, spiritual struggle toward self-improvement, moral cleansing, and intellectualism. The Prophet Muhammad thought of the armed-struggle version of holy war as "the little jihad" and the spiritual, individual version of holy war – the war within oneself – as "the great jihad" (Busool 1995). The internal struggle has been considered more relevant to women. Ways in which women can personally struggle for their faith, specifically regarding terrorism, include giving birth to martyrs and raising male children for "the little jihad."

Women participating in Islamic terrorism do so through supportive and violent actions. Women cook for fighters and take care of their children, and women fighters are referred to as mujahidaat. Despite early historical examples of women fighters in Islam, "classical Islamic sources are fairly negative about the role of women in jihad," asserting women should be dedicated to their husbands and private responsibilities (Cook 2005 [383]). Contemporary Islamic sources are vague about women's place in jihad. Whereas women are considered potential fighters, social regulations make them less fit for combat, for to go on a jihad mission a woman "would have to dress in an immodest fashion" (Cook 2005 [380]). During a mission,

a woman fighter would likely come in contact with men outside her family, which concerns some Islamic scholars.

Despite these perceived limitations on women, greater involvement of women in violence is evident in Palestine since the late 1980s and in Chechnya since the early 2000s. In the first intifada in Palestine (1987–1993), women played violent roles, but one did not complete a suicide mission until 2002. The first Palestine woman suicide bomber was Wafa Idris, and she was 28 years old when she completed her mission. In Chechnya, women also propagate suicide attacks, with the first woman bomber acting in 2000. (More on women as suicide bombers can be found in Chap. 3).

How have Islamic values evolved to allow for women's participation in the armed struggle of jihad? In Palestine, a change of heart in Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (1937–2004), an original leader of Hamas, marked a change in principles. Yassin originally believed that women should participate only in support roles, and he did not approve of the suicide mission of Wafa Idris in 2002. Later, he conceded that a woman could be a martyr if she completes her mission in 24 h and is escorted by a chaperone. Hamas did not sponsor a woman bomber until 2004, but other Palestinian groups had done so already. Women's violent actions in Al Qaeda grew through the 2000s as well. As discussed below, women participated in violent operations even though Al Qaeda's leadership originally denied that women were a part of the network. Women in the Islamic State have not yet participated in armed struggle to any great degree (Holt 2010).

Women in ISIS offer an example of women varying significantly from men in terrorist organizations, something less often seen in other groups. Given ISIS's ideological orientation toward an eighth century interpretation of Islam, women's place in the organization is different than what we see in other terrorist organizations. Women in ISIS are younger than women in other terrorist organizations, perhaps between the ages of 16 and 24 (Perešin and Cervone 2015), and they are believed to have less ideological motivations, for, as Nacos (2015) explains, "today's ISIS girls and women have often little or no knowledge of Islam and ISIS's use of the Quran as justification for their reign of terror" [np]. Many Western recruits to ISIS are educated, from non-radical families (Perešin and Cervone 2015), and are leaving the West to seek adventure, romance, and marriage with men dedicated to the Muslim Ummah, i.e., the Muslim worldwide community. Some also want to celebrate their religious identity apart from racist and gender discrimination experienced in the West (Perešin and Cervone 2015). Although some women have political motives and may long for and expect to be part of ISIS's armed action in places like Syria, they are being recruited to support men, be wives, and engage in domestic duties (Perešin and Cervone 2015). Preliminary evidence shows that some Western recruits desire to be reunited with their families in the West after finding out that they will lead a passive and domestic existence in ISIS territories (Perešin and Cervone 2015). ISIS uses non-Muslim women, such as Yazidi women, as sex slaves in the effort to purify their territories, a tactic also present in genocides as seen above. (More on women in ISIS can be found in Box 2.7 below).

**Box 2.7: Women in ISIS**

Tasheen Malik, one of the San Bernardino shooters, captured the attention of the American public in December 2015 when together with her husband she carried out an attack on an office building where her husband worked. Malik left behind an infant daughter, causing the media to question how a mother could do this to her child. In the days that followed the attack, one rarely heard the child's father questioned in this same way. Malik pledged allegiance to ISIS in several online postings and videos in advance of the attack.

ISIS, otherwise known as the Islamic State (IS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levante (ISIL), is a Salafi jihadist group that believes in Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam. Wahhabism asserts an austere form of Islam that insists on a literal interpretation of the Koran. ISIS began referring to itself as Islamic State in 2014 in order to reference its vision of a caliphate. The origins of ISIS, however, can be traced much earlier to 1999 under the name of *Jama'et al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*, an organization that pledged allegiance to Al Qaeda. It participated with Al-Qaeda in Iraq in the insurgency against the US and allied invasion of Iraq in the 2000s. It was during this time that the group began to refer to itself as the Islamic State of Iraq. After the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, it merged with other groups and began to refer to itself as ISIL. ISIS forces are numbered between 30,000 and 40,000 with about half to one-third being foreign fighters. Alongside its adherence to Wahhabism, ISIS espouses an extreme form of patriarchy and often invokes hegemonic masculinity. About one in five foreign members of ISIS are women (Hurlburt and O'Neil 2017); this interests the outside world due the patriarchal structure of the group. ISIS has a history of targeting women (read more about this in Chap. 4) as well as non-heteronormative individuals, and it declares homosexuality a "sin" punishable by death.

In addition to women, ISIS has a history of engaging children in its organization. Some, like the girls described above and elsewhere in this book, willingly join the organization. Others are kidnapped and brainwashed as foot soldiers for ISIS. Increasingly, children, especially mentally challenged children, are being used by ISIS as suicide bombers (Said-Moorhouse 2016). Since children are being recruited to ISIS, engaging mothers in counter-extremism tactics has been a growing counter-terrorism trend (as discussed in Chap. 10).

Women in ISIS fall into distinct categories – those who join willingly and those who are held as sex slaves. It is reported that there are close to 2000 women, mainly Yazidi who are held by ISIS as slaves (Chatterjee 2016). Escaped women tell harrowing stories of rape, forced impregnation and torture. This mass use of rape is used as a tool by ISIS to forge troop cohesion from recruits who come from different cultures and likely even speak different languages (Hurlburt and O'Neill 2017). According to Hurlburt and O'Neill (2017), "fighters develop a shared sense of dominance relative to another

group (minority women). They're told that through their acts, they're building the caliphate by fathering a new generation. For some, their first perceived victory is on the battlefield of women's bodies" [np]. Similarly, ISIS links gender identity, dominance and group belonging in order to victimize men and boys (Hurlburt and O'Neill 2017). Male-on male rape is used as blackmail if a fighter wants to desert as it is often videotaped (Ahram 2015).

Women also willingly join ISIS. Estimates are that between 20,000 and 32,000 women have joined the group (Zakaria 2015 [118]), with about 10% of these women coming from developed, Western countries (Chatterjee 2016). One of the more common reasons given for why women join is for respect and protection of other Muslim women and girls from non-Muslims. There is a sense that Western society does not respect Muslim women, and joining ISIS is a way for them to get the respect that they crave (Hurlburt and O'Neill 2017). What do these women do? Reports suggest "the inner workings of a women's network that's responsible for recruiting, spying, and enforcing sexual slavery in the so-called caliphate" (Youssef and Haris 2015 quoted in Chatterjee 2016 [209]). Women also provide support to ISIS via social media, helping to recruit women to the Islamic State as well as engage in propaganda. One woman, Abu Usama is known as the "poetess of ISIS." Previously involved in propaganda for Al Qaeda, she now publishes books of verses singing the praises of ISIS fighters (Creswell and Haykel 2015). One such verse states:

"Ask Mosul, city of Islam, about the lions – how their fierce struggle brought liberation. The land of glory has shed its humiliation and defeat and put on the raiment of splendor" (cited in Creswell and Haykel 2015 [np]).

Finally, women have served in administrative roles in ISIS. The Al Khanssaa Brigade is a type of morality police that monitors women's actions within the caliphate to make sure they are adhering to proper actions. The self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took a German girl of Iraqi decent and made her in charge of "women's issues" inside the caliphate, serving ISIS's mission through this administrative role.

Young women and girls are attracted to ISIS for reasons that others are attracted to terrorist organizations – ideological affinity, security, and family. One reason, however, stands out, particularly among those young women who have emigrated from the West to join ISIS. For some women, adherence to a strict religious code and wedding themselves to a man who upholds this code is a form of rebellion (Bennholdaug 2015). Quoting an expert on the subject, the Bennholdaug's *New York Times* piece reports, "For the girls, joining ISIS is a way to emancipate yourself from your parents and from the Western society that has let you down," Ms. Havlicek said. "For ISIS, it's great for troop morale because fighters want Western wives. And in the battle of ideas they can point to these girls and say, Look, they are choosing the caliphate over the

(continued)

**Box 2.7** (continued)

West.” (Bennholdaug 2015 [np]). Discussing these “jihadi brides,” Sjöberg (2017) discusses how the “whore” narrative often has been applied to explain why these women and girls join ISIS. In this narrative, women and girls do not join ISIS for ideological or religious reasons but because they are “blinded by love” and they are seeking a man who will fulfill their need for affection.

Although more women and girls have traveled from Europe to Syria to join ISIS than from the US, cases of women leaving from the United States can be found. Audrey Alexander (2016) divides American jihadi women, or those who support the Islamic State into three ideal types: plotters, who design or carry out domestic attacks, supporters, who garner material support within the US and help with propaganda and travelers, who emigrate in order to directly participate. In other words, American women in support of ISIS engage in similar activities to women supporters of terrorists elsewhere in the world. Most American women involved in ISIS act in pairs or groups, many with romantic partners, and they have come from fourteen states, with ages ranging from 15–44 years. Most are young, however, with the average age of women at 27 (Alexander 2016). While Malik mentioned above as well as two women from Queens, NY fall into the category of “plotters,” more women in the US fall into the category of supporters of Islamic terrorism. They provide supportive and recruiting statements online, raise money, and help with propaganda. Finally, as discussed above with the girls from the UK, American women have attempted to and traveled to Syria in order to support ISIS (Alexander 2016).

Women are less likely to be found in combat roles within ISIS, yet Yazidi women have been active in the fight against ISIS. One report states:

“On July 29 (2015), women of all ages made history by founding the autonomous Shengal Women’s Council, promising: “The organization of Yazidi women will be the revenge for all massacres.” They decided that families must not intervene when girls want to participate in any part of the struggle and committed to internally democratizing and transforming their own community. They do not want to simply ‘buy back’ the kid- napped women, but liberate them through active mobilization by establishing not only a physical, but also a philosophical self-defence against all forms of violence.” (Chatterjee 2016 [np]).

One of the more famous women in the Yazidi resistance against ISIS includes a popular singer, Xate Shingali, who formed a force called the Sun Brigade. Shingali is quoted as saying “they rape us, we kill them” (Holdaway 2015). Nadia Murad, a young Yazidi woman who escaped ISIS and is now fighting them, was named one of Time magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2016 for her work to bring attention to the abduction of Yazidi women and girls (see also Chap. 5’s brief discussion of Murad). Her Time tribute states “Nadia Murad stands in a long, invisible history of fierce, indomitable women who rise from the scorched earth of rape during war to break the odious silence and demand justice and freedom for their sisters” (Ensler 2016 [np]).



In addition, the LGBTQ community has organized against ISIS. A group of international volunteers are fighting with Kurdish fighters under the name of The Queer Insurrection and Liberation Army (Moore 2017). A statement by the group conveys that it seeks to “smash the gender binary and advance the women’s revolution as well as the broader gender and sexual revolution.” (qtd in Moore 2017 [np]). The group also operates under the slogan “Shoot back! These faggots kill fascists!” (qtd in Moore 2017 [np]).

### **Box 2.8: Women in Al Qaeda**

The origins of Al Qaeda lie in the Soviet war in Afghanistan (1979–1989). Male fighters from Muslim countries, called mujahedeen, gathered in Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Following the withdrawal of the USSR in 1989, Al Qaeda – a grouping of mujahedeen – turned its attention to eliminating secular, Arab governments, and then focused on combating the West, including the US, which was seen as supportive of secular Arab states. Al Qaeda’s central command is located in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and its network of affiliates include groups in the Maghreb, Iraq, Indonesia, Somalia, the Arabian Peninsula, and in Southeast Asia. Al Qaeda also maintains terrorist cells in other parts of the world, including Europe.

Al Qaeda’s social values regarding women are generally conservative, indicating that women should serve in the private, not public, sphere. However, gender values vary based on the location of the Al Qaeda affiliate, with some affiliate groups embedded in cultures where a strict physical separation and covering of women is preferred (e.g., Afghanistan under Taliban influence). In Iraq and the Maghreb, however, women are less restricted in Al Qaeda operations (see below).

Osama bin Laden, leader of Al Qaeda until his death in 2011, pronounced women’s responsibility to encourage men to fight. In 1996, he stated:

“Our women had set a tremendous example of generosity in the cause of Allah; they motivated and encouraged their sons, brothers and husbands to fight – in the cause of Allah – in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya and in other countries... May Allah strengthen the belief... of our women in the way of generosity and sacrifice for the supremacy of the word of Allah... our women instigate their brothers to fight in the cause of Allah.” (Bin Laden quoted in PBS 1996 [np]).

Beyond instigating their male relatives toward jihad, women support Al Qaeda in terms of domestic responsibilities and financial management. In the early 2000s, an Al Qaeda publication from Egypt “called for women to support the Mujahedeen in their missions, but only in terms of cooking for them, and providing material support” (Asharq Al-Awsat 2010 [np]). Assistance from women in the domestic sphere includes helping men and families hide

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**Box 2.8** (continued)

from authorities and live “underground” (BBC Monitoring Middle East 2010). Women are also fundraisers for Al Qaeda, with Haila Al-Qusayer, a Saudi, as a prime example. Al-Qusayer, married to an Al Qaeda leader and referred to as the “First Lady of Qaeda,” was famous for “her fundraising skills.” She collected “money from wealthy Saudis on the pretext of raising money for orphans and widows” (BBC Monitoring Middle East 2010 [np]), but was arrested in 2010. In addition to sheltering and financing, Saudi officials believe women are active in “spreading extremist ideology” (Asharq Al-Awsat 2010).

In recent years, Al Qaeda women have spread ideology via the internet, often appearing under false names” (Asharq Al-Awsat 2010 [np]). Bint Najd, a Saudi woman, had an incredible online presence. Najd “was the media chief of Al-Qaeda in the [Saudi] Kingdom. She operated more than 800 online clubs and blogs to promote the extremist ideology... She uploaded the extremist websites with audio and video recordings and official statements of Al-Qaeda” (BBC Monitoring Middle East 2010 [np]). Malika El Aroud, in Belgium, similarly encouraged men and women to be active in jihad. She describes her actions with the following statement: “It’s not my role to set off bombs – that’s ridiculous... I have a weapon. It’s to write. It’s to speak out. That’s my jihad. You can do many things with words. Writing is also a bomb.” (Sciolino and Mekhennet 2008 [np]).

Despite these examples, a puzzle exists about women’s participation in Al Qaeda, particularly in violent operations. Ayman Al Zawahri, the number one leader after the death of Bin Laden, has flatly denied that women participate in Al Qaeda. In a 2008 audio recording, responding to questions posted in an Al Qaeda online forum, Al Zawahri said the “terrorist group does not have women... A woman’s role... is limited to caring for the homes and children of Al Qaeda fighters” (The Star 2008 [np]). Nevertheless, statements by Al Zawahri’s own wife, Omaima Hassan, contrast his claims. In 2009, Hassan said that jihad is difficult for women because they need a male guardian in public, yet she mentioned that women could help “financially and morally, by leaking information to the mujahedeen, and even becoming a martyr” (Seib and Janbek 2011 [85]). In 2012, Hassan hinted at women’s active involvement in political change. Though she emphasized women’s responsibility to raise children for jihad, Hassan, as an Egyptian herself, congratulated women for taking part in the Arab Spring.

Al Qaeda’s practices appear to be shifting away from Al Zawahri’s perspective, given the actions of women suicide bombers in Iraq during the 2000s. The first woman suicide bomber for Al Qaeda in Iraq completed her mission in 2003, killing three coalition soldiers at a US checkpoint. In 2006, Muriel Degauque, a Belgian woman who converted to Islam, traveled to Iraq to be suicide bomber and “rammed an explosives-filled vehicle into an American

military patrol...wounding one American soldier” (Von Knop 2007 [403]). In the first half of 2008, women carried out 11 of 20 suicide bombings in Iraq (Rubin 2008). Al Qaeda in Iraq openly acknowledges its use of women in violent operations, and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb also sends women on bombing missions (Bloom 2011). In 2017, President Trump approved of a raid by Navy Seals on an Al Qaeda compound in Yemen. Gun battle ensued, and the Seals were met with fire from female combatants. Women also fight in Al-Shabab, an Al Qaeda affiliate in Somalia. Therefore, Al Qaeda women engage in a variety of actions related to terrorism, and therefore have agency, even if Al Qaeda’s central command denies or downplays women’s contributions.

## Media Reaction to Violent Women

Media responds to violence perpetrated by women with surprise, sympathy, and/or emphasis on motherhood, ruthlessness, sexuality, and/or appearance. Attacks by women draw greater media attention than attacks by men because they seem surprising due to a perception that women are not violent (Ali 2005). The **CNN effect/CNN factor** refers to a *media effect that amplifies the impact of a terrorist attack, occurring when attacks by female fighters are perceived of as “more deadly” or more newsworthy than those conducted by male fighters*. Media often replay coverage of attacks by women, thereby amplifying the impact.

Public response to terrorism by women may be more sympathetic, because women make terrorist acts look like they were carried out for love of a man or country (Nacos 2007). Media often assume that men have manipulated women terrorists and that women were forced to participate in violent actions, thus evoking sympathy. The media also portray women terrorists as mentally inept, coerced into action through a relationship with a man (especially regarding Islamic women), or as brainwashed victims (Talbot 2000/2001; Sternadori 2007). As such, O’Connor (2010) explains that operations carried out by women make the terrorist organization seem less “evil.”

Media often portray women acting violently as mothers, monsters, or whores (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Gentry and Sjoberg 2015). One popular media narrative is that of a failed mother and/or one who cannot bear children (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008). This type of reporting took place regarding Ulrike Meinhof, discussed above. Ulrike Meinhof, who had two young children, eventually left her children to their father because of her involvement with the group. The first woman suicide bomber from Palestine, Wafa Idris, also received coverage as a failed mother, considering that prior to her attack her marriage had failed due to fertility problems. According to Alison (2009), motherhood is invoked when discussing women terrorists because of the incongruence regarding an individual who can give life and also take it away. Thus, “it is assumed that women and mothers don’t hurt others, don’t loot or steal, and certainly do not kill.” (Brown 2012, [np]).

At times, women terrorists have been portrayed as *more* violent, ruthless and uncompromising than their men counterparts (Galvin 1983). Media coverage pointing to an “attack bitch” seeking revenge is not uncommon (Sternadori 2007). For example, Chechen women terrorists are described as bent on revenge, blood thirstily avenging the loss of a loved one. In Chap. 8, we will see this “attack bitch” metaphor also attached to women politicians when they behave assertively.

Media also reference violent women’s sexuality. Regarding suicide bombers, Sternadori explains that women may be seen as the “sexy babe” or as sexual objects for men as the media focus on the women’s attractiveness or paint them as sexually motivated (Sternadori 2007). Coverage often mentions “how they were dressed, as well as their body language or facial expressions” (Sternadori 2007, 17). Leila Khaled, the Palestinian terrorist introduced above, received such coverage. In the 1960s, she was described as a “girl terrorist” and a “deadly beauty” (Guardian Staff 2001). We’ll see in Chap. 8 that women politicians are described in much the same way as women terrorists. Thus, the divide between politician and terrorist is broken down when we view them both through the lens of gender.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on women engaged in violence as genocidaires, guerrillas, and terrorists as well as how ideas of gender and hegemonic masculinity intersect with political violence. While some scholars believe women’s motivations for violent action are different from those of men, most evidence suggests that women and men are similarly motivated to violent actions. In short, women are very much present in political contexts involving violence. Our gendered assumptions, however, as women as life givers, not life takers, causes this presence to be jarring and seen as unusual and in some cases exotic. Women in most cases herein did not express feminism as a cause for terrorist participation. That said, women involved in ISIS, like those involved with the FARC, often invoke explanations centered around respect and self-determination, ideals that suggest a latent interest in gender empowerment. Given their self-determination, we must recognize these women’s violent actions as a mode of political agency.

The media often react to violent women differently than they do to violent men – sometimes to the extent that women’s agency is ignored altogether in favor of seeing them as sexual objects or passive victims manipulated by men. Other times, the media emphasize the failed motherhood identity of women who act violent. Differences also exist in *how* women act violently, with women less likely than men to take leadership roles. However some recent examples show that women are rising to key leadership positions in terrorist organizations. In the next chapter, we explore the degree to which women are moving into suicide terrorism as well, a terrain that has been previously considered male.

Masculinity plays into violent extremism, with evidence that far-right extremists in the US as well as Islamic extremists are similarly motivated by a perceived

humiliation and need to regain a masculine power. Women too act violently because their voices are not heard in any other way. Consequently, we must problematize this agency for both women and men. Is it possible to address causes of humiliation such that we stave off violence as a way to regain masculinity? Is it possible for women to be agentic in ways other than terrorism, in a world where women's participation as terrorists, guerrillas, and genocidaires outpaces their participation in legislatures (see Chap. 8)?

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# Chapter 3

## Suicide Bombers



### Introduction

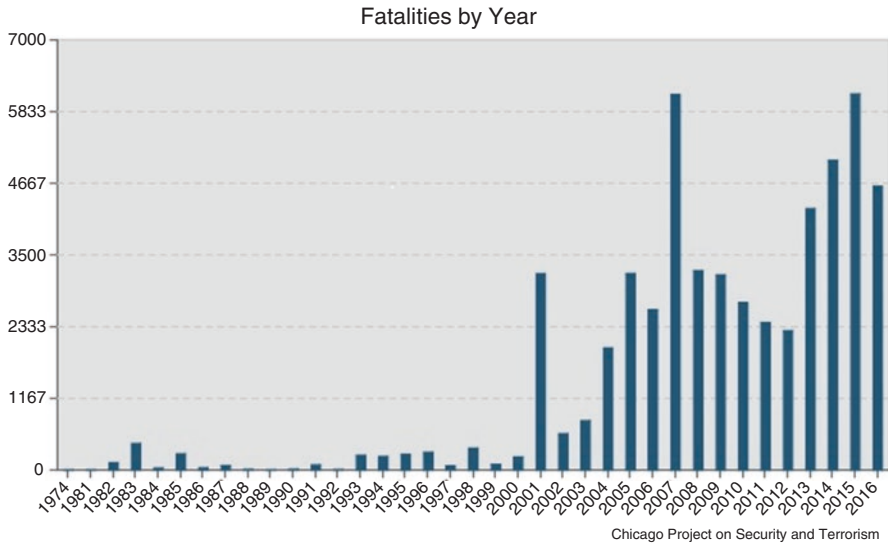
“I am proud to be the first female HAMAS martyr. I have two children and love them very much. But my love to see God was stronger than my love for my children, and I’m sure that God will take care of them if I become a martyr.” Hamas operative Reem Rayishi cited by Al-Muslimah, February 2004. (Ali 2005 [np])

“I shall not live one day, one hour in the bright season of our triumphs, but I believe that with my death I shall do all that it is my duty to do.” Ignaty Grinevitsky, March 1881. (Lewis 2013 [np])

Reem Rayishi, unlike other women bombers before her, came from a wealthy Palestinian family. The mother of two, associated with the Palestinian terror group Hamas, blew herself up at an Israeli checkpoint in 2004 killing herself and four Israelis. At the time of the attack, she had a 3-year-old son and 18-month-old daughter. Reaction to the attack was mixed and criticism was harsher than is typical after suicide attacks, particularly in the Arab world (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2004). Some argued that the use of a young mother as a bomber would hurt the Palestinian cause. Hamas defended the act, saying the attack illustrated the depths of despair felt by women in the occupied territories, and it argued the attack was a powerful recruiting tool for other women (McGreal 2004).

Ignaty Grinevitsky is believed to be the first suicide bomber. On March 13, 1881 the member of The People’s Will (a left-wing terrorist organization in Czarist Russia), rushed toward Czar Alexander II and dropped a bomb at his feet, killing them both. The attack was well orchestrated; Grinevitsky’s accomplice had thrown a bomb at the Czar’s bulletproof carriage, forcing the Czar out into the open for Grinevitsky to carry out his attack (Yarmolinsky 1986). Like Rayishi, Grinevitsky showed great commitment toward political change.

**Suicide bombing** is a violent, politically motivated attack carried out in a deliberate state of awareness by a person who uses their body as delivery vehicle for explo-



**Fig. 3.1** Fatalities from Suicide Terrorism by Year, 1974–2016 (Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism 2016)

*sives together with a chosen target.* It is considered a psychological tactic intended to affect a larger audience than just those killed in the attack (Atran 2003). Suicide terrorism, also called suicide bombing, suicide attacks, and martyrdom missions, is a subset of terrorism, and all suicide campaigns co-exist with regular insurgent tactics. While the Czar Alexander II is believed to be the first person killed by a suicide terrorist, suicide terrorism in modern history began in Lebanon in 1983 with dual Shiite militant (what was to become Hezbollah) attacks on US Marine barracks and French military personnel. Suicide attacks then spread to Israel and now are a regular part of terrorist organizations’ repertoires throughout the world (Hoffman 2003). Since the 1980s suicide attacks have occurred in over 40 countries, killing at least 50,000 people (see Fig. 3.1) (Overton and Dodd 2016 [np]). Over 110 groups have used the tactic, although some of these groups—like the different iterations of Al Qaeda—are related organizations working as chapters at different points in time or in different locations (see Table 3.1) (Chicago Project on Security and Threats 2016).

While many suicide attacks—particularly in the Middle East—are carried out by groups associated with radical Islam, secular groups also have adopted this tactic (Nacos 2016). Notable secular groups that have engaged in suicide terrorism include the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey and LTTE (discussed in Chap. 2 and in Box 3.2 below) in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon). In fact, while we often hear of attacks in the Middle East, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) held the record for the most attacks up until recently. These were undertaken primarily by the LTTE’s suicide corps, the Black Tigers, and exclusively targeted government officials and symbols of the county’s power structure or infrastructure (Nacos 2016).

The US is no stranger to suicide terrorism, particularly with 9/11. However, outside of the 9/11/2001 attack that killed 2977 people at the World Trade Centers,

**Table 3.1** Groups that have committed suicide attacks, 1974–2016

1920 Revolution Brigades	Islamic Resistance
Abdullah Azzam Brigades	Islamic State
Aden-Abyan Army	Islamic State - Hijaz Province
Ahrar ash-Sham	Islamic State of Ir
Ahrar ul-Hind	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
Aisha Umm-al Mouemeneen	Islamic Unity Brigades
Ajnad al-Sham	Jabhat an-Nuṣrah li-Ahl ash-Shām
Al Madina Regiment	Jaish al-Fatah
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade	Jaish Ansar al-Sunnah
Al-Haramayn Brigades	Jaish-e-Muhammad
Al-Jaysh al-Islami li Tahrir al Amaken al Muqaddasa	Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wa'al-Jihad
Al-Majlis al-Waṭanī as-Sūri	Jamaa Al-Islamiya Al-Alamiya
Al-Mourabitoun	Jamaat Ansarullah
Al-Qaeda Central	Jamaat-ul-Ahrar
Al-Qaeda in Iraq	Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula	Jemaah Islamiya
Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb	Jihad Islami
al-Qanoon	Jund al-Islam
Al-Shabaab	Jund al-Sham
Amal	Jundullah (Iran)
Amjad Farooqi Group	Jundullah (Pakistan)
Ansar al-Islam	Kamtapur Liberation Organization
Ansar al-Mujahedin	Karwan-e Naimatullah
Ansar al-Sharia	Khalid ibn al-Walid Army
Ansar al-Sunna	Kurdistan Freedom Falcons
Ansar Beit al-Maqdis	Kurdistan Freedom Falcons
Arab Egyptian League	Kurdistan Workers Party
Arab Resistance Movement - Al-Rashid Brigades	Lashkar-e Islam
Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party - Lebanon	Lashkar-e Jhangvi Al-almi
Armed Struggle Group	Lashkar-e Taiba
Army of Palestine	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
Assirat al-Moustaqim	Lebanese Communist Party
Babbar Khalsa International	Lebanese Islamic Jihad (Hezbollah)
Believing Youth Group	Lebanese National Resistance Front
Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
Boko Haram	Liwa Ahrar al-Sunna
Caucasus Emirate	Movement for the Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
Chechen Republic of Ichkeria	Mujahedi Masr
Chechen Separatists	Mujahideen Shura Council
East Turkistan Islamic Movement	Mujahideen Youth Movement

(continued)

**Table 3.1** (continued)

Egyptian Islamic Jihad	Mujahidin Indonesia Timur
Fatah al-Islam	Muslim Brotherhood
Free Sunni Brigade	Nusra and Jihad Group in Greater Syria
Free Syrian Army	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
Gakayev Group	Partisans of the Sunni
Gatia Pro-Government Militia	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Gazotan Murdash group	Popular Resistance Committees
Great Eastern Raiders Front	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front
HAMAS	Riyadus Salikhiin
Haqqani Network	Sergokala Bandit Group (Abdu-Salam)
Harakat ul-Mujahidin	Shumukh al-Islam
Hezbollah	Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries
Hizb-i-Islami	Soldiers of the Prophet's Companions Group
Hizbal Islam in Somalia	Suqour al-Sham
Hizbul Mujahedin	Syrian Social Nationalist Party
Iraqi Government	Syrian Tawhid and Jihad
Islambouli Brigades of Al Qaeda	Tajamo Ansar al Islam
Islamic Amal	Taliban (IEA)
Islamic Army in Iraq	Taliban (Pakistan)
Islamic Front (Syria)	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
Islamic Jihadist Union	Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	Turkistan Islamic Party
Islamic Pride Brigades in the Land of the Nile	Vanguard of Arab Christians
	Yekineyen Parastina Gel

Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism (2016)

Pentagon, and Pennsylvania, the US only has experienced two other suicide attacks (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3). The first entailed an airplane diving into an IRS facility in 2010 that killed one person and the assailant. The second was a bombing outside an abortion clinic in 2016 that killed the bomber yet had no additional victims (Chicago Project on Security and Threats 2016).

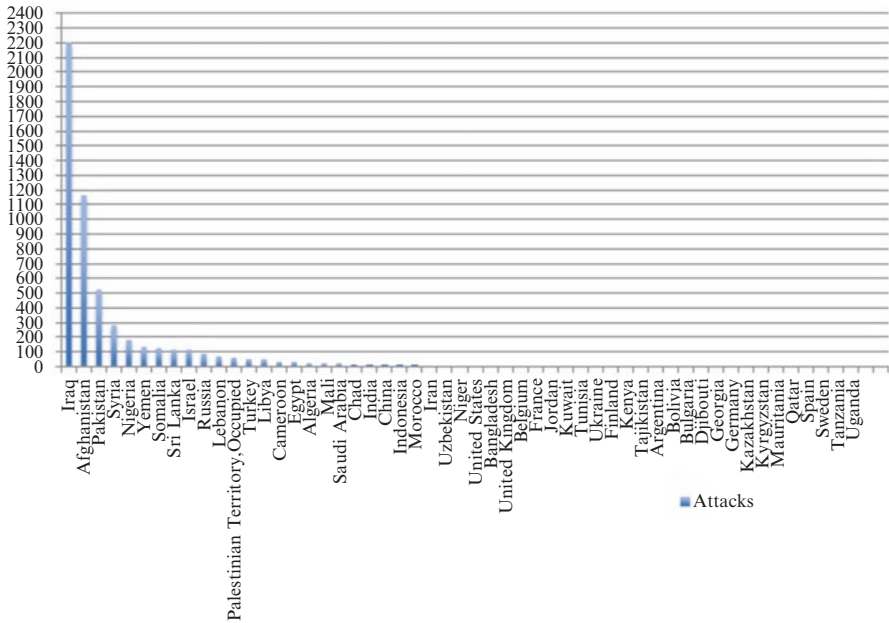
While enduring hundreds of ETA attacks, the Basque country has not seen suicide bombings. Spain itself only has faced one suicide attack in which a suspect in the March 2004 Madrid train bombings detonated an explosive belt while on the run. Although the Madrid 3/11 train bombings, themselves, in 2004 killed 192 people, the attack was not a suicide one. The 2017 Barcelona vehicular attack similarly was not a suicide attack. In an attack said to be inspired by ISIS, 13 people were killed and over 130 injured when a car was driven into the Las Ramblas area of Barcelona. However, the terrorist cell that launched the Barcelona attacks had developed a suicide vest prototype, presumably to be reproduced and used in future attacks. Given the relative lack of suicide bombing in the US and the Basque Country, this chapter more broadly focuses on suicide terrorism and draws more from comparative cases.

Countries experiencing suicide terrorism span the globe; however, attack totals in Iraq and Afghanistan account for a greater number of attacks than in all other



**Figs. 3.2 and 3.3** Images of the World Trade Center and Pentagon after the September 11, 2001 attacks (Photos Courtesy of the National Park Service (posted by Wood [2017](#)) and US Government, respectively)

### Countries Experiencing Suicide Attacks



**Fig. 3.4** Suicide terrorist attacks by location (Men and Women Terrorists, Minimum of One Attack) (Chicago Project for Security and Terrorism 2016)

countries combined (see Fig. 3.4). Comparatively speaking Western countries experience a great deal less suicide terrorism than countries in other regions. The Middle East and Africa have the highest rates of suicide terrorism, with high rates also seen in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Russia.

### Suicide Bombing and Women

This section focuses specifically on women and suicide terrorism, which comparatively speaking is a relatively new phenomenon; whereas later parts of this chapter address the way in which masculinity influences suicide terrorism. Sana’a Mehaydali, a Lebanese and PPS (secular pro-Syrian Lebanese organization) operative, was the first modern woman suicide bomber. In 1985, at 17 years old, she blew herself up near vehicles carrying Israeli soldiers in Lebanon (Bloom 2005). Since Mehaydali’s attack, women have carried out 221 attacks, killing 2286 people and wounding 5184 more. Attacks by women account for about 8.5% of all attacks since the late 1980s (see Fig. 3.5). Data also show that women have participated as suicide terrorists in 27 groups, but, in the majority of suicide attacks carried out by women, the group is unknown. According to Davis (2013), “on average, terrorist groups that use suicide terrorism as a tactic wait 13.5 years before employing women” ([284]) (Fig. 3.6).



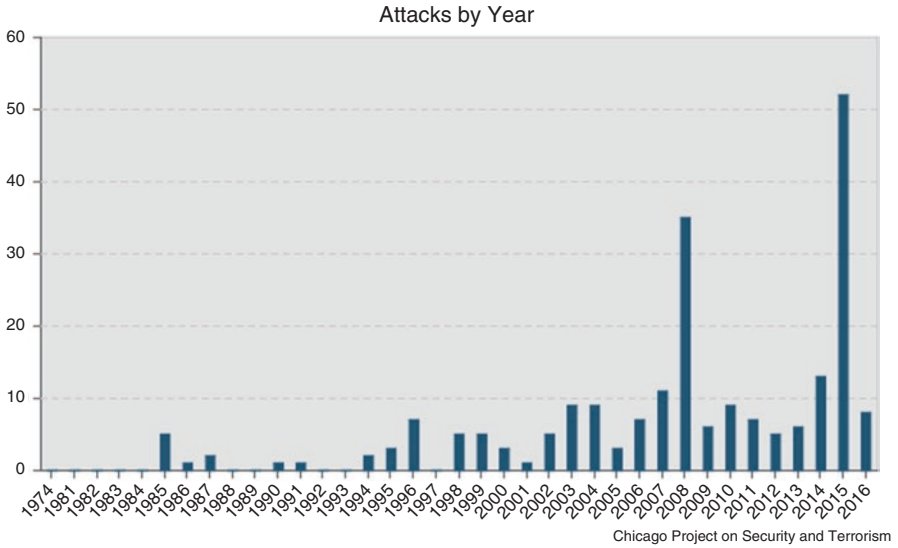


Fig. 3.5 Suicide attacks carried out by women, 1985–2016 (Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism 2016)



Fig. 3.6 Poster of Woman Jihadist Suicide Bomber of a Shopping Mall, 2003. From the Israeli Defense Force (Courtesy of Origins, The Ohio State University and Miami University. The attack killed three Israelis, with multiple injured)

## Why Do Groups Move to Suicide Terrorism?

Terrorist organizations use suicide bombings when other terrorist or military tactics fail and/or when they are in competition with other groups for popular or financial support (Bloom 2007; Ali 2005). In short, “the strategy of suicide terrorists is to make people paranoid and xenophobic, fearful of venturing beyond their homes even to a convenience store. Terrorists hope to compel the enemy society’s acquiescence, if not outright surrender to their demands” (Hoffman 2003 [np]). Thus, the purpose of suicide terrorism as a tactic is to create a sense of broad fear in the larger population (Hassan 2008). Terrorist groups do this in part by greatly limiting the areas and places in which a person feels they can safely linger or move (Hoffman 2003). According to Robert Pape, suicide terrorism is also designed to coerce modern liberal democracies, like the US, France, and Israel, to remove their troops from territories that the terrorists want to control (for example, Lebanon, Gaza and West Bank, and Saudi Arabia) (Pape 2003, 2005) (See also Hassan 2008).

Suicide terrorism is usually chosen as a tactic in the second stage of conflicts, after other strategies have failed for an insurgent group struggling against an established and more powerful state and/or when a stalemate between the group and state exists (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortobals 2012). When groups are engaged in competition with each other, as with the different groups in Palestine, they also use suicide bombings as a sort of “one upmanship” with other groups. Most importantly, however, is that suicide bombing is efficient, cheap, and effective (Hoffman 2003). Suicide attacks kill on average four times as many people as a regular attack. They can be undertaken for as little as \$150, and an escape route— sometimes the most difficult detail of organizing a terrorist attack — is not needed (Hoffman 2003). Moreover, the assailant, because he or she is dead, cannot be taken into custody, interrogated, and forced to leak information about the group.

When we consider that money is the most important fuel of terrorism, suicide terrorism becomes a ‘good’ option for many groups (Nacos 2016). For example, the 9/11 plot was carried out for less than \$400,000. Devastating explosive belts of the kind commonly used by bombers in Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan can be put together for less than \$100 (Nacos 2016). Thus, while suicide terrorism has psychological advantages for terrorist organizations, it has financial advantages as well. Not only are suicide bombings cheap, but they are effective in killing many people. According to Webber et al., suicide attacks make up “only 4% of all terrorist attacks, yet fully 32% of terrorism-related deaths” (2015 [852]).

Suicide bombings procure domestic and international audiences. Domestically, the bomber’s aim is to physically destroy a target, but the attack also constitutes a psychological weapon. The targets are not only those killed, but also those made to witness the killing; these are referred to as indirect victims. Suicide terrorists want to portray themselves as fanatical and irrational because their victimized audience will then feel like nothing can be done to stop terrorism. Since the image of a woman bomber so greatly clashes with the image of a peaceful life-giving woman,



the psychological impact of a woman bomber is greater than that of a man bomber (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012). Suicide bombing is also a recruiting tool. It shows complete devotion to a cause and as such is thought by groups (as seen in Hamas's reaction to using Rayishi above) to bring in additional recruits (Hassan 2008). The logic is that if a *woman* is willing to engage in an attack then it must be just. The use of women can also be used to shame men into joining with the logic that they are somehow cowards or "lesser men" if they don't participate. In this way, we see expectations about gender – womanhood and hegemonic masculinity – tied up in the recruitment and execution of suicide attacks.

Internationally, the suicide bomber's aim is to attract donors and supporters for the group (Bloom 2005; Hassan 2008). Funding for attacks comes from several sources. For example, ISIS engages in extortion, kidnapping, black-market food sales, and black-market oil sales to finance its state-building and war operations inside of Syria. For operations in other countries, however, ISIS relies upon "donations" from supporters outside the region as well as drug trafficking, loans, and social welfare payments (Levitt 2015). In terms of transnational terrorism, the international audience also can become direct targets and/or psychologically victimized indirect targets (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012).

## Why Did ETA Never Turn to Suicide Terrorism?

A group's use of suicide terrorism only proliferates when a population supports its goals and is receptive to terrorists targeting civilians. For example, when ETA bombed a Barcelona market in 1987, killing 21 shoppers, its popularity decreased due to the lack of Basque support for indiscriminate civilian casualties. Even though this attack was outside the Basque country (and not a suicide attack), the larger Basque population, while tolerant of killings of politicians and those associated with Spain's infrastructure (like telecom workers), strongly disagreed with the attack's outcome. One might presume therefore that the Basque population also would have disagreed with the use of suicide terrorism. Why does the general population either support or reject the use of suicide bombing? In countries where the state forcefully responds to terrorism – like in Chechnya or Palestine – greater public support of suicide terrorism exists because the public is more desperate and feels recourse options are limited (Wyne 2005). The state's heavy-handedness also serves to radicalize more terrorists.

The PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party), seeking an independent Kurdistan from Turkey, is illustrative. In the 1970s, the Turkish government harshly treated the PKK and the surrounding Kurdish population, raiding villages and jailing suspected sympathizers. During this time, public support for suicide terror existed. However, as Turkey tried to garner the European Union's favor, the government began to loosen restrictions on the Kurdish population and negotiated with the PKK. As a result, the PKK lost public support for the use of suicide terrorism and discontinued its use (Wyne 2005).

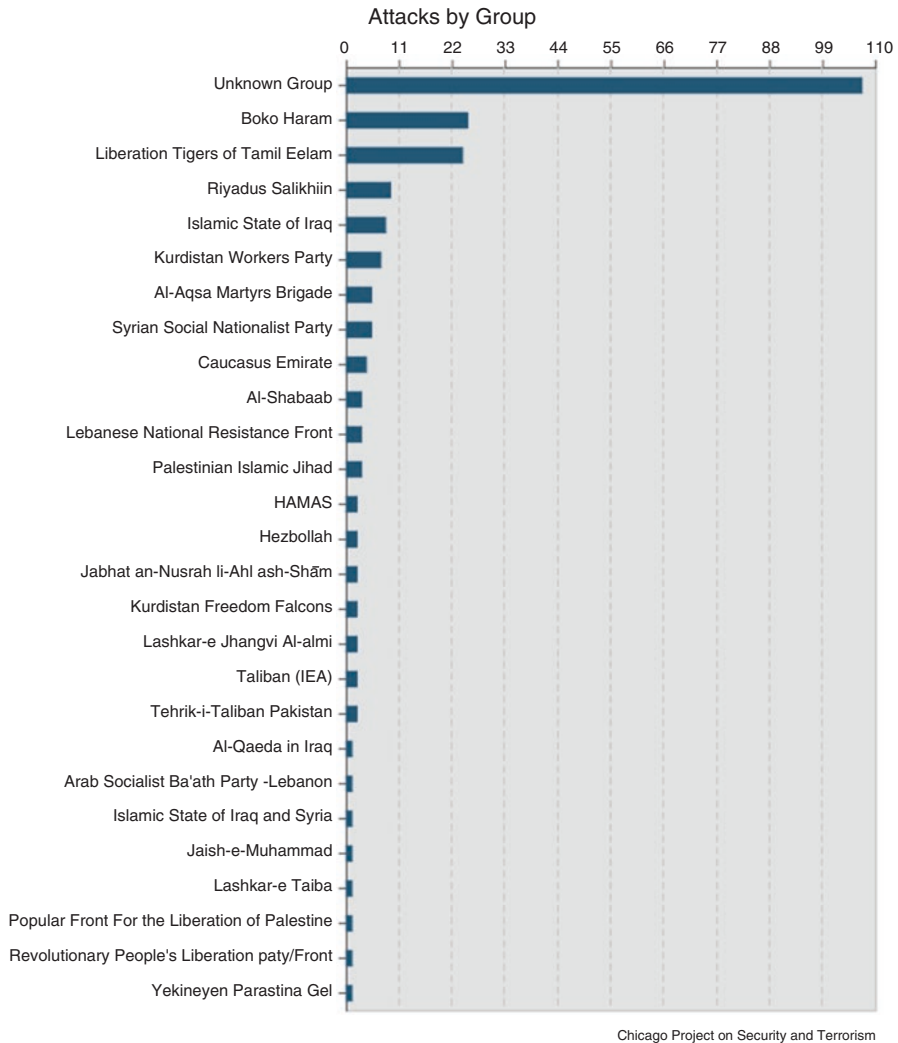
A charismatic leader coupled with the nationalist aspirations of the group also helps to explain why some groups choose suicide bombing and some do not (Nacos 2016). For suicide bombing to work, not only does the public have to be responsive, but there have to be recruits willing to die for the cause. “[F]anatical devotion to a religion and/or charismatic leader of godlike stature” is antecedent to a group’s move to suicide terrorism (Nacos 2016 [188]). Thus, while ETA had nationalist aspirations, it lacked public support as well as a god-like charismatic leader. As a result, suicide terrorism was not a justifiable or suitable tactic for the group. In short, without a charismatic leader *and* nationalist aspirations *and* popular support, suicide campaigns among terrorist organizations either do not exist or are short-lived.

## Why Do Groups Use Women Suicide Bombers?

As explained above, terrorist groups find suicide attacks advantageous because they are low cost, capable of signaling the groups’ complete dedication to a cause, and a way to legitimize the group. The negative costs of attack (deaths of civilians) are mitigated by the perceived brutality of the state that so horrendously treats its victims that the terrorist group has no other way to channel grievances than through this ultimate sacrifice. Using women as bombers helps to emphasize these factors. While not every terrorist group uses women suicide attackers, many consider the use of women advantageous to their goals (see Fig. 3.7).

Women as bombers help to achieve these goals because women are not thought to be violent and thus provide a sense of “tactical surprise” (Davis 2013 [282]). It also may be the case that women are more lethal due to their ability to surprise (Davis 2013; Laster and Erez 2015), for empirical evidence, demonstrates that “women terrorist actions were found to be significantly more successful than those by their male counterparts, measured by strike rate and number of victims killed and injured” (Laster and Erez 2015 [88]; See O’Rourke 2009). As mentioned above, ideas of masculinity play into the use of women bombers as groups may also use women for suicide missions to shame men into greater participation. If it appears the group *needs* women for missions, men may be compelled to come forward as active fighters. Finally, organizations may see women as “throw away artillery... because of their lesser military value” (Sixta 2008 [268]).

Interestingly, in traditionally male-dominated societies, women terrorists – in particular suicide terrorists – have been celebrated for furthering gender equality (Nacos 2016). Yassir Arafat is famously quoted as saying, “Women and men are equal. You are my army of roses that will crush Israeli tanks” (qtd in Nacos 2016 [164]). Not long after this speech, the first female suicide bomber attacked in Israel. Media declared that by doing so women had “shattered the glass ceiling” and “elevated the value of Arab women and, in one moment, and with enviable courage, put an end to the unending debate about equality between men and women” (qtd in Nacos 2016 [164]). That said, other research suggests that women, particularly in Palestine, who had attempted or succeeded in suicide terrorism, had universally been recruited by a male relative or esteemed friend and were often motivated by personal problems, such as relationships with men outside of marriage (Victor 2003).



**Fig. 3.7** Groups engaging women in suicide attacks (Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism 2016)

### Why Do Individuals Engage in Suicide Terrorism?

Social psychology is the scientific study of the way in which people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by other people (Aronson et al. 1999), and it can offer insight into the reasoning behind suicide terrorism. As mentioned above, groups cannot move into suicide terrorism as a tactic if they do not have both public support and willing recruits. What leads to the willingness of individuals to kill themselves and others in furtherance of their cause?

Some have argued that suicide terrorism occurs because bombers are mental, unstable, or suicidal (see for example Sheehan 2014). We reject this reasoning outright.

There is no evidence to suggest that suicide bombers are in fact suicidal in the psychological sense of the term. There frankly is not enough data to make this claim, and the data that is available does not warrant this conclusion (Ibáñez 2014). There is also no evidence to suggest that all suicidal individuals in terrorist organizations carry out suicide attacks. Suicide terrorism is also unlikely to emerge as an inevitable consequence of some root cause, such as poverty or political oppression (Krueger and Maleckova 2002), and, as discussed above, it is only found in groups in which individuals have a zealous attachment to a charismatic leader and nationalistic aspirations. Thus, suicide terrorism is in fact a tool: “a means to an end and a tactic of warfare that anyone could use” (Ibáñez 2014 [np]), and politics and institutions shape whether or not this tool is employed. Studies that suggest suicide terrorism exists because of poverty, oppression or the suicidal tendencies of recruits, are missing a serious understanding that *politics* shapes whether or not these variables manifest in suicide terrorism. That is, the way in which governments respond to these factors determines whether or not suicide terrorism will be an effective tool.

If we see suicide terrorism as a tactic or tool, then we can better understand why it is a rational act – both on the part of the group and the part of the bomber (see Coleman 1990; Rosenberg 1995 for discussions on rationality). According to Ibáñez (2014) a couple factors uphold this claim. First, most suicide attacks are not isolated incidents but are grouped as part of a larger campaign, as mentioned above (Ibáñez 2014). Second, groups and leaders who promote suicide attacks select this method out of a range of possible methods in order to achieve certain strategic goals, i.e. they are instrumental (Ibáñez 2014; Pape 2005). On the part of the bomber, a religious-like or zealot-like adherence to the goals of the terrorist organizations make choosing suicide terrorism a ‘rational’ means by which they can achieve their goals.

This is not to say that suicide bombing is completely rational in the sense that it is devoid of emotion. Emotional reaction does come into play, especially when we consider the motivations of the individual bomber (Bloom 2005; Ricolfi 2005). The motivations of humiliation that further radicalizes Islamic and far-right extremist terrorists (discussed in Chap. 2) also apply to the motivation and radicalization of suicide terrorists. Thus, given the bombers’ unique individual characteristics (see Chap. 2 for general discussion of motivations), suicide terrorism can serve as a way for the bomber to attain redemption or to prove ultimate adherence to a cause. In this way, suicide terrorism is an agentic act (except in the case of children or mentally disabled being used as suicide terrorists).

Considering suicide bombing as instrumental, i.e. tactical, requires an evaluation of suicide bombers’ presumed profile. Conventional wisdom states that suicide bombers are poor, with little opportunity, possessing of personality disorders, and/or motivated by financial incentives. Most bombers, however, are not undereducated religious zealots. In fact, some suicide bombers, like those in the LTTE in Sri Lanka and PKK in Turkey, engage in suicide terrorism for secular reasons. Most suicide bombers worldwide come from middle and upper-class backgrounds and are more educated than not (Hassan 2008). According to Hassan, for suicide bombers, “the average age is around 25, the gender is predominantly male and most are single and childless” (2017 [277]). Many bombers have suffered humiliation at the hands of their enemies and lack political outlets to express rage and frustration

(Victoroff 2005). Moreover, individuals who have been raised in war torn situations oftentimes become less sensitive to violence and feel despondent about their own lives, thus pushing them toward radicalization and terrorism when other forms of political expression are lacking (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012).

While suicide bombing is instrumental, idiosyncratic reasons for violent participation also exist (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012). One Palestinian man, interviewed by Berko and Erez, decided to become a suicide bomber for the money. “In responding to why he needed the 100 shekels he received for agreeing to be a suicide bomber, the interviewee stated that if he were to feel hunger on his way to the suicide mission, he could go to a restaurant and eat. He also said that he used the money to buy a cooking pot for his mother” (2005 [613]). A woman interviewee, who had been living in a refugee camp, had a similarly idiosyncratic explanation. She “relayed how she and her girlfriend...were preparing homework assignments at her home. They...felt that ‘there was nothing to do’ and looked for some excitement...they ‘wanted to do something’ and decided that they would volunteer to be terrorists” (Berko and Erez 2005 [611]).

## What Motivates Women Suicide Bombers?

Although media make it seem that women who take suicide missions are exploited by men or otherwise deceived into the deed (Laster and Erez 2015), most sources find that women suicide bombers are motivated by many of the same factors as men. Interviews with failed suicide bombers in Palestine reveal that women and men alike participate in violence “for revenge of the Jews” (Berko and Erez 2005 [611]). Women, like men, also engage in terrorism because of group dynamics and social ties, some of which are to male relatives. Men, as well as women, believe they will experience self-empowerment, redemption, and honor by way of suicide missions (Hassan 2008). Lindsay O’Rourke examined all known suicide terrorist attacks between 1981 and July 2008, and found that women’s motivations may be partly individualistic but are geared toward group solidarity, and are not significantly different than those of men (2009).

As discussed in Chap. 2, some works stress women’s gender-specific reasons for committing terrorism. This line of argument suggests that male relatives manipulate women into terrorism or that women are seeking a feminist equality to men in death as a terrorist martyr (Nacos 2016; Victor 2003). Bloom (discussed in Chap. 2) most prominently argues for women’s gendered motivations to terrorism. She puts forth 4 Rs as motivations, which she believes are key to women’s actions even if they sometimes also apply to men: revenge for the death of a loved one, a relationship with a male terrorist, respect for women who can act like a male terrorist, and rape, resulting in decreased social position and the need for redemption through suicide. The latter is one reason, among political ones, for women’s participation in the Tamil Tigers. Some Tamil women joined the terrorist group out of anger after experiencing rape by men in the Indian army, whereas other women joined the group to arm themselves and protect against the possibility of rape (Alison 2011).

The actions of women in the Palestinian struggle have been linked to failed motherhood, with the claim that women choose martyrdom when they cannot have children and raise families (see Gentry 2009) as well as to suicide terrorism as a means of redemption. According to Nacos (2016 [164]):

“These women’s social environment made them vulnerable to male manipulation and exploitation...It seems that whereas men justified the rationale for ‘martyrdom’ in political terms, women were told by their male handlers that their own or a male family member’s transgression could only be redeemed by killing themselves to kill Israelis and enjoy happiness in paradise.”

It also may be the case that women terrorists achieve feminist goals during terrorist campaigns even if feminism was not an original motivation of the women. For example, in the course of their activism, women in the Tamil Tigers became aware of social inequalities for women, which led them to stronger stances on women’s liberation (Alison 2011; Holt 2010). Despite the empowerment women might expect to gain from a suicide mission, it is likely that they will be especially shamed if their mission fails for some reason. Just the fact of attempting the mission might signal that a woman attacker has acted outside societal expectations. Furthermore, a man who goes to jail for an attempted attack may be applauded, but a woman in jail is an embarrassment to her family (Laster and Erez 2015).

### **Box 3.1: The Black Widows of Chechnya**

The Chechen Republic is a federal state located in the southeastern part of Russia, distinct in language, religion, and ethnicity from Russia. In 1990, Chechnya declared itself an independent republic, attempting to secede from the USSR (Tishkov 2004). The Soviets opposed this move, as has Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Since the early 1990s, the region has been embroiled in nearly constant conflict, leading to economic hardship and the emigration of many Chechens from the region (Tishkov 2004).

The first Chechen War took place between 1994 and 1996, during which Chechen guerillas fought against Russian forces trying to regain control of the region. After Chechen terrorists stormed and held a hospital in the Russian city of Budyonnovsk, the conflict ended in a ceasefire and peace agreement (Tishkov 2004). However, violence continued mainly in the form of targeted car bombings and kidnappings. Full-fledged fighting resumed in 1999 under the Second Chechen War (Tishkov 2004). After 1999, Chechen terrorist groups escalated violence and conducted most of their well-known operations.

Since 2000, “Chechen militant involvement has been identified in approximately thirty terrorist acts in the Russian Federation, leading Vladimir Putin to refer to the Republic as the ‘epicenter of the global war on terror’” (Banner 2009 [80]). More importantly, “these attacks...garnered worldwide attention because more than 40 percent of suicide attacks featured groups of women as perpetrators” (Banner 2009 [80]), with the women involved in attacks wearing black robes and full-face veils. These women were dubbed

“Black Widows” because of their dress and because they were related to men killed by Russian forces (Banner 2009 [81]). Western media portrayed Chechen women “as a ‘striking cult of vengeance’ that set a new standard for would-be ‘heroines of jihad’” (Banner 2009 [81]). Two of their more notorious attacks include the Dubrovka Theater and the Beslan School.

On October 22, 2002, women veiled in black and donning suicide belts entered the Dubrovka Theater demanding an end to Russian occupation of Chechnya. Threatening to kill all the hostages in 1 week, rebels used video messages to denounce the Russian occupation and to negotiate the release of hostages. Despite initial fears on the part of Russian intelligence, only two of the hostages were killed before Special Forces stormed the theater on October 26; however, Special Forces used an opium-based gas in the theater and 113 of the hostages were killed by the gas – not by actions taken by the rebels. The dead bodies of the Chechen rebels “were shown on worldwide television. Still photos of the women with bombs still attached to their inert torsos were the most dramatic, their heads leaning back or hanging down, loose-jawed, faces framed by black veils” (Nivat 2005 [414]).

The Black Widows returned in 2004 with what was dubbed the Beslan school siege. On September 1, 2004, thirty militants invaded Middle School No. 1 in Beslan Ossetia, taking students and teachers hostage in the gymnasium. The women militants wore suicide belts and carried rifles, prompting shock that *women* would endanger the lives of children. With about one thousand hostages, the rebels again demanded Russian forces be removed from Chechnya, as well as the release of 24 militants who had been taken into Russian custody in 2004. After three days, two explosions went off. A bloody battle commenced, and by the end of the siege, more than 335 hostages died with over 700 injured (Guardian Staff 2004).

According to their families and friends, the Black Widows only are able to defend themselves and their culture by using their bodies as bombs (Banner 2009 [6]). They were in despair. A friend of one of the Dubrovka Theater bombers, stated:

Our only desire is to be able to live in peace, to wear a scarf if we want, to study whatever we want, including the Koran, and to perpetuate our families. But here, it is impossible... we take things into our own hands... we are not afraid anymore. We’ve already died. (Nivat 2005 [417]).

Despair alone did not motivate the Black Widows, for their experiences and culture also determine their decisions. By living in a patriarchal society wherein they are valued less than men and their bodily integrity is at risk, especially with the loss of male relative who is a “protector,” they chose suicide as a mode of agency (Banner 2009). Under the Russian government’s repression, they saw their only method of protest to be suicide bombings (Banner 2009). By shattering social norms, these women garnered more media attention than a man in the same instance.



**Box 3.2: LTTE and Women Suicide Attackers**

The Tamil Tigers, discussed in Chap. 2, were pioneers in the use of female suicide terrorists, explosive belts, and the indiscriminate killing of civilians, tactics that were successfully implemented in the assassination of two heads of state: India's Rajiv Gandhi (1991) and Sri Lanka's president Ranasinghe Premadasa (1993). Such extreme methods were the expression of an equally extremist ideology that looked no further than the establishment of an "ethnically pure" Tamil state and attributed existentialist meaning to the bitter struggle itself. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE, exercised absolute power in the organization and promoted a cult of personality and fanatical obedience to his nihilistic vision. Dissenters were ruthlessly eliminated, and supporters worshipped him with godlike adherence. Militants, both men and women, were expected to commit suicide in order to avoid capture and were issued with cyanide capsules or instructed to blow themselves up with grenades. While it may be argued that individuals could find personal emancipation through their experience as fighters, female fighters as a whole were denied agency and exploited as cannon fodder. The LTTE leadership was composed entirely of men and, as a rule, women were excluded from decision-making. Women did head the "Birds of Freedom" but their position was largely nominal and devoid of substantial authority. On the other hand, female suicide bombers provided a very effective tactical weapon as they could count on the element of surprise, like in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. Furthermore, many families preferred to send girls rather than boys to imposed conscription, highlighting how females were considered inferior and expendable. Finally, the recruitment of women gathered pace as casualties increasingly took their toll on male fighters. Female fighters were also expected to incarnate traditional feminine virtues of modesty and chastity, as "mothers" ready to give their life for the "birth" of the nation. Off duty, women militants were not allowed to interact with men, they could not drink or smoke, and extra-marital sex was prohibited. Thus, women were constantly and everywhere subjected to male control while at the same time making up an important part of the Sri Lankan fighting force and suicide brigade.

**Conclusion**

As with terrorism in general, gendered expectations related to feminine constructions of women as peaceful life-givers, not life-takers, extend to women as suicide bombers. Chapter 10 furthers this discussion of how feminine gendered constructions prop up counter-terrorism efforts, and Chap. 9 examines how feminine constructions can influence public opinion related to counter-terrorism policies. Women are very much present in suicide terrorism, and we ignore this at our own peril. Ideas of hegemonic masculinity are tied up in suicide terrorism as well. Gendered expectations cause



the public and officials to underestimate the ability of women to carry out suicide attacks, and expectations of what it means to “be a woman” may prompt “lesser women” who do not meet expectations to redeem themselves through such attacks. Expectations of what it means to “be a man” shame some men into attacks when they see women taking on missions that they believe should be conducted by men.

While the general public often thinks of suicide terrorists as poor, uneducated, and Muslim, historically this is not the case. Both religious and secular groups have used suicide terrorism as a tactic in second stages of conflict. This tactic is chosen by both the group and the assailant because it is the one most likely to achieve goals; i.e. inflicting the most carnage for the least amount of money, psychologically terrorizing, or, in the case of the assailant, proving complete devotion to a cause. Suicide terrorism generally kills indiscriminately; however, we discuss in Chap. 5 how suicide terrorism can specifically target women and girls as victims. Such attacks play into gender assumptions held by terrorist organizations and assailants.

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# Chapter 4

## Women as Victims of Political Violence, Genocide and Gendercide



### Introduction

The media often portray women as caught up in a situation of terrorism – not as protagonists but as bystanders or victims. Osama bin Laden’s wives, discussed in Chap. 1, are often discussed collectively, along with their children, as beings influenced by terrorism but not precisely related to it. In 2012, Pakistan placed three of bin Laden’s wives, who were present during the US raid of the Abbottabad compound, under house arrest for a month for having illegally entered Pakistan. After serving their sentence, it was unclear where these women and children would go. While they were not believed to be active in Al Qaeda, their home countries, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, did not jump to get them back from Pakistan. The two Saudi wives, Khairiah Sabar and Siham Sabar, had lost their citizenship along with Osama bin Laden in the 1990s, yet, on humanitarian grounds, Saudi Arabia eventually accepted them and bin Laden’s younger, Yemeni wife, Amal Ahmed al-Sadah. Today, they live together in a compound outside of Jeddah. These women and their children were portrayed as passive, bending to the will of governments. In a sense, they were “victims” of association with bin Laden, not actors with their own agency.

This chapter explores how political violence negatively influences women, thereby marking them as “victims.” Many people assume that political violence particularly hurts innocent women and children. We investigate this assumption, contextualizing and critiquing it. We discuss how political violence victimizes women and how/whether women see themselves as victims, survivors, and/or actors with agency who address post-conflict policy and reconciliation.

The foci of the chapter are threefold. First, the chapter discusses state terrorism and genocide and introduces the concept of gendercide. Second, the chapter discusses rape as a weapon of war used in violent politics. Case studies of conflict in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, and the Darfur region of Sudan in the 2000s illustrate gendercide and/or rape during political violence. Finally, the chapter looks at reconciliation or how/if agency is regained after political violence.

This chapter and Chap. 5 both examine victims of violence; however, this chapter focuses on genocide, gendercide and rape, and Chap. 5 focuses on terrorism. By examining experiences of women and men throughout this chapter, we investigate how gender influences victimhood.

## Genocide and Gendercide

As explained in Chap. 1, genocide is “the use of violence by the state or its allied militias with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a targeted population” because of their group membership, based on ethnicity, race, politics, religion, or economics (Dekmejian 2007 [14]). Thus, genocide is an extreme and targeted form of state terrorism. Genocides have occurred throughout human history and throughout the globe from the United States (indigenous people) to Germany (Jews) to Rwanda (Tutsis). Notable among the pre-World War II genocides was the mass killing of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during and after the First World War. Turkey, the largest state to emerge from the Ottoman Empire, denies the genocide, and it is illegal under Turkish law to refer to the genocide. This brings up an important point – many societies engage in **reversionist thinking** after genocides occur, meaning they *deny the genocide happened or they present historical events in such a way as to not be considered as genocide*. While many of the genocides discussed in this chapter take place in developing countries, developed countries are not immune from genocides and revisionist thinking. Other prominently disputed pre-World War II genocides include the killing of indigenous people in the United States during Westward expansion and the killing of indigenous people in South America (notably Argentina) and Australia.

The atrocities of the Holocaust during World War II led many in the international community to vow “never again” and inspired the CPPCG (UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide); however, according to experts, 37 genocides have occurred since the CPPCG. This number is disputed because not every mass killing is agreed upon as constituting genocide. Several reasons explain why mass killings may not be called genocide. First, they may not meet the CPPCG legal definition of genocide. This is true with **politicides**, *killings based on a shared political characteristic*. For example, people were killed because of their left-leaning political orientation in the Argentine Dirty War, 1976–1983. Second, revisionist denials of genocide may exist. This is the case with indigenous genocides in the United States and Australia. Third, some countries use vetoes on the UN Security Council to block the labeling of killing as genocide (such as the Chinese veto of deeming Darfur a genocide). Finally, the CPPCG commits the international community to act once mass killing is deemed genocide. Thus, if the political will to act and stop genocide, often militarily, does not exist, the international community may not label mass killing as genocide. This happened in Rwanda. For many days after the genocide began in April 1994, the international community declared that “acts of genocide” had occurred, but did not go so far as to label the

**Table 4.1** Non-disputed genocides since World War II

Country of origin	Year	Number killed
Bangladesh	1971	500,000–three million, mostly Hindus
East Timor	1975–1999	200,000 East Timorese
Cambodia	1975–1979	1.7 million ethnic minorities
Guatemala	1981–1983	200,000 mostly Mayan
Bosnia	1992–1995	200,000 Muslims killed, two million displaced
Rwanda	1994	800,000 mainly Tutsi and some moderate Hutus
Darfur, Sudan	2004–continuing	70,000 non-Arabs killed, 1.5 million displaced

killings genocide. Currently (2017), the killing of homosexual men in Chechnya is labeled by some to be genocide (gendercide), while most countries fall short of calling it genocide and instead use the term “humanitarian crisis.” While some dispute genocides because of the above reasons, there are some atrocities universally seen as genocides in the international community (see Table 4.1).

**Box 4.1: The Rwandan Genocide**

7 April 1994, and the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi – Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira – are returning from tense but fruitful negotiations in Arusha with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RFP). They never make it. Two surface-to-air missiles hit the presidential plane as it prepares to land in the Rwandan capital of Kigali, killing everyone on board. Responsibility for the attack has never been conclusively proven, but all indications point to the Hutu extremist faction in the Rwandan government, the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR). Demonstrating that this was a long, premeditated coup, the CDR swiftly seized power, assassinated the more moderate members of government, including Rwanda’s first woman prime minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and unleashed its Interahamwe militias against the Tutsi minority that represented about 10% of the Rwandan population.

What followed in the next 100 days was one of the worst genocides in recent history that claimed the lives of several hundred thousand Tutsis, as well as many members of other ethnic groups and Hutu dissidents. Estimates of the number of mortal victims vary from 400,000 to over one million. Calculating the death toll in these circumstances is usually difficult and even more so in the Rwandan context. For a start, Rwanda was one of the poorest countries in the world with unreliable population records, high illiteracy rates, and a sizeable portion of the population that never officially was recorded. Furthermore, estimates based on the difference in the Tutsi population before and after the massacres tend to underestimate the number of victims because

(continued)

**Box 4.1** (continued)

they do not account for the thousands of Rwandan Tutsis who fled the country in the years prior to 1994 and the many who returned after the events. Finally, some scholars (Verpoorten 2014) argue that official state records purposely understated Tutsi numbers, as demonstrated by a comparison with local (municipal) records. The aforementioned elements tend to support higher estimates of the death toll. Furthermore, as many as 500,000 women were raped, many of whom were then killed or purposely infected with HIV.

Not only was the scale of the massacre shocking, but its intensity and brutality also are outstanding. The April 20 Karama Parish massacre in Butare, probably ranks as the worst single-day atrocity of the twentieth century, as some 40,000 people were killed in less than 6 h (Jones 2002). Another shocking aspect of the genocide was the mass participation of Hutu civilians. Spurred by the Interahamwe and hate radio and often crudely armed with machetes, spears and clubs, civil defense units pursued and killed Tutsis wherever they could find them. Members of all sectors of society including teachers, doctors, religious figures, journalists and even children participated in the atrocity. While calculating the number of perpetrators is a next to impossible task, the most conservative estimates indicate that at least several tens of thousands participated in the killings, and Straus (2004) calculated that between 175,000 and 210,000 actively participated in the killings, with many more providing support.

The International Community failed to respond to the carnage. The few UN peacekeepers present at the start of the genocide were withdrawn, and an international reaction only came after the massacres, in the form of the Arusha based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). In 1998 the ICTR became the first international court to deliver a judgment for genocide against the bourgmestre (mayor) of Taba, Jean Paul Akayesu. The ICTR was also first to define the crime of rape as an international crime (Buss 2009).

The Rwandan genocide appears to be the result of deep ethnic divisions between Hutus and Tutsis. However, this is a simplistic and misleading explanation and the causes of the tragedy run far deeper. To begin with, the idea of an ethnic divide is misleading in Rwanda considering that Hutus and Tutsis fundamentally share the same language and culture. However, the Tutsi were close to the monarchy that ruled over present-day Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Uganda and Tanzania. More than by any ethno-cultural element, Tutsis were distinguished by their status and wealth, represented by ownership of cattle. Hutus, with lower status, mainly dedicated themselves to agriculture. Boundaries between the two groups were porous and they frequently inter-mixed through marriage. It was the European colonizers that entrenched distinctions between Hutus and Tutsis by ascribing them to “ethnic factors” and introducing rigid divisions. The Belgians in particular adopted a policy of issu-

ing identity cards indicating the ethnic group of belonging, and they reserved higher education and positions in the colonial administration for Tutsis.

The idea embedded in Belgian colonialism was to forge Tutsis as the future ruling class, a goal born of the flawed Eurocentric notion that Tutsis were racially superior to Hutus (Verwimp 2004). Thus, the Belgian mandate maintained the Tutsi monarchy and groomed Tutsis to rule after independence. In this context the notion of Hutu identity fully emerged, but it was a political idea, at least in the beginning. It was only towards the end of the fifties that opposition leaders started propagating the notion of Hutus as a “tribe” and defining the corresponding Tutsi tribal identity as “the enemy.” As independence drew nearer, opposite political factions clashed more and more frequently, and the attempted assassination of Hutu political leader Dominique Mbonyumutwa in 1959 sparked an extremely violent Hutu reaction in which tens of thousands of Tutsis were massacred and many more fled the country.

Opinions are divided on whether the genocide targeted mainly men, women, or both sexes equally. Several elements contribute to a complex and contradictory picture. To be sure, the initial onslaught was specifically targeted at men of all ages, including infants, as testified by many episodes in which women were spared and parents attempted to protect their male children by dressing them as girls. Only in May, once the male Tutsi population was virtually wiped out, did the perpetrators turn their attention to women. The apparent division of the genocide in two phases has encouraged the opinion that the original order was to eliminate only men, but a “leave no witnesses” directive was subsequently issued.

In short, the perpetrators considered fighting-age men as a threat for the present and the future, and they had to be eliminated as soon as possible. According to traditional gender roles it was men who were the warriors, and it was inconceivable that women could fight back. The massacres of women and young children could be carried out more easily once adult men were destroyed. The 1994 genocide therefore is distinguished from earlier anti-Tutsi programs in the sense that women largely had been spared in previous rounds of violence but were eventually targeted in 1994.

Another factor to be considered is the patrilinear structure of Hutu/Tutsi society. Thus, men were irrevocably members of one group or the other and Tutsi men of any age were to be exterminated. The ethnicity of women was, on the other hand, less defined and Tutsi women could bear Hutu children from Hutu fathers. This may partly explain the rape of so many Tutsi women as well as the practice of enslaving them in forced union. However, this explanation does not account for the sexual torture of women or their deliberate contamination with HIV. These latter practices may in part be explained by the previously described repressed violence and sexual drive of many young Hutu men.

(continued)



**Box 4.1** (continued)

Two further factors—both related to social tensions deriving from the changing status of women in Rwandan society—need to be mentioned. Pre-colonial culture reserved a somewhat egalitarian status for women of all classes, for the influence exercised by the Queen and her circle in the upper classes was matched by the fundamentally egalitarian role of rural women as co-workers in the field. These patterns were disrupted by the Belgians who endeavored to transform Rwandan society and “promote” women to a domestic role similar to that of Europe at the time (Buscaglia and Randell 2012). Thus, education programs accentuated gender distinction, with men as the breadwinners and women relegated to the private, domestic sphere. However, urbanization challenged these roles, thereby jeopardizing male identity. Particularly Tutsi women, who on average belonged to the more privileged, urban class, were increasingly stereotyped by lower class Hutu males as independent, treacherous, and arrogant seductresses. This triply negative image based on ethnicity, class revanche, and sexual allure is possibly the psychological root of Hutu violence unleashed against Tutsi women, particularly the frequent instances in which women were raped multiple times, then sexually tortured and, finally, murdered. All the above elements and, in general, the “othering” of Tutsi women as compared to Hutu men and women were at the base of genocide mobilization propaganda and enshrined particularly in the “Hutu Ten Commandments” published by the Kangura Newspaper in 1990. Three “commandments” stand out as they appeal to Hutus of both sexes: Every Hutu man should know that Tutsi women, wherever they may be, are working in the pay of their Tutsi ethnic group. Consequently, shall be deemed a traitor: Any Hutu male who marries a Tutsi woman; Any Hutu male who keeps a Tutsi concubine; Any Hutu male who makes a Tutsi woman his secretary or protégée.

The wide participation of women as genocidaires is another distinctive aspect of the Rwandan genocide. Indeed, some scholars claim a central role for women who in Rwanda could be “mother, wife, sister, daughter and genocidaire” (Brown 2014). Many women directly participated in the killings and many more performed support roles, such as leading male perpetrators to where Tutsis were hiding, denying them shelter, or looting Tutsi property (Hogg 2010). It has been argued that said activities by women were conducted under the traditional authority of men and, thus, lack agency. However, the many cases of Hutu women enslaving Tutsi women as servants or for the benefit of their male sons prove that women did have agency as perpetrators of violence.

The presence of women in leadership roles further affirms the agency of women during the genocide (Brown 2014). A prime example of a woman leader is Agathe Kanza, the widow of president Habyarimana. Although



her flight to Paris at the beginning of the massacres absolves her from direct involvement in executions, she is accused of being one of the genocide's prime organizers due to her support of extremist media as well as her role in forming and training the Interahamwe militia. Unfortunately, she was never prosecuted (Hogg 2010). Other prominent female perpetrators such as Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the Minister of Family Affairs and Women's Development, and Agnes Ntamabyariro, Minister of Justice, were convicted of various crimes against humanity, including the conspiracy to commit genocide, rape, incitement to commit genocide, and drawing the list of Tutsis to be eliminated (Maier 2012).

Other prominent women perpetrators include extremist radio journalist Valerie Bemeriki, who provided updates on the massacres and announced the names of Tutsis on the daily killing list. Many "grassroots" and local leaders are also responsible for violence (Maier 2012). Rose Karusharara, a local political leader in Kigali directed men to kill, and Zaihabu Mukundufite organized and led a female Interahamwe unit. Doctor Jean Marie Nduwamariya drew up lists of Tutsis to be executed. These examples of women who took up active and leading roles contradict the portrayal of women exclusively as victims or as non-agentic executioners directed by the male masterminds of the genocide.

## The 'Gendering' of Political Violence and Gendercide

When the mass violence of genocide is perpetrated in a way that targets a particular gender, it is referred to as **gendercide**, or "*gender-selective mass killing*" (Jones 2004 [2]). According to Jones, a gendercide may target men, women, and/or those who identify with non-heteronormative sexuality, such as homosexuals who are seen as "asocial threats" as they challenge expected gender roles (Jones 2011 [474]).

Mary Anne Warren (1985) originally used the term gendercide in a gender-neutral way in her book *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection*. In this work, Warren writes:

"'gendercide' is a sex-neutral term, in that the victims may be either male or female...sexually discriminatory killing is just as wrong when the victims happen to be male. The term also calls attention to the fact that gender roles have often had lethal consequences, and that these are in important respects analogous to the lethal consequences of racial, religious, and class prejudice" (Gendercide Watch 1999–2013).

Thus, gendercide can refer to the targeted killing of either women *or* men (or those who identify as non-binary) when that killing occurs *because of their gender*. One even could assert that political violence typically results in the deaths of more men than women and thus more gendercides of men. Jones argues this is the case because battle-age men represent potential combatants, even if they are civilians, and, thus, are particularly vulnerable to mass killings. Jones (2004) explains:

“the most vulnerable and consistently targeted population group [in situations of war and genocide], through time and around the world today, is non-combatant men of “battle age,” roughly 15 to 55 years old. They are nearly universally perceived as the group posing the greatest danger to the conquering force, and are the group most likely to have the repressive apparatus of the state directed against them. The “non-combatant” distinction is also vital. Unlike their armed brethren, these men have no means of defending themselves, and can be detained and exterminated by the thousands or millions” [10].

One modern example of a gendercide against men occurred in the former Yugoslavia in the early to mid-1990s (see case study below).

Masculinity and notions of heteronormativity often intersect with other identities when examining genocides. For example, in Rwanda, ideas of Hutu masculinity and domination of men over women intersected to incite violent action among Hutus who felt as if their masculinity was threatened by Tutsi women in more prominent social positions (Jones 2002). Non-heterosexual individuals have been targeted in several genocides as well. For example, during the Holocaust, gay men were particularly persecuted. Currently (2017), homosexual men are being targeted in Chechnya and placed into concentration camps. Thus, gendercides are related to power dynamics, usually occur alongside other genocides, and are the result of intersecting identities (as discussed in the Rwandan case above).

**“Root and branch” genocides**, in contrast to gendercides, *lead to the extermination of all people, including men, women, children, and the elderly*. Even children, the so-called branches, may one day become the enemy and women have the capacity to give birth to this new generation of enemies, meaning that perpetrators see all of the population as a threat and seek to eliminate everyone. The Rwandan genocide would be an example of a root and branch genocide.

While gendercide is a gender-neutral term, **femicide (also called femicide)** or **gynocide** refer specifically to *the targeting killing of women or girls*. Current cases of femicide can be seen in Guatemala, Mexico, and Argentina. In Guatemala, more than 6000 women and girls have been murdered since 2000; estimates are that at least two women are killed per day due to gender-based violence. This prompted the Guatemalan government in March 2012 to set up a special unit on femicide. In Juarez, Mexico, nearly 1000 mainly indigenous and/or lower income women working in the *maquila* industry have been targeted and killed over the past two decades. (This story is discussed in more depth in Chap. 8). In Argentina, between 2008 and 2013 there were 1236 gender-related murders of women, which is the equivalent of one femicide every 35 h (Frayssinet 2015). The Argentine government did not keep official records of femicide until 2015. After protests regarding the death of Chiara Pàez, a 14-year-old girl killed by her older boyfriend, the Supreme Court in Argentina initiated the creation of The National Registry of Femicides, which documented 235 femicides in 2015.

Violence in Iraq and Chechnya provides an example of gendercide against homosexuals. The gender identities of homosexual men and women threaten fundamentalist religious values, resulting in the harassment, torture, and assassinations of homosexuals by militias (Jones 2011). In March 2012, the press reported, “at least 15 teenagers [in Iraq] have been stoned, beaten or shot to death in the past month,

**Table 4.2** Select gendercides in history

Location	Time	Target
Iraqi Kurdistan (Anfal Campaign)	1988	Battle-aged Kurdish men
Bangladesh (Civil War)	1971	Battle-aged Bengali men
Bosnia (Yugoslav War)	1992–1995	Muslim men
China (Nanjing Massacre)	1937–1938	Chinese women gang-raped and killed; Chinese men systematically murdered

while local activists put the toll far higher [at possibly 58]” (Rao 2012). Militants targeted these youth because of they are “emo.” Emo youth favor alternative-style, Western culture, dress in black, and are stereotyped as homosexual even if they are not. Thus, they are subject to violence because of the gender identities they express and/or those identities that are attributed to them.

While gay men in Chechnya have always been at risk of “honor killings” by family members and abuse by local authorities, the situation in the very homophobic Republic escalated in 2017 when the government began to target gay men more aggressively. This was sparked when a gay rights organization tried to get permits for gay pride parades in the region. While information is hard to come by, reports are that at least 100 gay men had been arrested as of April 2017 and three had been killed. The Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, did not only deny the accusation, but he denied that any gay men lived in Chechnya at all. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 2017, reports suggest that around 100 gay men from Chechnya sought asylum outside the country (BBC 2017a).

As with genocide, it is difficult to pinpoint a definitive number of gendercides. Some of the better known and more universally agreed upon cases are in Table 4.2.

## **International Response to Genocide and Gendercide: Punishing Perpetrators and Reclaiming Agency**

If the international community calls killings genocide, individuals responsible for conducting, aiding, and/or inciting genocide can be tried under international law. The most famous of these adjudications are the Nuremburg Trials (1945–1946), taking place after World War II to try Nazis for crimes committed during the Holocaust. Since the Nuremburg Trials, the international community has convened trials and/or tribunals to investigate genocides or crimes against humanity in four cases – Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and Darfur. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was held in 2001 at The Hague and convicted leaders involved with the genocide at Srebrenica, Bosnia during the Yugoslavian conflict of the 1990s. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was created by the United Nations after the Rwandan genocide, just

**Box 4.2: War and Gendercide in Bosnia & Herzegovina**

War in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) raged from 1992 to 1995 as part of the broader conflicts that marked the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in the aftermath of Marshal Tito's death and the decay of the socialist regime. Although, strictly speaking, the dissolution of Yugoslavia occurred in stages over the course of two decades, the salient conflicts took place between 1991 and 1995 and can be divided into two phases. Initially the Serb dominated Federation that followed the dissolution of the SFRY attempted to prevent the secession of Slovenia, Croatia and, later BiH (1991–1992). Following the success of Slovenia's and Croatia's bid for independence, the war turned into a land grab at the expense of neighbors (1992–1995). Serbia was particularly aggressive towards Croatia and, later, BiH. However, while on the defensive against Serbia, Croatia too promoted expansionist policies against BiH.

The new states' desire to bring all its "ethnic" nationals within their borders drove their expansionist policies. According to the last census conducted by the SFRY in 1991 (Stevanovic and Breznik 1991), 581,663 Serbs lived in Croatia, mainly in Eastern Slavonia and Krajina, while 97,344 Croats lived in Serbia. To understand the magnitude of these numbers, it should be highlighted that according to the same census in 1991, the total population of Serbia was 8.0 million and that of Croatia was 4.7 million.

The situation of BiH was particularly critical as its population of 4.4 million comprised 1,902,956 Bosniacs, but also as many as 1,366,104 Serbs and 762,852 Croats. To complicate things further, the three ethnic groups inextricably intermixed within the BiH territory. Overall, some 20% of Serbs and Croats lived outside the borders of their respective republics, and the majority resided in BiH. Beyond demographics, other factors contributed to BiH's vulnerability, starting from the fact that it was one of the poorest regions of Yugoslavia and that it was entirely encircled by Croatia and Serbia.

Surrounded by the unfolding conflict between Serbia and Croatia, BiH was initially unable to take a position in favor of against independence, as the three ethnic groups desired different outcomes for BiH. Inter-ethnic tensions inevitably escalated, reaching a tipping point in March 1992 when Bosniacs finally pushed for independence with the support of Croats. Independence immediately triggered a three-sided conflict for territory. Encouraged and supported by Belgrade, the Bosnian Serbs responded by creating their own breakaway entity, the Republic of Srpska (RS) and started attacking Bosniacs and Croats. The Croats soon followed with their own separatist movement in Herzegovina, the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia. BiH was plunged in a three-sided war that lasted until 1995.

War waged as a way to "liberate" territories from the presence of other ethnic groups. "Ethnic cleansing" was the purpose of the war, and it was marked by the systematic violation of humanitarian law and human rights law. Indeed, rather than fight each other, armies and militias of the various sides privileged attacking and harassing enemy civilians in order to eliminate them

or force them to flee. A whole range of severe crimes were committed, up to the genocide perpetrated in Srebrenica and pronounced as such by rulings of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It should be highlighted that while the Serb side was responsible for the worst and most systematic atrocities – including genocide – all factions engaged in war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

It is estimated that a minimum of 100,000 died in BiH as a direct result of hostilities, and this figure does not account for the wounded, victims of violence, and fatalities indirectly caused by the war's deprivations. As many as 40% of the mortal victims were civilians. Perhaps even more revealing is the huge numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs): 2.3 million from BiH and 530,000 from neighboring Slavonia and Krajina. (UN ICTY [n.d.](#)) (Fig. 4.1).

The predominance of men in combat roles insufficiently explains the extremely high proportion of male fatalities in BiH: over 90% of total fatalities were men. This figure exemplifies the implementation of gendercide. Although the civilian population in general was attacked, males were especially targeted for elimination or deportation, including minors and the elderly. For example, when the JNA and Serb militias violently forced Bosniacs and Croats out of Prijedor and surrounding villages, they rounded up male civilians for execution or imprisonment. More poignantly, when they occupied Srebrenica, the RS forces rounded up all the males and brutally executed them.



**Fig. 4.1** Mass grave of victims of the genocide in Bosnia, near Vitez (Photo courtesy of the ICTY Before It's News Staff [2016](#))

(continued)

**Box 4.2** (continued)






Women were also targeted, particularly with heinous tactics of mass and systematic sexual violence and rape. Since the end of the war, some 50,000 cases of rape have been reported, and many women were held captive in veritable brothels such as, for example, “Karaman’s house” set up by Serb militias in Foca. The ICTY’s proceedings revealed how, in a society dominated by patriarchal values, sexual violence was a deliberate tactic informed by a logic that reduced women to mere objects at the disposal of men. Indeed, sexual violence against women was primarily intended as an insult and a taunt to enemy men who could not protect their women. Furthermore, women were relegated to reproductive tools within the concept of ethnic cleansing, for impregnation had the dual symbolic and practical significance of perpetuating one’s own ethnicity while extinguishing the enemy’s. By the same logic, sexual violence targeted male prisoners too, in order to humiliate them by depriving them of their masculinity. In a series of landmark cases, the ICTY established the link between sexual violence and ethnic cleansing and defined sexual enslavement and rape as crimes against humanity. Narratives surrounding women in the BiH conflict depict them as lacking agency, and, therefore, reinforce the conception of women as victims or as lacking prominent roles in the conflict. In reality, many women engaged in relief and medical assistance, founding important institutions that are still active today, such as the Medica Therapy Center in Zenica. Other women advocated for the cause of peace. As Yugoslavia headed towards the crisis, women from all republics joined in the Women’s Lobby and appealed to voters in the 1990 election not to cast their ballot in favor of nationalist, fascist and warlike parties. Furthermore, as the elections approached, women formed a Women’s Party, the Zenska Stranka (ZEST) that ran on a platform advocating for democracy, tolerance, and peace. Once war broke out, armed with the evocative slogan “Always disobedient to patriarchy, war, nationalism and militarism,” Serbia’s Zene u Crnom (Women in Black) staged a continuous and highly visible campaign against the war (Women in Black 2015).






Women of all ethnicities participated as fighters (albeit at lower rates than men after war broke out). They also participated in committing war crimes. The most famous case, the only one tried by the ICTY, is that of Biljana Plavsic, one of the very few wartime women political leaders. As the vice president of the RS, Plavsic was convicted for command responsibility in planning and executing crimes against humanity. Other women have been indicted or convicted for war crimes by domestic courts. Once more, the lack of systematic information regarding female war criminals is indicative of the reluctance to conceptualize women in deviant roles that are stereotypically considered masculine.

In conclusion, the BiH war reveals how gender was influential all its phases: the rise of nationalist ideologies, the descent into war, the conduct of hostilities, the crimes perpetrated as well as the post-conflict narratives that reflect the exclusion of women, the denial of their importance and agency, and their relegation to the stereotyped roles of victim or deviant.



**WANTED FOR GENOCIDE**

				
FELICIEN KABUGA	AUGUSTIN BIZIMANA	<b>ARRESTED</b>	<b>ARRESTED</b>	<b>ARRESTED</b>

				
<b>ARRESTED</b>	AUGUSTIN NGIRABATWARE	IDELPHONSE NIZEYIMANA	PROTAIS MPIRANYA	CALLIXTE NZABONIMANA

YUSUF JOHN MUNYAKAZI, RYANDIKAYO, CHARLES SIKUBWABO, ALOYS NDIMBATI

**INDICTED**

Rewards of up to U.S. \$5,000,000 are offered for information that leads to the arrest of persons indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for serious violations of international humanitarian law and their transfer to Tribunal custody. If you have information about any of the above persons, please contact Rewards for Justice through the telephone number or email below.

CALL NOW - Kinshasa (243)98367160 or (243)8808308 | In the eastern Congo: (00250) 08574066  
Nairobi (254)722-298483 or (254)733-250208

WRITE NOW - Kinshasa: JusticeRewards@yahoo.com | Nairobi: Rewards@state.gov  
ALL CONTACTS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL | www.rewardsforjustice.net

**UP TO U.S. \$5,000,000 REWARD**

Fig. 4.2 Poster for fugitives of the Rwandan genocide created by the U.S. government (US State Dept. Archive 2001)

7 months after the killing occurred and was held in Arusha, Tanzania. The ICTR indicted 95 people. Over sixty convictions were handed down by the court, including the first conviction for the crime of genocide as defined by the CPPCG. Several other cases were referred to domestic courts in Rwanda or France for trial (Fig. 4.2).



**Fig. 4.3** S21, the school turned prison and death camp during Cambodia's genocide where unspeakable acts of torture took place. Most perpetrators were never tried (Photo courtesy of the authors)

The Cambodian genocide occurred in the late 1970s, but it was not until 2003, after years of negotiation between the United Nations and the Cambodian government, that the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia was created to try perpetrators. As of 2017, 300 million dollars had been spent on trials resulting in three convictions and six cases remained active. Convictions were difficult to achieve because the Cambodian government did not support the process. At this point, over 40 years have passed since the genocide and defendants are unlikely to be alive to stand trial (Fig 4.3).

The most recent international court case, as of 2017, pertains to genocide in Darfur (discussed further below). The International Criminal Court (ICC) tries cases of genocides occurring after 2002, thus the ICC is pursuing Darfur crimes. In 2009, the ICC issued a warrant for the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, for crimes committed and ongoing in Darfur. This was the first time the ICC indicted a sitting head of state, but, as of 2017, he has not been convicted and he travels regularly outside of Sudan.

## Rape as a Weapon of War and Genocide

While gendercides can target men or women, rape, like that seen in the Yugoslavia case discussed above, is the most common type of violence used against women during violent conflicts and often occurs alongside genocides and other instances of



state terrorism. It is used during war as a strategy to humiliate and ethnically cleanse. Similarly, state terrorism by authoritarian regimes uses rape and sexualized torture to silence opponents (Lykes et al. 1993). The rape of women is also a way to victimize men, *and* men are sexually tortured during genocides.

**Rape** is defined by the United Nations as “*sexual intercourse without valid consent*” (UNODC n.d.). The World Health Organization defined rape in 2002 as “physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration – even if slight – of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or an object” (WHO 2002). These definitions refer to rapes of women, men, or non-binary individuals. It is important to remember that rape during war is not a natural consequence of battle; it is always torture in need of prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

Rape has been used as a weapon of war many times in the past century. The systematic “rape of Nanking” by Japanese soldiers in 1937 was particularly horrific. Japanese soldiers killed 300,000 Chinese, and at least 20,000 women and girls were raped, including infants, the elderly, and the infirmed. During the battle for Bangladeshi independence in 1971 from Pakistan (at that time West Pakistan), a staggering amount of 200,000 women were estimated to have been raped, with many gang raped. Some of these women died from the physical consequences of gang rape, and some later committed suicide because of the trauma they experienced (Sharlach 2000; D’Costa and Hossain 2010). In Syria, where sexual violence and rape has been widespread during the country’s continued political violence, many women are reported to choose suicide as the threat of rape closes in on them (WITW Staff 2016). In addition to the systematic rape of women and men in Bosnia during the conflict in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, rape was used in a widespread manner, and rape has been used in ongoing conflicts in Darfur and the Congo since 2000. One estimate puts the number of rapes in 2011 in the Congo alone at 400,000 (Hogg 2011).

The words of the women who have experienced rape speak volumes to how devastating rape can be. The words of a Ugandan refugee, raped during the Ugandan civil war (1980s–present) shows how women, especially those with children, are vulnerable to wartime rape. One woman states:

“I couldn’t run because I have two children. I stayed in the house with them. After a while someone pushed the door open and flashed a torch at me. I realized he was a soldier. He threatened me with death if I made an alarm or noise. He then dragged me aside from the sleeping children and raped me inside my own house. I was gang-raped by four soldiers who took their turn, one after another. In all I was raped eight times that same night so I almost became unconscious without ability or energy to walk” (Turshen 2000 [803]).

Sometimes rape is referred to as **genocidal rape**, in that *the rape is not just a sexual act, but also has genocidal intentions or after effects*. Rwanda is a paradigmatic example of a genocidal rape. Rwanda is a small country; it was densely populated with eight million people in 1993, and between 250,000 and 500,000 women were raped during the genocide. Many women who were raped, often in gang-rape situations, contracted HIV, which later killed them. One study showed that two-thirds of Tutsi women raped during the Rwandan genocide tested positive for HIV. As this study poignantly states, “... soon there will be tens of thousands of

children who have lost their fathers to the machete and their mothers to AIDS” (McGreal 2001 [np]). What is more, following the genocide, some women were questioned with the “rape card,” namely their fellow residents wondered if they had managed to spare their lives by sleeping with attackers, i.e., facilitating rape instead of immediate death (Sharlach 2000).

Sexualized torture – short of the legal definition of rape – is similarly dehumanizing as well as gendered. This can happen against women and men, but has been found to be an action often used against men. For instance, women and men suffered torture in the targeting of genital areas and nipples, during the Argentine Dirty War (1976–1983), through the *picana*, an electric cattle prod. The National Commission on the Disappeared (CONADEP), which from 1983 to 1984, investigated Argentine state torture, reported that one man experienced electric shocks to his armpits and ankles as a female guard grabbed his penis and put a burning liquid into it. Eric Stenner Carlson researches beating of the male genitals, for example, with a rifle, as a form of mass sexual assault. He stresses that anal rape is not the only form of assault on men and that whether or not men become sterile or have sexual dysfunction because of a beating, “a crime is a crime, and a victim is a victim” (2006 [18]). Similarly, forced nakedness may be considered as a form of sexual torture, as it is discriminatory and coercive (Oosterhoff et al. 2004).

## Why Use Rape and Sexualized Torture as a Weapon During Conflicts?

Motives for why sexual violence and rape are used during war fall into the categories of circumstantial factors leading to anomie, threats, or maintenance of a masculine social nexus; the use of rape as a strategic weapon; and the difficulty in prosecuting rape (Office on the High Commissioner on Human Rights 2012). One reason why rape occurs in war torn countries is social anomie. As citizens of war torn countries become victims of violence, the society as a whole loses order and social norms disintegrate, leading to **anomie**, or *the lack of usual social and ethical standards of a group*. Anomie is compounded by poverty, malnutrition, and the availability of weapons. Furthermore, the breakdown of social order leads to an environment conducive to all forms of violence, including sexual violence (see Braithwaite 2010 for an Indonesian example; Card 1996).

Rape also occurs in conflict as a means of threatening or maintaining a masculine social nexus. Historically, women have been seen as the possessions of men, without agency. This view of women persists in many countries, particularly in rural areas. Thus, when women are viewed as the property of a male relative and they are raped, the rape is viewed not as much as an attack against the woman but as an attack against the man to whom she “belongs.” This is especially the case if the rape occurs in public. Instead of being a human rights violation against a woman, the rape signifies a “husband’s property damage” (Sharlach 2000 [90]). As a result, the

woman not only loses agency through the act of the rape itself, but also in the aftermath of rape when violations against her become less important than the rape's effect on the men. In this way, rape is a tool for men to attack other men. Rape threatens to emasculate the man because he is unable to protect his woman, thus challenging his masculinity (Goldstein 2001).

For years to come, the rape may challenge what it means to be a morally upright family. Where women's chastity is linked to a family's honor, rape can become a collectively experienced form of family shame (Sharlach 2000). Nationalism in an ethnic community is sometimes tied to the purity of women. Women are viewed as a symbol of a nation because they ensure its continuity through reproduction. When women are violated, a nation and ethnicity are violated as well and the continuity of the group is put in danger. The ethnic group/society is also demoralized when men are raped, for homosexuality may be a taboo and rape of men by men is seen as such. What is more, men might keep silent because few people may accept that men are vulnerable to such crimes like women (Oosterhoff et al. 2004).

Rape is also used as a tool to construct the male identity during times of combat (Goldstein 2001). For example, in Rwanda, Hutu masculinity was compromised before the genocide, as Hutu men often were unemployed and felt unsuccessful in society. Tutsi women were seen as elites and more successful than Hutu men; thus, Hutu men sought superiority by raping Tutsi women (Jones 2002). In some societies, male combatants believe that raping women will make them invincible or more of a man, and raping certain categories of women, like pregnant women, is thought to lead to more strength in battle (Sow 2009). Motives of power and intimidation over another individual are often more compelling than sexual motives, for wartime rapes target old and young, attractive and unattractive women alike (Kressel 2002). Combatants also use rape, particularly gang rape, to create a sense of male unity and cohesion among forces. This violence, for the purposes of forging a "brotherhood", again removes women's agency, treating them as a shell for the benefit of male wartime behavior.

Rape also has been used strategically during wartime, as a specific military tactic (Card 1996). Enloe (2000) argues that militarized rape is different than circumstantial rape because it is conducted in a context of institutional policies and decisions. In short, military commanders promote its use as a battle tactic and they compel individual soldiers to use rape. Why would a military commander condone and, in fact, promote the use of rape? Rape can effectively send a threatening message to one's opponent, thus rape becomes political as it achieves a political goal. In many societies, after a woman is raped and her virginity compromised, she is no longer "suitable" marriage material. As mentioned above, this can lead to an unraveling of families and the social fabric of a community (Card 1996). Thus, war rapes have a strategic political impact beyond the woman who has been violated. As mentioned in the case study, Bosnian women were strategically raped and impregnated as a part of ethnic cleansing. State-backed Pakistani troops also used rape as a strategic attack against Bangladeshi women in 1971. Furthermore, rape instills fear in a society, and the threat of rape can diminish a population's resistance.

Rape is also used strategically to inflict economic violence. If women are cast out of families or communities after a rape, they lose their livelihoods by being cut off from sources of income. Rapists sometimes commit economic violence against women by stealing their material possessions and seizing control of their labor after a rape has occurred. Thus, the rape allows the rapist to gain assets needed during wartime. Again, this plays into the idea of women being constructed as property. They can be stolen and used, and their property can be transferred to their rapist (Turshen 2000).

Rape and sexual torture also are strategic because they are difficult to prove in court following political violence, and most soldiers do not get prosecuted for these charges (Sharlach 2000). When someone is killed in war, her/his corpse may exist and serve as forensic evidence in a trial. Physical evidence of rape, or, for instance, trauma to the male genitals, may be unavailable when trials take place, most times many years later (Carlson 2006). Thus, deterrents to rape in violent contexts are minimal, and few are held responsible for rape and torture in comparison to how often they occur.

## **International Responses to Rape and Gendercide: Regaining Agency?**

Two trials involving rape display the international community's response to rape, one from the ICTR (Rwanda) and one from the ICTY (Yugoslavia). The Akayesu case emerged from the Rwanda tribunal, resulted in the first recognition under international law of rape as a form of genocide, and formulated a definition of sexual violence and rape. Jean-Paul Akayesu was a mayor of Taba, a town in Rwanda. Though initially protecting Tutsis from the Interahamwe (Hutu) militia, Akayesa later acquiesced to the militia and facilitated genocidal violence by exposing safe havens and encouraging people in the town to participate in killings. Additionally, he was charged with inciting torture and rape. He was charged in 1996 with genocide, complicity in genocide, and public incitement of genocide. Activists fighting for women and legal recognition of genocidal rape lobbied the ICTR to include the Taba rapes as part of Akayesu's trial. The tribunal found Akayesu guilty of many genocidal acts, including rape, and he was sentenced to life in prison in 1998. Although the Akayesu case is a "jurisprudential pioneer," the ICTR has not been widely successful in convicting other suspected rapists since 1998 (Van Schaack 2008 [29]). All told the ICTR indicted 93 people, sentenced 61 and acquitted 14, and many of these charges carried rape charges with them. This number pales in comparison to the estimated 250,000–500,000 rapes during the genocide. In 2014 Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, discussed elsewhere in this chapter, was convicted and sentence to life for her participation in genocide and the rape of Tutsi women. The ICTR closed in 2015.

Second, the Foca case centers on the town of Foca, Bosnia that experienced the deaths or refugee exit of close to 20,000 non-Serbs during the early 1990s. In the Foca trial three men were accused of imprisoning, torturing, and raping Muslim women and girls in 1992 – though the ICTY tribunal had initially wanted to try around 25 men for similar crimes but could not due to a lack of resources (Kuo 2002). One man had raped a 12-year-old girl, sold her for 100 Euros to a Montenegrin soldier, and she was never seen again. According to the US State Department, “this case is the first before an international tribunal to focus entirely on crimes of sexual violence and to enter a conviction for enslavement as a crime against humanity” (US State Department 2001 [npj]). A 28-year sentence was given to a commander, and a 20-year sentence was given to the man who had sold the abovementioned 12-year-old. The third man received a 12-year sentence. The ruling was handed down in 2001, almost 10 years after the crimes were committed.

While these cases were pioneers in prosecuting rape during wartime situations, rape was not officially acknowledged by the international community as a weapon used in war until 2008. In a resolution passed on June 19, 2008, the United Nations Security Council declared “women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.” Although the resolution called for an “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians,” it remains to be seen if it will result in more international prosecutions of perpetrators of wartime rape (UN SC 2008).

Although survivors of rape deserve the utmost justice, tribunals are not the only and perhaps best remedy for women who have been raped. In fact, the tribunal process as it pertains to gender crimes may be critiqued for several reasons. First, rape and gendered torture are hard to prove. Second, perpetrators are not likely to be tried at all or in a timely manner. Tribunals cost a lot of money in comparison to the number of criminals eventually convicted and they linger for many years after an atrocity (for example the ICTY was still ongoing as of 2017 and ICTR closed in 2015; in 2010–2011, the ICTY budgetary costs were over \$300,000,000). Second, though some women desire to publicly state atrocities and seek closure through trials, the process actually may rob survivors of their agency once again. As Nomfudo Walaza, a South African psychologist and Director of the Center for Survivors of Violence and Torture, has observed, “‘revealing is not healing,’ and the performative aspects of the courtroom may not be therapeutically in the survivors’ best interest” (qtd. in Mertus 2004 [113]).

Why would this be the case? Julie Mertus (2004) explains that the legal setting prioritizes perpetrators’ narratives, as the trial is about whether the perpetrator is guilty. In this sense, it is not a setting in which the survivor tells her story in full; her therapeutic retelling of events are not welcome as the court is not interested in the complex impact violence has had on her life. Though defense lawyers cannot directly accuse survivors of being complicit in rape, they tend to portray

women who testify as weak and non-credible witnesses. Moreover, psychologists have found retelling one's story of violent attack in genocide can induce fear and post-traumatic stress (Brounéus 2010; Kuo 2002). Women then lose agency as they are possibly discredited, re-traumatized, and cut-off in the expression of their story.

What then should international agencies, politicians, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and individuals do to respond to gendered political violence? The answer to this question varies from woman to woman, man to man. Research on and programs for women are more developed than they are for men. Some women want to take part in gatherings of women, whether formally or informally organized, as a way to regain agency after mass rape. One Yugoslavian woman pursues healing, by getting "together with other women from her village who were in the concentration camp with her. She describes how they immediately start talking about what happened to them: they simply cannot stop talking about the suffering they went through" (Skjelsbæk 2006 [388]). Kada Hotic, whose son, husband and two brothers were murdered in Srebrenica during the Yugoslavian conflict has been involved with Ambassador Swanee Hunt in a healing project. Hotic states, "Maybe one day we can close the story of war and move toward genuine reconciliation. Everyone has suffered. When those men killed my son, they killed themselves. I forgive them, and so I live" (qtd. in Hunt and Clark 2012).

Other women start women's organizations. These formal organizations will be discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7, yet one, the Nobel Women's Initiative, deserves mention in this chapter. This organization is led by Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Leymah Gbowee, Tawakkol Karman, and Mairead Maguire. Their mission is to "... use the visibility and prestige of the Nobel prize to promote, spotlight, and amplify the work of women's rights activists, researchers, and organizations worldwide who address the root causes of violence, in a way that strengthens and expands the global movement to advance nonviolence, peace, justice and equality" (Nobel Women's Initiative 2017). The group was instrumental in shedding light on rape crimes in Sudan and Darfur more specifically and creating policies that put rape survivors at the center of post-conflict healing. Additionally, they have been outspoken with their "Stop Rape in Conflict" campaign about the need to recognize and combat the use of rape as a weapon of war.

On the other hand, some women do not speak to friends, their mothers, or husbands about their experiences (Skjelsbæk 2006). Other women's post-traumatic stress disallows them from leaving their homes and functioning socially on a day-to-day basis. Women also call for better social services for survivors. In conflict-torn countries, strong social service institutions may be lacking; however, survivors often need counseling, physical therapy, surgeries, and/or prescription drugs. Making sure health networks are adequate to meet this demand is a pressing policy concern for post-conflict societies and the international community. Social service providers, in order to satisfactorily respond to refugees, must be trained to understand how diverse gender norms impact various women and men. For instance,

counselors might not suspect that men are also victims of gender violence and they might underestimate the great stigma of rape in a woman's home culture (Lykes et al. 1993; Oosterhoff et al. 2004). In Colombia, where rape was used as a weapon of war in the country's 51-year-long war, survivors come together in a therapy center to tell their stories and heal. Taking this time is vital for the rehabilitation of the entire society.

Some NGOs go beyond basic health care and seek to enhance women's wellness and mental health. An interesting example of this is Project Air in Rwanda and Eastern Congo. This program facilitates yoga classes for sexual violence survivors, and it brings hope and excitement to women who have had so much hope stripped from their lives. The NGO describes below:

"So, in the beginning, the women in those early classes said, "No!" with a polite, but heavy grimness. "This is not for us. We're too old, too sick!" But then, as they relented and shyly began to try the yoga, it seemed as if something inside them began to stir, to shift. This was something below the level of thought, below the level of memory, below the level of conscious feeling even, but when it was sparked, it was as if – and I don't know how else to put this – it was as if the women became able to feel again and so love again the life that was in them" (Project Air n.d. [np]).

In Guatemala a group of survivors called "La Poderosas" (The Powerful) is using theatre to share their experiences and shed light on the issue of femicide. These women are inspiring others to speak out and men to reflect on their attitudes towards violence against women (Guinan 2015). In a different example, the Monument Quilt project is meant as a way to regain the agency of people who have been victims of intimate terrorism and rape in the US. The quilt is scheduled to be on public display in Washington DC, and, when finished, it will spell the words "not alone" on the Washington Mall. The quilt is meant to convey the story that each individual survivor carries and to allow the survivor to regain agency through telling her story on the quilt. Communities across the US have their own quilts, and individuals can stitch their own square. To date over 1000 squares have been displayed in 22 cities across the United States. Organizers state that "by stitching our stories together, we are creating and demanding public space to heal" (The Monument Quilt n.d. [np]).

In Kenya a group of women known as the "Karate Grannies" is fighting back and reclaiming agency against sexual assault. While not necessarily during conflict, rape in Kenya of old and young alike is widespread. The Karate Grannies are learning self-defense to protect themselves and others from future attacks. As such, they are inverting their narrative from one of victim to one of agent (AJ+ Staff 2017).

Finally, according to Turshen (2000), the political rehabilitation of women in the aftermath of conflict involves reestablishing women's standing in their communities because community status is the first instance of women's citizenship. In order to reestablish citizenship, post-conflict policy should focus on the promotion of women's rights and the reform of outdated and discriminatory laws (Turshen 2000).



### Box 4.3: Genocide and Use of Rape as a Weapon in Darfur

“I was sleeping when the attack on Disa started...They took dozens of other girls and made us walk for three hours. During the day we were beaten and they were telling us: ‘You, the black women, we will exterminate you, you have no god.’ At night we were raped several times...”

– as told by Darfuri refugee (Amnesty International 2004 [1]).

“That is one of the biggest issues in Darfur: the rapes, and crimes against women and children,”

– Michael Fryer, police commissioner of UNAMID, the United Nations peace-keeping force (Robertson 2008 [np]).

The ongoing armed conflict that has been ravaging Darfur for almost two decades has been defined as the first genocide of the twenty-first century. Arab-Sudanese Janjaweed militias back by Khartoum’s government have been waging a brutal war of ethnic cleansing against the Fur, Zaghawa, Masolit, and other non-Arab ethnic groups. Despite the systematic, egregious crimes perpetrated, no international organization or judicial body has officially declared events in Darfur as genocide. However, several governments including the United States as well as numerous civil society organizations and scholars agree that the gravity of atrocities committed in Darfur amount to genocide.

Darfur is a vast region in Western Sudan, bordering with Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic and, since 2011, South Sudan. The region is thinly populated and only 7.5 million people inhabit the mainly semi-arid, desert, and mountainous landscape. Darfur was originally inhabited by Muslim, non-Arab populations. The Fur represent the largest autochthonous ethnic group, followed by the Zaghawa, Masolit, and other smaller ethnic groups. While each group has its own language, they also share many cultural traits, starting from a mainly sedentary way of life based on agriculture. Arab populations like the Rezeigat also inhabit Darfur, particularly in the North. Once powerful and independent, the Fur fell under the rule of the Egyptians and Sudanese in the nineteenth century and the subsequent Anglo-Egyptian administration unified Darfur with Sudan in 1916. Consequently, in 1956 the region became part of the newly independent Sudanese state.

Darfur’s relations with Khartoum’s government and the Arab Sudanese populations have never been easy, particularly because the latter are predominantly pastoral and nomadic. While non-Arab minorities have never been represented adequately in institutions, conflict for land between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders was bound to intensify due to the series of droughts that starting from the 1960s, and particularly in the early 1980s, affected the already extremely poor region. Conflict over land also assumed a distinctive inter-ethnic character because of the colonial land tenure system that attributed ownership to ethnic groups rather than to individuals. For several decades the region experienced low-level insurgency and inter-ethnic conflicts like, for example, the one pitting Arabs against the Fur in 1987 and 1989.

The situation intensified in 1989 when Omar al-Bashir seized power in Khartoum through a military coup. The new regime inaugurated a far more decidedly pro-Arab nationalist policy that heavily discriminated against other ethnic groups, like the Fur, the Zaghawa, and the Masalit. Al-Bashir's despot rule divided Darfur into three smaller administrative regions with boundaries defined in order to make sure that non-Arabs would be a minority in each. Khartoum also only appointed Arabs to head local administration and systematically manipulated land tenure issues to the detriment of non-Arab communities. Tensions mounted and a second inter-ethnic conflict broke out in 1995–1999, this time between Arabs and Masalit. Arab ethnic groups in Darfur had been organizing their own militia, the Janjaweed, and the three non-Arab ethnicities responded by creating their own fighting forces: the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). In 2003, the two insurgent groups started attacking Sudanese military targets, leading to the government's violent response (Reyna 2010).

Supported by government forces, the Janjaweed launched a vicious scorched-earth campaign targeting civilians. Events in Darfur are part of the wider context of conflicts ravaging Sudan, which included the separation of South Sudan, and the inability of Northern Arab elites to take into consideration the interests of other parts of the country (Quéniévet 2006). While numbers are hard to come by, conflict in Darfur has so far claimed an estimated 400,000–500,000 victims from combat, starvation, and disease while over one million have been displaced to refugee camps in Sudan or in neighboring Chad. Rather than the product of single episodes of mass atrocities, such as the ones that occurred in Rwanda, these dramatic figures reflect relentless persecution through a series of unending raids on communities, villages, and even refugee camps managed by international organizations.

The data on victims reveals a distinctive and tragic textbook gendercide pattern. Male civilians, particularly young adults, represent a disproportionately high percentage of fatalities, while vast numbers of females of any age are subjected to sexual violence and rape. It has been estimated that since 2003 as many as 10,000 females have been raped each year. If the estimate were to be accurate, it would imply that almost 200,000 females have been raped so far. Considering that the combined population of Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit is less than three million, and assuming that it is evenly divided between the genders, over 10% of females of all ages have been victims of rape. Furthermore, the cited figure is likely to be understated for a number of reasons. First, ongoing violence and the hostility of Khartoum's government has led to a paucity of medical personnel and external organizations who could treat victims and collect information about them. Second, the few actors who try to gain such information are targeted, harassed, and even arrested by government forces. Finally, victims themselves are deterred from reporting by the moral and social stigmas that local culture associates with rape (Clark Miller 2009).

(continued)

**Box 4.3** (continued)

All the elements described indicate that atrocities in Darfur are a result of a deliberate and coordinated strategy to rid Darfur of Fur, Zaghawa, and Masolit by physically eliminating them or forcing them to leave. It is also a strategy that leverages local culture and values. Traditional local societies are based on very clear-cut gender roles. Males are the leaders and protectors of females who, in turn, incarnate the values of motherhood and reproduce society and culture (Kaiser and Hagan 2015). In many ways, males and females represent security for each other and the community. The murder of males deprives females of their protection, while the attack and rape of females destroy the male's own sense of community and identity. Attacks are therefore specifically calibrated to destroy the psychology of both sexes and diminish their will to remain in their ancestral lands.

Plenty of testimonies describe the typical raids of government forces and the Janjaweed. Surprise raids are mounted against communities. Villages are surrounded and males systematically are killed. Females, including young girls, are then raped and subjected to all sorts of sexual violence that reveal the deliberate intent to destroy an entire ethnicity and affirm the aggressor's own ethnic supremacy. It is a consolidated practice to scar the face of females subjected to rape as a "mark of infamy" that transforms them into outcasts not easily accepted again by their families and communities. Furthermore, many victims have narrated how their persecutors taunted them by claiming that they would use their inferior bodies to make fairer babies and improve the race. Like in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Rwanda, violent conflict worked to deny agency to women and turn them into passive "bodies" for the affirmation of one identity over the other.

It is important to highlight that such violence is directed eminently towards civilians, as actual clashes being regularized militias are comparatively few and most operations are staged against communities accused of siding with the insurgents. In addition to violence perpetrated against individuals, scorched-earth tactics employed by the attackers include torching dwellings and farming fields, killing of cattle, and fouling of rare, precious water sources. All these actions once again reveal the intent to eradicate the Fur, Zaghawa, Masolit, and other non-Arab groups from Darfur.

In the face of such terrible violence aiming to destroy whole societies, one wonders how the international community could fail to unite in declaring the Darfur tragedy as genocide. In fact, the UN Security Council did mandate the formation of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur in 2004 to investigate reports on humanitarian law and human rights violations crimes, including acts of genocide. In its 2005 final report, the Commission concluded that Sudanese authorities generally resorted to disproportionate use of force. The report confirmed that the Government of the Sudan and the Janjaweed are

responsible for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law amounting to crimes under international law but also that the government of the Sudan has not pursued a policy of genocide (International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur 2005 [4]). The Commission admitted that individuals, including government officials, could have committed acts of genocide but this could only be confirmed by competent judicial institutions. Several commentators have pointed out that too literal adherence to the international legal norms on genocide prevented the Commission from gaining a comprehensive understanding of the general picture and the genocidal nature of this case.

The judicial approach to Darfur also has been disappointing. The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002 meant that, unlike for Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, no ad-hoc international judge was set up to deal with Darfur. The strength of ad-hoc tribunals is that they are recognized by the countries in which crimes were committed. Sudan, on the other hand, is a party to neither the UN Convention on Genocide nor the treaty establishing the ICC. The ICC prosecutor did indict al-Bashir and other Sudanese leaders for acts of genocide and, more recently, raised a new, far more progressive indictment that recognizes rape as an instrument of genocide. However, proceedings have been hampered by Sudan's refusal to cooperate and the current impossibility that al-Bashir and his acolytes will be extradited or submit voluntarily to the authority of the ICC. Therefore, justice and recognition for the tragedies suffered eludes the victims and peoples of Darfur.

## Conclusion

When examining genocide, we can see that victimization of individuals during political violence is gendered, particularly if we consider gendercide. At every turn, societal expectations related to gender are tied into victimization. Women are more often seen as victims of violence than as agents of violence. As such women are very much present in violent context but their presence is understood as one of passivity and not necessarily that of agency.

While men are more likely to be victims of political violence (and in fact most gendercides are of battle-age men), women and men are victimized during incidents of political violence. Rape, a weapon used in war, more often impacts women, but the reasoning for rape is gendered as men try to attack other men through women's bodies. However, rape is not reserved for women as men also are victims of rape and sexual violence.

International tribunals have been used to punish perpetrators of political violence, but tribunals do not convict many perpetrators and they may not serve as the best avenue for victims to regain agency. In fact, tribunals may re-victimize people all over again. Innovative approaches by community groups and non-profit organi-

zations are working outside of government structures and do have promise for regaining women's agency. More work needs to be done both in an applied and academic setting in this area, specifically to ask how programs can be constructed to allow individuals to move from victim to agent even in settings rife with gendered assumptions about political violence and victimhood.

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# Chapter 5

## Women as Victims of Political Violence, Terrorism



### Introduction

Shenila Khoja-Moolji, an academic and expert on gender and education, debates the victimization of girls seeking education in Pakistan. She points out that extremists, such as those in the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP; Taliban Movement of Pakistan), stop girls from attending schools by destroying schools as well as attacking individual women, but she also critiques the West for perpetuating a narrative that women in South Asia are uneducated and in need of being rescued by foreign organizations (Khoja-Moolji 2016). She states:

“Girls’ education – or, lack thereof – thus, has become a way in which Western institutions have established their own superiority and, simultaneously, the inferiority of Islam and Muslims, deeming interventions necessary and even ethically imperative.” (Khoja-Moolji 2016 [np])

This chapter straddles the victimization puzzle posed by Khoja-Moolji, namely it conveys how terrorists act in brutal ways against women and girls while also seeking to assess narratives that situate groups of women as victims and, in doing so, rob them of their agency. For example, we discuss how terrorists use sexual violence, sex trafficking, and the destruction of schools as ways to pursue their political goals and increase their resources. On the other hand, we show that drones and the narrative surrounding them also harm women as they produce a gendered way of viewing men and women in the context of conflict. Although we tend to focus on ways terrorists victimize women and girls, we also discuss the gendered victimization of men as well as how some women, as survivors, assert political agency *vis-à-vis* terrorists. We begin our discussion below with a numerical analysis of how many women and men are mortal victims of various terrorist attacks.

## Gendered Victims of Terrorism

Policymakers, elites, and the public in the United States have used the term “war on terror” to refer to the country’s response to September 11, 2001. Given that terrorism and the fight against it can be perceived as a type of war, it is not surprising that more men than women fight in this war and are likely to be victims of terrorist violence. Men make up the majority of fighters in terrorist organizations and men predominate in militaries fighting terrorists in conflict areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, one way to evaluate the gendering of terrorism’s victims is to look at the sex identity of victims killed by terrorist organizations. In other words, who does terrorism and the fight against it tend to seriously or mortally wound?

For example in the Basque Country in Spain, in the more than 40 years of ETA terrorism (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Homeland and Freedom), over 800 people were killed. Government estimates of victims by sex show that men were 93% of ETA’s mortal victims. More men have died because police, state security forces, and politicians are ETA targets. Women have gained political representation in Spanish political institutions since the 1990s, but men still hold more of these targeted positions (Varona 2009). Though most of ETA’s victims were targeted for death as enemies of the group, 87% of women killed by ETA were indiscriminate deaths, meaning they were not direct targets but bystanders in a large attack on other people. The sex of targeted victims of terrorism in the late twentieth century was the same for the Red Army Faction (Germany 1970–1998); this Marxist group targeted businessmen and politicians, thus most of its victims were men.

Although recent terrorist attacks are more indiscriminate than the aforementioned assassinations in Spain and Germany, we find that some Al Qaeda attacks in the early 2000s killed more men than women. For example, the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 off the coast of Yemen was directed against a military installation, and more men died in this attack than women. A similar conclusion is true for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center. It is estimated that approximately 75–80% of the victims were men (CNN 2017). The reason for a greater number of men victims is due to the composition of those in the World Trade Center buildings when they collapsed. Many first responders died as well as people working in financial institutions; both of these groups of individuals worked in male-dominant employment.

The above cases notwithstanding, many times when fundamentalist Islamic groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS indiscriminately kill civilians, mortality rates tend to be more balanced between men and women victims. For example, a biological attack would hurt all citizens in the attack’s vicinity and not just men politicians or businesspersons. The same could be said of a vehicle ramming attack, i.e., when vehicles operated by terrorists slam into a crowd on a busy city street. Some terrorists see the general population as targets and may conduct attacks that kill persons – men, women, and children – unrelated to politics. Osama bin Laden confirmed this approach in the late 1990s when he declared deaths of American civilians as part of a global jihad, meaning that Al Qaeda sees everyday citizens as fair targets of terrorism.

Three examples demonstrate this current reality of terrorism's victimization. First, the largest terrorist attack on European soil since 2000 occurred in Madrid at the city's Atocha train station. In this attack, 192 people lost their lives. Of the mortal victims, 57% were men and 43% were women. Children lost their lives as well. In the summer of 2016, a truck ran into a crowd in Nice, France, killing 84 people, 48 women (57%) and 36 men (43%). In August 2017, in another truck attack on a crowd in Barcelona, 7 of the 13 deaths were women.

A notable exception to the indiscriminate nature of recent terrorist attacks in Europe is the attack on Ariana Grande's concert in Manchester, England on May 22, 2017. Most of the mortal victims in this attack were women and girls (17 of 22; of the total victims, 77% were female). The youngest victim of the attack was an 8-year-old girl. The reason why the victims are so heavily balanced towards women and girls is the fact that Ariana Grande appeals to young fans, and especially girls. Many young girls were in attendance at the concert, and most of the adult victims of the attack were parents (mothers and fathers) accompanying their children to the concert.

The terrorist motivation behind the Manchester attack can be interpreted in a couple of ways. One reason for the attack was that Salman Abedi, the 22-year-old suicide bomber, acted in revenge for the stabbing death of his friend, who he believed had been targeted because of his Islamic religious faith. ISIS did claim responsibility for the Manchester attack and Salman's father considered him to be radicalized; however, some sources dispute that Salman was working within a larger network of terrorists. Another interpretation of motive pertains to gender, specifically that Abedi and his accomplices targeted women and girls at the concert (Crockett 2017; D'Silva 2017; Gilbert 2017; Guardian Letters 2017; Loxley 2017; Summers 2017). Ariana Grande's tour and her hit single were called "Dangerous Women." Grande explained that a "dangerous and savage" woman is a woman who is strong and not afraid to back down for what she believes. Therefore, in some ways her music stands for the empowerment of women. In fact, Christina Cauterucci of Slate claims her music expresses feminine sexuality and "threaten[s] the established heteropatriarchial order" (2017 [np]). The messages Grande creates through her music for young girls challenge the beliefs of ISIS. Elsa Marie D'Silva from NPR, explains that in some countries "men feel it is their responsibility to show" women that the public "is not [their] place and to punish" them "for being there and not at home" (2017 [np]). Although this second interpretation of motive cannot be fully confirmed, it is logical to suggest that men terrorists who seek to police women's public presence would consider women who publicly celebrate "feminist" music to be a worthy terrorist target (Fig. 5.1).

The Manchester case, therefore, demonstrates that terrorism can be gendered if attacks serve as a sort of retaliation for gender equality and women's empowerment. Terrorism is also gendered in the way that the media and society view women as the innocent victims of terrorism, who need to be protected, rather than acknowledging them as political actors themselves. Take for example the story that opened Chap. 4. Though one of bin Laden's wives fought back against US troops in the Abbottabad raid, in the year that followed, media discussed his wife and children as being caught up in terrorism, as innocents caught in the middle. A discourse



**Fig. 5.1** Ariana Grande benefit concert (Photo courtesy of Learning English VOA News 2017)

surrounds terrorism – both on the side of the US and the side of global terrorist networks – that women and children are not safe due to the war on terror. In other words, both the US and her enemies express concerns about innocent women who are seemingly on the frays of terrorist activity.

Western, developed countries often claim the victimization of women as a way to justify action in conflict zones. One 2012 headline about genocide in Syria read: “Dead Babies. Dead Women. No Action.” The message conveyed here is that action must be taken in order to save innocent lives, and specifically those of women and young children. A similar framing of action to protect victimized women is apparent following September 11, 2001 when the US invaded Afghanistan. The United States and its leaders expressed concern about the women of Afghanistan and their oppression under the Taliban that governed the country between 1996 and 2001. In a radio address in November 2001, First Lady Laura Bush announced that the Bush administration was kicking off a “world-wide campaign to focus on the brutality against women and children by the Al Qaeda terrorist network and the regime it supports in Afghanistan, the Taliban” (quoted in Cooke 2002 [469]). Though packaged through the words of Laura Bush, feminist scholars saw the administration expressing a form of “masculinist protection.” Male, American troops were going to save Afghani women who were the victims (Young 2003). A more direct assertion is that the war was an example of “white men saving brown women,” thus serving as an insult to the Afghani women who rarely gained voice in the matter (Cooke 2002 [469]; Spivak 1988). The framing of Muslim women in Afghanistan as victims also recalls a colonialist sentiment, as British and French activists in colonial times sought to liberate women in their respective empires from circumstances such as child marriage (Abu-Lughod 2002).

A more current example of “saving women” pertains to European women who have become supporters of ISIS and who seek to join the terrorist group in its

territories in Syria and Iraq, as discussed in Chaps. 2 and 3. Ahmad discusses how views regarding these women, often referred to as “jihadi brides,” stem from the notion that Muslim women are deserving of “pity” and in need of “rescuing.” This sentiment instructs us to rescue Muslim women who live in Europe from their families and cultural heritages, so that “the West” can become “the source of their freedom and safety” (2017 [39]). The women Ahmad discusses, who number about 100 of the 700 British Muslims who have joined ISIS in its territories, appear in the media as victims who were duped online by ISIS recruiters or as “deviants” who chose to follow a savage path marked by ISIS. In the latter case, the media attributes agency to the women, but only does so in the context of criminality (Ahmad 2017). Neither of these explanations of women’s choices take into account that many British, Muslim women are highly educated, write op-eds about women’s empowerment, and/or have uniquely, self-constructed identities apart from negative tropes about Islam (Ahmad 2017).

The above examples demonstrate that victimization continues to be a theme in the war on terrorism. Thus, it is pertinent to ask why this theme is prominent, particularly regarding radical Islamic terrorism, and what effect it has on women’s and men’s lives. As mentioned above, a history of colonialism reifies differences between Islam and the West and it propels the discourse of victimization as a way to sympathize with the so-called backwardness of non-Western cultures (Martín-Muñoz 2002). This discourse is maintained by way of gender assumptions about Islam, Muslim men, and Muslim women that are prominent in media and society. The media tends to portray Middle Eastern men as fanatics (Nacos 2005; Berkowitz 2005 [608]; Jacques and Taylor 2009), which allows many in the West to perceive of women as “passive victims of sexual urges” of these domineering Muslim men (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008 [13]). As in the case of British Muslim women, very few social and political actors care to recognize the agency that Muslim women practice regularly. For example, a research project looking at the mention of Muslim women in regional Spanish newspapers found that “in only 14.9 per cent” of news items about Muslim women were the women discussed in ways “not related to the representation of ‘woman and Islam’, or rather, ‘woman as a victim of Islam’” (Martín-Muñoz 2002). As a result, women are only being viewed through their connections to religion and its supposed ill effects rather than being acknowledged for their “job-related, personal, political or creative aspects” of their lives (Martín-Muñoz 2002). Negating women’s ability to act in political and social contexts then justifies their need to be saved by men or ‘the West.’

Debates about drone strikes as a counterterrorism policy also invoke the gendered discourse of women victims (see the following textbox). The civilians killed in strikes are often referred to in news articles and policy discussions as the “victims” or as the “collateral damage” of drones, and they most often are portrayed as having a feminine face or the face of children. Moreover, Box 5.1 demonstrates how the two sides in drone warfare (terrorists v. drone operators) are perceived of as male. We also show that terrorists who target the United States think of women as victims who need to be protected and they use the victimization discourse as tool for terrorist recruitment.

**Box 5.1: Gendering of Drone Strikes**

Barack Obama's administration (2009–2017) is infamous for its use of drone warfare as a counterterrorism strategy in countries such as Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Libya. In fact, Obama used drone strikes to kill terrorists far more often than George W. Bush. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) estimates that “between Jan. 20, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2015, there were 473 strikes that killed between 2,372 and 2,581 combatants and between 64 and 116 noncombatants” (Zenko 2016). Critics of the US government believe the government seriously underrepresents civilian casualties. Non-government estimates of deaths of this same time period are higher: 4189 deaths, of whom 474 were civilians.

A 2015 article from *The Daily Beast* about a woman drone operator is a fitting way to introduce how these casualties are gendered in the eyes of government and non-government actors. The article's tagline reads as follows: “Her name is ‘Sparkle.’ She operates a drone. She is sick of whiny boys. And she is perfectly OK with dealing out death” (Maurer 2015). The article goes on to describe the tense and skillful moments in the life of a drone operator. Gendering is apparent in several parts of the article, as the author subtly marks drone operations as a masculine job that pits good guys against the bad guys who do bad things “to their women.” In other words, the men who are targeted by drones, presumably Muslim and/or from the Middle East, are deserving of death due to their connections to terrorism as well as their cultural views on women. What is more, feminine gender attributes cannot be harnessed for the job of a drone operator. As ‘Sparkle’ explains:

“When you hit a truck full of people, there are limbs and legs everywhere... I watched a guy crawl away from the wreckage after one shot with no lower body. He slowly died. You have to watch that. You don't get to turn away. You can't be that soft girly traditional feminine and do the job.” (Maurer 2015 [np])

If drone operations are associated with men and the operators are fighting a war against men in terrorist hotspots, it stands to question “where are the women” in local contexts of political violence and how are they perceived by actors on both sides in the conflict? We argue here that most actors – whether on the side of terrorism or counterterrorism – frame women “on the ground” as victims. They are collateral damage of drone strikes, as they themselves are not perceived of as terrorists. Instead, they are attributed no agency as victims of their own culture and in their deaths.

Particularly, we find women discussed through the trope of “womenandchildren.” Cynthia Enloe, writing about the first war in Iraq (1990–1991), coined “womenandchildren” as a one word moniker “to connote women being seen as helpless, and in a group without agency, or like children” (Sjoberg 2007; also Dyvik 2014). In August 1990, Saddam Hussein's forces took US and Western nationals as hostages in Iraq and Kuwait, with the intention of





**Fig. 5.2** Protesting Obama’s drones with sign “When Drones Fly Children Die” (Photo courtesy of Debra Sweet 2013)

using the hostages as bargaining chips to stave off military action against Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. (Freedman and Karsh 1993; ADST n.d.). Many of the hostages were from diplomatic families, and Enloe argues that the media enabled feelings of urgency regarding the rescue of women and children hostages, and the resulting outrage became validation for US military action (Enloe 1990). In short, “womenandchildren” served as a call for the state’s mobilization for war (Eisenstein 2013). It therefore is a trope that justifies political action, particularly war, on account of saving the helpless (Fig. 5.2).

War is fought to save women “at home,” and political action abroad also is justified in places where women are labeled as backward and beholden to their men. For instance, the Western press and US officials “legitimized the [Afghanistan] war as a rescue mission” aimed at the passive Afghani women (Anderson 2006 [ii]). Contemporary conflicts like the one in Syria also reflect the “womenandchildren” trope. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, both arguably coming from a progressive political stance on women’s rights, have used what Enloe would call patriarchal language to rationalize potential US actions in Syria. In 2013, Obama urged Congress to think about the “threat posed by Assad’s use of chemical weapons on innocent civilians and women and children” (Whitesides and Cowan 2013). Secretary Kerry, also in 2013, declared, “Let me be clear. The indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, the killing of women and children and innocent bystanders by chemical weapons is a moral obscenity” (New York Times 2013).

(continued)



**Box 5.1** (continued)

The ‘womenandchildren’ trope also applies to counterterrorism efforts, and especially the use of drones (see Heijthuyzen 2017). Government officials, the press, human rights organizations as well as terrorists view women and children, but not typically men, as the innocent victims of drone warfare. Men who are not terrorists, such as a man at a roadside vegetable stand or a father attending a wedding, have been killed in US drone strikes (see Shabibi and Watling 2016). Yet, as the table below demonstrates, political and social actors of various stripes usually portray women as innocent bystanders and men, if at all, as the ‘bad guy.’

In 2013, after the American Civil Liberties Union launched a lawsuit for freedom of information, the Obama Administration released its Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG) regarding its use of drones (US DoJ 2013). In its discussion of non-combatants whose injuries and/or deaths should be avoided, this document appears to treat men victims as a reality in the fight against terrorism; however, the Obama administration’s actual practices point to the “womenandchildren” trope. On the White House website page that accompanied the PPG’s release, the following is footnoted: “Males of military age may be non-combatants; it is not the case that all military-aged males in the vicinity of a target are deemed to be combatants” (White House 2013 [np]). That said, the Obama administration, as reported by *The New York Times*, “embraced a disputed method for counting civilian casualties...It in effect counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants, according to several administration officials, unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent” (Becker and Shanemay 2012 [np]). Women were assumed to be victims, without agency, of attacks.

It is interesting to note terrorists themselves, and not only the Western press and officials, view women and children as victims who elicit intense attention. In fact, the “womenandchildren” trope can be viewed as a recruitment strategy for terrorists. Any civilian death can harken feelings of revenge and/or shared sympathy between terrorists and civilians who have lost loved ones, but the deaths of women and children especially urge these sentiments (Abbas 2013).

We can therefore conclude that many actors related to the war on terror – state officials, media, terrorists, NGOs--perceive of women as victims and men as politically active. Because such a diverse group of voices illumine patriarchal views of victimhood, women’s agency relative to terrorism is being ignored consistently. Women are not recognized as terrorists or drone operators, unless they maintain masculine attributes and feelings. With patriarchal ideals emanating from all sides, drones have become a subject matter laden with intense biases against women (Table. 5.1).

**Table 5.1** Selection of gendered language related to drone strikes

Source of quotation	Date	Quotation (emphasis added in bold and italics)
Jennifer Gibson, Reprieve Human Rights Group	2014	“Drone strikes have been sold to the American public on the claim that they’re ‘precise’. But they are only as precise as the intelligence that feeds them. There is nothing precise about intelligence that results in the deaths of 28 unknown people, including <b>women and children</b> , for every ‘bad guy’ the US goes after.” (Ackerman 2014 [np])
Karen McVeigh, <i>The Guardian</i> author describing the words of Rafiqur Rehman, a Pakistani primary school teacher testifying before US Congress	2013	“He said that his mother was not the first innocent victim of drone strike, but that ‘dozens of people in my own tribe that I know are merely ordinary tribesman had been killed’. He said that numerous families in his community and the surrounding area had lost loved ones, including <b>women and children</b> over the years.” (McVeigh 2013 [np])
Leon Panetta, Director CIA at the time, speaking about a potential drone strike	2009	“If you can isolate the individual and take the shot without impacting on <b>women or children</b> , then do it. But if you have no alternative and it looks like he might get away, then take the shot.” (Whipple 2015 [np])
A H Khayal, Pakistani author and academic, in Pakistan’s <i>The Nation</i>	2010	“The masses are piteously ignorant. They just don’t know that the drones are not material creatures. Actually, they are spiritual beings. They don’t need earthly runways for taking off... They live in outer space, beyond the international boundaries of Afghanistan and Pakistan. When they feel hungry, they swoop down and kill innocent Afghani <b>women and children</b> . They eat the corpses and fly back to their spacial residences for a siesta. When they again feel hungry, they again swoop down and kill another lot of innocent women and children. Having devoured the dead bodies, they fly back to their bedrooms in space. It has been going on and on like this for years.” (Independent 2010 [np])
Noor Behram, photographer who works with human rights activists	2009	“Of all the aftermaths, this was the worst... There was big rubble, [much] destruction, and <b>women and children</b> killed.” (Ackerman 2011 [np])

## Terrorists Targeting Women and Girls

Although we recognize the hazards of discussing women and girls as “victims,” including the reification of colonial and patriarchal discourses, we now discuss the gendered abuses women face at the hands of terrorists. We do so to tie the literature about sexual attacks during wartime to the study of gender and terrorism and to acknowledge current events related to terrorist attacks on women. Particularly, we review attacks on women pursuing education, sexual abuse at the hands of terrorists,

and human trafficking of women by terrorist organizations. Although current events push us to focus on gender abuses by radical Islamist terrorists, we note that terrorists and many non-terrorists in Muslim communities see Islamophobia in the West as a means of victimizing women, expressed for example in harassment over religious attire, which occurs acutely following terrorist attacks in the West (Thomas 2015; Gur 2016). The West is therefore not immune from being the victimizer. As Abu Ithar al-Jazrawi, an ISIS fighter, stated regarding Western military action: “We terrify as they terrified... We scare as they scared. We make widows as they made widows. We make orphans as they made orphans” (Hurlburt and O’Neill 2017). Given that each side of the war on terror can be held responsible for harm against innocent victims, we conclude this sub-section of the chapter with a discussion of counterterrorism’s ill effects of women (but see also Chap. 10 for a lengthier debate about counterterrorism and gender).

## Victimization of Women in Education

Afghanistan and Pakistan offer the most extreme cases of terrorists targeting school children, and especially schoolgirls. Schoolgirls are maimed or killed by terrorists individually through acid attacks and collectively when arson and explosive devices destroy schools or school buses are attacked with gunfire (Adkins 2016). As Razia Jan, a founder of a girls school in Afghanistan, explains:

“People are crazy... The day we opened the school, (on) the other side of town, they threw hand grenades in a girls’ school, and 100 girls were killed... Every day, you hear that somebody’s thrown acid at a girl’s face ... or they poison their water”. (Torgan 2016 [np])

Malala Yousafzai, now well-known for her international activism for women’s education, was subject to this same type of violence in Pakistan. As a young girl of 11, she spoke against the Taliban’s suppression of girls’ education, and, on October 9, 2012, at age 15, she was shot in the head, neck, and shoulder on her way home from school (Biography 2017).

Statistics from Afghanistan and Pakistan illumine the extent of recent attacks on schools. In 2015 alone, 360 schools in Pakistani regions near the Afghan border (boys’ and girls’ schools included) were destroyed by terrorist attacks. According to the Global Terrorism Database, between 2007 and 2015, 392 people were killed in school attacks in Pakistan. Data from Afghanistan demonstrate how these attacks are gendered. Adkins (2016) explains, “female students have suffered the most [from school attacks]. Girls’ schools account for 40% of all school attacks, mixed schools account for 32% and boys’ schools account for 28%” [109]. Given that there are “less than half the number of girls’ schools than boys’ schools in the country,” a definite “a gender bias in the attacks” is obvious (Glad 2009 [2]).

The assailants in attacks are militant groups, such as the Taliban. It should be noted that the US State Department does not list the Afghani Taliban as terrorists because it is a larger force with control over territory and doing so would hinder negotiations to end conflict between them and the Afghani state. On the other hand, the State Department classified the Pakistani Taliban as terrorists. The Global

Terrorism Database counts attacks against education institutions as terrorist attacks, coming from Islamist militant groups in Pakistan and other groups such as Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). In recent years, ISIS operatives also have arrived in Afghanistan to recruit members. Terrorists from these groups have several motivations for school attacks. Educational systems are considered to be full of apostates who utilize curricula that counters what radicals believe. Destroying schools, therefore, is a way to stop non-radical teachings. Schoolgirls are particular targets because extremists see women's participation in life outside the home as counter to their views, with women's education being proclaimed as "un Islamic" by high ranking Taliban leaders in Pakistan. During the 1990s, when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, women were barred from schools and the workplace. Though schools for girls have reopened since that era, militants still dispute women's place in education, and, in places where the Taliban still dominate everyday life, girls' schools have been closed. A final reason for continued attacks on schoolgirls is the context of immunity surrounding this form of terrorism. States have not successfully tried individuals responsible for attacks, and, even in Malala Yousafzai's world famous case, only 8 of 10 assailants were held responsible for the attack (HRW 2017b). Boko Haram's ill treatment of schoolgirls is a focus in the textbox later in this chapter.

## **Terrorism's Sexual Violence Against Women**

As with other forms of political violence, terrorism often results in sexual abuses to women and men. In fact, the United Nations issued a report in April 2017 documenting the "increasing use of rape as a weapon of terrorism" (Leimbach 2017; UN SC 2017). Reasons for sexual violence committed by terrorists were discussed in Chap. 4, including unstable socio-political contexts, the shaming of victims, and the desire to create cohesion amongst terrorist fighters. Groups using sexual violence in recent years include ISIS and Boko Haram; however, sexual violence is/was present in other cases of terrorism as well, such as in the armed conflicts in Pakistan, Colombia, and in narcoterrorism in Mexico, as discussed later in this chapter (Rehman 2012; AI 1995; Leimbach 2017).

As touched on in Chaps. 2 and 4, the sexual violence wrought by ISIS includes gang rape, forced rape and marriage, and the sale of women into the sex trade in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries. Victims of this violence are often non-Islamic women, such as Christian women and Yazidi women; however, reports also indicate ISIS abuses of Sunni Muslim women (HRW 2017a, February 20). The Islamic State has given religious authorization to Muslim fighters to treat non-Muslim women as sex slaves, and victims report that fighters tell them that multiple rapes are a means of converting them to Islam (Atler 2015). Sunni Muslim women report that they are targets because their husbands are enemies of ISIS – as they are police officers or they have fled the Islamic State for other reasons.

The case of Yazidi women is perhaps the most newsworthy account of ISIS's practices of sexual slavery. In August 2014, ISIS invaded the Sinjar region of northern Iraq, which is the ancestral homeland of the Yazidis, a minority group who

practices an ancient religion related to Zoroastrianism and the Abrahamic faiths. ISIS does not consider the group to be a “people of the book,” meaning that they do not ascribe to the Bible or Koran (Ahram 2015). For this reason, they have been targeted throughout history. At Sinjar, deemed a genocide by an United Nations commission, 10,000 Yazidis were killed or enslaved. The UN Commission of Inquiry reports, “Thousands of Yazidi men and boys remain missing and the terrorist group continues to subject some 3000 women and girls in Syria to horrific violence including brutal daily rapes and beatings” (UN News Center 2017). Nadia Murad, a Yazidi woman in her twenties, survived the massacre, was sexual enslaved, but later escaped and began a non-profit to benefit other survivors. Her brothers were killed as well as her mother, who “was considered too old for sexual enslavement” (I’m W/ Nadia n.d. [np]). Many older people and/or disabled persons could not escape the attack and were executed by ISIS.

Reasons for ISIS’s use of sexual violence are akin to the use of sexual violence in other genocides: ISIS wants to humiliate and scare its opponents, and particularly those they believe are apostates. Rapes also are motivated by the goal of cohesion among fighters; ISIS fighters come from various countries and speak different languages, but rape is one way to unify all men fighters. Furthermore, the promise of access to women can be an appealing recruitment mechanism for the group (Hurlburt O’Neill 2017). The geographic, social, and political context in which ISIS fights also motivates sexual violence. The countries of Iraq and Syria are unstable, and, given this instability, immunity regarding sexual violence prevails. In other words, it is not likely that fighters will be held accountable for their actions if the states in question cannot even control their own territories. Finally, Rajan points out the sexual abuses that mark the recent histories of Iraq and Syria— even before ISIS’s arrival (Rajan 2015). Human rights violations and honor killings of women are not unheard of in both countries’ recent histories; thus, the sexual abuses of ISIS are not entirely extraordinary for their context.

## **Kidnapping and Human Trafficking of Women by Terrorists**

The ill treatment of Yazidi women and other women in ISIS territories may be considered **human trafficking**, which is defined by the US State Department as an “*umbrella terms for the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion*” (US DoS 2013). Human trafficking includes the kidnapping of women and their forced marriages to fighters as well as the movement of kidnapped women to other locales to be sold into the sex industry. ISIS transports women and auctions them to the highest bidders. Human trafficking can include forced labor and it can be sexual in nature, which is termed **sex trafficking**, “*when an adult is coerced, forced, or deceived into*” sex acts (US DoS 2013). Terrorists groups that commit human trafficking include Al Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab. Boko Haram, for example, kidnaps children who are used as fighters, some of whom become child suicide bombers. ISIS is known to harvest organs from kidnapped persons, allowing them to die and selling the organs on the black market.

Terrorists engage in human trafficking for several reasons – both related to achieving sexual power over enemies (see above) and for the enterprise’s lucrative nature (UN Staff 2016). Recall, as in war, rape and sexual assault is used as a way to generate fear in a targeted population (Welch 2017). This too happens in ISIS operations, as kidnapping, abusing, and selling women scare local populations and put them under the control of ISIS. The revenue that comes from trafficking is equally important to terrorist groups. Whereas in earlier years terrorists, and counterterrorist forces tracking them, had fixated on terrorist funding through drug trafficking (e.g., Al Qaeda and Taliban selling poppy), human trafficking is increasingly important to groups like ISIS and Boko Haram because it diversifies “their revenue stream” (Homeland Security News Wire Staff 2014). New sources of revenue are essential to terrorist operations because financing terrorism is more difficult in a post-9/11 world environment, in which governments track terrorist finances, thus making untenable “traditional funding sources, like contributions from rich donors” (Vardi 2009). The following case study explores the activities of Boko Haram, and, in doing so, captures how kidnapping and trafficking harm women and girls in Nigeria.

### **Box 5.2: Boko Haram**

In light of the British colonialism and the tumultuous journey toward democratic rule that characterize the recent history of Nigeria, it is helpful to view Boko Haram as a social movement, as well as a terrorist organization. Thus, the emergence of Boko Haram stems less from an ideological or religious adherence and more from the social unrest present in the larger society. While British colonialism suppressed the practice of traditional Islam in Nigeria, post-colonization saw the growth of some radical Islamic elements. One such individual was Mohammed Yusuf, the Salafist preacher who founded Boko Haram in 2002. Boko Haram embraces an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam known as Wahhabism and jihādī-Salafism, extremist Islamic sects that seeks to purify Islamic worshipers and convert or exterminate ‘infidels’ and ‘apostates’ by any means necessary, including violence (Kassim 2015). The group believes that past imperialism and current shifts toward globalization have rendered Nigeria a nation tainted by Western influence.

Following Yusuf’s extrajudicial death in 2009, Abubakar Shekau became the leader of the terrorist group. Shekau’s attempts to purify the State have included the declaration of anyone who does not adhere to the radical teaching as kafir, an unbeliever deserving of harm, as well as a stark opposition to democracy. By this, Boko Haram has justified committing atrocities against fellow Muslims and waging jihad against the State. Additionally, the group fights many other battles, systematically opposing any Western influence, especially influences within education. Most notably, in an attempt to halt Western influence and reinstate Sharī’a law, Boko Haram is known to target the education of girls, as well as known Christian villages.

Viewing Western influence as the source of evil and conflict, Boko Haram justifies the destruction of western-leaning social institutions as a method of

(continued)

**Box 5.2** (continued)

expelling systemic apostasy. Thus, the destruction brought about by the Boko Haram movement is but a step toward the terror group's goal of attaining a more pure Islam and the creation of an Islamic State. This holy purpose then drives members to be wholly committed, even unto martyrdom. The extremist ideology of the group has proven to be an effective recruitment tool, garnering support from individuals frustrated with Western presence and perceived liberalization among Muslims. The group has a pattern of participating in more lucrative illegal activities, such as robbery and kidnappings, in order to finance itself and gain leverage. This leverage, along with the looming threat of more attacks, gives Boko Haram the ability to demand that the governing authorities release prisoners associated with the group.

According to the Global Terrorism Index of 2015, which is put out by the Institute for Economics & Peace, as of 2014, Boko Haram has replaced ISIL as the largest terrorist threat to international security, claiming hundreds of lives more than the Islamic State. Together, these groups are responsible for more than half of all deaths attributed to terrorism (IEP 2015 [4]). The group has engaged in a wide variety of insurgencies, including attacks on police stations, the detonation of car bombs and IEDs, prison raids, mass market shootings, and kidnappings (Delman 2015).

Boko Haram recently gained global attention for the 2014 abduction of 276 girls from a government school in the town of Chibok, though this was not a new tactic for the group. The terrorist organization regularly attacks schools in order to disrupt the teaching of western-influenced education and the education of girls. Though a global campaign has been implemented to 'bring back the girls', only a few dozen have escaped or been released. The kidnappings serve a multitude of functions. The group can inspire fear in a community while showing the inability of the government to protect its citizens. Additionally, these abductions allow the group to gain women as sex slaves for their soldiers, a reward commonly promised to recruits. The captive women also offer the group reproductive capabilities as Boko Haram soldiers hope to reproduce and raise the next generation of indoctrinated fighters.

When kidnapped by Boko Haram, girls and women are given the choice of becoming a slave or a wife, but they are beaten and raped in both instances. Some of the women captured become supporters of the group, becoming enforcers and disciplining other captives. Likewise, through the processes of indoctrination and possible Stockholm Syndrome, many women transform from victimhood to an agentic member of the resistance movement who then take part in attacks. In recent years, female suicide bombers have been deployed to attack 'soft targets,' such as markets, mosques and other public spaces where the women can enter relatively undetected. While some may have sought this fate willingly, many of these assailants were either too young



to fully understand what they were doing, or were so psychologically tormented by Boko Haram insurgents that they lacked the proper agency to resist becoming weaponized. Though several terrorist groups have learned to utilize the unpredictability of female perpetrated attacks, Matfess and Bloom call Boko Haram's use of female suicide bombers 'disproportionate,' noting that the terrorist organization has been responsible for over 90 such attacks in the span of one and a half years (Bloom and Matfess 2016).

In the event of escape or release, women that were once enslaved by the terror group are left with lives shaped by their victimhood. The local and international community struggle to decide what to do with these women, fearing that they have become radicalized. These women, saved but forever in torment, find it difficult to reintegrate into the homes they left, as they often are faced with the disdain of neighbors and relatives. The women are commonly left with the 'Boko Haram wife' stigma that marks them as outcasts (Hayden 2016). In more severe cases, if a woman has been impregnated by her captor, both she and her child are hated and ostracized. According to BBC interviews of several freed women, an alarming number of them are so hated and marginalized that they long to be back in captivity. Further, others consider becoming suicide bombers (Leithead 2016).

The attacks of Boko Haram are not limited to any one area, and have resulted in regional instability. Indeed, the group has been known to commit atrocities in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. Many have been displaced due to violence, leaving these individuals vulnerable to structural violence, as well as sexual exploitation. A 2016 UN Security Council Report discusses some of the crises that have resulted indirectly due to Boko Haram. The UNHCR has reported a high occurrence of sexual abuses in areas affected by displacement, as well as human rights violations by the Cameroon authorities committed against Muslim youth suspected of ties to the terrorist group (UNSC 2016).

The actions of the group have also resulted in an economic downturn that devalues regional resources and makes it harder for governments to generate the revenue necessary to provide for services to citizens and pay the wages of security personnel. Trade routes have been disrupted by the violence, causing a shortage of supplies in certain areas, as well as inflation. Further, finances earmarked for social spending have had to be diverted to pay for counterterrorism and security efforts. Additionally, many people have been displaced due to the efforts of the terror group. These refugees have had to be taken in by those already facing drought and food insecurity, elevating the crises. With a high unemployment rate and the increased vulnerability of displaced youth, circumstances are favorable for continued abduction and recruitment of children. These children then are added to Boko Haram's relentless cycle of sexual violence and child suicide bombings.

(continued)

**Box 5.2** (continued)

In recent years, the Nigerian government has made large strides to rid themselves of the terror threat, rescuing hostages and reclaiming territory. Following the abduction of the Chibok girls, the international community has joined with Nigerian forces to ramp up counterterrorism efforts. For example, neighboring nations, NGOs and other, more powerful countries, such as the US, have provided military support and surveillance equipment to help Nigeria monitor the Sambisa forest and gain intelligence.

Boko Haram has lost much ground in recent years, having been beaten back to only rural areas and losing control of its ‘capital’ city in 2015. Later that year, the Nigerian president reportedly claimed that the terrorist organization was ‘technically’ defeated, though the group’s actions persist. The once large presence of the group has continued to diminish, in Nigeria as well as in the Lake Chad Basin region. Boko Haram has shifted to smaller scale, local attacks, mainly consisting of individual suicide bombings. This is possibly due to the efforts of Nigeria and surrounding nations to reduce the flow of money that funds the group. Further, there has been doubt that the leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau, is still alive. Boko Haram currently exists as a handful of guerrilla groups that use the plundering of goods and people to keep the fear of terrorism alive (International Crisis Group 2016).

Though Boko Haram seems to have lost its once wide influence in Nigeria, the institutional problems that brought it about remain largely intact, threatening to make the complete eradication of the terrorist organization a distant hope. While progress has been made, territory reclaimed, and some hostages rescued, the effects of the terrorist group’s actions have persisted. As of a 2015 Human Rights Watch reports, up to two million people had been displaced and thousands killed (HRW 2016). Additionally, many are still displaced, living in vulnerable refugee camps. Along with the difficulties of displacement, these camps have been the sites of further attacks by Boko Haram, recruitment, and reported sexual assault.

## Women as Victims of Counterterrorism Efforts

Counterterrorism, simply defined as measures “designed to combat terrorism,” yields gendered victims, both men and women (Crenshaw 2010 [1]). Perhaps the most infamous torture against men in a counterterrorism setting began in 2003 at a US military prison in Abu Ghraib, Iraq. The prison held both detainees who were common criminals and others who were high profile leaders of the insurgency against the United States. Photos emerged of the torture in 2004 that led to an international controversy regarding US interrogation techniques. Greenburg succinctly describes the nature of the photos:

“They showed US military personnel humiliating, hurting and abusing Iraqi prisoners in a myriad of perverse ways. While American servicemen and women smiled and gave thumbs up, naked men were threatened by dogs, or were hooded, forced into sexual positions, placed standing with wires attached to their bodies, or left bleeding on prison floors.” (Greenberg 2014 [np])

Examples of male victimization such as this one and the one of drones demonstrate that men are often targeted because of their sex and age; as in war and genocide, battle-aged men appear as threats, and thus they become acceptable targets of counterterrorism, even if their identities and intentions are unknown.

Counterterrorism programs may victimize women as well, especially women who are related to terrorists. Counter-extremism programs tend to “construct women primarily as relatives of radicals” rather than radicals themselves (Brown 2013 [42]), and data show that wives, sisters, and mothers of male terrorists are disproportionately arrested for the crimes of their relatives (Sjoberg 2009). Prison conditions for those arrested in relation to terrorism are questionable. For example, a study of women in N. Ireland prisons found that women prisoners under questioning were strip searched in the presence of male guards, regardless of whether they were pregnant or menstruating (Ní Aoláin 2013). Moreover, interrogations included sexually offensive language deemed to be gendered verbal abuse (Ní Aoláin 2013). Counter-extremism programs, which seek to identify possible terrorists and contain them before they act on extremist views, can put women in a difficult position of being “traitors.” States want to tap the local knowledge women hold in order to pinpoint sources of terrorist/extremist sentiment, but asking women to offer such information often amounts to them acting against their communities and close relatives (see Chap. 10). Women are sometimes terrorists themselves or they significantly support the actions of their male relatives (see Chaps. 2 and 3), but according to most discussions of counterterrorism, such as the one above about drones, we are left to think of them as helpless bystanders. Therefore, counterterrorism efforts can physically victimize women who are in fact bystanders and at the same time paint women only as victims and possibly miss their contributions to terrorism. If this is the case, counterterrorism policies will not take into account the salient threat that women pose as terrorists (see Chap. 10).

## Women as Targets of Various Types of Terrorism

Recalling discussions in Chap. 1 of the different types of terrorism, we now discuss how women become victims of narcoterrorism, machista terrorism, and acid terrorism. **Narcoterrorism** is “*the use of extreme force and violence by producers and distributors of narcotics against a government or population, intended to coerce that body to modify its behavior in their favor*” (Dyson 2012 [31]). **Machista terrorism** pertains to *situations of gender violence when masculine power is asserted over women to threaten, injure, and/or kill them*. **Acid terrorism** includes *threats or assaults using acid meant to punish, kill, and/or disfigure victims*.

## Narcoterrorism

Drug cartels use assassinations, kidnappings, and grotesque violence (dismemberment of bodies, public displays of bodies, etc.) to threaten local populations as well as state agents. Frequent targets also include journalists and human rights activists who speak out against narco-violence. Narcoterrorism is political in nature given that drug cartels seek to control political agents for the purpose of furthering their economic benefits (Campbell and Hansen 2014). The cartels infiltrate military and police organizations, and, in Mexico, they are responsible for the deaths of approximately 70 mayors and former mayors between the years of 2006 and 2013 (Cisar 2014).

Abuses by narcoterrorism disproportionately fall on men. Amnesty International reports that in Mexico in 2016 “29,917 people (22,414 men and 7,503 women) were reported as missing by the government” (AI 2017). Many of the disappeared have been abused by drug cartels, whereas others are victims of different types of violence that go unchecked due to the general state of impunity in Mexico. Although more men are victims of narco-violence overall, women experience harsh sexual abuses and sexual trafficking at the hands of drug cartels and many other types of assailants in Mexico (Fig. 5.3).

Therefore, we argue that narcoterrorism is gendered by way of its sexual abuses focused on women. The story of “Daniela,” a woman survivor from Nicaragua, shows the ongoing sex trafficking of women by Mexican cartels. Cartels (first the Zetas, then the Gulf Cartel) held Daniela for 7 years, during which, she was kidnapped and forced to work in a brothel. She once served as the slave lover of a Zeta commander, and she saw brutal killings of numerous people. The killing that most bothered her, however, was a 12-year-old boy who was also sexually trafficked and had become her friend at the brothel. At one point, she herself was asked to kill him in order to vet if she had what it takes to be a *sicario*, a hitman. Campbell and Hansen report that *sicarios* are responsible for sexual violence; “Women suffer rape and genital mutilation at the hands of depraved sicarios” (2014 [164]). In summary, women suffer terrible abuses at the hands of cartel members as well as members of the public and tourists who buy their services at brothels.

This is an important point regarding narcoterrorism – cartels are not solely responsible for violence against women in the context of drug violence. Rather, narcoterrorism creates a context in which the state is unable to hold any abusers responsible for their crimes. Criminals of all types go unpunished in Mexico. In fact, the Center for Impunity and Justice Studies (CESIJ) in Mexico calculates that in 2016 convictions only occurred for approximately 4.46% of the crimes committed (Woody 2016). The implication for sex crimes is obvious; if abusers will not be held responsible, sexual violence will be widespread, if not acceptable (AI 2016). What is more, the crimes often mirror the grotesque practices of the cartels (dismemberment, etc.) given a normalization of violent crime. The state is responsible not solely for the context of impunity, but also for being the assailant in rapes

**Fig. 5.3** Missing women/  
possible victims of  
narcoterrorism in Juarez,  
Mexico (Photo courtesy of  
Christopher Dowdy 2014)



against women prisoners. Because security forces have incentives to show they are fighting the cartels and imprisoning offenders, they often take people into custody and treat them inhumanely to elicit confessions before proper evidence can show whether or not they are guilty. Many women in custody, most of whom are poor, report rape and torture. The story of Mónica is illustrative; when she was 26 years old she “was gang-raped by six police officers [and] received electroshocks to her genitals” (AI 2016 [np]).

Narcoterrorism is also gendered in that threats between cartels can be posed in rape language. John Cisar, at the Center for Security Studies at Angelo State University, tells of a particularly disturbing incident:

“The bodies of four women and five men were found hanging off a bridge in the Mexican border city of Nuevo Laredo. The message apparently from the Zetas to rivals DTOs and is translated: Fucking (Golfas) whores, this is how I’m going to finish off every fucker you send to heat up the plaza” [33].

The threat to “whores” who will be “fucked” conveys that the abuse of women’s bodies can become a narrative of extreme violence. As extreme violence is doled out on women, so too will rivals be feminized and treated with bodily harm.

## Terrorismo Machista

Machista, the adjective form of machismo, conveys exaggerated masculinity. Terrorismo machista literally means terrorism arising from violence associated with extreme masculinity and targeted towards females. As described in Chap. 1, terrorismo machista is a term similar to the term **gender violence**, defined as *emotional or physical violence directed at either men or women based on their sex and prevailing gender constructions in society* (Carpenter 2006 [83]; Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence 2017). However, terrorismo machista's focus is on *women* suffering abuses at the hands of men in a patriarchal order. It is similar to what academics call intimate terrorism (Johnson and Leone 2005) or sexual terrorism due to patriarchy (Sheffield 1987). Machista terrorism can be wielded through the rape, sexual violence, and homicide of women, and, though it is a term largely used in Spain, it could refer to gender violence happening elsewhere, such as in Argentina, Mexico, or Turkey (see Hurtado 2015; Del Mar Daza Bonachela 2017).

The Spanish press inaugurated the term terrorismo machista, or *terrorismo patriarcal*, as early as 2000, and the Equality Secretary of Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) referenced the connection between it and ETA terrorism in 2004. She argued, "In Spain, there is another type of terrorism in addition to ETA, it's terrorismo machista that assassinates women and children" (Europa Press Staff 2004 [np]). Spanish feminists assert that machista terrorism is a public (not private), structural violence associated with the subordination of women under patriarchy. In this patriarchal order, men hold positions of power over women and women may be seen as property, lacking power and sexual and reproductive rights (Asamblea Feminista de Montilla 2012; Asamblea Feminista Langresta 2010).

One example of terrorismo machista is the harassment and assassination of Yasmín Rodríguez in Irun, a town in the Basque Country of Spain. Rodríguez, at age 37, was driving on a highway when her partner chased her down, stabbing her to death and injuring a good Samaritan who had stopped to help her. The press began calling Rodríguez's death an instance of *terrorismo machista*. In the same year as Rodríguez's death, 2009, 55 women died in all of Spain as a result of gender violence. That same year three people died as a result of ETA terrorism. Recent statistics show 55 women died in 2016 on account of terrorismo machista, and as of September 2017, 42 have died. (Separadas Y Divorciadas 2016).

The use of machista terrorism in place of gender violence has rhetorical value. Damián Moreno Benítez explains, the "argumentative value... of [terrorismo machista] precisely resides... [in a] metaphorical mechanism... for speakers who want to fight this social evil... It is intended thereby to elicit the same outrage and rejection that exists for social terrorism [like ETA or Al Qaeda terrorism] (2010 [910–911]). However, invoking machista terrorism is not only a means of drawing attention to gender violence, for it can be considered as urgent as political/social terrorism because of its similarities to it. First, like political terrorists, "gender violence offenders are also using physical force or psychological pressure as mechanisms to terrorize their victims, for the sole purpose of submitting to his [i.e., the offender's] will" (Europa Press Staff 2011 [np]). Thus, machista terrorism physically injures but



also psychologically immobilizes victims. Second, terrorism, whether political or machista, is undemocratic and serves to damage civilizations. Lusia Etxenike made this argument in an op-ed from 2007, explaining machista terrorism “is precisely an attempt to compare the comparable: the dimension of social evil of the phenomenon, its status as radical assault on the values of civilized and democratic coexistence” (2007 [np]). It is also a comparable, if not a greater threat, in Spain than political terrorism due to the numbers of women who fear machista violence and die as a result of it. Tweets drawing attention to machista terrorism emphasize how many Spaniards have been killed by terrorism in the last half century: “#Terrorismo: 1,220 assassinated in 41 years (Fund.Víct.Terr). #Terrorismomachista: 1, 242 women assassinated in only the last 17 #URGENT #EQUALITY.” Finally, political terrorism and machista terrorism intersect because men who commit the former are also men who have committed the latter. As discussed in Chaps. 1 and 2, terrorists and mass shooters are often wife/woman abusers. Helen Lewis reports, the terrorists in the Nice, Orlando (Pulse Nightclub), and Westminster Bridge attacks all previously had been identified as domestic abusers (Lewis 2017).

How political and societal actors respond to machista terrorism often mirrors its responses to political terrorism. For example, in Spain, activists advocate for women victims to have access to bodyguards. The state routinely provided bodyguards for persons threatened by ETA, thus it seems reasonable to activists that victims of gender violence be provided the same level of security. In protests in 2017, Spanish feminists also demanded that the state provide violence survivors with subsidies as it does for victims of ETA and Islamic terrorism (see Chap. 6 for discussion of feminist protests against machista terrorism and Chap. 10 for a discussion of police bodyguards for women).

## Acid Terrorism

Acid terrorism has been called gender terrorism as a way to mark it as a type of violence against women. However, it is also a tactic political terrorists and common criminals use to attack men and women. Thus, we define **acid terrorism** as *threats or assaults using acid with intent to punish, kill, and/or disfigure victims*. It is considered to be a type of terrorism because it is meant to terrorize a particular audience (mostly women, but men as well) and seek control over them. Acid terrorism is not contained to one world region. Though many cases arise from South Asia, acid attacks happen regularly in Africa as well as Europe.

The frequency of attacks in several individual countries demonstrates acid terrorism’s widespread use. Data suggests that Colombia sees approximately 100 victims per year (BBC 2015), and, in 2016, attacks using corrosive substances numbered 450 in the United Kingdom (Kakissis 2017). The Acid Survivors’ Trust International, located in the United Kingdom, reports “300 [recorded] attacks” in India in 2016, but notes that “many go unreported, so the actual number could exceed 1,000” (Dhar 2017 [np]). Many countries do not keep official statistics of acid attacks.





**Fig. 5.4** Cambodian acid attack victim, circa 2007 (Creative Commons 2007)

Acid terrorism is an appealing method to attackers because acid is cheap and easy to purchase. In Colombia, it is estimated that one can purchase enough sulfuric acid for an attack for a little more than one U.S. dollar (Jolin 2016). Acid attacks may also be preferred over the use of firearms because using acid makes it difficult for authorities to trace attacks to assailants. For this reason, and because of failing justice systems in many countries, acid attacks are rife with impunity (Fig. 5.4).

Misogyny is a prevailing cause of acid terrorism. Acid terrorism can be a form of gender violence and abusers can use an attack or the threat of an attack as a way to control women. Men terrorizing women who do not accept their dating or engagement proposals is a commonplace scenario associated with acid attacks. An example from Colombia bears out this dynamic. Natalia Ponce refused the attention of an obsessed admirer and in response he threw acid at her. Attackers also “act out of envy, jealousy or to revenge a perceived wrongdoing” (BBC 2015 [np]). In Ghana, Joyce Frimpoma’s partner arrived at her place of work, a beauty shop, and poured acid on her because she had earlier smiled at a male customer (Flackner 2016). Katie Piper’s story is similar; her partner raped her and he enlisted another man to throw acid on her. A former model, she is now blind in one eye and has visible scars; yet, she is a TV personality in the UK who has become a prominent activist for burn survivors. In Cambodia, acid attacks relate to gender dynamics but take a different twist, with victims often being the young mistresses of prominent men and attackers being the men’s wives (Delauney 2010).

Acid terrorism also arises out of volatile political and religious contexts. As we discussed above, Islamic militants use acid against women and girls who are seeking an education. Boko Haram, using acid, targets women for “dishonouring Islam” through “‘un-Islamic’ practices, such as a failure to wear the hijab, or for taking a job” (Zenn and Pearson 2014). Similarly, members of the Al Qaeda affiliate

Ansar al-Sharia have attacked women with acid who they believe are inappropriately dressed (Onassis 2012). In Kashmir, Al-Qaeda linked extremists, threatened women who do not veil themselves. A note from the terrorists proclaimed;

“We appeal to the public that they ensure that their women observe purdah [cover their heads and faces] in public places. If we spot any woman without purdah we will sprinkle acid on her face. If we spot any girl using mobile phone, she will be shot dead.” (Nelson 2012 [np])

Finally, we should note that motivations for acid attacks vary widely. In Tanzania, local Islamist terrorists who have been marginalized in domestic politics use acid terrorism against women and men for political reasons, and their victims include a moderate Muslim imam, a Catholic priest, and British tourists, who were young girls engaged in volunteer work (LeSage 2014). In 2017, a white terrorist in London used acid to commit an anti-Muslim hate crime against cousins Resham Khan and Jameel Muhktar (BBC 2017b, July 1). Because acid can be bought so cheaply, and a wide range of assailants use it with various motivations, it comes as no surprise that activists and survivors lobby governments to regulate the purchase of acid.

## Women as Agents of Political Action and as Survivors

Women in violent conflicts are complex actors. Women are not solely victims, but they sit at the boundaries of terrorist agency and victimhood (Ness 2005; Auchter 2012; Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014; Parashar 2014). Scholars and media should therefore take note of women’s experiences in particular cases of terrorism, listening more carefully to individual women’s voices who may be considered victims as well as survivors with political agency (Sjoberg 2009).

As in Chap. 4, we wrap up this chapter’s analysis by pointing out ways women respond to victimization with activism. This discussion then continues in Chap. 6, which analyzes women’s agency in social movements vis-à-vis terrorism. We narrow our focus here to activism by Malala Yousafzai and Nadia Murad. These women hold several things in common: they are survivors, they started non-profits to raise awareness of terrorist attacks, they have become the voice of other survivors, and they network with governments and international organizations to change public policy.

After her recovery from gunshots to the head, neck and shoulders, Malala Yousafzai visited New York in 2013 to speak at the United Nations about the education of the “world’s most vulnerable girls” (Malala Fund 2017). The day of her speech, July 12, 2013, was then declared as “Malala Day.” Yousafzai has been politically active in many more ways since that time. She published her autobiography “I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban,” and she has traveled to countries including Syria, Kenya, Nigeria, and Mexico to advocate for women’s access to schooling. In Nigeria, in July 2014, she demanded the safe return of the girls kidnapped by Boko Haram. Later that year, in December, Yousafzai won the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee applauded



**Fig. 5.5** Malala Yousafzai talks about the systemic nature of gender inequality and bringing about change (Photo courtesy of Southbank Centre 2014)

her by stating, “Despite her youth, Malala Yousafzai has already fought for several years for the right of girls to education, and has shown by example that children and young people, too, can contribute to improving their own situations” (Owen et al. 2014). Along with her father, Yousafzai co-founded the Malala Fund, which most recently has supported activists who pursue women’s education initiatives through the foundation’s Gulmakai Network (Malala Fund n.d.). Ten education projects are included in the inaugural class of the network, from countries such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Lebanon, and Turkey (Fig.5.5).

The activism of Nadia Murad, a Yazidi woman who survived ISIS violence, focuses on giving survivors voice and holding ISIS accountable for its crimes. Murad experienced abuses by ISIS in 2014, and by 2015 she was testifying before the UN Security Council about ISIS treatment of the Yazidi community. Her testimony was meant to raise awareness of the Yazidi plight as well as a means to urge international actors to rescue Yazidi still in the hands of ISIS. Furthermore, her testimony was also intended as an avenue to share her personal story (Alter 2015). The goal of her foundation, Nadia’s Initiative, is similar: she wants “to be a global voice for survivors and ensure victims of mass atrocities, sexual enslavement and human trafficking have a voice on the world stage” (I’m W/ Nadia Staff n.d. [np]). It should also be noted that, like Yousafzai, Murad’s activism is worthy of international recognition. In 2016, the Iraqi government nominated her for the Nobel Peace Prize, and she has been named the Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking of the United Nations (Sul 2017). Murad’s most recent activism surrounds accountability for ISIS at the International Criminal Court. To do so, she has urged the UN Human Rights Commissioner “to establish a Commission of Inquiry that collects evidence” on ISIS atrocities (Global Citizen Staff 2017 [np]) (Fig. 5.6).



**Fig. 5.6** Nadia Murad meets with U.S. Department of State Secretary Kerry (Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of State 2015)

## Conclusion

We opened this chapter with a call from Shenila Khoja-Moolji to think of victimization in complex ways. Therefore, we have discussed how terrorism victimizes men and women and how narratives surrounding terrorism locate women, and particularly Muslim women, as the ultimate victims of extremist men. Throughout these discussions we have recognized that such narratives ignores women as political and social agents, and instead sees them as a fixed group, without diverse identities, who simply need to be saved. This was particularly the case in our discussion of drones. Almost all actors in drone debates and operations—US officials, NGOs, and terrorist themselves—consider women victims, without recognizing that some women could be terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. To guard against this dynamic in our discussion of education attacks and sexual abuses by terrorists, we stress that women survivors respond by claiming their rights and educating the international community about the needs of other survivors. Therefore, in real life, women are agents who can change contexts rife with terrorism.

Another conclusion emerging from this chapter relates to the harsh consequences of impunity as it relates to gender violence. Narcoterrorism, acid terrorism, and school attacks go unchecked around the world because some states' judicial systems do not hold responsible perpetrators of violence. As a result, attacks against women become commonplace and tolerated. What is more, in the gruesome context of narcoterrorism, impunity breeds a context in which various assailants use the grotesque torture techniques of cartels to abuse women. In Chap. 6, we discuss a women's group in Mexico that urges greater responses from the Mexican judicial system. This group's work is essential, and we argue that similar efforts by women around the world should be encouraged and recognized by scholars and the international community.

A final conclusion relates to similarities between victimization through terrorism and victimization in war and genocide. As in Chap. 4, we found here that sexual abuse and rape is meant to unify assailants and further their political goals to suppress populations perceived as enemies. Thus, the victimization of women is not only a matter of unchecked sexual urges in the permissive context of violence but, rather, a purposeful political strategy of wielding power. Similarly, though sex trafficking serves the instrumental purpose of funding terrorism, it is also a political strategy to scare and humiliate enemy populations. In the history of terrorism, and the funding of it, the use of human and sex trafficking is fairly recent. As a result, we urge more scholarship that examines how terrorists employ this funding strategy and whether governments are responding to it as they do for other types of terrorist funding.

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# Chapter 6

## Women in Social Movement Groups as Related to Terrorism



### Introduction

“Can a mother’s love prove greater than the lure of extremists? A new coalition of parents in Europe hopes so” (Millar 2016 [np]).

Lisa Millar, in an Australian newspaper, asked whether a mother’s love can be strong enough to stop extremism. In the article “Fighting terrorism with love: How mothers can use emotion to tackle extremism,” Millar details a conference in Paris, at which mothers came together to counter the emotional appeals of ISIS with the emotional power of the family to stop young people from recruitment to terrorism (2016 [np]). At the conference, Saliha Ben Ali lamented the loss of her son who had already left for Syria to join ISIS, but she championed the ability of mothers to influence their families and quell the appeal of radicalization. Also in attendance at the conference was a representative of SAVE (Sisters Against Violent Extremism), which is the world’s first women’s counterterrorism platform. SAVE began in 2008 as a project of the group Women Without Borders, and it champions a feminist agenda. That is, it emphasizes the importance of mothers but explicitly strives to make women realize their agency and responsibility in countering violent extremism (Personal Communication 2012).

In this chapter, we examine social movements, with a focus on women’s groups, that seek to address terrorism, but also groups of women who support alleged terrorists. Our goal is to capture the wide array of women organized in social movements as activists influencing the politics of terrorism and/or counter-terrorism. What are these activists’ motivations, goals, and tactics? How does gender influence their activism? How and why do they express maternal identities and/or feminist sentiments to address terrorism? We argue that women’s movements addressing terrorism largely group into two camps: women in groups who practice maternal politics by seeking goals related to their own children or to mothering their communities and groups that critique terrorism, security, and violence from a feminist perspective. Some groups, like SAVE, fit into both camps, and both camps undoubtedly

offer women a means to political agency that is rarely recognized in the scholarly literature about terrorism. Thus, by drawing attention to these forms of women's agency, we hope to inscribe their activism as an essential part of the politics of terrorism.

## Women Organized in Social Groups

Kriesi (1992) defines **social movements** as “*an organized, sustained, self-conscious challenge to existing authorities on behalf of constituencies whose goals are not taken into account by these authorities*” [22]. The claims of women activists typically do not make front-page news regarding terrorism; rather, they are marginalized. Thus, women use social movement activity to influence authorities and the general public. Scholars have detailed the actions of women's movements and women in social movements during and following political violence, in countries such as Sri Lanka (Alison 2004; Alison 2009), Palestine (Jacoby 1999; Sharoni 1995) and Ireland (Sales 1997; McWilliams 1995), but they have yet to take a comprehensive look at the many ways women activists address various types of terrorism.

We distinguish between women's movements and “women in movements.” **Women's movements** are groups with central goals pertaining to “*women's gendered experiences, women's issues, and women's leadership and decision making*” (Beckwith 1996 [1038]). “**Women in movements**” refers to *activism by women in movements not primarily focussed on women's issues and experiences*. For example, we discuss women activists in victims' rights groups. Though these women express gendered discourses, they are not in a “women's movement” because gender issues do not guide the groups' actions and men may lead the groups (Beckwith 2000 [437]).

The definition of a women's movement may be applied to feminist, anti-feminist and non-feminist movements (Beckwith 2000). Whereas **feminist women's movements** challenge “*political, social and other power arrangements of domination and subordination on the basis of gender*” (Beckwith 2000 [437]), **antifeminist women's movements** “*protect women's socially ascribed gender roles*” in the private sphere (Alvarez 1990 [24]). **Non-feminist women's movements**, unlike antifeminists, accept *women's entry into the public sphere, yet they do not actively seek changes in gender relations*. In fact, non-feminist groups reproduce gender relations as they often uphold feminine, wifely, and maternal ideals (see Ortobals 2010). Non-feminists respond to issues important to women and families “like education, child-care, [and] family violence” (Matland and Montgomery 2003 [61]). In this chapter, we consider mothers organized to end terrorist violence or to seek better treatment for their children who are alleged terrorists as non-feminist activists. The feminist groups discussed in the second half of the chapter see terrorist violence as it relates to patriarchal institutions, cultures, and practices that they hope to dismantle and change.

We group activism into two camps: groups premised on maternal identity and feminist groups. Three groups fit under the umbrella of maternal politics: prisoners' rights groups, victims' rights groups, and counterideological groups. SAVE, discussed in the introduction, is a counterideological group that operates through a feminist lens but stresses the importance of motherhood. Thus, we acknowledge that groups often function somewhere between our two major camps. The feminist groups in the second half of the chapter are oriented toward peace advocacy in the US and worldwide and stopping machista terrorism in Spain. We ask how each group acts to support or counter terrorism and how gender motivates them and frames their action. Some of the groups in this chapter are akin to what we found in Chap. 4; they are groups designed to tackle the struggles that genocide survivors often face. These women seek social connections to heal, cope, and seek justice, whereas some groups also seek political action to change the context of political violence. Thus, as in Chaps. 4 and 5, we show that women who are victims are often survivors who become community and world leaders.

## **Maternal Politics in Social Movement Groups: Advocating for Family and Peace**

Being a mother is one of the most acceptable identities for women in international politics (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). Motherhood is key to nationalism because women bear and raise each generation of a nation, thus they are a revered representation of entire publics (McClintock 1993; Bracewell 1996; Roche 2016; Beukian 2014). Moreover, because they are attributed maternal characteristics like care and gentleness, women often are viewed as less violent than men and more capable of facilitating peace in the international system (Åhäll 2012).

Three reasons demonstrated by three very different women's groups –Latina janitors in Los Angeles, Chilean Leftists, and Nicaraguan anti-revolutionaries – illustrate why women incorporate maternal identity into social movement action. First, women use maternal politics because the maternal identity ties to their everyday experiences and those of their children. In the case of union politics in Los Angeles in the 1990s, Latina janitors participated in protests because they wanted to better their children's lives. One woman protested for employment benefits because, "women take the children to the doctor, and they see how much it costs. And that's why we are fighting for health insurance" (Cranford 2007 [375]). Similarly, in the 1980s, Rightist, anti-revolutionary women in Nicaragua protested against poor prison conditions experienced by their relatives in jails run by the governing Sandinistas (Bayard de Volo 2004). During the right-wing Augusto Pinochet dictatorship in the 1980s, Chilean women joined organizations for families of the politically repressed, imprisoned, and executed. By pointing out the ill effects of state terrorism on their family members, these women added a motherhood emphasis to the larger pro-democracy movement in Chile (Valenzuela 1996).



Second, social groups practice maternal politics because framing protest as an extension of motherhood is strategic. Rita Noonan, speaking of Chile in the 1980s, explains that motherhood is a safe identity to activate – even to speak out against state terror—because motherhood implies care for one’s children, which is not overtly suspect in the eyes of authoritarian regimes (1995). Motherhood also becomes a strategic way to garner public sympathy for social groups’ aims.

Third, other actors (the state or NGOs) mobilize politically inactive women through compelling maternal discourses, thus convincing them to politically support a cause. During the 1980s in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas of the ruling, leftist regime organized mothers’ groups and used pressure from mothers to conscript young men into the regime’s revolutionary cause (Bayard de Volo 2004). Thus, rather than women organizing themselves from the grassroots, other actors – whether social groups or governments – may mobilize women by way of maternal identity.

As we review prisoners’ rights organizations, victims’ rights organizations, and counterideological groups below, we point out why maternal identity is essential to each group’s activism. We find that all groups use motherhood as a way to connect their lived experiences, and some see it as a strategic way to frame protest.

## Prisoners’ Rights Organizations

The ill treatment of prisoners is a historical concern, but sustained activism by and for prisoners stems from the 1960s (Jacobs 1980). In the United States and in Europe, prisoners’ rights organizations flourished in the wave of protest that also included civil rights, women’s rights, and third world activism (Hanshaw 2014). Across countries prisoners’ demands were similar: to improve living conditions in jails by addressing issues such as overcrowding and sanitation and to establish basic human rights for prisoners (Behan 2017; Hanshaw 2014). The case of Northern Ireland in the 1970s is particularly instructive because it includes a terrorism dimension. Due to the Troubles (1968–1998), more and more of the prison population became prisoners associated with political crimes (Behan 2017). They too were interested in improving living conditions, but they also resisted being labeled ordinary criminals. They wanted to be acknowledged as political prisoners. Despite establishing organizations in jails, holding hunger strikes, and having advocates outside of prison arguing their case, the British government largely did not respond to their demands (Behan 2017) (Fig. 6.1).

Prisoner demands about civil rights and living conditions continue in the modern day of terrorism, and, particularly, regarding international terrorism related to radical Islam. Anti-war protesters have critiqued the United States for disregarding the human rights of foreigners held as terrorist suspects (Mikkelsen 2007) and, in France, prisoners’ rights activists question the confinement of radical Muslims in special prison units. French prisons serve as a point of terrorist radicalization, and

**Fig. 6.1** Mural Dedicated to Bobby Sands, in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The IRA prisoner held in Northern Ireland died after participating in a hunger strike intended to raise awareness for prisoners' rights (Photo courtesy of the authors)



to prevent radicalization of ordinary prisoners, the French state wants to separate known radicals from the larger prison population (Bryant 2016).

As we examine prisoners' rights activism in the Basque Country of Spain below, we look for similar dynamics – what are the demands of prisoners and their families, how are they lobbying/protesting the state to achieve these demands, and is the state responding to them. Moreover, we ask how the activism is related to gender relations.

## Prisoners' Rights Organizations in Spain

Prisoners' rights organizations in the Basque Country lobby for prisoners with histories tied to ETA. The prisoners were either armed operatives or supporters of the armed faction who participated in the outlawed political parties Batasuna and Ehak that were fronts for terrorist goals. Thus, prisoners are in jail for violent and non-violent activities. The case of Aurore Martin, a French Basque activist, demonstrates that not all political prisoners have committed violent crimes. The Spanish state accused Martin of aiding in terrorism, because she has ties to the French Batasuna organization and Ehak, the Communist Party of the Basque Lands. She also spoke at a rally in Spain in 2003, at which she called out oppression by the Spanish state in an act of support for Batasuna (see Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2012). Though Martin is French, she was extradited to Spain, where she risked a conviction of 12 years in prison. Though imprisoned until her trial, she evaded a long-term prison sentence by confessing her terrorist participation to a Spanish judge in 2016.

The tough treatment of Basque separatists, evidenced by Martin's case, is one of the key grievances of prisoners' rights organizations. Separatist activists believe they are victims of the Spanish state, and they claim police brutality as well as torture occurring in prisons (Personal Communication 2012). Two prominent prison-

ers' rights organizations, Etxerat ('Homeward') and Guerkin accuse the Spanish state (and to a certain extent, the French state) "of terrorizing prisoners including beating, insulting, threatening, and spitting on prisoners; and submersing their heads into water" (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014). Thus, the organizations desire human rights for political activists as well as those who are already imprisoned.

Etxerat also demands that prisoners be located in prisons in the Basque region. The Spanish and French states purposely place prisoners far from their homeland as a way to stymie terrorism communications and actions. Prisoners' rights organizations argue for the repatriation of their sons and daughters back to the Basque homeland, with cries of "Basque prisoners in the Basque Country." The prison policy is a form of oppression in their minds because the prisoners are distanced from loved ones who can rarely visit them, and, when their loved ones do visit, they have to travel long distances and are more likely to be victims of traffic deaths. Etxerat organizes protests when family members are injured or killed in accidents en route to prison visits, and they arrange group transportation to prisons. (Note, Etxerat is talked about in relation to political memory in Chap. 7).

Men and women participate in these organizations, but mothers and wives of imprisoned operatives mainly started the organizations. This makes sense given that more men than women are imprisoned for ETA involvement. The prisoners' rights groups invoke the language of motherhood when seeking the return of their children. In January of 2012, at a prisoner's rights march in Bilbao, Spain, Consu Mayo, and a participant in Etxerat and the mother of Gorka Mayo, who was detained for participating in Batasuna, stated "my son ... does not have blood on his hands. For a year, he has been detained without trial. I am here to advocate for his rights"



**Fig. 6.2** Signs Flown throughout the Basque Country Calling for the Repatriation of Basque Prisoners (Photo Courtesy of Ukkerri (2010))

(Mora 2012 [np]). Women in groups like Etxerat often brandish flags with the outline of the Basque country stating “euskal presoak, euskal herrira”, meaning “Basque prisoners in the Basque country”, and they argue that their children should be returned to their families (even if not released from prison), by being incarcerated in their home communities. Thus, being mothers, and particularly mothers separated from their children, these women have been driven to politics as a way to help their families. What is more, some of the women who became armed operatives of ETA first participated in prisoners' rights organizations (Fig. 6.2).

Given that the Spanish state is the culprit and unjust in the eyes of Basque prisoners' organizations, the national state's response is not satisfactory to them. However, the Basque regional government and municipal governments have granted such organizations funds for travel to prisons and for educational events (Elorza 2014). These actions are met with disapproval from representatives of the Popular Party (PP), the center-right party in Spain known to be tough on terror. In the eyes of the PP, the prisoners' associations have close ties to terrorists and should not be eligible for public funds (El PP reclama a Urtaran que no subvencione más a Etxerat 2017).

## Victims' Rights Organizations

Perhaps the most famous example of mothers fighting for victims of political violence is the group Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo from Argentina. In the 1970s, the Madres' children were disappeared due to state terrorism, and, more specifically politicized, and the Madres were searching for their children in hopes of their return. The textbox at the end of this sub-section reviews this case in greater depth. The Beslan Mothers' Committee is an illustrative contemporary case of women in victims' rights associations. The group is responding to the deaths of 330 adults and children at the hands of Chechen terrorists in 2004 (Hoffman and Kasupski 2007). The terrorist rebels kept over 1000 hostages in a school for 3 days, and the siege ended when Russian forces moved in on the rebels, at which point gunfire and explosions killed the victims. Acting as mothers who have lost children, the Beslan Mothers' Committee has written letters to the Kremlin and has participated in “meetings, rallies, and protests in an effort to demand government accountability for the crisis' disastrous end” (Hoffman and Kasupski 2007 [38]).

In order to better analyze the below cases of victims' rights organizations in Spain, the United States, and Mexico, we provide a quick snapshot of the types of actions victims' associations take. The academic literature on these organizations is sparse, but it conveys that organizations exist to change political practices and discourses (Druliolle 2015). First and foremost, however, organizations form to serve the interests of survivors and victims' families (Hoffman, and Kasupski 2007). Organizations provide psychological support and unity for their members (Hoffman and Kasupski 2007). The organizations also name victims and give their stories voice in the public record (Hoffman and Kasupski 2007). Recognition as victims creates a victims' discourse that is essential to elicit public sympathy and

action (Druliolle 2015). Memory politics are tied to recognition; organizations seek specific means – whether monuments or books- as ways to enshrine the memories of loved ones (Argomaniz 2017). Memory efforts can be enacted by the organization itself, but organizations also ask governments to work with them to memorialize victims in a public way (more on memory can be found in Chap. 7). The government is also subject to organizational lobbying in regards to financial, medical, and psychological assistance for victims and families of victims. Alternatively, organizations can challenge the state by protesting it for its inaction regarding their loved ones (Weis 2017). Finally, some organizations claim a counter-terrorism role. In order to dispel the discourses of terrorists, organizations propel a victimization discourse as a counternarrative about the ills of terrorism (Argomaniz 2017). In performing all these functions, groups are also empowering themselves (Weis 2017). Political agency is amplified as groups move from an intra-organizational focus to one that seeks political change.

## Victims' Rights Organizations in Spain

In Spain, several victims' organizations exist with diverse political goals and affiliations. Whereas the Association for Victims of Terrorism (AVT) historically represented ETA victims and is close to the political right due to its tough approach on ETA, the March 11 Association of Those Affected by Terror (11-M) finds the political left to be more of an ally. What is more, family members of victims of the Franco regime and feminists fighting against machista terrorism also claim victim status on par with those who have lost lives to ETA and Jihadist terrorism. It is thus correct to say that victimhood is contested in Spain (Druliolle 2015). We focus here on AVT because of its longevity in Spanish politics and because it represents the interests of ETA victims and some March-11 victims as well; but, in the second half of this chapter, we discuss feminists allied against machista terrorism. Moreover, in Chap. 7, we detail the memory politics of COVITE (Victims of Terrorism Collective), a victims' organization geared to the Basque region.

The AVT's story can be traced back to 1980 and the actions of Ana María Vidal-Abarca López. ETA terrorism took the life of Vidal-Abarca López's husband, Jesus Velasco Zuazola. As a police commander in the *Basque Country*, Velasco Zuazola was considered an agent of the state and thus a target for ETA violence. The morning of his death, he dropped his four daughters off at school and assassins shot him near his car. As a young widow and mother in the Basque region, Vidal-Abarca López did not receive community or governmental support because it was too dangerous and controversial for anyone, including journalists and Church officials, to come out strongly against ETA. Thus, she moved her four daughters to Madrid and searched for a support network of other families hurt by terrorism. In Madrid she met Sonsoles Álvarez de Toledo and Isabel O'Shea whose families had been victimized by ETA (one of them a widow and the other caring for a husband injured by ETA terrorism).

In several ways, AVT activism may be considered gendered. The first leaders identified as widows/wives, and, though the president as of 2016 is a man who was himself injured in an ETA bombing (Alfonso Sánchez), the immediate past president (2010–2016) is a woman, Ángeles Pedraza, whose daughter was killed in the March-11 Atocha bombings. Given that more men than women have died as a result of ETA violence (see Chap. 5), many family members of victims of terrorism are women. Many women in victims' organizations in Spain maintain a discourse of personal victimhood – even as they were not physically harmed by terrorism. Women construct a narrative that they are living victims who must mend their families' lives. This parallels women as genocide survivors, as genocides also eliminate more men than women and leave women to reconstruct families and communities. Take for example the words of Vidal-Abarca; she once explained, “I had been to so many funerals...I had seen so many widows...who didn't understand the problem [of ETA], that...[ETA] had destroyed life forever. I thought I had to do something” (Calderín 2012 [np]).

The organization's goals and tactics are political in nature. The AVT advocates for pensions, housing, and health benefits for survivors or families of victims. Keeping in mind the Spanish and Basque context around 1980, one can argue that widows were in great need of public assistance. Widows of terrorism “faced numerous problems, including poor economic status, rejection from society, and their husbands' lost legacies... A widow with children had few economic resources, and she often faced callousness from society” (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014b). As reviewed in previous chapters, those lost to ETA were mostly state officials or police, and many in the public at the time believed they “deserved it” as agents of the state (Olvido Valle Delegada qtd. in María Díaz 2010). As a result, AVT women truly had to fight for political memory and for victim services.

Recent actions of AVT pertain to justice, extradition, amnesty, and memory. The organization's fight for justice is not over, considering that over 300 ETA deaths have gone unresolved and/or untried in the justice system. Extradition of former ETA members, many of whom initially fled to France, is a priority because “every extradition allows us to reopen five, ten or fifteen [unsolved] cases” (Chicote 2017 [np]). Although ETA declared a permanent ceasefire in 2011, AVT is opposed to amnesty for and societal reintegration of former terrorists. Most importantly, for victims, amnesty disallows full justice. In Vidal-Abarca's case, one of her husband's assassins was released in a wave of amnesty in the late 1970s, and he did not serve jail time until the late 1990s.

In addition to legal matters, the group focuses on teaching younger generations the history of terrorism in Spain. The organization facilitates academic panels about ETA terrorism and sends speakers to schools to discuss terrorism with the youth. In 2016, AVT released a video project of victim testimonies from families hurt by ETA, ISIS, and GRAPO, a Maoist group in Spain. AVT argues that victims' stories need to be disseminated because they are frequently “lived in silence and loneliness, being relegated to the personal sphere, and do not transcend beyond the borders of each family.” (Europa Press Staff 2006 [np]).



AVT's international efforts have blossomed in recent years. For example, in 2017, the organization put together an international seminar about assistance for victims of terrorism. At the seminar, AVT called on the European Parliament and the European Council to address victims' rights as they relate to the EU's directive on counter-terrorism (ABC España Staff 2017).

State responses to AVT are evident. Political parties meet with AVT to discuss its goals and how they might work the goals into party platforms and actions. Furthermore, the Spanish government passed a law in 2011, the Law of Protection of Victims of Terrorism, guaranteeing compensation from the state for victims and families affected by terrorism. The law guarantees state funds for victims and families, retroactive to January 1960.

## **Victims' Rights Organizations in the United States**

One of the first victims' rights organizations in the US formed in light of the Pan Am flight 103 bombing, which took the lives of all 259 individuals on board, in addition to 11 whom were hit by debris on the ground. The victims' families were first shocked and then angered once an investigation into the attack was stalled and yielded no useful information. In response, family members formed the organization VPAF 103—Victims of Pan Am Flight 103. This organization was short-lived, as it soon split into four separate groups (with one additional one representing victims living in the UK). VPAF 103 and Families of Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie remained the largest, most prominent, and successful of the four groups, and their efforts resulted in legislative action and responses from presidential administrations, after the groups participated in independent commissions, Hill hearings, and lobbying. Victoria Cummock and Paul Hudson—family members who both lost loved ones in the attacks—were leaders of Pan Am Flight 103/Lockerbie and VPAF 103, respectively. Victoria Cummock is particularly well-known for her aviation security and counterterrorism activism as she was instrumental in the effort to convince Senators Bob Dole and Ted Kennedy to support legislation that implemented the Aviation Security and Terrorism Commission, under President George H. W. Bush. In July 1996, she was appointed by Al Gore to serve on this commission.

Women, as family members of victims, stand out in the victims' rights activism surrounding 9/11. Almost immediately after the 9/11 attacks, family members of the victims gathered to form support groups. However, like the Pan Am attack, these groups differed in motivation and began to split in their missions as time went on. For example, the WTC United Family Group's message evolved over time. Originally centered around "loss", the group eventually changed their focus to "mass murder." They lobbied senators and the New York governor multiple times to try and secure the right type of memorial for the victims, and the organization eventually evolved into The September 11th Education Trust, which is directed by Patricia Reilly (sister of Lorraine Lee who was in the South Tower) and is focused on educating the youth about 9/11. By contrast, Peaceful Tomorrows has adopted a



more dovish tone in response to the 9/11 attacks. This group advocates for world peace and is completely against war. What brought them together is the concept that their family members' lives should not be used as justification for killing innocent people in Afghanistan (Couch et al. 2008; Peaceful Tomorrows n.d.).

One of the founders of Peaceful Tomorrow was Rita Lasar who died in January 2017. Lasar's brother was in the World Trade Center when the planes hit. He could have escaped the building but decided to stay back to wait with his friend, who was in a wheelchair, until the firemen came. After hearing about Rita's brother's heroic act, President George W. Bush decided to include the story in his address to the nation at the National Cathedral. The last thing Rita wanted was for her brother's death to be used as justification for war. In her response to the President, she published a letter in the *The New York Times*; it explained her disdain for his remarks and her desire to not use American deaths as a reason to invade Afghanistan. Another group of women instrumental in the aftermath of 9/11 were dubbed the "Jersey Girls." Highlighted in the textbox below, the Jersey Girls are responsible for demanding that an independent commission should study government responses on 9/11 and leading up to that day. They framed their identities as widows and mothers, thus they acted on their lived experiences of loss.

### **Box 6.1 'Jersey Girl' Activism Following 9/11**

In Chap. 4, we discussed how more men have been killed in certain terrorist attacks. The attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 resulted in the deaths of more men than women because many of the victims were in areas of employment with large proportions of male employment, specifically as first responders and in financial services. The families left behind were often led by widows who wanted answers to why their loved ones had been lost to terrorism and wanted to make sure nothing like it happened again. With these motives in mind, four women formed the group September 11th Advocates, which became known as the "Jersey Girls." All four lived in New Jersey and their husbands were killed on 9/11 in the twin towers of the World Trade Center (Stolberg 2004).

The Jersey Girls included Kristen Breitweiser, Patty Casazza, Lorie Van Auken, and Mindy Kleinberg. Most sources cite only four widows in the Jersey Girls, but a fifth, Monica Gabrielle from New York, not New Jersey, also was active in the group. The Jersey Girls became active in the months following the attacks. Kristen Breitweiser, arguably the most active out of all four women, spoke out for survivors and victims' families in November of 2001 (Bean 2009). She then became a spokesperson for the Family Steering Committee (FSC), a group that worked to "establish a commission to investigate 9/11" (Bean 2009 [430]). The FSC was an "independent, nonpartisan group of individuals who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001" (9/11

(continued)

**Box 6.1** (continued)

Independent Commission Staff 2005 [np]), and it was instrumental in pushing governmental officials to establish an independent commission to investigate the preparedness preceding and responses following the terrorist attacks.

The Jersey Girls' main goal was to find out "'why [their husbands] went to work one day and didn't come back'" (Stolberg 2004). For them, as Van Auken explains, "Nine/11... was a colossal failure. A failure of defense, security" (CNN Staff 2005 [np]). Consequently, they lobbied the government to study what precisely had failed on that day. All four women held rallies, researched and spoke for their committee, and gave interviews. For more than a year, the Jersey Girls met with members of Congress in order to pressure government (Fox News). Though they worked with other family members of victims, Chris Smith, a Republican Congressman from New Jersey (1981-present), once stated "The Jersey Girls were, in my opinion, the reason the commission [National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States] came into being" in 2002 (AP and Fox News 2011 [np]). The women also are attributed with fighting against the leadership of Henry Kissinger, who was first appointed by President George W. Bush to lead the commission. Thomas Kean, a former governor of New Jersey and a leader more acceptable to the women, replaced Kissinger. Kean reported in 2004 that the women "call me all the time...they monitor us, they follow our progress, they've supplied us with some of the best questions we've asked. I doubt very much if we would be in existence without them" (Stolberg 2004 [np]). The commission published the 9/11 Commission Report in 2004, which detailed counterterrorism strategies and failures before the attacks in 2001 and a strategy of what should be done to protect against future attacks.

The Jersey Girls sought to hold the government accountable so that they would be more prepared for future attacks (Breitweiser 2006); however, despite The Commission's efforts and their desire to "protect the world" (Braun 2012), the women, in retrospect, express doubts about preparedness against terrorism. Van Auten believes The Commission's report showed "reluctance to be too critical of senior government officials," and Breitweiser asserts the Jersey Girls' "work to campaign for more openness and better security tactics in defending the US against future terrorism has failed" (Harris 2011b [np]).

The gender framing of the Jersey Girls' activism is obvious in the sense that they are wives and mothers and have lost their husbands to terrorism. Breitwieser has referred to herself and the other "Jersey Girls [as] moms," as well as the "sole protectors" of their children" (Breitweiser 2006). The women repetitively use a private lives frame when discussing their actions and beliefs. They claim they were advocates in order to provide their children with safe homes and environments (Breitweiser 2006). They also present themselves as

widows. For example, Breitweiser explains that the “The Internet,” which they searched endlessly to understand issues such as FAA hijacking protocols, “has been our fifth widow.” Breitweiser also “is famous for bringing her dead husband’s wedding ring [which was recovered in the 9/11 rubble] along when she talked to politicians” (Goldenberg 2004 [np]). Even as they emphasized feminine frames, they demonstrated political agency by holding rallies and pressuring members of Congress.

The widows are no longer collectively active in politics *as widows*. In 2011 Karen Breitwiester said in an interview, “I am no longer defining my life as a widow. I feel like I am not going to let myself be defined by what happened to me on 9/11” (The Guardian). She also explained, “I don’t identify myself as a widow anymore. I am a single mom” (Goldberg 2011 [np]).

As of August 2011, only two of the Jersey Girls were still lobbying for public policy change: Lorie Van Aucken and Kristen Breitweiser (AP and Fox News). Van Aucken’s public policy work revolves around environmentalism and beekeeping. She is particularly interested in the impact of pesticides on bees and has campaigned for the Environmental Protection Agency to ban harmful pesticides. Kristen Breitweiser is the last of the Jersey Girls whose work still relates to issues tied to 9/11, as she has blogged for Huffington Post about topics such as Saudi financial connections to terrorism.

## Narcoterrorism: Victims’ Rights in Mexico

Women in Mexico organize for victims’ rights, though they face a different kind of terrorism and violence than in Spain and the United States. They live in a context of **narcoterrorism**, which is defined as “*the use of extreme force and violence by producers and distributors of narcotics against a government or population, intended to coerce that body to modify its behavior in their favor*” (Dyson 2012 [31]). Dangers associated with narcoterrorism include assassinations and kidnappings, and, as of 2016 over 100,000 people are dead and 30,000 more have disappeared since the Mexican government began a war on drugs in 2006 (AP and CBS News 2016). According to the NGO Justice for our Daughters, “Mexico’s 98 percent impunity rate for all crimes, corruption within various levels of government, and desperation among the population...has created a carte blanche for any type of gender violence to occur” (Justicia para Nuestras Hijas 2012 [np]). Dr. Cynthia Bejarano, a criminal justice professor at New Mexico State University, concurs: “People are willing to commit crimes against women—whether that’s sexual assault, rape, murder—right now is the time to do it because you can get away with it” (Frandino 2011 [np]). Thus, narcoterrorism creates a context for the victimization of women and girls (see Chap. 5).

Norma Ledezma Ortega, leader and founder of the NGO Justice for our Daughters (Justicia para Nuestras Hijas), lost her 15 year-old daughter, Paloma, in 2002 (Mayorga 2016). At the time, Ledezma was a minimum wage worker in a factory,

but she since has begun an NGO that receives grant monies from the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons and she has earned an M.A. in legal studies in order to further the activities of the organization. Justice for our Daughters, created in 2002, seeks information about feminicides in the Mexican towns bordering the United States (particularly Ciudad Juarez and areas in Chihuahua State). As discussed in Chap. 4, **femicide (also called femicide)** is the *targeting killing of women or girls*. Some femicide deaths in Mexico are directly related to the drug trade, but others constitute a form of gender violence, becoming permissible given the state's inability to control narcoterrorism.

Describing themselves as “poor women...[who] have suffered...the pain and anguish of losing a daughter”, the organization states “WE WANT JUSTICE, FOR OUR DAUGHTERS, FOR THE MISSING, FOR THE DEAD, WE DEMAND JUSTICE” (Justicia para Nuestras Hijas 2012 [np]). In addition to emphasizing their motherhood, the women take what they call a “gender perspective.” They call out societal expectations of women and men as well as recognize how women are in positions of inferiority to men (Hiding Under the Bed Is Not the Answer 2012). Due to the place of women in society, they believe violence against women is naturalized and normalized and they urge the end of gender inequalities in order to put a stop to the murder of women.

The activities of the organization are diverse. They have held peace marches and they work with government officials to investigate cases of missing women. With Chihuahua officials, the Justice for our Daughters collaborated on “Operation Justice for Chihuahua” which will fight political corruption, organized crime, discrimination and violence against women” (Sánchez 2017 The organization gives instructions to family members on how to approach the police and state governments when a woman in their lives is disappeared, and it provides a community for loved ones. Although families report there is “no cure” to the pain and loss they suffer, they feel hope in working toward answers with the organization. Moreover, the organization's Facebook page serves as a space to post memorials and discuss emotions related to losing a loved one.

### **Box 6.2 Case Study, Argentina: Maternal Politics and the Madres of Plaza de Mayo**

In Argentina, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, radical Leftists launched terrorist attacks against symbols of capitalism, including bankers, whom they kidnapped or assassinated. Right wing extremists formed militias and enacted terror in response. When President Juan Perón died in 1974, the ideological terror escalated, creating a cycle of violence between the police and terrorists, which prompted the military to take over the government in a coup. A junta of three military commanders ruled the country between 1976 and 1983. The military waged the Dirty War during this time, committing atrocities to root out Leftist extremists and anyone tangentially associated with them.

Between 9000 and 30,000 people “were disappeared” and/or killed during the Dirty War. Victims were typically young people from the working class. Prisoners were tortured by electrocution and sexual abuse, and people were killed in heinous ways – including death flights over the Atlantic, during which prisoners would be drugged and dropped alive to drown in the ocean. The disappeared, known as the *desaparecidos*, mostly were not heard from again, leaving families with no information of their deaths or ability to bury their remains. More men than women were disappeared during the Dirty War; however, some women prisoners gave birth in jail, were later killed, and military families adopted their children.

Women largely were not represented in politics and economics at this point in Argentine history. Many women were housewives, and the country's culture reflected machismo and marianismo. Machismo is exaggerated masculinity and indicates male dominance in society and politics, whereas marianismo reflects the adoration of the religious mother Mary and conveys the expectation that women's life pursuits are sacrifice and motherhood. The Madres of the Plaza de Mayo reflect these expectations, as their reason for mobilization was to find their disappeared sons and daughters. The women became activists as they sought information about the disappeared from authorities, and they turned to one another as they began to recognize their common plight vis-à-vis the authorities who would not provide information. The Madres began meeting in churches, and eventually moved their protest to the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires in 1977, gathering in a large circle in the plaza located in front of the Argentine Presidential Palace, Casa Rosada (Bouvard 1994). The mothers were mostly from the working class, were middle aged, and had minimal education. One mother explained:

“Each of us Mothers is born again in the circle... One Mother leaves her apron in the kitchen, another her sewing machine, yet another her typewriter. We have to be present at three-thirty in the afternoon... Not one Mother fails... What mysterious hand convokes us? The puzzle of our children's fate, which didn't stop us from going on...the son's photograph on the night table; every Thursday it would point the way – ‘Today is the circle, Mom: – to the Plaza!’” (Mellibovsky 1997 [82–83]).

At the plaza, women wore white scarves embroidered with the names of their children. Their maternal politics caught worldwide attention and hastened democracies like the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States to put pressure on the Argentine government (Bouvard 1994); however, even as mothers, the women were harassed by police officers and sometimes arrested, and one of their founders, Azucena Villaflor De Vicente, was disappeared in 1977. The mothers empowered themselves through camaraderie (Bosco 2006). One mother stated:

“My first time in the circle I was very scared...and deeply moved...Once we were in the Plaza, the fact of being arm in arm, or of walking together compelled us to

(continued)

**Box 6.2** (continued)

return... we could talk [to each other] about our concerns without any problem, without fear, and the person by our side listened very, attentively” (Mellibovsky 1997 [84–85]).

The women protested by walking peacefully around the Plaza de Mayo, every Thursday, continuing to this day (Fig. 6.3).

By demanding information about their children from Argentine officials, thus garnering international attention, the mothers helped to facilitate the return of democracy in Argentina in 1983. They have since won the 1999 Prize for Peace Education from the United Nations. Moreover, they have inspired many women’s activists worldwide – as their repertoire of maternal politics and peaceful demonstrations translates into other contexts in which women also confront state terrorism or warfare that endanger their families. The Madres splintered in 1986, and some of the mothers since have become controversial. One group of mothers, Madres Línea-Fundadora, desired information about the remains of relatives, and these Madres approved of exhumations by the then democratic government. Other mothers within the Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo refuse exhumation and closure, insisting that their loved ones deserve justice not burial as dead persons (Pauchulo 2008/2009). This second group, led by Hebe Bonafini, has expanded its activism to include



**Fig. 6.3** Madres with Argentine President Néstor Kirchner (Photo Courtesy of Presidencia de la Nación Argentina (2005))



support for the poor and against neoliberalism (Borland 2006). These mothers are connected to the international left (e.g., Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez), thus prompting some to accuse the Mothers of supporting terrorists. The other group of Madres (Madres Línea-Fundadora), for example, harshly criticized Hebe Bonafini for speaking out in favor of ETA in Spain. Though Bonafini advocates for those who have little power in the international system, like those in ETA seeking a homeland, her views are distinct from the Madres' original goal of searching for disappeared sons and daughters.

## Counterideological and Mothers' Support Groups

**Counterideological work** is defined as *challenging terrorist propaganda by “presenting alternatives to terrorist ideology”* (Hassan 2006 [535]). Counterideological work is among the goals of **Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**, which is a *“comprehensive approach to countering the spread of terrorism and violent extremism”* that includes, for example, harnessing the media, education institutions, community leaders and civil society in an effort to discredit terrorist narratives (UNSC n.d.; see also Chap. 10). Mothers become the conduit for counterideological work when they closely observe their children to see signs of radicalization and intercede by communicating with them and teaching them new messages related to politics, society, and religion.

Mothers' groups involved in such efforts have other purposes as well. Mothers mobilize in order to find support among each other. Women whose children have already been recruited into terrorism need social connections, considering that they face ostracism in their communities. Moreover, they have important lessons to teach other mothers whose children have not yet been radicalized. After finding support and community, mothers often turn to greater political involvement.

The group entitled Mothers for Life, active internationally but particularly in Europe, provides a framework for the analysis of other groups in the following subsections. Mothers for Life is comprised of women who have lost children and sometimes husbands to the terrorist struggles in Iraq and Syria (Mothers for Life n.d.). The network is first of all a community for women, but it is also an online community attempting to stymie terrorist recruitment. Thus, it plays a social and psychological role as well as a political one. Mothers for Life includes another feature apparent in the case studies below; the group harnesses religion as a tool against terrorism. As part of its fight against ISIS, the group has issued two open letters to ISIS, for which they have received harassment from the group. In their second letter, activists cited religious texts to challenge extremists who reject their mothers' pleas to come home. They explain that ISIS has ordered their children to reject and ridicule their mothers. They believe religion points to respect of mothers; the religious leaders who they reference are two of the most authoritative hadith compilers. Their 2016 letter states:



“As mothers it was conveyed to us that we have been given something in Islam that no other religion has: that our rights take precedence over those of the father, as al-Bukhaari (5514) and Muslim (4621) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, who is most deserving of my good company?” He said: “Your mother.” He said: “Then who?” He said: “Your mother.” He said: “Then who?” He said: “Your mother.” He said: “Then who?” He said: “Then your father.”” (Mothers for Life Network Press *n.d.* [np]).

We find below that mothers in places as varied as the United States, Pakistan, and Europe find community through activism, demonstrate political agency, and question the religious assumption of terrorists. The first case below regards Voice of East Africa Women (VEAW), located in Minnesota and active in the Somali-American community there. The last two case studies, of Aman-o-Nisa and SAVE, bridge the divide between maternal politics and feminism, for both emphasize motherhood while also promoting women’s rights and women’s participation in counterterrorism. Aman-O-Nisa is active in Pakistan, whereas SAVE is a European organization that works in many world regions.

## Voice of East African Women

Founded in 2012 by Farhio Khalif, Voice of East African Women (VEAW) is a non-profit organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota that seeks to connect women within their communities so that they can provide support for each other. VEAW was created in the interest of East African women, and since has become a safe place for East African and Muslim women. The main actions of VEAW include: fighting domestic abuse and sex trafficking, countering Islamophobia, and responding to hate crimes against Muslims. VEAW also offers legal services for victims, training and education, as well as therapy services. In recent years, VEAW started a program called Mothers Against Youth Recruitment (Mansaray 2015), as a means to prevent terrorist recruitment, particularly of Somali-American youth in Minnesota.

The US Congress reports that out of the 250 Americans who have attempted to join ISIS, one in three is from Minnesota (Yuccas 2015). The Minneapolis area has the largest Somalian population in the United States (Jany and Norfleet 2015), and it is estimated that the Somali community there totals between 60,000 and 100,000 people. By 2016, more than 15 Somalis from the area had joined ISIS or attempted to do so (Healy and Furber 2016) and between 2007 and 2015 at least 22 men left to Somalia in order to join Al-Shabab, an Al Qaeda ally (Jany and Norfleet 2015). In 2016, the US government prosecuted an entire terrorist cell of young Somali men who wanted to join ISIS. The men had “radicalize[d] each other, watching hours of violent propaganda videos, including beheadings and burnings” (Karnowski 2016 [np]). The defendants received jail sentences from 11 months to 35 years.

Because Somali mothers “play a significant role in Somali culture,” they are believed to be essential to “engaging the Somali-American community in an open

dialogue” about terrorism (Jany and Norfleet 2015). Although fathers in the Somali community also play a part in acknowledging and stopping terrorism, The Mothers Against Youth Recruitment initiative is particularly geared to women. Farhiya Kalif Mohamud, the head of VEAW, explains that women should know what their children are doing at home, and thus are in a position to spot radicalization. She states, “As a mother...when we are outside our homes, we talk much about our children, but at home when we watch our TVs we see what our children are doing...” (Yabarow 2015 [np]). Therefore, activists believe that the engagement of mothers will lead to “a huge reduction of those vulnerabilities of our youth” (Jany and Norfleet 2015).

The actions of women include forming personal networks, working with law enforcement, engaging public officials, and holding town hall meetings. As with victims’ rights organizations, women in counterideological work need to speak out about their children, particularly about how experiences of radicalization have altered their families. Thus, VEAW and its anti-recruitment initiative is a way to stop women from “suffering in silence” (Yabarow 2015 [np]). Because radicalization and recruitment can lead to jail time for their children, VEAW also communicates with law enforcement in order to think of solutions for reducing recruitment and as a way to repair “tense relationships” with authorities that prosecute young men (Yabarow 2015). The women want their efforts to be bipartisan so that they can engage as many public officials as possible. They ask elected officials to take time to meet with and listen to their community. To accomplish this end, the group holds town hall meetings that gather community members, law enforcement, and politicians, including, at times, Minnesotan Governor Mark Dayton. The leader of the group, Farhiya Khalif, is part of the Somali American Task Force working with U.S. Attorney Andy Luger to investigate how and why the recruitment is happening. Possible explanations for recruitment and radicalization that the task force is exploring include “identity issues, community isolation, lack of role models and unemployment” (Yuen 2015 [np]).

Perhaps the most important action of the mothers is to engage the youth. The mothers want to understand who is recruiting children and why, but, as Farhiya Khalif explain, no one seems to know. Mothers are trying to figure out why, but it can be challenging when a mother works all day and cannot monitor her children after school. Thus, as Khalif explains, without activities to engage the youth during 3–8 pm, a 15-year-old kid could easily be recruited without a mother knowing. This then justifies the need for community action to keep children busy so that they do not fall into the grips of terrorist groups (MPR News Staff 2016).

Finally, we should note that VEAW is standing up to hate crimes that are aimed at the Somali-American community – crimes that are a type of terrorism. Governor Mark Dayton called an explosion at the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center near Minneapolis in 2017 an act of terrorism. In 2015 another threatening hate crime occurred against Asma Jama, a Somali-American woman. At an Applebee’s restaurant, a woman approached Jama and insisted that she speak in English rather than Swahili. Afterward, she smashed a beer mug in Jama’s face. (Davis et al. 2017). VEAW creates community dialogue about attacks by holding forums with government officials. In fact, Asma Jama later joined the staff of VEAW and

tells her story as a way to put a “personal voice to the statistics” (Montemayor 2016 [np]). Statistics show hate crimes against Muslims in Minnesota have been on the rise since 2011 (Montemayor 2016 [np]).

## **Aman-o-Nisa: Pakistan Women’s Coalition Against Extremism**

Aman-o-Nisa: Pakistan Women’s Coalition Against Extremism is a women’s group focusing on mothers and sons as a way to stymie terrorism. The coalition’s leader, Mossarat Qadeem, left her academic post as a political scientist at the University of Peshwar to start a foundation called Paiman, or “Promise” (Hunt 2012). Through her work in Paiman she connected with other activists in Pakistan seeking to counter extremism; together they formed the Aman-o-Nisa Coalition in 2011. The coalition wants to eradicate extremism by working with mothers who can influence Pakistani children away from radicalism (Aman-o-Nisa 2011). The group is made up of professional women who promote women in higher government and societal posts. The women traveled to the US to work with Hillary Clinton when she was Secretary at the U.S. State Department, and they have received support from the US Institute for Peace.

Aman-o-Nisa’s grassroots efforts include education curriculum for youth stressing democracy and tolerance and programs for extremist youth that offer alternative interpretations of Islam. Mothers are considered to be the ideal vehicles to deliver this curriculum. For instance, a recent conference of the group concluded, a “transformation of attitudes needs to start from within the home and communities. As mothers and teachers, women hold enormous sway in these arenas and can largely influence attitudinal and behavioral shifts in Pakistan’s next generation” (Hunt Alternatives Fund 2012 [np]). Qadeem, further explains the role of mothers: “In Pashtun society, a woman...is very well-respected...the sons - they do listen to the mothers. ... once a mother is convinced, I think, you convince the whole family, the whole community then” (Qadeem qtd. in National Public Radio Staff 2012 [np]). Thus, the network emphasizes the special qualities of women, and particularly mothers, who promote peace.

To counter radical views of Islam women in the network consult with former, radical extremists to identify the Quran verses used to radicalize youth, and they teach alternative perspectives, from moderate scholars, about those verses. Qadeem provides an example of how she works with mothers and young men and convinces them of alternative meanings of jihad. Azam, a young man with whom she was conversing, told her of his interest in jihad and how his connections with radicals allowed him supply bread for his family. Qadeem countered his reasons for radicalization by saying, “If you’re killed...you won’t be able to help” your family in the long term (Hunt 2012). She also reasons with boys that if they “want to carry out jihad...[they should] carry it out against corruption, social ills, and political dishonesty (Hunt 2012 [np]). Paiman foundation, also directed by Qadeem, provides young men like

Azam with job training in fields such as plumbing and electrical work. Since meeting Azam and talking him out of extremism, he “has opened a shop” through which he supports his family (Hunt 2012 [np]).

Counterideological work, however, is not without consequences for women like Qadeem. Aman-o-Nisa acknowledges, “if a woman goes out and starts getting involved in such [counter-ideology] activities, she is definitely going to be at risk” (Weingarten 2012 [np]). Qadeem herself faces danger as she travels to various parts of Pakistan to meet with mothers who fear the radicalization of their sons. In the abovementioned example of Azam, Qadeem received a call from his mother at 9 p.m. one evening and promised to be at their house the next morning. To do so, she drove 4 h “through rough rural roads into an area so dangerous that U.N. workers and U.S. soldiers are prohibited from entering” (Hunt 2012 [np]).

## **Women Without Borders and Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE)**

Women Without Borders (Frauen Ohne Grenzen) is a feminist organization headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and it was founded in 2002. Its mission is to “encourage women to take the lead in their personal and public lives” and to “invest in women from all over the world as they strive toward inclusion and participation in all levels of the decision-making process” (Women Without Borders 2012 [np]). Focusing on core beliefs of advancement, equality and participation, Women Without Borders carries out projects that give women space in the public arena to “raise their voices and state their concerns, to actively participate in social, political and economic activities at all levels, and to empower women to achieve positive change” (Personal Communication 2012). This group particularly focuses on the intersections between maternal and feminist politics and peace.

In 2008, Women Without Borders launched a global campaign aimed at targeting terrorism called Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE). SAVE brings together women from several walks of life— victims and survivors of terrorist attacks, activists, educators, policymakers and peace-building experts from around the world “to create a new sisterhood and contribute to a safer and more secure world” (Women Without Borders 2012 [np]). SAVE has projects to combat extremism in India, Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Yemen and Indonesia, and a key step in the initiation and continued success of SAVE’s projects is the building of relationships with established non-governmental organizations in the target countries (Personal Communication 2012). Focusing on all forms of violent extremism, SAVE’s platform argues “women must be included as sought-after contributors in the security arena” so that “politicians and journalists can find alternate, oft-neglected viewpoints on conflicts, negotiations, and bases of popular support by turning to these women’s networks” (Women Without Borders 2012 [np]).

In an interview conducted for this book, Elaine Hargrove of Women Without Borders was asked about the primary cause of violent extremism. She stated:

“I believe that a sense of isolation and despair, disillusionment with mainstream society and politics, at times economic distress, and a search for identity are key contributing factors to radicalization and extremism” (Elaine Hargrove in Personal Communications 2012 [np]).

She went on to explain:

“women have a key role to play in finding and implementing new, alternative approaches to ending violent extremism. Their voices, experiences, and ideas have been utterly neglected to date, but their close proximity to potentially vulnerable youth through their roles as the main caretaker in most societies provides them with a unique point of view that can lead to vital insights into how to steer youth away from violence” (Elaine Hargrove in Personal Communications 2012 [np]).

Women, then, are key to ending violence and shedding light on violent extremism. As Hargrove states:

“...the single most important thing women can do to end violence is to provide alternative narratives, paths, activities, and perceived outcomes to their children, other youths, and community members... as one of our interview partners in Northern Ireland pointed out, women tend to think more long-term than men: ‘how will this affect my children? How will this affect my grandchildren?’ ...however, women’s voices remain sidelined and their priorities neglected. If women are therefore empowered, self-confident, and respected enough to challenge dominant thought processes and responses to events, they can contribute significantly to ending violence by offering to their family and community members more peaceful ways of resolving conflict” (Elaine Hargrove in Personal Communications 2012 [np]).

One of the most recent SAVE initiatives is entitled Mothers Schools (see also Chap. 10), which strives to teach women self-esteem, parenting skills, and how to notice signs of radicalization (Schlaffer and Kropiunigg 2015). This program was developed in 2013 after SAVE interviewed 200 mothers from Nigeria, Pakistan, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Palestine. The study that emerged from the interviews concluded that mothers do not fully trust state institutions and they desire to network with other mothers to communicate about radicalization (see also Chap. 10). One participant in the study stated:

“We always think that such discussions can only be among the educated and elite people from high profile societies. But, now we believe after exploring, our skills were with us always but unfortunately on sleeping mode, that we can also become friends with our children and help them to deal with any kind of support so that they don’t feel the need to look for any violent alternatives.” ([22])

SAVE stresses how parents can identify radicalization and possibly stop it. If properly equipped with an understanding of the radicalization process, parents, and particularly mothers, are able to “pre-empt and respond to radical influences” [22]. They do so by developing their children’s “resiliency” during their “early years,” and they are the “first to recognize and address signs of distress such as anger, anxiety and withdrawal” in their children [20–22].

## Feminist Politics in Social Movement Groups: Challenging Patriarchy and Violence

Peace activists use maternal discourses at times, thereby making it difficult to classify peace activists responding to terrorism and violence as either feminist or maternalist in focus. For example, women from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, with children who “disappeared” while attempting to migrate to the United States across the Mexican border, marched to Mexico City in “caravans” to seek information from the Mexican government on Mother’s Day in 2012. One woman protester, speaking of disappeared family members stated, “Our pain and our struggle for our missing sons and daughters are heightened when we see that part of society is indifferent, when we see a government that also contains corrupt authorities who are in league with criminal elements” (Pastrana 2012 [np]).

Our focus in this section, however, is squarely on women’s groups that question patriarchy and believe gender equality and women’s participation in international affairs is necessary to change the international system predicated on war. Debates surrounding feminist peace activism beg the question of whether women influence international affairs because they are naturally more peaceful than men. Women peace activists who were social reformers in the United States in the 1800s affirmed women’s natural penchant for peace. They tied the eradication of war violence to other social ills they believed threatened society, such as liquor. They favored peace “as childbearers... [with] a special affinity for preserving life” (Zieger 1990 [72]), but they also saw themselves as “social housekeepers” who could clean up the ills of the “public world” (di Leonardo 1985 [602]). When women in the US obtained suffrage, some activists believed women soon would occupy the reigns of government, consequently changing institutions and culture, and making peace a reality (Alonso 1993). Women invoked motherhood and women’s special penchant for peace to provide “acceptable cover for their highly political work” (Alonso 1993 [11]); however, by entering the public sphere, they also wanted to change the status quo, altering gender relations and building new institutions and traditions (Zieger 1990).

Second wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s moved women’s culture and traditions in a new direction. Instead of focusing on occupying existing institutions, activists sought out all-women spaces in the form of peace camps situated near US military bases and/or nuclear arsenals. By physically occupying spaces near the “real” spaces of power, peace camps served as non-violent, visual reminders that women were fighting against the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and proliferation. Women lived at the camps (with famous ones in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia) for prolonged periods, slept and washed their clothes there, and created posters and art as a way to communicate with the media. The camps valued creativity and fomented a “feminist cultural renaissance” (Murray 2010 [4]). Moreover, camps included the participation of lesbian activists at a time when lesbianism was stigmatized in many advanced democracies (Murray 2010). One famous example of a peace camp existed in Greenham, UK. The Greenham Common camp began at noon on December 12, 1982 when 30,000 women held



**Fig. 6.4** Women at Greenham Common, December 1982 (Photo Courtesy of Ceridwen (1982))



hands around the six-mile perimeter fence of a US Air Force base to protest the UK government's decision to site American cruise missiles there. Women stayed at the camp for 19 years (Fig. 6.4).

What is the logic of feminist peace activism today? First, many scholars and activists reject the older movement's pacifist link to maternity, considering it **essentialism**, the idea that "*human behavior is 'natural,' predetermined by genetic, biological, or psychological mechanisms and thus not subject to change*" (Vance 1989 [29]). Thus, they reject the idea that all women are born with a tendency toward peace. As Cynthia Cockburn argues, "to expect women to be naturally unaggressive is a recipe for disappointment", for many women wholeheartedly rally around troops and war efforts (Cockburn 2003 [np]). If women's biology does not unite them in the fight for peace, another "bridge" is necessary, argued to be a *feminism* based on gender experiences shared by women (though these experiences also vary among women). Women share a number of gendered experiences, including primary responsibility for care-giving (motherhood, but also eldercare), gender discrimination and division in economic life, and sexualized violence; and, women are present in combat contexts even as they are absent in military decision-making (Cockburn 2003). These gendered experiences may make women question why countries spend substantial public funds on defense rather than domestic policies that impact women's caregiving responsibilities (Alonso 1993). Women also may question why their bodies are front and center in war – through rape as a weapon and prostitution associated with military encampments – yet they have little say in how/whether those wars are fought (di Leonardo 1985).



What can be done to remedy these realities relates back to the ideas of early women's activists: more women need to be in prominent roles in society and politics – as politicians or as participants in social activism – in order for policy priorities to change. Also, women must point out that the violence of war is connected to other kinds of violence, whether colonialism, racism, and/or gender violence. Cockburn (2003) argues that the US war on terror created a new sort of colonialism and racism, as the US and her allies occupied areas of the world and discriminatorily labeled “others” as bad, such as “Muslims” and “terrorists.” Moreover, gender violence is linked to terrorist violence, as seen with the case of Justice for Our Daughters. Although narcoterrorism is not responsible for every feminicide death near Juarez, the context of permissive violence brought on by Mexico's drug war leads to violence against women. Alonso concurs, explaining that military training often utilizes misogynist and homophobic language, violently expressing the desire to “fuck” an enemy or calling young men “fags” and “girls” if they fail to perform at a certain standard. As violence against “others” pervades a culture, according to feminists, “the result is an easy swing to domestic violence, date rape, and child abuse” (Alonso 1993 [10]). Women in Black and Code Pink provide examples of how groups graft feminist principles with pacifist goals. These groups have addressed terrorism by challenging the “war on terrorism.”

## Women in Black (Fig. 6.5)

Women in Black began in Israel in 1988 to address the occupation of Israel in the Palestinian territories of Gaza and the West Bank. Though the group found inspiration in Argentina's Madres, as Women in Black hold silent, non-violent vigils, they are also adamantly feminist. Women in Black find inspiration in feminist peace camps, and their website states “we have a feminist understanding: that male violence against women in domestic life and in the community, in times of peace and in times of war, are interrelated. Violence is a means of controlling women” (Women in Black 2012a [np]).

From Israel, Women in Black expanded to Europe – particularly Italy, Spain, and the former Yugoslavia– and later to India, Philippines, the UK, and the United States. Groups are now in over 30 countries. The groups' actions are always non-violent, but they are direct and assertive. Groups hold vigils against militarism at military bases, “refusing to comply with orders” (Women in Black 2012a [np]). Their placards displayed at vigils, say, for example, “no war in my name” and “how many dead children?” Three examples of Women in Black's activities offer a sampling of their tactics and beliefs. First, Women in Black in the Bay Area (San Francisco, California) held weekly, Saturday vigils in 2007 to protest the US military's role in Iraq, potential US conflicts with Iran, and the occupation of Palestine. They stated:

“JOIN US as we use the powerful presence of our vigil to bring attention to the costs, political, economic and moral, of these two occupations [Iraq and Palestine] that increasingly resemble each other... [we] must counter those who use name-calling and heated rhetoric” (Bay Area Women in Black 2007 [np]).

**Fig. 6.5** Women in Black Inauguration Day Vigil, Oakland, Jan 20, 2005 (Photo by Eva, Reprinted with Permission from Bay Area Women in Black (2005))



On November 25, 2016, the Bay Area group used “Black Friday” to hold a silent vigil about Palestine, which emphasized the slogan “Let’s unite to end illegal occupation!” (Bay Area Women in Black 2012a, b [np]).

Second, Women in Black in Belgrade, Serbia, active since the early 1990s, have raised awareness about the atrocities committed by their own government during the Yugoslav conflicts (see Chap. 4). They also support Bosnian women by attending commemorations of massacres. At a ceremony commemorating Srebrenica, a Serb woman conveyed her unity with all victims of terrorism, including Bosnians, by stating, “My nationality is – woman...Sept. 11 and July 11 (date of the Srebrenica massacre) are linked because those were attacks against civilians, those were terrorist acts” (Associated Press Newswires, 11 September 2002). Women in Black in Belgrade, along with other women’s groups, set up the Women’s Court Initiative in the former Yugoslavia. Because many rapists in wars and genocides are never punished (see Chap. 4), the women, in public proceedings, “testify about their experience during and after war, and their vision for addressing gender and structural violence and individual and community healing” (Global Fund for Women 2011 [np]). The women’s court began in 2010 and continued many years thereafter as a space for women to share testimonies (Nobel Women’s Initiative 2015). Women in Black are not well received in Serbia, for they have been “beaten and even tear gassed” during their protests (Bzganovic 2012 [np]).

Third, Women in Black in London have held vigils to recognize the rape of women and the proliferation of small arms in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2015, they held a vigil at which they protested, “NO TO MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – in the home; – in the community; -in peace and in war.” Like many other feminist activists we have discussed in this book, the group recognizes connections between gender violence and political violence (Women in Black London 2017).



**Fig. 6.6** Code Pink Demonstration in Front of the White House on July 4, 2006 (Photo Courtesy of Ben Schumin (2006))

## Code Pink

Terrorism is no laughing matter; however, social movement groups often make a spectacle of serious issues in order to draw the public's attention to them. Take for example women in Code Pink who wear feather boas, Statue of Liberty crowns, and clothing in "the hue of Barbie dolls" to protest for peace in the world today (Copeland 2007 [np]). "They've dressed in pink surgical scrubs to hand out 'prescriptions for peace,' and in pink slips to call for the president's ouster" (Copeland 2007 [np]). Their name plays on the homeland security color-coded threat levels of yellow, orange, and red. Code Pink began in 2002 to stand up to President George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq and to make fun of the homeland security color-coded alert system. They joked, "President Bush was telling us all to be afraid: **CODE ORANGE!** Duct tape your windows shut! **CODE YELLOW!** Saran-wrap everything in your freezer! We decided we needed to open a space for women to respond with love, humor and spirit: we decided that America needed **CODEPINK!**" (Code Pink 2012b [np]) (Fig. 6.6).

Code Pink holds goals similar to Women in Black. They reject militarism, particularly in Iraq and in Palestine, are committed to non-violence, and work across borders to pursue peace for all women. Both Women in Black and Code Pink respond to terrorism by rejecting the war on terror. Rather than focusing on the violence of terrorists themselves, the groups argue against the United States' and its allies' assertive response to countries/regions where terrorism emerges. Though

September 11, 2001 happened more than a decade and a half ago, Code Pink argues that the US is still spending money and perpetuating violence – such as drone attacks—in the name of fighting terrorism. They “wage peace” by challenging counterterrorism policies associated with the war on terror, such as the use of drones, and by urging the impeachment of both George W. Bush and Barak Obama (Code Pink Staff 2017a).

Code Pink’s actions, unlike Women in Black, are not vigil-like. It is impossible for the group to go unnoticed because it chooses the bright and feminine color of pink to frame its activism. In addition, Code Pink women often scream at current and former politicians, whom they believe are war criminals and responsible for deaths and torture. For example, the group believes President Trump’s appointees include war hawks; thus, at Donald Trump’s Presidential inauguration, 40 Code Pink activists were disruptive, leading to 10 of them being removed from the crowds (Code Pink Staff 2017b, January 21).

Code Pink is feminist in that it is a “a women-led organization that seeks to empower women politically, creating space for women to speak out for justice and peace in their communities, the media and the halls of Congress” (Code Pink 2012a [np]). Kutz-Flamenbaum calls Code Pink a “feminist performance activist group” (2007 [99]) that uses carnivalesque activities to “draw attention to the differential impact of war on women, challenge gender norms by explicitly and implicitly critiquing the relationship between militarism and patriarchy, and attract media attention” (2007 [90]). Moreover, the Code Pink website claims the group operates by “feminist principals” such as cooperation and compassion (Code Pink n.d.). Code Pink was also present at many of the Women’s Marches across the United States in January 2017. The group’s co-founder, Jodie Evans, explains the activists’ motivation for protesting, stating “This is our third day out in the streets of DC expressing the audacious power of women to stand up to militarism, misogyny and hate. We are here as accomplices with those most vulnerable within the US and the countries negatively affected by US foreign policy” (Code Pink Staff 2017b, January 21). Thus, Code Pink ties militarism to misogyny and indicates that fighting for peace is fighting against patriarchy.

## Fighting Machista Terrorism: Asociacion Velaluz

Similar to Code Pink and Women in Black, feminists in Spain make connections between gender violence and political violence. In Chap. 5, we defined **machista terrorism** as *situations of gender violence when masculine power is asserted over women to threat, injure, and/or kill them*. Spanish feminists have fought against machista violence since the country’s second wave of feminism in the 1970s; however, the term machista terrorism was used as early as 2000 by the Spanish press. The Asociación Velaluz (see the Light Association) regularly frames its fight against gender violence as a fight against terrorism. For example, the group began a [Change.org](#) petition, entitled, “Question the state already, against Machista Terrorism”

(Cuestión de estado YA, contra el Terrorismo Machista n.d.). As they explain, they want the state to respond to victims of machista terrorism with the “same assistance that is established for victims of ‘terrorism’” ([Change.org](#) n.d. [np]). By putting the word terrorism here in quotations, the women of Velaluz are drawing attention to the victims that are typically recognized by the Spanish state, that is, the victims of political terrorism such as ETA, and they are suggesting that terrorism has a broader meaning and should include machista violence. As of October 2017, 13, 322 people have signed the [Change.org](#) petition.

Survivors of gender violence established Velaluz in 2010, and it began its protest against machista terrorism that very year. The group’s most well-known form of protest is the hunger strike, which they have utilized at least three times. First, in their home region of Galicia in 2013, Velaluz employed a hunger strike that pushed the regional government to form a parliamentary subcommittee regarding machista violence (Rivero y Mendez 2017). Second, between November 1 and 15, 2015, the group held a hunger strike in the center of Madrid, in the city’s most central and famous plaza, the Plaza del Sol. The protest’s goal was to solicit the attention of political parties in the December 2015 general elections in Spain (Agencia EFE 2015). Some political parties on the left agreed to add the group’s demands to their election platforms, but other parties merely said, “that they are with... [Velaluz] ‘in spirit’” (Agencia EFE 2015). The third hunger strike, and the most nationally and internationally recognized of the three, took place in February and March of 2017 and, once again, it was held in the Plaza del Sol.

Over the years, Velaluz has put forth the same 25-point platform for legal change, which they want to see put into a law addressing gender violence. The 25 points include, for example: assisting victims from the moment they first submit a complaint by giving them housing, policy, and psychological supports; disallowing minors to be obliged to visit an abuser (e.g., visiting a father who has abused their mother); and recognizing mothers whose children have been murdered in the context of gender violence as victims deserving of a pension ([Change.org](#) n.d.).

The hunger strikes in 2017 met with some level of success in that politicians listened to the 25 demands of the group. Beginning on February 9, eight women occupied a portion of the Plaza del Sol. As a part of the protest, they placed ladies’ shoes in the color red on the ground, arranged in the form of a peace sign. The display of shoes symbolized the color of blood, and it drew attention to feminicides in other parts of the world (Rodrigo 2017). The origin of the symbolic red shoes is Ciudad Juarez in Mexico, where activists had protested the death of a woman killed by her husband. (Aragón Álvarez 2017). Four of the Velaluz women did not make it to the end of the strike, and it ended just in time for International Women’s Day on March 8. The women stated that they would “end the protest because” the government promised that they would “have a voice in the subcommittee,” called the Equality Commission, which at the time was drafting a new gender violence law (Borraz 2017 [np]). The subcommittee participation, as they saw it, was a way to open dialogue with political parties about the 25 points (Fig. 6.7).

The Spanish government’s new gender violence law (El Pacto de Estado contra la Violencia Machista), enacted as of July 28, 2017, included Velaluz’s proposals,





**Fig. 6.7** Red Shoes in the VelaLuz Protest in Puerta del Sol, Madrid, Spain (Courtesy of Emilio (2017))

“though in a somewhat diluted form” (Rivero y Mendez 2017 [np]). In some respects, the women “feel cheated by the government,” because (Ramírez 2017 [np]) their role in the subcommittee was not as robust as they imagined and they believe the new law does not do enough to provide financial assistance to victims. In particular, they call out the law’s failure to consider mothers of murdered children as victims. The case of Ruth Ortiz demonstrates their concern. Ruth Ortiz’s husband murdered her two small children in 2011. She is a victim because “there is no greater psychological abuse than when your partner kills your children because it is a psychological abuse for life” (Lourido 2017). As such, the Velaluz group believes women like Ruth Ortiz deserves state assistance as much as a woman whose child or husband has been lost to ETA terrorism.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on the relationship between social groups and various forms of terrorism. Women mobilize in groups to advocate for victims of terrorism and for alleged terrorists. Women also mobilize in groups to advocate for peace through maternalist politics. These groups are mostly non-feminist, yet sometimes they also champion women’s rights. Women in groups draw upon their private lives and identities as mothers as an inspiration for protest. Moreover, women are fighting for peace through feminist women’s movements. Feminist groups including Women Without Borders/SAVE, Code Pink, and Women in Black, argue that unless patriarchy is dismantled, and women are present in politics, violence will continue.

Thus, women are acting with agency in social groups and are present in politics surrounding terrorism. While these examples of women's agency may be considered more constructive than the agency of women terrorists (see Chaps. 2 and 3), all activists in groups do not meet with success. Sometimes women's foray into the politics of political violence is met with negative reactions and even threats to their safety and lives. Feminist activism is also a prominent theme in the chapter. However, because feminist peace activists do not support status quo counterterrorism measures, they may be seen as terrorist sympathizers. The motherhood theme also is prevalent here. Women express that they are motivated for peace as mothers. Feminist groups, however, often challenge maternal politics, insisting instead that women should seek peace based upon shared gendered experiences.

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# Chapter 7

## Memory Politics



### Introduction

One woman in Colombia suffered sexual violence by armed actors during the country's more than 50-year conflict between state forces, left-wing rebels, and paramilitaries. She also found her husband's dead body floating in a river; he too was victimized by armed actors. She was later displaced from her home. Her story is not an easy one to process, yet she explored and recalled it through the program *Memory is Me: Memory, Body, Territory*, a memory effort led by the feminist organization *La Casa de la Mujer* (Casa de la Mujer n.d.). Part of this woman's memory work included a photography project, about which she was threatened by armed actors. Nonetheless, she persevered and was able to heal as she contended with political memory and her personal story. By way of memory, she was able to "release the terror out of her body" (Casa de la Mujer n.d.).

This chapter examines political memory in situations similar to that above, namely memory as it relates to gender, violence, and terrorism. Although international relations scholars discuss the participation of women in peace negotiations following political violence, scholars have not theorized the representation of gender in memory politics during and following political violence, particularly as related to terrorism. Some theorizing has been done related to gender violence and memory, yet it is also underdeveloped. We believe that this is problematic given the brave testimonies and memory work women around the world have offered. Because many women have been agentic through political and personal memory, we seek to document their efforts as well as develop theory around gender and memory. We specifically theorize and investigate modes of memory that construct gender identities, analyzing whether/how women are empowered in the representation of memory and whether/how political memory related to terrorism and violence is gendered. The reasons why a new conceptualization of gendered memory is needed are three-fold. First, memory is socially constructed and therefore transmits gender constructions. As such, it is necessary to find out *who* is constructing memory and *how*.



Second, memory is always contentious, and while feminists can create counter-memory that challenges the patriarchal status quo, scholars cannot know what a feminist counter-memory would look like without further investigation. Third, memory is meant to influence current *and* future generations, which is particularly important in post-conflict situations; thus, it is a potential mode of social change and gender transformation.

This chapter proceeds in five sections. First, we interrogate what international relations and political science more broadly says about memory politics. Second, we investigate gender and conflict and the gendered memory that emerges following conflict. Third, we develop a typology of gender and memory politics that covers two types of gender and memory: (1) Gendered memory in war, terrorism, and political conflict and (2) Gendered memory related to gender violence (which can also occur in the context of political conflict, for example, as we see in the example of Colombia above). Fourth, we develop case studies that illustrate our two-fold typology: one case about memory regarding terrorism in the Basque Country, particularly as it relates to ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Freedom), and one case about gender violence and memory in Juarez, Mexico. Other cases to elucidate different points about political memory include the Korean Comfort Women, the 9/11 Memorial, and performative memory in Colombia. We conclude with a call for additional theorizing and research about the gendered nature of memory politics.

When we refer to memory as “gendered”, we are talking about the fact that memory is not gender neutral as it is sometimes assumed. In fact, memory is constructed by certain societal expectations about gender and often privileges stories of men over those of women as well as privileges heteronormative stories and those that reinforce hegemonic masculinity. While we acknowledge that gender is not binary, as discussed in earlier chapters, our gendered analysis of memory in this chapter prioritizes women’s stories in the construction of memory.

## International Relations Theory and Political Memory

The **politics of memory** is *the political means by which events are remembered and recorded, or discarded*. The terminology addresses the role of politics in shaping collective memory and how remembrances can differ markedly from the objective truth of the events as they happened. Thus, political memory is top-down and can be used (or abused) for political action and formation of group identity (Assmann 2006). It is important to keep in mind that states or political entities do not “have memory” as an individual might, they “make” memory and, as such, political memory is always a social construct (Assmann 2006) (Fig. 7.1).

Very little literature in international relations focuses on memory as a political act following violence or conflict. This is curious, because the construction of memory *is* political and can be used to re-create or tell a particular version of a political





**Fig. 7.1** Robert the Bruce, King of Scots (Photo Courtesy of the Authors. Bruce won Scotland from England, pictured here as a strong warrior on a large horse. In actuality, he was likely petite and rode a horse the size of a modern-day pony)

reality, especially related to conflict. As Auchter points out, “our world is imbued with the politics of memory and of memorialization. Everywhere we go we are inundated with a virtual memory industry” (2014 [2]). One only needs to walk through the street of any European city to see memory-making in action. There are countless war memorials, statues of important generals and commemorations of battles won. In these memorials, hegemonic masculinity is upheld as the victors are nearly always men who appear larger than life, vital and strong. While the US has a shorter history, nearly every US town has a war memorial as well. The literature related to political memory that does exist tends to come from more critical approaches to scholarship, or, what one would consider theoretical perspective that questions concepts like the state and gender in order to rethink international relations (see for example Assman 2006; Auchter 2014). This chapter draws upon these perspectives and marries them with empirical data collected through interviews, newspapers, websites, and secondary sources.

Memory is directly political because the state can either support or refute a memory narrative (Auchter 2014). Through state constructions of memory certain groups or positions can be rendered visible or invisible in the political narrative surrounding political violence and conflict (see Oto-Peralfías 2015 for an example related to the Spanish Civil War). As such memory “both constructs and is a construct of the past” (Auchter 2014[8]), and it “...is the product of conflict, power struggles and social contestation” (Bell 2009 [351]).

Memorials cause us to relive one narrative about the past, while also putting “ugly” events, like conflict, firmly in the past (Auchter 2014). At the same time, the construction of political memory is very much about the future in that “we remember in order to give meaning to the present and thus gain power over the future” (Palmberger 2016 [12]). At critical moments of social change, states and/or other political actors can work to erase repressive political and collective memories and “re-remember” or reconstruct a new version of political memory (see Goldfarb 2009 for Poland, Israel-Palestine and US examples). Political memory, and undisputed political memory, tends to be stronger in ethnically homogenous societies and nations (like Israel) compared with those that are more multicultural (like the United States) (Assmann 2006). Thus, we see political memory contested more often in cases with heterogeneity in ethnicity, language, political orientation, etc. Some scholars have referred to this process of constructing memory as “national myth-making” intended to develop a unified national ethos around key historical events (see Tang 2011 for a review of this literature). How memory is presented to the public also can be contested. For example, some family members of victims of violence may approve of a state’s or private organization’s memory of their loved ones, while others may find displays of public memory to be inaccurate or distasteful. The US case as related to the 9–11 memorial and museum is a poignant example of how modes of memory are themselves contested (See Box 7.1).

In international relations, memory often manifests in memorials of war. According to Assmann (2006), for hegemonic nations, victories are remembered rather than defeats. For example, in Paris, streets and metro stations commemorate Napoleon’s victories, yet none of his defeats. In contrast, in London, there is a subway stop with the name of Waterloo, i.e., the place of Napoleon’s ultimate defeat (Assmann 2006). In non-hegemonic nations, political memory focuses on defeats and the narrative of the tragic hero (Giesen 2004). For example, the Serbs have memorialized a lost battle in Kosovo to the Ottoman Turks in 1389, and this memory was used to fuel ethnic battles in the 1990s (Volkan 1997), and the Chinese use “100 years of humiliation” (1800s to 1900s) to justify current international posturing (Wang 2008). Minority groups within a country, like the Basques in Spain, may also use memory to justify political positions and recast actions. While memory related both to triumph and defeat emerges from conflict situations, it is important to keep in mind that this exists so long as memory can “be integrated into the semantics of a heroic...narrative” (Assmann 2006 [218]). This is problematic for politics



**Fig. 7.2** Memorial to La Pasionaria (Photo Courtesy of Authors. As discussed in Chap. 2, foreigners fought alongside nationals in the Spanish Civil War against fascism including fighters from Glasgow, Scotland. Located in Glasgow, Scotland)

of violence, particularly related to gender, as shame and guilt cannot be woven into this sort of narrative. Thus, as we will discuss below, feminists often construct counter-memory in instances of gendered political violence (Fig. 7.2).

Understanding political memory as a scholarly pursuit rests more in the domain of disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies than in political science. This lack of theorizing in political science and international relations is troubling as conflict studies are ripe for a discussion of the construction of political memory. Much of what is written about political memory and violence in political science approaches the topic from a comparative politics perspective, focusing on a single case of violence and the memorialization of that violence. Scholarship of this sort includes analyses of the memory of the North African struggle against France and Italy (Githens-Mazer 2009) or those of Serbia or China discussed above.

**Box 7.1 Contested Memory: The Case of the 9/11 Memorial in NYC**

On Sept 11, 2001, Al Qaeda terrorists flew planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City killing 2871 people and injuring thousands more. A 9/11 Memorial was opened on September 11, 2011, a decade after the attack. The 9/11 museum which sits adjacent to the memorial occupying the same space as the former towers opened in 2014 and is intended as an educational, experimental supplement to the memorial (Kennicott 2014). While lauded by many for its interactive elements and use of space and ruins, the museum is not without controversy. The controversy stems from the gift shop, complete with NYPD and NYFD dog costumes and shot glasses with images of the original twin towers. Family members of victims have said it is tasteless to house a gift shop on what is the last resting place of their loved ones. Only 293 remains of people were recovered whole from the site of the World Trade Center. The rest of the remains were found in small bits and catalogued and stored in an effort to one day return them to their families once they are identified (Aronson 2016). In fact, the New York City medical examiner's office has pledged to keep the remains in perpetuity until such time that technological advances will allow identification of remains that today cannot be identified (Aronson 2016).

After the attacks of September 11 2001, then President George W. Bush stated "Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done" (qtd in Aronson 2016 [np]). In doing so, he was using the death of the 9/11 victims to justify military actions, something that also has been troubling to some family members of the dead (Aronson 2016).

The gift shop controversy is more intense because the museum holds some of these unidentified remains of the 9/11 victims. Some argue these remains should be moved to an above ground tomb and that selling trinkets at a burial ground is insensitive. Speaking of the gift shop, relatives of the dead state "It's crass commercialism on a literally sacred site... 'It's a burial ground. We don't think there should be those things offered on that spot'" (qtd in Phillip 2014 [np]). The New York Post even referred to the gift shop as the "Little Shop of Horror" and family members have characterized the museum as making money off of their dead loved ones and refuse to visit the museum as a result (Phillip 2014). Family members have also petitioned to not have remains be part of the museum. While the remains are in a portion of the museum where the public is not allowed to enter, they still find it crass and petitioned and protested for the remains to be moved and the gift shop to be closed (Phillip 2014). The museum directors argue that the gift shop helps to defray some of the costs of maintaining the museum, and victims' families have free admission to the museum (everyone has free entry to the memorial portion of the 9/11 complex) (Fig. 7.3).

While the 9/11 museum is not the only memorial to carry with it a gift shop, the question of what is appropriate when memorializing victims of political violence is certainly front in center when staring a kitschy toy fire truck or dog costume in the museum gift shop after having just listened to the last voice mails left by 9/11 victims (Fig. 7.4).



Fig. 7.3 NYPD and NYFD Dog Costumes in the 9/11 Memorial Gift Shop (Photo Courtesy of Nile Creed Olson)



Fig. 7.4 Reflecting Pool at the 9/11 Memorial Site (Photo Courtesy of the Authors)



## Political Memory and Gender Politics

A developed literature on gender and post-conflict studies exists while scholarship has emerged concerning the intersection between gender and memory. That said, the literature on gender and post-conflict has sufficient space for discussing gendered memory. Post-conflict studies are broad and relate to different kinds of political conflict, including war, genocide, and terrorism. Studies about women in situations of war, genocide, and terrorism are present in the international relations literature (see Meertens 2001).

Given the long and non-linear processes of reconstruction following political violence (*Rajasingham-Senanayake 2004*), it stands to reason that memory politics could occur at the same time as other post-conflict activities. Nevertheless, memory politics largely are not addressed in gender and post-conflict studies, with the exception of truth commissions, which may be considered a first step in memory politics. What is more, gendered memory of violence can take place while conflicts wage on and outside the context of political violence altogether, examples of which include cases herein, respectively, the feminicides in Juárez, Mexico and memorialization surrounding ETA terrorism.

## Gender and Post-conflict Studies

The content of studies related to women, gender, and war tend to be divided into women's experiences during conflict and women's experiences after conflict (Moser and Clark 2001). During war, scholars document women's experiences with gender violence, their roles as combatants, and how they function on the local level to seek peace and maintain everyday living for families and communities (McGrew et al. 2004). After conflict, women, hypothetically, may be present as countries draw up new constitutions, fighters are reintegrated into society, truth commissions uncover atrocities, and new laws are fashioned that address gender equality. The international community of activists and scholars are particularly interested in these outcomes as they relate to women and their capacity to build peace, for "there are now a considerable number of women's peace activist organizations operating in every continent" (El-Bushra 2007 [138]).

The idea of women as peacemakers, or the "peaceful woman approach," is appealing at first glance. Evidence shows that women in several conflicts have promoted peace by taking care of communities, often through women's organizations (whether through communal kitchens or "lobbying for equal access to services," see El Bushra [136–7]). In Spain, women themselves speak of their unique ability to "forge a peace after years of ETA violence" (Personal Communications 2011, 2015). This positive association of women as peacemakers, though prevalent in many international organizations/agencies, can be critiqued for theoretical and empirical reasons. Theoretically, it is essentialism to consider women as *the* actors who take up peacekeeping because they are assumed to have the special attributes

to do so. Assumptions about women as peacemakers tend to hinge on the idea that women are caregivers and mothers. With women occupying this essentialized role, some authors view men as particularly violent and applaud women for influencing male relatives and children in the way of peace (for this discussion, see Pankhurst 2003; Rajasingham-Senanayake 2004), and for taking care of their families during and after conflicts (Sørensen 1998). The idea of men as inherently violent plays into ideas of hegemonic masculinity and social constructions of women as life givers, not life takers, as discussed in earlier chapters.

This essentialist vision typecasts women and it is not representative of women's political and social agency or their experiences during and after conflict. Chapters 2 and 3 as well as several additional authors detail women as active combatants in wars and terrorism (MacKenzie 2009; McEvoy 2009; Sjöberg and Gentry 2011; Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012, 2014). What is more, women's experiences during post-conflict times is rarely sanguine; i.e., they are not always capable of creating peace and quelling violence (as we see in discussions of counter-terrorism in Chap. 10), thereby eliminating all violence against them. Several examples of the dangers and disappointments faced by women during post-conflict demonstrate that peace, and a positive peace coupled with gender empowerment, is elusive. First, women, though sometimes active in social organizations addressing peace, as we saw in Chap. 6, are rarely at the negotiation tables meant to end conflict because negotiations are typically led by political and military officials who tend to be men (Bouta and Freks 2002; Moser and Clark 2001; Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2012; Pankhurst 2003), and women might not be recognized for the informal peace work they do because caring responsibilities and local efforts "tend to be ignored by mainstream actors in conflict resolution" (El-Bushra 2007 [139]). As discussed in Chap. 2, when women have been combatants, government programs do not take into consideration their needs as they reintegrate into society (Pankhurst 2003), nor do truth and reconciliation commissions adequately address rape during war (Patterson-Markowitz et al. 2012), with society providing few social services to rape survivors (Pankhurst 2003; Krog 2001). What is more, gender violence, prostitution, and trafficking of women may actually increase following conflict, as women are "put back in their place" as men return to society and women find few viable employment options. It may even be the case that international actors participate in sexual abuses, as has been noted of UN peacekeepers (Handrahan 2004). Or, women who begin participating in policies and gain leadership may experience physical threats (True 2013). Overall, evidence shows that patriarchy becomes more influential following conflicts and women only experience short-lived gender liberation from the breakdown of patriarchal structures experienced during war (when men are away fighting and/or never return home). In this case, it remains questionable whether the post-conflict milieu is one in which feminist memorialization could flourish.

Although the place of women in conflict societies is dismal according to the aforementioned accounts, opportunities exist for women during political reconstruction. It is important to recall that women, though often victims of war and peace building, are also agentic, and realistically can be victims and political actors



at the same time (Parashar 2014; Moser and Clark 2001), especially when presented with potential “spaces for empowerment” (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2004 [154]). The most prominent “spaces” found in the literature include participating in social groups, engaging other women in solidarity, protesting, and receiving leadership training. Participation in civil society also draws women into the public sphere and helps to develop an inchoate non-governmental sector (Bouta and Freks 2002). Women’s grassroots groups have the ability to address gender concerns and bridge communities that were estranged during conflict; e.g., collaborating in Northern Ireland (Mulholland 2001) and crossing political parties to address local issues in Cambodia (McGrew et al. 2004). Through protest, women draw attention to peace issues (McGrew et al. 2004; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbals 2012). In order to stymie gender violence, for example, experts suggest that countries need to create policies addressing violence as well as bring women into political participation and leadership so as to challenge cultures of violence that produce gender violence (Buss et al. 2014). Thus, as Strickland and Duvvury note, “sustainable peace also requires a more permanent transformation of social norms around violence, gender, and power” (2003 [1]). Once again, if social transformation is the desirable end, the end of conflict is not a definitive cessation point, but rather the beginning of long-term change for a nation-state.

Memory can be a part of the long-term social transformation. As with the post-conflict literature, the sparser gender and memory literature emphasizes spaces for empowerment utilized by women in social groups. Though women typically are left out of memory politics, as they have been absent during many political reconstructions, scholars maintain hope that women’s leadership regarding memory will emerge and encourage public debates about violence, representation, and the future of gender relations. Given that the international community stresses women’s leadership, it stands to reason that women could and should become leaders in memory politics.

## Gendered Memory Politics

Gendered memory has long interested historians, for they have argued that women’s identities and lives have been left out of recollections of the past (Peacock 2011; Leydesdorff et al. 1996), and they seek to “rescue” memories about women (Leydesdorff et al. 1996 [2]). While men’s experiences are remembered as taking place in the public sphere, women’s experiences in the private sphere are less often documented, and not explicitly tied to gendered cultures and structures. For instance, a museum in Romania documents the horrors of communism, but leaves out women’s experiences with abortion, which, while seemingly private, stem from the public policy of pronatalism and a lack of contraception on the market (Haliliuc 2013). At the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, the fourth most popular museum in the United States, women’s stories and experiences are largely absent from the exhibits. Commentary discusses “brave men and women”, but

**Fig. 7.5** Pictures of Pin-Up Girls inside a World War II-Era Plane (Photo Courtesy of the Authors. The pictures (photos and pictures) decorate the inside of a fighter pilot's plane on display at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA)



women are seen more as a monolith whose individual experiences are not articulated. Outside of some uniforms women wore as nurses during the conflict, there is little depiction of women beyond the “pin-up” girls used to decorate combat pilots’ planes. (Note: the “Salute to the Homefront” exhibition opened in Summer 2017 has remedied some of this initial oversight and focuses in part on gender and racial prejudice during World War II) (Fig. 7.5).

Even when women have influenced public culture, as in the case with *bertsolaritza* singers in the Basque Country, history emphasizes the masculine, in this case male singers (Larranga 1996; Siebert 1996). Why women’s experiences and voices are hidden can be attributed to public memory’s connection to power structures. Actors with power, exclusive of many women over the course history, “are usually assured wider social space and easier transmission” of memory (Leydesdorff et al. 1996 [8]). In short, women’s voices are “missing voices” as they lack social power (Vinel 2010), and thus memory becomes gendered. Consequently, memory tends to highlight men’s accomplishments; “men’s names appear on buildings, roadways, squares, trees, waterways, and monuments, inscribing the landscape with masculinity” (Norkunas 2002 [95]). Particularly, memory portrays men as strong, patriotic, and as combatants (Frühstück 2006; Foxall 2013; Norkunas 2002). In contrast, women are memorialized as mothers and care providers. For instance, the

above-mentioned Romanian museum features an exhibit about women as prisoners during communism, but “a large panel explicitly identifies ‘women in prison’ as ‘Mothers, Wives, Sisters, Daughters’” (Haliliuc 2013 [120]).

Feminist scholars respond to the absence of empowered women in memory projects by seeking to collect counter-narratives, through individual testimonies and autobiographies (Leydesdorff et al. 1996; Bhattacharya 2013). Through narratives, women’s lives “on the boundary between public and private” (Norkunas 2002 [108]) become counter-memory, defined as memory that proactively challenges the official history and construction of collective memory (see Foucault 1980; Pendleton 2011; Young 1997). The move at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA can be seen as an example to “rescue” memories of women and to bring to light the sexism present during the World War II era in the US.

Collective memory is not without challenges for feminist studies. First, when feminists ask, “who is being remembered” and the answer is generically “women,” scholarship falls prey to essentialism or a collective conceptualization of women that excludes based on race, class, sexuality, and/or ability (Bold et al. 2006). In short, it neglects intersectional explanations. Moreover, sometimes memory projects attempt to represent a broad swath of women through the commemoration of only one or a few women’s lives. Although it could be argued that these few women’s lives are representative of the whole, it must be recognized that other women are not being specifically named in the public record and hence silenced (Bold et al. 2006). Because memory projects require monetary and human resources for their development and maintenance, it stands to reason that advantaged women, just as with men traditionally, may have more voice in memory politics (Bold et al. 2006).

## Typology of Gendered Memory

There are two primary ways in which gendered memory is manifest: (1) memory related to women in war or conflict, including terrorism, and (2) memory related to gender violence, including femicide, which may or may not occur alongside other forms of political violence. It is important to note that these two types of memorialized violence are not mutually exclusive. Political memory is concretely seen through monuments, museums, protest events, and other performative acts (see Table 7.1).

## Monuments

The most common way in which memory is constructed related to women in war or violent conflict is through monuments. However, many war memorials fail to recognize or address the presence of women in a meaningful way that is reflective of the sacrifices women have made. Some memorials try to rectify this. *The Women in*

**Table 7.1** Typology of memorials

Type of memory	Type of memorialization	Examples
Women in war	Monuments Museum installations	Military Service for America (Arlington National Cemetery) Peace monument for comfort women (Seoul, South Korea) Memorial of women of world war II (London) Women and war, Canadian war museum Historical Museum of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery Women in war online exhibition at the imperial war museum (London)
Gender violence	Monuments Protests Performative Acts and art	Victims of domestic violence (Arizona) Cotton field murders memorial Justice for our Daughters (Juarez, Mexico) The monument quit The clothesline project One billion rising
Terrorist/political violence	Museums Monuments Protests Performative acts	9/11 museum (NY, New York) Dove and peace (san Sebastian, Spain) Weekly marches by Exerat (san Sebastian and Bilbao, Spain) Women for justice and COVITE marches (Spain) Vidas rotas

*Military Service for America Memorial* in Arlington, Virginia, shows “the many things that women have done,” as history books have failed to do so (Vaught 1997). In Vitoria, Spain a permanent exhibit at the *Memorial Center for the Victims of Terrorism* bears the name of Ana Maria Vidal-Abarca, founder of a victims’ rights group in Spain for her work as a pioneering, courageous, and unique woman who protected the rights and dignity of victims of terrorism (For more on Vidal-Abarca, see Chap. 6; Ministerio del Interior 2015). Other monuments, however, like the “Cotton Field Murders” memorial in Juarez, Mexico (discussed below) paints women as victims, without mention of their individual agency. The Women of World War II memorial in London, pictured above, is meant to illustrate the “men’s” jobs taken on by women during the war, yet with it women are anonymous and intersecting identities are absent. While monuments are the most common way of memorializing women in war, or victims of terrorism, monuments like the Cotton Field Murders memorial are also erected to commemorate women as victims of gender violence (Fig. 7.6).

In addition to monuments, counter-monuments are prevalent as a way of memorializing gendered violence. Counter-monuments are defined as “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of their being” (Young 1997 [858]). Whereas conventional memorials may seal off memories, counter-memorials are provocative and ask people to continue thinking about the issues at hand. Feminists in Canada, for example, have established monuments



**Fig. 7.6** Women of World War II Memorial in London, England (Photo Courtesy of the Authors)

for women who suffered gender violence. One of these memorials bluntly states that women were “killed by men,” thus making no qualms about patriarchy’s responsibility in murder and provoking conversations about perpetrators of violence (Bold et al. 2006 [227]).

### **Box 7.2 Korean Comfort Women**

“Comfort Women” is the name given to Korean women who were used as sex slaves by Japanese soldiers during World War II. There have been several attempts to memorialize these women, even while their existence remains controversial. Though the 1993 Kono Statement serves as an apology for Japan’s use of sex slaves, contemporary Japanese leaders deny the existence of hard evidence to prove comfort stations were official Japanese policy. While Korean society respects and wants justice for these women, the women are constructed through a discourse of victimhood. By and large the women are portrayed as victims, and memory efforts put little focus on the women’s individual agency.

Memorials have been erected around the world (for example in Korea, Georgia, New York, and Los Angeles) to pay tribute to the comfort women. The most famous of these is the memorial that stands in front of the Japanese

Embassy in Korea. Comfort women also have been memorialized through a website/virtual museum (I'm The Evidence n.d.), and through what is known as the "House of Sharing" in Korea, which is part museum exhibit and part living quarters for survivors. Interestingly, the women at the center of the story, those used as sex slaves, were largely absent from the planning of memorials and installations (Fig. 7.7).

Controversy continues to surround these women. Many in Korea believe that more attention should be paid to them and political memory, particularly in educational textbooks so that there is no repeat use of women as sex slaves in future conflicts. Nevertheless, discussion of the women in textbooks has been rolled back in recent years. In addition, Koreans also want more justice for these women; however, the Japanese believe justice already has been served. This has resulted in continued tensions between the two nations.

Due to the controversy surrounding memorialization of the comfort women, weekly protests occur on Wednesdays in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul. In front of the embassy sits the "Peace Statue" of a young girl with an empty chair beside her, which represents comfort women who have passed. The statue also symbolizes the young victim who has lost her childhood to sex slavery. The protests are sponsored by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, an organization made up of NGOs and religious organizations. While survivors were largely absent from the creation of the memorials, they did participate regularly in weekly protests. Protestors ask that no one forgets what happened to these women, and they also ask for further action from the Japanese government to reimburse the comfort women, or their families, and to officially apologize for the



**Fig. 7.7** Memorial to Korean Comfort Women (Photo courtesy of Typehost (2015))

(continued)



**Box 7.2** (continued)

atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during World War II. In total, there are seven objectives articulated by the protestors:

1. For the Japanese to admit their crime.
2. For the Japanese to reveal the truth of what happened.
3. For the Japanese government to make an official apology.
4. Legal reparations (including money).
5. Punishment for everyone who is responsible.
6. Record the crime accurately in Japanese textbooks.
7. Create a museum for the survivors.

Thus, this case illustrates several themes related to memory, violence, and gender. First, when gender violence exists alongside other types of political violence, it is difficult for the perpetrators of the violence to integrate a gendered memory into a post-conflict political memory. We also see that women are depicted as victims without much focus on individual agency or the reclamation of agency following gender violence. Moreover, though memorials may be consequential (and in the case of the memorial in front of the Embassy, often visited), protests are better focused on reclaiming agency and hold more promise for a feminist counter-memory than memorials.

Museum installations are similar to monuments in that they present a given view of women's participation during a certain conflict event. Usually, they exist for a short period of time and are undertaken to highlight women in conflicts in which men's stories are well known (for example, women in World War II or women in Vietnam). In some instances, museum installations tell the story of gendered violence, like *Ni Una Mas*, Not One More, a "two-month long exhibition featuring more than 70 works of art by 20 international artists... organized by Drexel University through a collaboration of academic, student and institutional departments." (Linnert 2017 [np]). The installation sought "to raise awareness about gender violence and, in particular, crimes against women in the Mexican border town of Juarez" (Linnert 2017 [np]) (Fig. 7.8).

## Protest and Women's Movements and Memory

Social movement studies stress how movements utilize and create symbolism (see Tarrow 2011). Not only do memories bring social movements together, but, through the symbolism of protest, movements also keep memories alive (Farthling and Kohl 2013). The slogans on protest signs and the costumes of protesters reflect and create memory (Liao 2010). Women's movements serve this purpose for the counter-memory of gender. Women's movements are often essential in





**Fig. 7.8** Ni Una Mas protest, Juarez, Mexico (Photo Courtesy of Lydia Reich (2013))

collecting women’s testimonies following conflict, and they do so as a way to challenge “women’s marginality” in society and politics (Patterson-Markowitz et al. 2012 [88]). Because feminists are not strangers to protest, protest as a type of memory is very accessible for women’s movements. In fact, protest may be seen as a potentially more successful strategy than monuments for telling holistic stories of women’s lived experiences. Examples abound of women conveying memory through protest: hunger strikes by anti-mafia women in Italy (Siebert 1996), Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina (see Chap. 6), Take Back the Night events, One Billion Rising, etc.

We know of no protest events related to memorializing women’s participation in war and violent conflict *as* agents of war. Instead, we see examples like the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina or Victims of Terrorism Collective (COVITE, Colectivo de Victimas del Terrorismo) in Spain (discussed in the Basque case below) of women marching against conflict or in support of a loved one killed in conflict. Protests can also construct memory that becomes contested. In the Basque region of Spain, COVITE marches against “ETA terrorists” and for loved ones killed by said terrorists, but the Homeward Association (*Etxerat*) marches for “political prisoners” terrorized by the state (i.e. the same ETA operatives COVITE is marching against). Thus, when marches and protests are used to memorialize women in conflict (as opposed to gendered violence), they are generally used to speak out against conflict inflicted on women or their loved ones by the state or by a terrorist organization rather than to memorialize the actions of women in war (Fig. 7.9).

Protests to memorialize women killed by machista terrorism are common in many countries. The figure above shows that the slogan of ‘Ni Una Mas’ is not only the name of a museum exhibit but also a frame for protest in Mexico. Furthermore, as we described in Chap. 6, women in Spain in the Asociacion Velaluz (See the Light Association) used protest in the country’s most famous plaza to raise

**Fig. 7.9** Etxerat Poster on Billboard in San Sebastian, Spain (Photo Courtesy of the Authors)



awareness of lives lost to gender violence. Perhaps the most visible protest pertaining to machista terrorism across Latin America in recent years originated in Argentina in 2016. That year Lucía Pérez was violently raped and killed, thus prompting activists there and in many other countries—including Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, and El Salvador—to protest with the hashtag #NiUnaMenos, which also means “not one more”.

## Performative Art and Acts

Seen as a type of protest and sometimes monument, performative arts and acts tell the story of memory through art (visual and performing). These memorial types are not often associated with women, war, and conflict, but rather with gender violence. For example:

“The Monument Quilt: a public healing space by and for survivors of rape and abuse is an on-going collection of stories from survivors of rape and abuse...The quilt resists the popular and narrow narrative of how sexual violence occurs by telling many stories, not one...As the quilt continues to grow, survivors, loved ones and supporters are encouraged to make a square” (The Monument Quilt n.d. [np]).



**Fig. 7.10** Flash Mobbers Dance at a Suva Shopping Mall (MHCC) (Photo Courtesy of UN Women and Olivia Owen (2014). The group raised awareness of violence against women as part of the global One Billion Rising campaign 2014)

The purpose of the quilt is to portray women as survivors with identities and with agency. This is an important distinction from other types of monuments that may portray women as victims of violence, but not as survivors with agency.

Similarly, The Clothesline Project displays shirts of different colors that represent different aspects of violence against women and the LGBT communities. A white shirt represents those who died because of domestic violence; pink represents those raped or sexually assaulted; yellow represents those battered or assaulted; and blue represents survivors of incest or sexual abuse. Shirts are decorated by survivors or friends of those who have experienced sexual and gender violence. Other groups use dance to express and memorialize gendered violence. For example, One Billion Rising is an organization dedicated to speaking out against violence against women. This flash mob “demonstrates physically and vocally peaceful resistance against gender violence around the world” (One Billion Rising Staff 2015 [np]) (Fig. 7.10).

### **Box 7.3 Protest and Performative Memory in Colombia**

La Casa de la Mujer (The Women’s House) is a feminist organization located in Bogota, Colombia and founded in 1982. This organization’s goals include: providing psychological and legal help to women, working on women’s rights in a variety of capacities (such as protesting against gender violence and for human rights and LGBT rights), conducting feminist research, and forging a political memory of women regarding the violent history of Colombia.

(continued)

**Box 7.3** (continued)

In the Casa's April 2015 newsletter, one author states the purpose of memory efforts that engage women:

"Listening to the voices of women should serve to prevent the emergence of new victims... [as a result, we must] treat... [women] not only as agents of the past but of the present. It is time to...connect past, present, and future [in order] to be more... democratic... [as we now] face a possible de-escalation of the war" (Cagua Martínez 2015 [4]).

In other words, as we already have described in this chapter, memory not only captures what happened in the past but also shapes a country's future. In the case of Colombia, women's testimonies can tell us about previously ignored or erased stories of political violence and their gendered components, and the women who tell their stories can themselves serve as "bridges" to a more democratic future. Thus, the quotation here envisions women as agentic in memory efforts *and* in the future of post-conflict states.

The reasons why the Casa's memory efforts, which first took place between 2009 and 2011, can be considered feminist are that the organization itself is feminist and when it developed its memory efforts in the late 2000s, it purposely did so with a feminist logic. The Director of the Casa hired Claudia González Perez because of her experience in human rights advocacy and rehabilitation of former combatants, and, though González Perez had a sensitivity to gender given her previous interactions with indigenous women, she was new to feminist activism and provided a fresh voice to the Casa in terms of feminism surrounding memory (Casa de la Mujer n.d.). The director charged her with the goal to start a dialogue about gender and memory in Colombia and do it from a feminist angle. Her project, focusing on giving women opportunities to expose the influence of political and family violence on their bodies, received funding from the government of the Netherlands. These memory efforts were called *Memory is Me: Memory, Body, Territory*.

Modes of memory resulting from González Perez's work include workshops with women across Colombian regions and a photography project that captured images by ordinary women who learned how to photograph their lives as they relate to memory. At the workshops, which over 800 women attended, women learned about human rights and how to tell "fictional stories" about their experiences of war. Thus, they are able to process experiences, but they could do so with confidentiality. The photography project was particularly salient because photographs serve as an non-written expression of testimony that can appeal to women who do not know how to read or write. About 150 women from around the country have participated in the photography program, and the program is ongoing. The woman's story that opened this chapter emerged from the photography program. Recall, this woman experienced sexual violence, displacement, and the death of her husband. She

described participation in the program as a healing act, not solely for herself but also for her son who was able to deal with grief and rage. The result, a photography exhibit called ¡Memoria soy Yo! (Memory is Me!) was displayed at the National Library of Colombia in 2011.

González Perez, in a personal interview, explains the multiple benefits of these programs for the women and general public of Colombia (2017). As listed below, the program was able to:

- Raise a public voice about the condition of women during armed conflict in Colombia, particularly regarding the violence brought against women in conflict
- Raise awareness of public responsibility for situations of violence against women in Colombia
- Collect narratives of women victims of violence and recognize their role in the construction of violence memory
- Empower and strengthen individual women as well as local women’s organizations that participated in the workshops
- Develop spaces for grieving and healing, individually and collectively
- Augment individual women’s knowledge of rights, truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of no repetition.
- Generate a public statement against violence against women amidst armed conflict.

In short, listening to women and making a proactive attempt to engage them in memory has occurred as Colombia has moved into a post-conflict era (though some conflict still exists in 2017, even following a 2016 peace agreement). We see the example of Colombia as a promising blueprint for other countries as they emerge from political conflict. With a feminist perspective, the Casa has positively influenced the individual lives of women and has harnessed their agency. What is more, the Casa has had an impact on the country as a whole as it has augmented the historical record.

## Feminist Counter-Memory

Not all political memory is feminist in nature; in fact, most is not. How then, do we know when a feminist memory is developing around post-conflict contexts related to terrorist or gender violence? In earlier work (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2017), we developed a model of feminist memory with five criteria, representing a form of counter-memory (Foucault 1980). This model of feminist memory disallows popular “forgetfulness” about women’s experiences, thus challenging patriarchy and the gender status quo (Pendleton 2011 [360]) (see Table 7.2). These criteria can apply to many forms of “public representations of memory” (Fulbrook 2014 [70]), including but not limited to statues (monuments) (Foxall 2013), naming of

**Table 7.2** Criteria for feminist counter-memory

	Feminist counter-memory criteria	Definition	Sample sources
1	Feminist Women's leadership	Feminist women participate in and lead counter-memory projects. They act with agency in the creation of memory.	Hirsch and Smith (2002); Bold et al. (2006)
2	Women's agency and skills	Women are agents in the public (and private) sphere, memorialized as more than victims or in relation to males.	Davidson (2013); Norkunas (2002); Vinel (2010)
3	Multiple Women's voices	Counter-memory consider multiple women's experiences, including intersectional ones.	Bold et al. (2006)
4	Consciousness raising and discussion	Counter-memory provokes conversations about gender, encouraging feminist change.	Kelly (1995); Young (1997); Bold et al. (2006); Vinel (2010)
5	Consequential locations and forms	Counter-memory is substantial in form and is located in a significant space where the public can encounter it.	Norkunas (2002); Bold et al. (2006); Cronshaw (2014)

streets (Foxall 2013), educational curriculum (Davidson 2013), monographs detailing narratives (Norkunas 2002), “memorials, museums, parliamentary debates, media reports, [and] war crime trials” (Fulbrook 2014 [70]) as well as protest (Liao 2010; Farthing and Kohl 2013), “commemorative practices,” and “rituals of remembrance” (Fulbrook 2014 [70]).

In order for a feminist counter-memory to be present, several key factors must be in place. First, feminist women should lead memory efforts. Though definitions of feminism are contested, we define **feminism** here as the *project to “transform the roles society assigns to women”, change “existing gender power arrangements”, and proclaim “women’s rights to personal autonomy and equality”* (Alvarez 1990 [24]). Second, women’s agency and skills should be highlighted. The focus here is on a balance between collective memories of the private and public which guards against women’s bodies and memories of them becoming ways to mark masculine achievements of war, nation, or colonialism (Norkunas 2002). Third, multiple women’s voices should be heard. In short, memory should be intersectional in nature, and take into account multiple women’s voices and the realization that women’s experiences vary based on intersectional oppression. Fourth, memory projects that are feminist in nature should engage in consciousness-raising and promote discussion. Memory projects must encourage conversations about gender violence, war/terrorist violence, and/or micro-aggression of everyday life. Finally, in order to achieve the above, memory projects ought to be consequentially located. In short, space is political, gendered, and subject to power relations. Practically speaking, a memorial site or activities must reside where the public can experience them. When memory projects are not consequentially located, we must question whether inconsequential memory locations indicate indifference on the part of memorial makers or a lack of resources to inhabit power-centric sites.



**Box 7.4 Memory Making in Juárez, Mexico in the Wake of Femicide**

*Juárez* is the fifth largest city in Mexico (Staudt and Coronado 2010), and it shares a border with El Paso, Texas. As a borderland city, historically, it has been a place of lawlessness and prostitution. In recent decades, *Juárez* has been an epicenter of Mexico’s drug war and economic neoliberalism, the former of which spurred militarization and a general context of violence in the city. Globalization and free trade policies allowed *Juárez*’s maquiladora sector to flourish. Though not all femicide victims worked in factories, many of them did, requiring them to travel by public transportation at many hours of the day and night.

It is estimated that between 1993 and 1998 over 500 women died due to femicide, and women continue to die until this day. Almost all of these women were young and economically disadvantaged. According to Gaspar de Alba, the victims’ “bodies were found strangled, mutilated, dismembered, raped, stabbed, torched, or so badly beaten, disfigured, or decomposed that the remains have never been identified” (2010 [3]). The women’s movement called these murders femicidio to mark them as an “extreme act of violence against women...exercised by men, that is a result of their gender” (Staudt and Méndez 2015, 35). The response of women’s movements can be broken into two time periods, the 1990s and post-2000s (Staudt and Méndez 2015). Local activists, both feminists and mothers’ groups, dominated the first period through protest while the movement during the second period became transnational in organization. The monument “Flor de Arena,” was commissioned by the Mexican government during the second period and situated in a cotton field (Campo Algodonero), where eight women’s bodies had been discovered in 2001 (Table 7.3).

The degree to which memorials in *Juárez* adhere to a feminist counter-memory is mixed. By definition, a women’s movement is led by women (see Beckwith 2000), thus protests led by women’s movements about femicide display women’s leadership and meet the criteria of women’s leadership. The *Juárez* case is interesting, however, in that the movement against femicide

**Table 7.3** *Juárez*, Mexico Femicide results

Feminist memory criteria	Monument	Protest
Feminist women’s leadership	X	✓O
Women’s agency and skills	✓(disputable)	X
Multiple women’s voices	X	✓O
Consciousness-raising and discussion	X	✓O
Consequential locations and forms	X	✓O

X = Absent; ✓O=Present

(continued)



**Box 7.4** (continued)

has had fissures. One part of the movement includes mothers of victims, and another part is comprised of feminists who are middle class professional and academic women. As the movement became transnational near the 2000s, it became associated with international organizations, universities in the United States, as well as NGOs. Scholars have questioned which voices emerged most strongly from these coalitions, concluding that the mothers' voices got less attention (especially from the authorities) and were rhetorically silenced, whereas international feminists took the limelight (Rojas Blanco 2006).

As a result, protests did not necessarily increase women's skills and provide agency for victims. Although protest signs and flyers often featured victims' photos and names, only a vague sense exists about who the victims were outside of their victim status. Gaspar de Alba explains, "you know about them because they are *dead*, because they are part of this sensational, unresolved heinous crime wave...we did not know anything about these...girls...when they were alive" (2010 [5]). Outside of their mothers' testimonies, no record exists about these women's interests or social/political agency. There are a couple other complicating factors related to agency. First, many victims' remains have not been identified; thus, there is no way to memorialize these women in terms of their previous agency. Second, the press and officials painted negative stereotypes of the girls, specifically that they were out late, were loose women, or were prostitutes. As a result, activists spent time countering these claims, perhaps eliminating possible rhetorical space for explaining the women's true identities. According to Rojas Blanco, the women were "symbolically erased" as "fallen" women (2006 [12]).

The main representations of the women were as murdered bodies, with a focus on gruesome details. Doing so allowed the press to focus "upon the violated body rather than the life of the victim...so as to make them an unrecognizable mass rather than a group of individuals" (Driver 2011 [42]). If femicide victims are portrayed as sexualized and murdered bodies, the only agency being documented and remembered is the agency of the murderers themselves (Rojas Blanco 2006). The women's movement also used a frame of extreme violence, publicizing "horrifying testimonies" (Staudt 2008 [79]). However, this frame was disputed within the movement. Staudt argues that the "serial-killer femicide" frame and the notion that femicide is akin genocide caught the world's attention, but it becomes a weak frame as extreme violence against women becomes normalized in *Juárez* and in other countries around the world (2008 [109]).

To know more about the young women and memorialize them for something more than their victimhood would require asking their families about

them. Some testimonies like these exist, but many families have been asked about the killings over and over again, thus re-traumatizing them (Rojas Blanco 2006; Ravelo Blancas 2010). Without more information, it is difficult to “promote the idea of victims as individuals worthy of respect” (Ravelo Blancas 2010 [40]). The women’s families would stress, “they are not merely dead women from Ciudad Juárez; they are our daughters, and they had names, dreams – they had everything” (Ravelo Blancas 2010 [40]). They were also hard workers in the factories (Arriola 2010). Even though the globalized economy views maquiladora workers as “disposable” (Rojas Blanco 2006 [52]), the victims were agents through employment. We found no data showing that protests emphasize this, however. With the exception of memorial artwork, femicide victims are not recognized for their active roles in the public or private sphere (see Heiskanen 2013).

Class and youth make up the intersectional identity of femicide victims, and their mothers also are associated with poverty. Thus, multiple women’s voices are incorporated in Juárez protests only in a basic way given that the two parts of the women’s movement against femicide, mothers of the lower classes and the middle-class and professional women, were represented in protests and it was made clear that class and youth were consequential to the act of femicide. Moreover, the femicide protest frame eventually expanded to take into consideration broadly defined gender violence, thus making activism relevant to many more women who face violence (Staudt 2008).

It must be acknowledged, however, that the mothers were silenced in a couple of ways. Not only did government authorities consistently ignore their claims for information and their protests against impunity, but they also drove wedges into the women’s movement. Government authorities gave restitution money to mothers (but not all mothers), perhaps as patronage, and emphasized the victims’ “underprivileged conditions” as a negative stereotype pointing to their supposed role in prostitution (Rojas Blanco 2006 [54]). Mothers also distanced themselves from middle class feminists, believing that feminists were profiting off their grief, as they garnered grant money to further the movement (Rojas Blanco 2006; Staudt and Méndez 2015). Therefore, multiple women’s voices did not coalesce without controversy.

While not every voice was heard in this case, the women’s protests achieved consciousness raising, as the term of femicide alone raises discussion. Attributing women’s murders to patriarchy and misogyny distinguishes them from the abundance of homicides that take place in Juárez each year. The slogan on many protest signs “*Ni Una Más*” (Not One More) points to the future, as it asks everyone to disallow misogyny from continuing as is. One activist claims, “we have been able to break the silence surrounding the murders and maintain their public visibility. If it were not for so many women

(continued)

**Box 7.4** (continued)

who have supported this struggle in different ways and at different moments, this injustice would not be visible” (Rojas Blanco 2006 [102]). As of now, *Juárez* feminicides are visible worldwide and have spurred conversations about gender change in many countries.

Protests were also consequentially located, having taken place in prominent squares in *Juárez*. Moreover, activists have painted pink and black crosses throughout the city and even on the bridge to El Paso. Photos of missing women line streets and have for over two decades. The protests and imagery have been consequential, so much so that elites in the city began to care about femicide because of how it affects *Juárez*’s image as a city, and thus its economy. The forms of protest, crosses, photos, and slogans are performances of gender that raise awareness (Staudt 2008). The effectiveness of these forms and locations become questionable, however, as they become normalized after two decades of activism.

*Monument: Campo Algodonero.*

The second way the *Juárez* case was memorialized was through a monument, Campo Algodonero. Activist women initiated the case called *Gonzalez et al. v. Mexico* (2009) at the Interamerican Court of Human Rights. The case investigated whether Mexico was responsible for the deaths of three (of eight) women at Campo Algodonero. The court ruled, “the State failed to take adequate steps to prevent the disappearance, abuse, and death of Ms. González, Ms. Ramos Monárrez, and Ms. Herrera Monreal” (Inter-American Court of Human Rights Project 2014 [1984]). Part of the case’s ruling included the Mexican government’s responsibility to construct a monument in memory and honor of the victims. The government did so, but women’s groups were not pleased with the monument, called Flor de Arena. Few attended its commemoration ceremony, and the activists who did interrupted the speakers to point out impunity in cases of femicide. Activists also critiqued the lack of high-level officials at the ceremony, and they disapproved that the monument names three victims instead of all victims since 1993 (Staudt and Méndez 2015). Given that activists showed disapproval of the monument, we can conclude that feminist leadership was not central to the monument’s conception and presentation. What is more, the monument’s grounds, a cotton field and the scene of murder, had previously been an informal space of memory for women’s groups, with pink crosses situated in the field.

The monument itself is of a woman figure with roses surrounding the bottom of the figure. The sculptor, Chilean Verónica Leiton, explains that she hopes it “contributes to the lessening of pain for the families and represents

the feminine and the victims of violence” (Agencia el Universal 2011). As to its meaning, Leiton adds,

“Conceptually, I aimed for something delicate and very dignified, not grotesque. I envisioned an homage to 1500 women and girls, which would convey the idea of transformation and transmutation... [Each of the sculpture’s roses is] distinctly unique, like the girls and women, each one is different...The statue represents a strong and young woman, a female image who projects calm and reflection, wearing the gaze of liberation” (Fregoso 2012).

The name itself, Flor de Arena, references desert plants, like those in the cotton fields where women’s bodies were discarded. Though the monument itself does not bear the names of all women victims since 1993, the grounds surrounding the monument include more names than solely the three women at the heart of the *González et al. v. Mexico* case. Because the monument names women and envisions them as unique, strong, and with potential for liberation, it meets our criterion of agency. Arguably, it should not meet it, given that the artist’s meaning is not obvious at the memorial site and only known through interviews. Moreover, it is questionable that the public will know its meaning given the memorial’s hidden location.

Multiple voices, however, are absent at Campo Algodonero because, to our knowledge, the monument ceremony and discussions surrounding the monument do not mention the intersectional identities of the victims, especially class. Though the monument’s grounds include more names than those of Ms. González, Ms. Ramos Monárrez, and Ms. Herrera Monreal, activists do not feel all victims have been honored. Many feminicide cases go unsolved, and this monument does not bring voice or clarity to these victims. This disapproval also made consciousness raising difficult. Activists were absent at its unveiling and those who were present were confrontational toward authorities. Therefore, the monument is not furthering discussion in several ways, either between activists and the public or between activists and the state.

Another reason why the monument does not meet the consciousness-raising criterion is due to the monument’s location and accessibility. It is not within walking distance of the city’s center. Moreover, when we visited it, no parking was available and the gates to the monument’s grounds were chained and locked. It stands to reason, that few people are taking in the monument and discussing its message. Therefore, we judge the monument to be inconsequentially located. Though its form is striking (i.e., it is not a small plaque to be forgotten), it is nearly impossible to see (Fig. 7.11).

(continued)

**Box 7.4** (continued)

**Fig. 7.11** Flor de Arena Monument (Photo Courtesy of Chris Dowdy)

**Box 7.5 Gender and Memory in the Basque Region, Spain**

As stated in earlier chapters, the Basque peoples live in France and Spain, possess a non-Latin language, and experienced self-rule through Basque institutions and collaboration with Spanish monarchs from the twelfth century until the late 1800s, eventually losing all autonomy during Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975). The French Basques experienced the woes of state centralization and the loss of Basque identity earlier, following the French Revolution (Watson 2003). Nationalism in past centuries expected women to “ensure the continuity of tradition” as wives and mothers (Llona 2010 [86–87]), and Basque women are still responsible for the majority of household

production (Novo and Elizondo 2010; García-Mainar et al. 2011). Moreover, throughout the twentieth century, Basque women’s integration into public life took place through the construction of women’s social action as mothers (Ugalde Solano 1992).

The desired territory for a Basque homeland, or Euskal Herria, is “4 + 3,” meaning a country composed of four Spanish provinces and three French provinces. The current decentralized landscape of Spain and France, however, does not reflect Euskal Herria. The 1978 Spanish Constitution guaranteed political autonomy to the Basque Country (*País Vasco*); yet, it includes only three Basque provinces in Spain, and the fourth, Navarre, is its own region. In France, departments (local structures) are administrative agents of a centralized government with few powers. ETA terrorists sought for over 50 years the legal establishment of Euskal Herria and the protection of the Basque language and culture. ETA began in 1959, when a generation of young nationalists adopted Marxism and armed action as an independence strategy. The Spanish Basque Country gaining regional autonomy in 1978 did not satisfy ETA’s desires. ETA terrorism has resulted in the deaths of more than 800 people to date (Spencer and Croucher 2008), with assassinations of local politicians (from national-level parties) and journalists becoming a popular ETA strategy in the late 1990s and 2000s. Both conservatives and socialists in Spain have used strong anti- terrorism measures against ETA. Though France once ignored escapee terrorists from Spain, it assists Spain in counter-terrorism since the 1990s. French policing of ETA operatives hiding in France helped to weaken ETA and motivate an ETA ceasefire announced on October 20, 2011. The ceasefire’s longevity is unknown, because ETA has declared peace before and then broken it a year or so later. As of 2017, the ceasefire is still in force. Memory around ETA terrorism falls into two camps: those who advocate and memorialize ETA’s victims and those who memorialize those held prisoner by the Spanish and French states for alleged involvement in ETA activities (Table 7.4).

Protests related to memorializing ETA terrorism take two general forms: those individuals protesting against ETA and in favor of victim rights (represented by the group COVITE and similar groups like Mujeres por la

**Table 7.4** Basque Country, Spain, Terrorism Results

Feminist memory criteria	Monument	Protest
Feminist women’s leadership	Mixed results	✓O
Women’s agency and skills	✓(disputable)	✓O
Multiple women’s voices	✓(disputable)	X
Consciousness-raising and discussion	X	✓O
Consequential locations and forms	✓O	✓O

X = Absent; ✓O = Present

(continued)



**Box 7.5** (continued)

Justicia (Women for Justice)), and those protesters acting in favor of prisoners' rights and advocating for amnesty and repatriation to the Basque country those they deem to be political prisoners (represented by Exterat). The degree to which feminist ideals permeate the leadership style of each group varies. COVITE (and its sister organization at the national level, Victims of Terrorism Association (Asociación Víctimas del Terrorismo, AVT) were founded by and were often led by women. That said, when asked why so many women are influential and active in the organization, the leadership and members did not have ready answers. Most assumed it was due to the fact that most of the mortal victims of ETA are men, who were "leaving behind women and children to grieve. We had to do something, so we formed COVITE out of shared necessity and a desire for justice for our husbands and fathers" (Personal Interview 2015). Even *Mujeres por la Justicia*, though a "women's group," is not necessarily feminist in orientation. Exterat on the other hand, has men and women in its ranks, generally the mothers, fathers, wives, husbands and siblings of those prisoners being held in France and Spain accused of alliance with ETA. While the leadership of Exterat has been more mixed than COVITE in terms of sex, Exterat more closely aligns with feminist groups, often engaging in shared protests while categorizing struggles for human rights (feminist rights and prisoner rights) as parallel. Part of the difference between the two groups may be that COVITE and other victim's rights groups in Spain have historically been allied with the political right, while prisoner's rights groups and feminist groups both ally with far-left political parties. In the Basque region, the far left has been nationalist (pro-Basque).

The degree to which protest groups, particularly COVITE, are guided by feminist ideals is unclear, yet we can conclude women's agency and skills are most definitely achieved through these groups. Leaders of COVITE speak of "regaining their lives" and "transformation" through participation in the organization (Personal Interview 2015). Additionally, women, who in the Basque Country led more traditional lives before engagement in protest, gained forays into politics and other important organizing skills through participation in the protest groups. While Exterat tends to remain a protest group, COVITE has become institutionalized and a player in politics in the Basque region. AVT, COVITE's national sister organization, had a similar agentic impact on women. As explained in Chap. 6, Vidal-Abarca lost her husband to ETA terrorism, but together with two other women formed what would become the AVT in 1981.

Class, age, ethnicity, and political identity makes up the intersectional identity of individuals in the Basque Country agitating both for prisoner and victim rights. Some members of COVITE are not Basque because most of the ETA's mortal victims were politicians, police, and military officials, many of whom were "imported" to work in the Basque region from elsewhere in Spain.

On more than one occasion, those we spoke to felt the need to explain that *even though* they were Basque, they still identified with the COVITE mission. Because those killed by ETA were in leadership positions, or in the case of a few interviewees, high ranking officials with the national telephone company accused of spying on ETA operatives, the majority of family left behind is from the upper middle class to upper classes; thus, poorer women are not as represented in COVITE. Etxerat, on the other hand, tends to be populated nearly entirely by people of Basque ethnicity and language and by people from lower socio-economic strata. Thus, within each organization, the opportunity for a plurality of voices to be heard is limited.

Given its lack of connection to a feminist ethic, COVITE does not engage in feminist consciousness raising, although it does raise the issue of victims' rights prominently on the political agenda. Etxerat, on the other hand, with connections to feminist groups, engages in consciousness raising, exposing members who may not self-identify as feminist to feminist ideals through shared protest events. While feminist consciousness raising differs between the groups, protests of both groups take part in prominent local squares and boulevards and are highly visible.

As seen in the *Juárez* case, memory in the Basque country is made through both protests and through monuments. We consider two such monuments, *Vidas Rotas*, un monumento realizado con palabras a las víctimas de ETA ('Broken Lives': a monument made with the words for the victims of ETA), a performative monument, and *La Paloma de la Paz* (Dove of Peace), a structural monument.

*Vidas Rotas* is a written monument intended to memorialize the 857 Victims of ETA terrorism. It is a monument in the form of performative art, and its memorialization is encapsulated in 1300 pages of text. While the book was conceived by Maite Pagazaurtundua, the President of AVT, and documents the loss of women's lives to ETA violence, it is devoid of clear feminist intentions. Similarly, memorialization in the form of structural monuments for Basque prisoners or ETA operatives killed by the state is similarly devoid of feminist ideals. In fact, while statues exist commemorating the loss of men associated with ETA, the authors know of no monuments commemorating women of ETA or loss of women to ETA violence. Similarly, monuments in support of prisoners' rights and amnesty like *Dove of Peace*, speak of prisoners generically without mention of sex or feminist orientations. Women's agency is definitely realized through *Vida Rotas*, and the organizing skills of women are similar to those found in protest movements. Monuments that memorialize terrorist or prisoner victims, however, do not address issues of women's agency.

*Vida Rotas* memorializes all victims of ETA terrorism over 50 years and thus gives voice to multiple women. Importantly, it treats the unborn as victims, memorializing in its collection two pregnant women who were killed by ETA and

(continued)

**Box 7.5** (continued)

their unborn children. Memorial monuments to terrorism, however, are silent treating ‘victims’, be they those killed or those imprisoned, as a monolithic group.

While monuments do not necessarily engage in feminist consciousness-raising, they do raise awareness about the political issues surrounding terrorism. As such, through monuments, memory is constructed and the ‘story’ of memorialization is told a specific way. “These pages make up an impressive story full of humanity in which, through an intense work of documentation, the abominable history of persecution and suffering of all the men, women and children killed by ETA is evoked” (Alonso et al. (2010) [1]).

While structural monuments hold less promise for a feminist counter-memory, in the Basque Country, they are nearly always in areas of prominence, such as town squares, prominent boulevards, plaques on government buildings, and the like. As such, both the memory of those killed by ETA and the memory of ETA prisoners held by the state are prominently vying for dominance in most cities throughout the Basque region (Fig. 7.12).



**Fig. 7.12** Graffiti Calling for Basque Country Independence (Photo Courtesy of the Authors)

## Conclusion

A discussion of memory politics, and particularly feminist memory, is missing in most of political science and international relations. Memory pertaining to political violence is constructed in a few different forms, with the most common form being monuments. These often are dedicated to men in battles and rarely focus on women's lives and feminist consciousness raising. We also see memory constructed through museum installations, which sometimes elicit a masculine recollection of conflict but have the ability to show women in a variety of capacities during conflict. Our case studies show that performative acts and protest are more likely to stimulate feminist memory, particularly if they are consequentially located. For example, feminists designed the photography exhibits in Colombia and they were displayed in a way that received national attention. That said, counter-memory as a mode of feminist social change is not consistently present in the cases examined in this chapter. Though the anti-gender violence message of Juárez protests urged change in gender relations, traditional gender expectations dominated in the Basque case, as women's memory making was tied to their private relationships with men. The case of Korean comfort women is a good example of how memory tends to emphasize women's victimhood. Given that memory in cases of political conflict typically hinges on narratives of victimhood and nationalisms, we anticipate similar results in many other cases of memory. Specifically, we expect feminist counter-narratives to take the backseat to victimhood and nationalism. Future researchers therefore should focus on identifying "deviant cases" in which feminist narratives do emerge and then theorize on the basis of such cases about what explanatory mechanisms make feminist counter-memory possible (for deviant cases, see Lijphart 1971).

Finally, we confirm what many past scholars have found regarding gender and memory, primarily that women are oftentimes absent from the memory tableau. When one walks into most Basque towns, it is the male ETA operatives who are memorialized and not the women. Similarly, though feminicide deaths in Juárez are memorialized, official memory from the state feels forced, as if the state would rather forget. The state putting the Flor de Arena monument in an inaccessible location after an international court required its construction demonstrates a preference for women's invisibility. These realizations serve to confirm why feminist counter-memory is essential. We urge scholars to continue the search for counter-memory in an effort to uncover its possibilities.

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# Chapter 8

## Political Violence, Terrorism, and Elites



### Introduction

In many countries, including the United States, countering terrorism is linked to military action (though counterterrorism can include non-military approaches (see Chap. 10). As a result, terrorism, like military affairs, can be viewed as a man's game, associated with the need for tough and assertive leadership. This sentiment arguably surfaced in November of the United States' 2016 presidential election, when Donald Trump discussed Hillary Clinton's qualifications. He said, "When I look at these great admirals and these great generals and these great medal of honor recipients behind me — to think of *her* being their boss? I don't think so" (Diamond 2016 [np]). Trump's claim came years after Clinton had served as Secretary of State. Although Clinton had experience dealing with diplomacy as well as terrorism in that post – including being part of the decision to take out Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden – Trump deemed her unfit for military leadership and broader executive leadership. Moreover, earlier in the campaign he claimed she did not have the physical and mental stamina to fight ISIS.

Women make up fewer than half of most countries' legislatures and executive cabinets, and, historically, women do not comprise the top leadership positions related to foreign policy and defense (Goldstein 2001). Although more women are in legislatures today than decades ago, and more women have become defense ministers (Barnes and O'Brien 2018), we do not know the extent to which women political elites participate and lead in terrorism policymaking, which may include actions in various government ministries and agencies as well as in the military. In this chapter, we examine to what extent women are present in policy positions in which they can influence terrorism, if/how they experience or respond to terrorism in gendered ways, and how the media and other political actors react to their responses. The chapter mainly draws on examples from the United States and Europe (particularly Spain, the Basque region, and the United Kingdom); however,

it also highlights women's leadership and actions in Argentina and in Kurdish territories in and near Syria.

Throughout the chapter, we use the terminology of representation, essentialism, framing and frames, hegemonic masculinity, and elites. Each of these terms, while sometimes defined in earlier chapters, is important to discuss before analyzing the role of women as elite policymakers. We are interested in two types of representation in this chapter: descriptive and substantive representation (Pitkin 1967). **Descriptive representation** of women means *the absolute numbers of women in government, and it is often stated as the percent of political leaders who are women*. We want to know the extent to which women are in positions of power in institutions that are influential in responding to terrorism. **Substantive representation** refers to *how a representative acts on behalf of his/her constituency*. In other words, do women provide a "women's viewpoint" when governing? Or, do women in key institutions related to terrorism advance the preferences of women as it relates to terrorism? Most scholars discuss substantive representation of women as it relates to "women's issues," typically defined as policy areas related to health, education, or social services that impact women and families (Swers 2002; Celis 2008; Reingold 2006). As discussed in Chap. 9, in public opinion polls, women as a group do not hold uniform preferences for actions to stymie terrorism. Identifying a "women's viewpoint" as it relates to terrorism is therefore ambiguous, thus requiring us to acknowledge essentialism, which is defined as assuming that all women have the same attributes and opinions. To avoid essentializing women, we assert here that not all women in society or all women in political leadership want the same response to terrorism. Instead, we ask if certain women demonstrate ways in which to substantively represent women in this policy area. Also, we investigate if the media essentializes women's leadership regarding terrorism by the way they frame women's actions.

**Framing** refers to *how elites or the media construct and present reality*. **Frames** present "little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (Gitlin 1980 [6]), and they articulate how reality is defined and interpreted by various actors and institutions (Benford 1997). We are interested in how women elites frame their own identities and actions *vis à vis* terrorism and how elites are framed by the media when they respond to terrorism. We find that hegemonic masculinity influences the framing of women elites responding to terrorism. **Hegemonic masculinity** (discussed in other chapters in this book) is the *expectation that men, and political leaders as men, convey aggression, decisiveness, and independence rather than feminine traits, stereotyped as emotional, gentle, and caring* (Connell 1995; see also Krosnell 2005; Hutchings 2008). Women leaders are often portrayed via feminine frames, which then stereotype them as being emotional, subpar leaders, while lacking the abovementioned masculine traits.

**Political elites** are those "*persons occupying the top of powerful organizations,*" such as legislatures and bureaucracies, with the capacity to change "political outcomes" (López 2013 [3]). They are the political actors in important positions with power to take action regarding terrorism. Thus, elites in this chapter may include women in executive or legislative positions or those in key positions in the military and law enforcement. Historically, women have not been elites. A quotation from

1959 aptly conveys this assumption: “The power elite is composed of men...in positions to make decisions having major consequences” (Mills 1959 [np]). Though leaders of social movements may also be seen as elites in society, we reserve discussion of social movements addressing terrorism to Chap. 6.

## Descriptive Representation of Women Elites in Terrorism Policymaking

Gender and terrorism research typically investigates women as perpetrators of violence (see Chaps. 2 and 3) or as targets of violent activity (see Chaps. 4 and 5). Few scholars examine how terrorism affects women political leaders. To explore this question, we must ask to what extent women are present in leadership positions related to terrorism. Put another way, what is the descriptive representation of women in these positions? Recall, descriptive representation of women means the absolute numbers of women in government, and it is often stated as the percent of political leaders who are women. Descriptive representation envisions women in government “sitting in” for women in the general public.

Are women in positions of power in institutions that are influential to terrorism response? To answer this question, we must brainstorm the government positions related to terrorism that women could occupy. We argue that women could be influential in legislatures, in executive positions, and in the military, police, and memory politics. We discuss these below, noting the percent of political elites in these areas who are women.

On average women are 23.6% of legislators worldwide. As discussed in Chap. 2, many terrorist groups include 20–30% of women in their ranks. Therefore, it is likely that many terrorist organizations better represent women in a descriptive way than national legislatures around the world. Only two countries—Rwanda and Bolivia—have women comprising at least 50% of their legislatures. Table 8.1 displays the countries with the highest descriptive representation of women in legislatures. The trends we see in this data are two-fold. First, one is likely to notice the many Scandinavian countries in the table. For many years, these countries, renowned for their egalitarian cultures, saw incremental increases in women’s representation which positioned them as leaders worldwide (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005). Another trend is the high representation of women in countries with histories of political conflict. Of the countries in Table 8.1, this book utilizes Rwanda, Mexico, and Spain as case studies of political violence and/or gender violence. Other cases on the list with histories of intense political conflict and/or significant political transitions include: Nicaragua, South Africa, and Mozambique. Countries not on this list but with recent or current conflicts and also with higher descriptive representation than the United States (at 19.4%) are: Afghanistan (27.7%), Iraq (25.3%), and Pakistan (20.6%) (Table 8.1).

Why do so many countries that have recently emerged from conflict have high levels of descriptive representation for women? The best explanation is that descriptive representation is on the rise in these countries due to **gender quotas**, which



**Table 8.1** Descriptive representation of women, top 15 countries worldwide, 2017

Country	% Representation of women in lower (or single) house legislature	Presence of legislated quotas/reserved seats
Rwanda	61.3	Y
Bolivia	53.1	Y
Cuba	48.9	X <sup>a</sup>
Iceland	47.6	X
Nicaragua	45.7	Y
Sweden	43.6	N
Mexico	42.6	Y
Finland	42.0	N
South Africa	42.0	N
Senegal	41.8	Y
Namibia	41.3	N
Mozambique	39.6	N
Norway	39.6	N
Spain	39.1	Y

Note: Data come from Interparliamentary Union (2012) and Luciak (2005)

<sup>a</sup>Cuba denies using gender quotas, yet it is suspected that women's representation in politics is based on some sort of positive discrimination Luciak (2005)

*mandate the proportion of women who must be candidates on election lists or ballots.* Sometimes countries, by way of legislation or a constitution, mandate quotas, and, in other countries, political parties choose to use quotas voluntarily. Some countries mandate **parity**, *namely equal, 50/50 representation of women*. Of the countries in Table 8.1 that do not have legislated quotas for the national legislative bodies, many have party quotas and legislated quotas at the subnational level (e.g., Iceland, Norway, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, Sweden). Reasons for the development of quotas vary. In some countries women's movements fight for them as an issue of equality (e.g., the parity movement in France, see Baudino 2003) and in some countries quotas are a response to political violence. Specifically, it is argued that men created political violence and women are therefore needed to put government back together in post-conflict settings, as women are associated with peace. Moreover, as we have discussed in other chapters, UN Resolution 1325, from 2000, stresses that women should be a part of post-conflict circumstances and peace negotiations. Thus, the international community encourages countries to bring women into leadership following conflict, thereby designating women as political elites.

A good example of this scenario is Rwanda (Tajali 2013). After the genocide, a new constitution was drafted, providing a political opportunity to incorporate women into political leadership. It also made practical sense for women to lead due to the uneven population ratios between men and women at the time, with 70% of the population being female due to the disproportionate deaths of males during the genocide. The women's movement in Rwanda also advocated for quotas. According to Tajali,

“The National Assembly of the transitional government appointed the 12-member Constitutional Commission to draft the new constitution in 2000, three members of which were women, including Judith Kanakuze, who was a representative of civil society and a

gender expert. Kanakuze brought her background as a consultant for the National Women's Network and represented the Rwandan women's movement at the Constitutional Commission. Among her central demands for the new constitution was to include a quota to guarantee at least 30% female representation in parliament and in cabinet (2013) [279]"

In the end, Rwanda's new electoral rules ensured that 30% of parliamentary seats be reserved for women, that is, 30% of the seats are elected through all-female ballots. The result in Rwanda is that before 1994, women were no more than 15% of the national legislature, but after the new constitution, women became 49% of the legislature. Additionally, the constitution mandates that two members of the youth and one disabled person are represented in the legislature.

Descriptive representation of women can also be found in executive institutions. Four of the most obvious executive positions related to political conflict and terrorism are head of government, defense minister, interior minister, and state or foreign minister. Because these positions are often associated with hegemonic masculinity, and the need to be tough and decisive, women historically are disadvantaged at occupying these posts. In other words, they are not usually descriptively represented in the positions of head of state or head of government or as ministers of defense, state, or interior. **Head of state** refers to the *chief public representative of a country*. The **head of government** is a country's political leader in charge of running the country and policymaking. In the US and most of Latin America, the president is both head of state and head of government; while other countries have prime ministers who are heads of government and presidents (or monarchs) who are heads of state. The head of government, because of her/his policymaking role, is essential to terrorism responses. Situated under the head of government in the executive is the cabinet. The cabinet (or ministry) portfolios most associated with combating terrorism are defense, state, or interior. A **defense department or ministry** would *manage the military as related to terrorism*, and a **state department secretary** or **foreign minister** would be *responsible for diplomacy and foreign policy related to terrorism*. **Interior ministries** deal with *policing and immigration as related to terrorism* (and can be called a ministry of home affairs). In the US, the Department of Homeland Security is roughly similar to interior ministries in other countries. Some country's counterterrorism policies are based strongly on military responses (as in the US), whereas other countries (as in Europe) see terrorism as a matter of policing. As such, the importance of the abovementioned ministers to terrorism may vary by country as counterterrorism models vary as well. Table 8.2 shows the presence of women in these ministries, over time, for the cases included in this book.

Table 8.2 tells us that several countries have had women as heads of government and cabinet ministers related to terrorism policy. In particular, we see many women working in these areas in the countries of the UK, the US, Argentina, and Colombia. Other countries have had women as heads of government, but we must note that "women [executive] leaders in certain regions [of the world] are largely limited to relatives of former executives or opposition leaders" (Jalalzai 2010 [136]). Pakistan (Benazir Bhutto) and South Korea (Park Geun-hye) would be examples of countries where women elites are relatives of powerful men. Women, when viewed as part of a family or connected to men, might be acceptable as leaders, but it is possible that they are not seen as independent agents in politics. Moreover, we recognize that a

**Table 8.2** Representation in country cases

Country/ regional case	Descriptive representation % <i>women in lower house of legislature or in unicameral house, as of November 2017</i>	Women Elites in Terrorism-Related Portfolios <i>women who are heads of government, defense ministers, foreign ministers, or interior ministers, up to 2017</i>
<b>Cases of political violence as active conflict</b>		
Mexico	42.6	Rosario Green (Secretary of Foreign Affairs: 1998–2000) Patricia Espinosa Cantellano (Foreign Minister: 2006–2012) Claudia Ruiz Massieu Salinas (Foreign Minister: 2015–2017)
Spain	39.1 <sup>a</sup>	Ana Palacio Valle-Lersundi (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2002–2004) Carme Chacón Piqueras (Minister of Defense: 2008–2011) Trinidad Jiménez García-Herrera (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2010–2011)
United Kingdom	32.0	Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister: 1979–1990) Hazel Blaers (Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety: 2003–2006) Margaret Beckett (Foreign Minister: 2006–2007) Jacqui Smith (Home Secretary: 2007–2009) Theresa May (Home Secretary: 2010–2016) Amber Rudd (Home Secretary: 2016–Present) Theresa May (Prime Minister: 2016–Present)
Sudan	30.5 <sup>a</sup>	None
Afghanistan	27.7 <sup>a</sup>	None
Israel	27.5	Golda Meir (Foreign Minister: 1956–1964) Golda Meir (Prime Minister: 1969–1974) Tzipi Livni (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2006–2009)
Iraq	25.3 <sup>a</sup>	None
Pakistan	20.6 <sup>a</sup>	Benazir Bhutto (Prime Minister: 1988–1990; 1993–1996) Hina Rabbani Khar (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2011–2013)
United States	19.4	Madeleine Korbelt Albright (Secretary of State: 1997–2001) Condoleezza Rice (National Security Advisor: 2001–2005) Condoleezza Rice (Secretary of State: 2005–2009) Hillary Rodham Clinton (Secretary of State: 2009–2013) Janet Napolitano (Secretary of Homeland Security: 2009–2013)

(continued)

**Table 8.2** (continued)

Country/ regional case	Descriptive representation % women in lower house of legislature or in unicameral house, as of November 2017	Women Elites in Terrorism-Related Portfolios women who are heads of government, defense ministers, foreign ministers, or interior ministers, up to 2017
Colombia	18.7 <sup>a</sup>	Nohemí Sanín Posada de Rubio (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1991–1994) María Emma Mejía Vélez de Caballero (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 1996–1998) Carolina Barco Isakson (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2002–2007) 2002–03 Minister of Defence Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón, Colombia María Consuelo Araújo Castro (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2006–2007) María Ángela Holguín-Cuéllar (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2010–Present)
Russia	15.8	None
Turkey		Tansu Çiller (Prime Minister: 1993–1996) Meral Akşener (Interior Minister: 1996–1997) Tansu Çiller (Foreign Minister: 1996–1997)
Syria	13.2	None
Nigeria	5.6	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Minister for Foreign Affairs: 2006) Viola Onwuliri (Minister of Foreign Affairs: 2011–2014)
Yemen	0.0	None
<b>Cases of political violence resolved</b>		
Rwanda	61.3 <sup>a</sup>	Rosemary Kobusingye Museminari (Foreign Minister: 2008–2009)
Basque Country	53.3 <sup>a</sup>	Estanfanía Beltrán de Heredia (Security Minister: 2012–Present)
Argentina	38.9 <sup>a</sup>	Isabel Martínez de Perón (President: 1974–1976) Susana Myrta Ruíz Cerutti (Secretary of External Relations: 1989) Nilda Garré (Minister of Defense: 2005–2010) Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (President: 2007–2012) Nilda Garré (Minister of Security: 2010–2013) María Cecilia Rodríguez (Minister of Security: 2013–2015) Susana Malcorra (Minister of Foreign: 2015–2017) Patricia Bullrich (Minister of Security: 2015–Present)

(continued)

**Table 8.2** (continued)

Country/ regional case	Descriptive representation % <i>women in lower house of legislature or in unicameral house, as of November 2017</i>	Women Elites in Terrorism-Related Portfolios <i>women who are heads of government, defense ministers, foreign ministers, or interior ministers, up to 2017</i>
Germany	37.0	Angela Merkel (Federal Chancellor: 2005–present) Ursula von der Leyen (Federal Minister of Defence: 2013–present)
Northern Ireland	30.0	Claire Sugden (Justice Minister: 2016–2017)
Bosnia	21.4 <sup>a</sup>	Marina Pendeš (Defense Minister: 2015–Present)
South Korea	17.0 <sup>a</sup>	Han Myung-sook (Prime Minister: 2006–2007) Park Geun-hye (Prime Minister: 2013–2017)
Sri Lanka	5.8	Sirivamo D.R. Bandaranaike (1960–1966) (1970–1977) (as Premier Minister Bandaranaike also held a number of other portfolios, among others as Minister of External Relations).

<sup>a</sup>Presence of legislated quota system for lower house of legislature

woman has never been president of the United States or Russia. Jalalzai explains that countries with powerful presidencies and large militaries, and particularly states with nuclear arms, find it the hardest to elect women as presidents (2013). As mentioned above, top executive positions tend to be associated with hegemonic masculinity (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2014). Masculinity is associated with strength and the ability to protect, thus making it difficult for the public to perceive of women, who are often portrayed as soft and passive, as being fit for presidential and military leadership (Sperling 2016). Thus, elite executive positions tend to be gendered in a masculine way, “leading to assumptions of men’s superiority at handling military conflicts” (Jalalzai 2010 [139]). Chapter 9 elaborates on how gender expectations about leaders influence citizens’ voting behavior. We can therefore conclude that while women in chief executive positions are increasing across the globe, complete equality with men has not transpired.

Research on women cabinet ministers tells a similar story. First, women are more common in cabinets today, but they do not have parity representation in most cabinets worldwide (Krook and O’Brien 2011). **Parity cabinets exist when heads of governments choose to appoint half women and half men to cabinets**, thus resulting in many women in executive posts. According to Krook and O’Brien, in 2011, “countries with more than 40% women [in cabinets] have grown more diverse to include Chile, Spain, France, Switzerland, Nicaragua, South Africa, Burundi, and Germany” ([9]). Recent examples of parity cabinets include Justin Trudeau’s government in Canada (appointed in 2015) and Emmanuel Macron’s government in France (appointed in 2017).

In terms of positions in cabinets, women tend to lead ministries or departments that are feminine (i.e., family, culture, education, and social services), rather than

masculine (i.e., defense, economic, finance, security, and agriculture) (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson 2009; Krook and O'Brien 2011). Because women often are viewed as compassionate or as mothers, they are considered fit to oversee ministries related to family and social services. Considering that terrorism policy-making generally comes from “masculine” ministries, women often lack the opportunity to engage in this policy area. Recent scholarship, however, suggests that women are becoming more and more present in the area of defense (Barnes and O'Brien forthcoming). Though defense is associated with weaponry and masculine power, “by 2012, women had been appointed to the ministry of defense in 41 countries” (Barnes and O'Brien forthcoming [2]). Looking at defense ministries in 163 countries, Barnes and O'Brien find that,

“women are less likely to be appointed [as defense ministers] in countries engaged in fatal disputes, governed by military dictators, and in those that invest heavily in military operations while forgoing peacekeeping. By contrast, women are more likely to come to power in states with large numbers of female parliamentarians and female chief executives, as well as in those where the post takes on new meanings—particularly in countries concerned with peacekeeping and in former military states governed by left-leaning parties” [3].

Argentina, as shown in Table 8.2, is a good example of these findings. Argentina was a military state during the late 1970s and early 1980s, but in much of the past decades has been governed by leftists who see security as meaning more than raw military power. The United States also fits the dynamic described by Barnes and O'Brien. First, the US does not have a gender quota and it has a low number of women legislators in comparison to other democratic and some non-democratic countries. Moreover, the US is involved in military operations around the world, and stopping terrorism is considered a military endeavor for the US. Therefore, the fact that the US has never had a woman as a defense secretary may be because the meaning of security in the US is still firmly embedded in force and masculine expectations, rather than peacekeeping and human rights.

A few final ways that women may be descriptively represented as political elites include holding positions in the military, police, and political memory. An extensive discussion of US military, police, and counterterrorism is included in Chap. 10, but what is important to note here is the lack of numerical representation of women in the military and police, and especially in leadership capacities. Figures from 2017 show women comprise about 15% of US active-duty military personnel. As of 2015, all US combat positions were opened to women and therefore women can now lead combat units (Lemmon 2016); however, 2013 data show that only “about 16 percent of the officer corps and just seven percent of top generals and admirals across the armed forces are women” (McGregor 2014 [np]). Only three NATO states have more women in the military than the US (Hungary, Latvia, and Slovenia), and most have significantly less. Poland and Italy have only 2.1% and 3.9% respectively of women in its forces (Obradovic 2014). Average representation worldwide is even lower. Joshua Goldstein reported in 2004 that only 3% of militaries' standing army soldiers around the globe are women, out of 23 million soldiers total. These numbers are significant given that the military is a long-standing pathway to political leadership (Jalalzai 2013). Therefore, if women aren't descriptively represented in the military, they may not become political elites.



Policing trends mirror data about the military. Women make up on average 12–13% of the police forces in the United States, and they are in leadership positions in about 11% of US police departments, sheriff's offices, and other law enforcement agencies. Although these numbers do not sound incredibly large, they are notable in comparison to other countries. In developing countries, women are barely represented in police forces, considering that many women stay out of the work force altogether and feminist movements have not demanded women's inclusion in the police (Natarajan 2007). One prominent exception to these trends is Cressida Dick, the Metropolitan Police commissioner for London, which is the highest-ranking police position in all of the UK. Dick was appointed in 2017, and her previous position was head of counterterrorism for the police.

Finally, some countries have bureaucratic positions dedicated to political memory. As we saw in Chap. 7, political elites influence how political violence—genocide or terrorism—is remembered in a country. In Spain, for example, in the national Interior Ministry, the General Directorate of Support for Victims of Terrorism is charged with working with relatives and associations regarding information about loved ones, financial assistance, and preservation of memory. So too in the Basque region, an agency exists to preserve memory, but particularly memory regarding the region's struggles with ETA. It is called The General Secretariat for Peace and Coexistence, and a Directorate of Victims and Human Rights also exists to help victims and families of victims. As of 2017, the directors of both of these bureaucratic agencies, at the national and regional levels, were women. A past director of the Basque directorate was also a woman. No research to date has determined why women are often in political memory positions, yet we believe this finding matches themes in Chap. 7, specifically the idea that women are instrumental in constructing memory and understandings of their communities.

## Violence Against Women Politicians

We saw in Chaps. 4 and 5 instances when women are particular targets, or victims of political violence. Sometime violence does not take the form of genocide or gendercide, but instead targets politicians because of particular traits. This came into sharp focus in 2016 when the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) released a comprehensive report that examined violence against women parliamentarians, i.e., women elites in legislatures. This report draws into stark examination the fact that women politicians are often targeted because they are women. That means the women who are present in leadership and possibly could influence policies related to political violence are themselves targets of political violence (see also Krook 2017).

The report includes interviews from women in parliaments across geographic regions that detail experiences with gender-based violence. As discussed throughout this book, women have been historically associated with the private sphere; while men (and men who ascribe to traditionally-held masculine stereotypes based on hegemonic masculinity) have been associated with the public sphere. In some instances, when women have stepped into the public sphere, as in the case of women who are legislators, they have been met with intimidation, harassment, sexist language, and sometimes violence (IPU 2012).

The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines **gender-based violence** as “*any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.*” According to the IPU and the campaign #NottheCost, three additional elements define violence against political women:

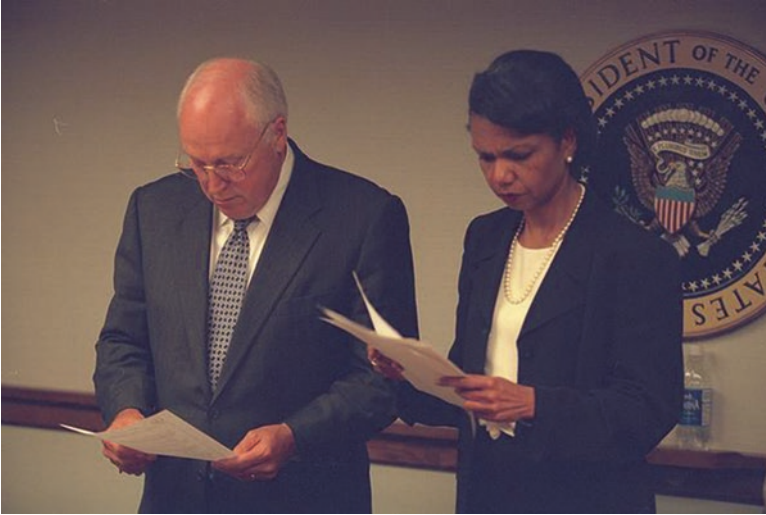
1. “It targets women because of their gender;
2. In its very form it can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence;
3. Its impact is to discourage women – in particular from being or becoming active in politics” (IPU 2012 [np]).

Based on this definition, the IPU study concluded that 81.8% of the respondents from all countries and regions experienced political violence and 44.4% of those surveyed said they had received threats of death, rape, beatings, or abduction during their parliamentary term (IPU 2012). Additionally, over one-fifth of parliamentarians reported being subjects of sexual harassment (21.8%); while 25.5% of respondents were subjects of physical violence, and 7.5% of respondents reported being subjects of forced sexual interactions (IPU 2012). Sixty-five point 5% of respondents indicated that they had been subjected to multiple incidents of derogatory and humiliating sexual remarks. Social media is the number one platform through which threats are made, and most parliamentarians believed they were being intimidated so that they would stay out of the public sphere (IPU 2012). IPU also found an intersectional nature to the threats. Young women and women minorities were more likely to receive threats and/or violence than other groups (IPU 2012).

Efforts to stem violence against political women have been mixed. Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright addressed the problem in an op-ed in the Spring of 2016, shortly after the IPU report was released. She stated “I have often said that success without democracy is improbable, and democracy without women is impossible. If we fail to act on behalf of the current and future female leaders in our world, the cost to our democracies will be too high.” (Albright 2016). As a result, the National Democratic Institute, on which Albright serves as chairwoman of the board, launched a global call to stem violence against women in politics. Some countries have already taken steps. Bolivia, a country with a history of murdered women politicians, criminalized violence against women politicians in 2015. The National Democratic Institute, Albright, and others are now calling on the UN to include investigations against women politicians under the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls.

## Women Elites and Substantive Representation

Women inconsistently occupy governmental positions with authority over terrorism policymaking, but Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State in the United States (2005–2009), is a prominent exception to the rule. At a public forum on the campus of



**Fig. 8.1** National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice with Vice President Cheney in the President’s Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) on 9/11/2001 (Photo courtesy of the US national archives)

Pepperdine University in 2011, the former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor of the United States noted her interests in gender as it relates to foreign policy. She, as well as Hillary Clinton (see Chap. 10), strongly focused on gender while leading the State Department. Although Rice is criticized for her complicity in the Bush Administration’s approach to human rights and her silence regarding gender issues throughout her career before politics (Dolan 2010), while Secretary of State, she was instrumental in getting the UN Security Council to recognize rape as a weapon of war (United Nations Security Council 2008), she initiated a health campaign for women in the Middle East, and she began the One Woman Initiative, which awards grants to Muslim women who are entrepreneurs (Fig. 8.1).

Whereas descriptive representation refers the raw number or percentage of women in politics, the actions of Secretary Rice that we are describing amount to what is called substantive representation, or how representatives act on behalf of his/her constituency. In other words, do women provide a “women’s viewpoint” when governing and pay attention to issues of importance to women? How would women want to be represented as related to terrorist and genocidal risks, and what sort of responses would they want in the aftermath of violent conflict?

Scholars debate whether and how women elites act as representatives “for women” as a particular constituency, and they consider the substantive representation of women to consist of women elites speaking out and voting for/pursuing women’s issues. **Women’s issues** generally mean *issues related to women’s lives, such as women’s health, the gendered division of labor (women’s double duty of work within and outside the home), and women’s responsibilities in the private sphere (pertaining to children, family, and community)* (Celis 2009). Because all women do not have the same preferences about what it means to improve women’s

lives, “women representing women” is not as straightforward as it sounds. Anytime one defines “what women want” out of politics, she runs the risk of essentializing women.

Given that substantive representation is difficult to operationalize in studies of how women legislators represent women’s interests, it is also not easy to determine how women elites could have a specific “women’s perspective” on military, security, and terrorism policy (see Chap. 9 about whether women as constituents have a “women’s perspective” on terrorism). Although peace advocates view women as agents for peace in a violent world (see Chap. 6), Goldstein indicates that many women elites in the United States do not feel they must act in a way different than men as related to foreign policy. He states,

“A 1993 study of foreign policy insiders found that...nearly 90 percent of men and women at both [the] State and Defense [Departments], excluding career women at Defense who split evenly, thought that having more women in the Department would not affect foreign policy or process. Overall, little evidence shows that women foreign policy insiders hold a ‘women’s perspective’ on international issues or the policy process” (Goldstein 2001 [124] citing study by McGlen and Sarkees 1993).

Furthermore, studies of American politics have shown that women candidates and politicians represent “women’s issues,” or “caring areas” related to education, health and welfare, and that women are *less likely* to focus on policies surrounding terrorism and security (Khan 1996). Women politicians often emphasize “‘female’ issues, such as education and health policy, while men are more likely to stress their commitment to ‘male’ issues, such as the economy and defense policy” (Khan 1996 [35]). Thus, some women in society and some women leaders might believe there is an appropriate way to address women’s interests as it relates to political violence, whereas other women will not.

Our task here, nevertheless, is to attempt to connect substantive representation to leaders’ responses to political violence. Thus, we argue that a couple of factors best display how women elites can substantively represent other women in matters related to political violence. These factors are not exhaustive of substantive representation as it relates to political violence, and not all women might agree on them, yet they are representative of the demands and actions of many women.

First, women elites can recognize the need to incorporate women’s voices into deliberations about political violence. This means that women elites honor women’s agency and expect them to be present and active regarding solutions to violence. It may also be the case that elites recognize how women themselves are violent political actors with agency that causes conflict. In this instance, elites may consider how women as perpetrators alter state responses to violence. A second way to substantively represent women in this area is to tie gender violence to the context of political violence, and not dismiss either. As past chapters have discussed, political violence breeds spaces for the victimization of women, and perpetrators of gender violence make up the ranks of those who inflict political violence on others. Thus, if women elites, especially those in security and interior ministry capacities, tie these kinds of violence together and seek solutions to both in their work, we can assume they are representing women’s interests. This is akin to O’Brien’s and Barnes’ arguments about defense ministers

above (2017); it may be the case that women as ministers of defense and interior see their portfolios outside the traditional constraints of hard power and militarism and also focus on human security, including issues such as human rights, sex trafficking, and child labor.

Women elites acting in the abovementioned ways is not as easy as it sounds. In fact, doing so could put them in a **double bind**, or, in other words, *a situation where they cannot balance feminine and masculine expectations and get critiqued for meeting both or either sets of expectations*. Women elites are often torn about representing so-called women's issues, because they do so at the risk of the public associating them with maternal traits and care, regardless of whether or not they have children (Monopoli 2009). Nevertheless, if they act too tough, the public might dismiss them as cold or inauthentic, and, in any case, still see them as weaker on terrorism and security.

To further explore substantive representation by elite women, we look to two countries from Table 8.2, namely the United Kingdom and Argentina. We chose these cases because they are ones highlighted in other parts of the book and because both have many women represented in the national legislatures and many past or current women serving in the roles of head of government, minister of defense, minister of interior, and/or foreign minister. The cases also provide a contrast: of one case with active terrorism (e.g., UK with recent ISIS attacks) and a case with historical terrorism (e.g. Argentina with state and societal terrorism surrounding the Dirty War era of the late 1970s and early 1980s). For each, we look at how women elites advocate for women's interests in the realm of terrorism and/or memory politics. Following these analyses, we present results from interviews with Basque women elites. These elites told us that they represent women and respond to terrorism in ways distinct from men. Combined with the analysis of Argentina and the UK, we show that many women indeed attempt to bring a so-called woman's perspective into the politics of violent conflict.

## United Kingdom: Women Elites Representing Women

The United Kingdom has had two women as prime minister, Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May, both of whom are/were political conservatives. Although there have been women ministers from the Labour Party who have represented policy areas related to political violence, we focus here on the Prime Ministers and two recent Home Secretaries, all of whom are from the Conservative Party, or Tories. Keeping in mind that a Home Secretary is like an interior minister charged with national security, policing, and immigration, the two most recent home secretaries in the UK have been Theresa May (2010–2016) and Amber Rudd (2016 – present). That is, before her ascendancy to Prime Minister, May was tasked with affairs related to terrorism.

A first response from feminist activists, particularly those on the Left, is that these women elites do not represent feminism. For example, the political Right in

the UK has favored austerity measures and tough immigration policies, both of which can be seen as anti-feminist stances (e.g., austerity hits women hard because they must take up the slack in the social arena when social programs are cut and tough immigration stances further disadvantage refugee women who face intersectional discrimination and violence). Nevertheless, May and Rudd assert a different kind of leadership than the Tory women of old. Whereas Thatcher specifically disavowed support for women's rights and channeled a masculine, "iron lady" style of leadership, Tory women today have embraced feminism. For instance, May has been photographed before wearing a "This is what a feminist looks like" t-shirt, and Rudd has commented "I think that most of the women who came in with me [as Members of Parliament] in 2010 would describe themselves as feminists" (Hinsleff 2012 [np]). Interestingly enough, conservative feminism, because it emphasizes the actions of individuals (instead of political and social structures influencing individuals), makes a strong case for individual agency. That is, women who are conservative feminists argue that women should and can be empowered as leaders.

How then does this translate into the area of political violence and terrorism? Several notable initiatives related to gender come from May's time as home secretary. First, she met with women's organizations to discuss "a whole range of issues, including domestic and sexual violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation" (Smith 2016 [np]). Second, she worked with police to better respond to victims of gender violence when cases are being investigated. In fact, in 2016, she told the "Police Federation's annual conference that there was still evidence of too many victims being let down and 'shameful attitudes' on the part of some police officers, who even exploited their position to develop inappropriate relationships with domestic abuse victims" (Travis 2016 [np]). What is more, her advocacy regarding violence against women and girls developed into a government strategy in 2011. As for counterterrorism, May as Prime Minister, along with the Conservative party, has promised to better integrate at-risk communities by teaching English to members of those communities and training women for the workplace. Also, in February 2017, May announced that she would pursue a national law to improve police treatment of domestic violence victims and to increase prosecutions of domestic violence perpetrators. As such, we consider May, as home secretary and now as Prime Minister, to be substantively representing women related to violence, particularly regarding gender violence and how it intersects with the security function of the police (Fig. 8.2).

Amber Rudd also emphasizes gender violence in her role as Home Secretary. In 2017, on International Women's Day, she stated, "International Women's Day will see us celebrate the achievements of women around the world and throughout history, while also reflecting on what more we can do to ensure all women are protected from violence. As Home Secretary this is a question I must ask constantly" (Chui 2017 [np]). In terms of terrorism responses, Rudd has met with women's organizations involved in counter-extremism efforts through the UK's Prevent Program (see Chaps. 9 and 10) and she made a firm statement regarding the 2016 Manchester suicide attack on the Ariana Grande concert (See Chap. 5). She explained that Grande "is a very modern heroine for a generation of young women"





**Fig. 8.2** Home Secretary Theresa May at the dinner on the eve of the marriage of his Royal Highness Prince William of Wales K.G. with Miss Catherine Middleton at Lancaster House (Photo courtesy of Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011)

and that the attack on young women was an “attack on society’s most vulnerable” (Luckhursts 2017 [np]). In 2017, Rudd also announced her intentions to regulate the sale of acid used in acid terrorism. Although we might critique Rudd for her support of the Prevent program, which has angered many in the Muslim community and arguably puts women in a position to disclose information on their communities (see Chap. 10), what we are interested in here is that Rudd is engaging women in the process of responding to terrorism. Similarly, though we may take issue at her type-casting young women as “the most vulnerable,” we note that she is analyzing the terrorist attack with a gender approach in mind. That is, she recognized that the Manchester attack might have been aimed at women rather than simply considering it an attack on concertgoers.

### **Argentina: Women Elites Representing Women**

At first glance, Argentina appears to be extremely well represented by women in executive and legislative capacities. The country had its first woman president in the 1970s, and another, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, served as president from 2007 to 2015. Moreover, with 38.9% of its legislative lower house being women, Argentina exceeds the descriptive representation of women in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, there are several reasons to be modest in assessing Argentina in terms of women elites. First, the women who have become presidents have risen to power not on their own independent merits but through association with their husbands who preceded them in the presidency (e.g., Nestor Kirchner before Cristina Fernandez and Juan Perón before Isabel Perón). Second, women were slow to enter into cabinet positions, and Cristina Fernandez



did not appoint many women, especially in comparison to President Michelle Bachelet of Chile or even to her own husband, Nestor Kirchner. The first women to occupy a cabinet post in Argentina, Susana Ruiz Cerruti, only served 6 weeks as Minister of Foreign Relations, as she was serving out the end of Raul Alfonsín's presidential term after his previous foreign minister resigned. A woman did not serve in the Argentine cabinet in a full position until 1996, when Susana Decibe became Minister of Education (Barnes and Jones 2011). As president, Kirchner only appointed women to 3 of 13 ministerial posts in her first term and 1 of 14 in her second (this contrasts to Bachelet who appointed a parity cabinet for her first term) (Catherine Reyes-Housholder 2013). Finally, we note that although Fernandez was instrumental in furthering LGBT rights in Argentina, she was opposed to reproductive rights, which met with the ire of feminists (Kumar 2014).

Particularly regarding political violence, we now turn to analyze the work of Nilda Garré, who served as Minister of Defense from 2005 to 2010 and Minister of Security from 2010 to 2013. Originally appointed by Nestor Kirchner, Garré continued in her role as defense minister into Fernandez's term. Later, Fernandez appointed Garré to head the Ministry of Security, which was charged with internal security, and was established after widespread slum riots in 2010. When Garré switched portfolio assignments, Fernandez appointed a man to replace her as defense minister.

We see Nilda Garré meeting our model for substantive representation as a minister of defense and of security. While Security Minister, she was instrumental in diversifying the Argentine federal police. According to one human rights lawyer, in the past, "there was deep-rooted misogyny in the police" (Frayssinet 2015 [np]). That began to change under Garré who "who banned restrictions or quotas for the admission of women in the four national police forces and their academies" and promoted the recruitment of and the end of discrimination against transgender officers (Frayssinet 2015 [np]). Furthermore, she worked with the police to institute a new protocol for investigating feminicides (Ministerio de Seguridad 2011). Therefore, Garré is an example of a woman minister who promotes the presence of other women in security work and who furthered responses to machista violence.

Similarly, Garré improved the lot of women in the Argentina military during her time as defense minister. She sought to modernize the military with a focus on human rights, and, part of doing so, included, in her own words, "giving particular attention to the question of gender" (Frederic and Calandrón 2015 [6]). By this she meant that the military should recruit, retain, and promote more women in its ranks. Furthermore, at the time, she asserted that it was the state's responsibility to eliminate "specific forms of violence and discrimination based on gender" (Frederic and Calandrón 2015 [6]). To do so, she made military personnel take training courses on sexual assault (Walker 2011). This is a big departure from the military of the Dirty War era, which was renowned for its use of torture, some of which targeted men and women in gendered ways (see Chap. 4). Once again, we note Garré sought the greater presence of women in responses to gender violence and she held military forces responsible in the fight against gender violence.

Of final note is Garré's symbolic representation of women's interests on Twitter. In 2017, after she was no longer in the cabinet, she tweeted about the Grandmothers



**Fig. 8.3** Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates escorts Argentine Minister of Defense Nilda Garré into the Pentagon Sept. 8, 2009, for bilateral security talks (Photo courtesy of US Department of Defense)

and Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo: “#Abuelas40Años un día como hoy, pero de 1977, 12 mujeres se organizaron para buscar a sus #Nietos luego fueron muchos + #40AñosDeLucha. Roughly, this translates to “a day like today, but in 1977, 12 women organized to look for their grandchildren and later there were many more of them.” She also had met with these women activists regarding memory politics when she was defense minister. We can interpret her interest in the Madres protests (see Chap. 6 for more on the Madres) in two ways. First, she may be an advocate of the Madres because she is striving to substantively represent women who have made a mark on Argentina memory politics. Or, it is just as easy to say that she aligns herself with them due to her own ideological politics on the Left. Garré, as well as the Kirchners, were Peronists whose friends were targeted by the military during the Dirty War. Thus, she finds herself in alignment with those who opposed the military and she wants to see the military held accountable for human rights abuses. It therefore comes as no surprise that she was tasked to modernize the military during her time as defense minister (Fig. 8.3).

## Basque Women Elites

We use frames to describe how women elites articulate their gender realities (Benford 1997). Recall from the introduction that framing is a way individuals and institutions articulate, “what exists.” Framing can also be thought of as a way of “**doing gender**,” meaning *how individuals discuss perceived gender differences and*

*similarities, thereby constituting gender relations through social interactions* (West and Zimmerman 1987; Deutsch 2007). Social interactions yield various **gender frames**, or *social interpretations of gender*, and many of them convey that women are different than men, less experienced, have less status, and/or are excluded from male activities.

Women elites may frame their actions in *feminist* and/or traditional *feminine* ways. When an individual uses a **feminist gender frame**, she *emphasizes the rights of women, their political agency, and women's emancipation from male dominated societies* (Baldez 2003). When an individual uses a **feminine gender frame**, she *accentuates women's private lives, in particular housewife and mother identities, as well as women's appearances and so-called feminine traits, such as gentleness or emotionalism*. (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Sylvester and Parashar 2009). Feminine framing also *suggests women are invisible or lack agency in politics* (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). Women elites use five of the six prominent gender frames, which can be found in Table 8.3. The first three are feminine frames, the next two are feminist frames, and the last one is a frame claiming femininity as a way to express women's agency.

## Media Framing and Hegemonic Masculinity

Media as well as elites use frames to construct women's identities and actions. The media tend to highlight women politicians when reporting on political issues perceived to be less important (such as education and culture), while focusing stories on men politicians for issues considered to have more primacy in the political domain (such as economics, foreign policy, or terrorism) (Pantti 2011). Because fighting terrorism is associated with institutions such as the military and police, leadership and actions in this policy area are often framed in terms of hegemonic masculinity. Norms stemming from hegemonic masculinity include, but are not limited to chivalry, rationality, aggression, toughness, competitiveness, and combativeness (see Donaldson 1993; Hutchings 2008). In short, the media often describes elites working in the area of terrorism policy as having these masculine qualities. This in turn creates a framing of women as less than men when it is perceived that

### **Box 8.1: Women Elites in the Basque Regions of France and Spain**

In a previous study (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011), we presented data from 14 interviews conducted with local political elites in the Basque regions of Spain and France. The interviews, from 2011, were anonymous, thus the women did not frame their experiences as a way to impress the media or constituents. The women invoked many of the frames presented in Table 8.3. Below is a summary of the study's results.

(continued)

**Box 8.1** (continued)

**Private Lives Frame:** This frame was present in interviews, as many respondents talked about balancing work and family as they referenced the influence of terrorism politics (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011). According to one respondent, “as with every woman who works outside the home, women who are dedicated to politics suffer, especially the difficulties of reconciling work and family life” (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011). Because of assassination threats on Basque politicians before ETA’s ceasefire of 2011, some women elites conveyed that they fear for their children’s lives. Elites also used the private lives frame to explain why women were more likely to be found working on “caring” policy areas and are less likely to be seen in portfolios dealing with security. The former areas dovetail more closely with their other responsibilities inside and outside the home.

**Attack Bitch Frame:** Though women typically stressed equality (see below), some mentioned sexism in politics as prompting them to act like men to succeed in terrorism policymaking. One typical response sums it up. “In order to be accepted in politics, you have to act like a man. You have to talk loudly and be bold. You can’t be too ‘feminine’. In order to succeed, I have to take on more male characteristics because of the sexism” (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011).

**Equality Frame:** Together with the *private roles frame*, the interviewees used this frame the most. Women used it when first discussing their role in terrorism policymaking (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011). Women stressed that they fight for democracy and stand up to terrorism in no way different than a man politician. While women espoused the equality frame, some acknowledged sexism in politics and stated the need to act like men (see “attack bitch” frame).

**Transformational Change Frame:** While no women talked explicitly about dismantling patriarchal structures, some Spanish women predicted change in gender relations over time, claiming that women eventually would be prominent in terrorism policymaking (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011).

**Relational Frame:** Women in France and Spain expressed that they have a unique way to govern that influences terrorism policymaking. A French elite stated, “I think women who are involved in politics, particularly at the local level, see things differently than men. They focus more on the relationships in the community.” Another French elite said, “all policy areas are connected. That is why education is as important as fighting terrorism ... You have to look at the big picture. Women do this more than men” (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2011).

**Table 8.3** Feminine frames and feminist frames

Name of frame	Description of frame	Supporting sources
Private life frame	<i>Feminizes women elites</i> by focusing on their family and home life. This frame is used when an elite invokes her status as a wife or mother.	Sreberny and Van Zoonen (2000); Baird (2005); Noonan (1995)
Cover girl frame	<i>Feminizes women elites</i> by emphasizing their physical appearance. Women elites articulate this frame if they assert that feminine looks are essential to political success.	Baird (2005)
“Attack bitch” frame	<i>Masculinizes women elites</i> by attributing exaggerated toughness and strength to them, presuming the <i>feminized</i> inferiority of others. A politician uses this frame to bolster her perceived weak points, i.e. lack of toughness, strength and fortitude.	Nacos (2005); Pantti (2011); Gidengil and Everitt (2003)
Equality frame	<i>Asserts feminism</i> , for women elites to be equal to men in terms of participation, agency, and competence in terrorism policymaking. Women elites may assert competence and agency in order to emphasize equality relative to men.	McCammon (2007); Baldez (2003)
Transformative change frame	<i>Asserts feminism</i> , for women elites to dismantle patriarchal structures that maintain masculine power and to empower women in politics. Women elites articulate this frame when they express that their leadership can transform gender relations.	Lombardo and Meier (2009); Deutsch (2007)
Relational frame	<i>Flips feminine ideals to assert women’s agency</i> through women’s special way of governing <i>vis-à-vis</i> constituents that stresses women’s relationship skills and their ability to understand policy issues and constituent concerns in an interconnected, distinctly responsive way.	Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger (2016)

Adapted from Ortvals and Poloni-Staudinger (2016)

do not have these qualities. Likewise, men who lack these qualities are marginalized for being less “manly.” Hegemonic masculinity appears ‘natural,’ ‘ordinary,’ and ‘normal;’ and therefore these frames persuade a “great part of the population” (Donaldson 1993 [645]).

The political ramifications for women is that they are excluded or remain unseen in these policy circles, and they are often depicted as victims, or potential victims, of strong, sexually aggressive men (Jansen and Sabo 1994 [9]; see also Connell 1989). This creates a double bind for women elites because women are presumed weak, and the media and public become surprised, if not turned off, when they act strong and aggressive as policy leaders. Schippers explains, “pariah femininities are actually the quality content of hegemonic masculinity enacted by women” (Schippers 2007 [95]). For example, when women act with authority (i.e., as men) they may be considered a “bitch,” i.e., a “pariah” to expected gender performances of passiveness, emotionalism, and weakness (Schippers 2007). Thus, women in political leadership positions, in “male” domains like security

and terrorism, are likely to be viewed through the lens of hegemonic masculinity when they act with authority. Women may feel like they need to be strong and aggressive in order to be included in such policy circles, and, as a result, alternative ways for some women to view foreign policy through a lens of care and peace may be untenable.

Hegemonic masculinity and frames associated with it also influence men who are leaders in politics. Hegemonic masculinity strongly separates masculinity and femininity, and any trait or action that does not exude masculinity is assumed to be feminine and weak. Thus, men must act with lack of emotion and affection or they will be considered weak. Hegemonic masculinity is also bound by race and heteronormativity. Non-heteronormative men are feminized by hegemonic masculine frames (see Barrett 1996; Schippers 2007; Lusher and Robins 2009), and, as Hirose and Kei-ho Pih explain, non-white men may be seen as weak, feminine, and sexually deviant “compared to the idealized form of white masculinity” (2010). Whereas Asian men may be seen as asexual and nerdy (Hirose and Pih 2009), black men are considered “bad” for their supposed hyper-masculinization (Cooper 2009).

How then does the media react when women enter the “masculine” world of terrorism? In the three sections below, we show the influence of hegemonic masculinity as it relates to media framing of Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and Kurdish military women fighting ISIS. In the first section, we examine Clinton’s role in the Abbottabad raid that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden. This analysis shows how the media portrayed Clinton as emotional and Obama as serious and decisive. The second section looks at claims made by Donald Trump in his 2016 presidential campaign against Hillary Clinton. Trump suggested Clinton would not be an effective leader against ISIS, and media responded in various ways to this claim. Finally, we show that Kurdish women, although very much actors with agency on the frontlines against ISIS, received feminized gender frames from the media. Whereas the first two cases examine media coverage of a woman elite (as a cabinet secretary and as a presidential candidate), the third case details elite women fighters in a military. What is interesting is that two very different types of women—a government official/candidate (cases 1 and 2) and military women (case 3)—both receive gendered media treatment, *as women* with feminine characteristics.

## Case 1: Gendering Abbottabad

Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State in the United States from 2009 to 2013, and she was present in the Situation Room on May 1, 2011 when American forces captured and killed Osama bin Laden at his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In a 2014 article (Poloni-Staudinger and Orbals 2014), we analyzed non-op-ed newswires, debating how/whether the media framed Hillary Clinton’s actions during the raid, asking specifically if media presented her with political agency or through the eyes of hegemonic masculinity. We conducted a content analysis of non-op-ed, non-television newswires discussing the White House photo taken during the raid on the compound.





**Fig. 8.4** The iconic situation room (Photo courtesy of Business Insider 2011, original from the White House)

The newswires were from May 2, 2011 (the day after the raid) through May 9, 2011. Using the Factiva newswire service, we searched: Abbottabad AND photo AND Hilary Clinton OR Secretary Clinton OR Clinton; Situation Room AND photo AND Hilary Clinton OR Secretary Clinton OR Clinton. Dow Jones Factiva is a subscription library database that provides access to the Dow Jones and Reuters newswires, The Wall Street Journal and over 8000 other sources. A team of five coders coded the articles according to a common codesheet. Intercoder reliability was 96%.

Our 2014 article made use of 201 articles written about the so-called “Hillary photo.” Below we present findings from the article, specifically contrasting them to findings regarding Clinton with those about President Obama and other men present during the raid. We show that Obama was portrayed as more decisive than Clinton, but that he also received a frame of marginalized masculinity.

Those in charge of the operation to find and kill bin Laden viewed it from the White House Situation Room, which is a conference room used for deliberations about security and intelligence issues. The room is historically a male domain in US politics (Goldstein 2001), and when Clinton appeared with her hand over her mouth in an official White House photo, the media considered what she called a cough as a woman’s display of emotionalism (see Fig. 8.4). On May 2, the media began discussing the “Hillary photo,” and Clinton was interviewed about the photo on May 5. At that point, she stated that she had a springtime cough but media claims about her anxiety and/or shock in the Situation Room continued a week after the initial story. The photo was depicted as follows by CNN International:

“At the bottom right hand corner you can see the U.S. Defense secretary there, Robert Gates, with his arms crossed. Next to him, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, her hand pressed to her mouth. You can see visible concern on her face.

And then moving across the table, you can see Vice President Joe Biden, slouching a bit there. U.S. President Barack Obama, he's leaning forward as other national security advisers stand in the back" (CNN International 2011).

### *Framing of Women: Hillary Clinton*

The media focused on Clinton's emotions during the raid. This constitutes a feminine framing of Clinton, even as she is serving as a counterterrorism leader. She is described as anxious, worried, in shock, in horror, and in dread (see Table 8.4). These descriptors suggest that the emotion of the moment is overwhelming to her.

The media report that Clinton's emotions are varied in many more ways than the emotions of men. Thus, her presence, though interpreted a variety of ways, is still to be considered emotional, and especially more emotional than men who are present. She is referred to as operatic, which signals an extreme emotional state and is a word choice never used to describe men in the room. Her emotional presence is viewed positively, however, in that she is applauded for bringing humanity to the Situation Room. Several articles assert that Clinton's face and expression represent all the emotion and humanity in the room. Clinton is "wide-eyed" and her eyes "tell the entire story." Therefore, though women's emotion can be extreme, jarring, and potentially a pitfall, it is also welcome in light of the room's otherwise lack of emotion.

Because media does not always quote women politicians (see Artwick 2013), thereby denying them agency, it is important to ask what the media reported Clinton saying about the White House photo. Clinton was not quoted until May 5, three days after initial stories about the raid. It is reported that she insists she was coughing in the photo. Additionally, the media reported that she said she had "no idea" what the policymakers were doing at the time of the photo and that the raid constituted "38 intense minutes." At the time of her statements, Clinton was making a policy address in Rome about US-Pakistani relations. Nevertheless, the media did not discuss policy statements related to her address. In contrast, the media often quoted men in the week after the raid—specifically Leon Panetta (Director of CIA at the time, not in photo) and John Brennan (Obama's Counterterrorism Chief). Quotations from David Cameron (then British Prime Minister) and the White House photographer for George W. Bush (also a man) also were present in the analyzed news stories.

The second woman in the Situation Room is of final note in this part of the analysis. Audrey Tomason, Director for Counterterrorism at the time, is positioned in the background of the photo. The media framed her as non-existent or young, and many media outlets could not identify her or misidentified her in the photo. As we stated in our article, media refer to her as a brunette, "the lowest-level official in the picture," and as a woman peeking out or popping up from behind the men (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbal 2014 [47]). Tomason is repeatedly described as the lowest ranking official in the room and she is misidentified in several articles as a "staffer" or secretary. One article, entitled, "Riddle of raid snap 'spy' girl," without knowl-

**Table 8.4** Media representations of gender in the White House situation room

Leader (policy position)	No. of articles in which discussed (out of 201)	Action/trait discussed (no. of stories in which mentioned)
Hillary Clinton (Secretary of State)	141	<b>Physical Traits:</b> Hand (clamped) over mouth or gasping (124); Eyes telling a story (4); Eyes staring ahead/watching (7); General sense of expression, emotion, humanity on face (5) <b>Clothing:</b> Tweed Jacket (3); Pantsuit (3) <b>Emotions:</b> Anger (1); Anxiety/Nervous/Stress (20); Concerned (1); Emotional/Operatic/ Expressive (18); Horror/Anguished/Disturbed (12); Shock/Surprised/Disbelief (20); Strong (1); Weak (2); Worried (5) <b>Positioning in Room:</b> NA
Barack Obama (President)	128	<b>Physical Traits:</b> Grave/frowning face (7); Posture is huddled/hunched/slumped over (36); Shoulders raised (1); eyes staring intently/intense gaze (69) <b>Clothing:</b> Casual Clothing/Tieless (22) <b>Emotions:</b> Angry (2); Anxiety/tension (3); Concerned (4); Emotionless (1); Expressive (1); Serious/Stoic (13); Strong (18); Taken aback (8); Worry (5) <b>Positioning in Room:</b> In the corner/to the side (20); Sitting in small chair (5); Behind others (1)
Joe Biden (Vice-president)	18	<b>Physical Traits:</b> Broadly filled out and sitting up (2); No expression on face (1); Staring intently (11) <b>Clothing:</b> Casual Clothing /Tieless (1) <b>Emotions:</b> Disbelief (1); Nervous/Worried (2); Relaxed (6); Stoic (1); Taken aback (2) <b>Positioning in Room:</b> Flanking Obama (1); Prominent position in room (1)
Robert Gates (Secretary of Defense)	24	<b>Physical Traits:</b> Unruffled (1); Arms folded (1); No expression on face (1); Staring intently (3) <b>Clothing:</b> NA <b>Emotions:</b> Grim (1); Stone-faced (1) <b>Positioning in Room:</b> Standing in back (1)
John Brennan (Counterterrorism advisor to the President)	20	<b>Physical Traits:</b> NA <b>Clothing:</b> NA <b>Emotions:</b> Grim (2); Anxiety/tension (4) <b>Positioning in Room:</b> Standing in back (3)
Audrey Tomason (Director for Counterterrorism)	46	<b>Physical Traits:</b> Brunette (3); One of two women in room (2) <b>Clothing:</b> NA <b>Emotions:</b> NA <b>Positioning in Room:</b> Peeking over men’s shoulders/Straining to see from back of room (13)

Table reproduced from Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2014

Note: NA not available, as this particular action/trait was not mentioned by the media for the given policy leader

edge of her identity, stated that she could be a spy and that this photo might have leaked her identity (The Sun 2011). Another article coyly asked, “who is that woman getting to peek in there and share this moment in history?” (Koblin and Turner 2011). The same question was not asked of lower-ranking men who are also difficult to identify in the photo.

### *Framing of Men: Barack Obama*

While Clinton is framed as emotional, Obama is seen as decisive and serious, which are traits associated with strength and masculinity. The men in the Situation Room, which would include Obama, are considered expressionless, even though the press also thought of them as being “tense.” The data in the following table indicate that Brennan is considered gruff and President Obama is thought of as intense. The media suggest that Obama might be worried or anxious in about 4% of the articles, but he is also considered calm in about 2% of the articles. If he does have emotions at all, he is not framed as demonstrating them by his facial expression. Obama is described as “steely eyed” and with a “death stare” during the raid, thus he is serious (CNN Wire Morning Outlook 2011). Moreover, Obama’s presence and actions cast him as having political agency. He actively watched the raid and he ordered it. He is the main actor in one respect because he gave order to kill Osama bin Laden (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2014). As we explain, “he not only authorizes the raid, but he communicates with foreign and domestic officials, announces the raid to the American public, and congratulates the Navy Seals who completed the raid” (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2014 [48]). These strong descriptors of Obama’s actions contrast with the media’s portrayal of Clinton as one whose actions are at best emotional. This is fascinating given that Clinton was believed to be one of the strongest proponents for the raid among Obama’s advisors.

President Obama, though framed as a masculine leader in many articles, also challenged masculine stereotypes associated with fighting terrorism by his seated position and clothing. Media often comment on the apparel of women politicians, and in the case of this White House photo, media emphasized President Obama’s choice of relaxed clothing (he did not wear a tie and instead had on a windbreaker he had worn to a golfing outing beforehand). One article included the following quotation: “I wonder how many White Houses would have been confident enough to release a photo with the president looking so diminutive” (Brooks and Collins 2011 [np]). Not only are Obama’s clothes less formal than other men in the room, his physical positioning lacks a commanding posture. Obama is over to one side of the room in the photo. The media called this positioning “hunched over in the corner” rather than in the center of the action and in the largest leather chair in the room. In contrast, other men in the room are other described as “filling out the room.” Without stiff, dress clothes or military uniform and without the largest chair, therefore, Obama did not display the hegemonic masculinity many expect of the country’s top leader.

### ***Case 1: Conclusion***

We conclude that the media used feminine frames to discuss Hillary Clinton during the Abbottabad raid. Hillary Clinton's and Audrey Tomason's role in counterterrorism decision-making was trivialized because their presence and actions were either erased or feminized in the news stories. The media did not use feminist frames to describe Clinton and did not give voice to her policy actions; thus, she was not perceived as having political agency. Tomason's agency was compromised as she was considered a "girl" and perhaps an intruder in the Situation Room. We therefore conclude that women in policy positions related to terrorism still surprise the media and that women are still a minority within these masculine spaces. Expectations of hegemonic masculinity in this analysis not only cast women as absent and less than men, but they also lead to a critique of Obama. Though Obama meets some of the qualifications of hegemonic masculinity through his decisive and serious presence, he does not entirely look the part compared to the military men in the room.

### **Case 2: Hillary Clinton During 2016 Presidential Campaign**

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Clinton was again at the center of media attention for her perceived ability (or inability) to fight terrorism. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Donald Trump negatively evaluated Clinton's ability to lead the military and fight against terrorism. The analysis that follows addresses one particular claim by Trump, which was most emphatically waged in August 2016 when he stated that Clinton did not have the "mental and physical stamina" to fight ISIS. Particularly, he said, she "lacks the mental and physical stamina to take on ISIS, and all the many adversaries we face – not only in terrorism, but in trade and every other challenge we must confront to turn this country around" (Politico 2016 [np]).

We argue that this claim can be seen as a gender claim, and, specifically, a claim that is sexist and ableist. Although a small handful of media sources pointed out the sexism imbued in the statement, most media, and particularly media on the right, focused on Hillary's health as it pertained to her lack of "stamina." This "healthier" claim at first glance does not appear to be gendered, but we argue it does in fact point to hegemonic masculinity's presumptions about disability.

Before examining media claims, the timeline of Trump's comments should be reviewed. Trump made the ISIS comments in mid-August 2016, but he had made similar claims about stamina earlier in the campaign cycle. These claims hinged on right-wing conspiracies about the concussion Hillary Clinton suffered in 2012 when she was Secretary of State. Doctors attributed the concussion in 2012 to a fall resulting from dehydration and subsequent fainting. After the fall Clinton needed to be hospitalized and to use prescription drug thinners. These events prompted 'healthers' to purport that she had suffered a brain injury with significant neurological



**Fig. 8.5** Meme made with photo taken after 9–11 memorial ceremony, entitled Hillary has a “Special” Pneumonia requiring neurological testing

implications. As a result, she was said to wear special, anti-seizure sunglasses and need frequent naps. With this in mind, Trump asserted in December 2015 that Clinton lacked the stamina and strength to become president. Again in January, on the primary trail in Iowa, he stated, “You don’t see her for five or six days. She goes home, goes to sleep. I’m telling you. She doesn’t have the strength. She doesn’t have the stamina” (Gearan and Phillip 2016 [np]). He also claimed at this point she was “low energy.” He repeated similar claims in March, and, in August, he specifically tied the claims to the fight against ISIS. In contrast to Clinton, Trump implied his keen ability to address ISIS, claiming, “My Administration will aggressively pursue joint and coalition military operations to crush and destroy ISIS.” (Politico 2016 [np]). His intended actions against ISIS were posed with extreme force. For example, he stated he will “wipe ISIS off the face of the Earth” and that terrorists will be “stripped out and removed one by one, viciously if necessary” (Peat 2016 [np]).

Trump’s accusations against Clinton became more substantial after Clinton fainted at a 9/11 Memorial ceremony several weeks later. Doctors attributed this health incident to dehydration and pneumonia, and she tied these ailments to the consequences of an intense campaign. However, to those who strongly suspected she was seriously ailing, her fall signaled an inability to lead as president. Many sources demanded a full release of her medical records, and some conspiracy theorists believed she used a body double on the campaign trail to hide her extreme medical woes. Trump, in the weeks and presidential debates to follow, reissued his belief that Clinton lacked stamina (Fig. 8.5).

What are we to make of the assertion that Hillary Clinton lacked stamina? What exactly did Trump mean by stamina and how did the media and other political actors interpret it? It is our claim that “stamina” can be interpreted a couple of ways, both of which have gendered implications related to hegemonic masculinity.

First, an obvious gender interpretation of “lacking stamina” is one that emphasizes sexism and masculinity contests. During the 2016 primaries, Trump engaged in



masculinity contests with his fellow Republican candidates. These contests posed him as the more proficient, “manly man” and the other candidates as lesser men or, in the case of Carly Fiorina, an unseemly woman. As Trump matched up with Clinton in the general election, he too positioned himself as the stronger candidate with more physical stamina. This implies, in a sexist way, that as a woman, Clinton could not match his strength.

In particular, the masculinity contests with Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush elicit a strong connection to the Clinton story and help to make the case for stamina being related to hegemonic masculinity and sexism. Trump impugned Rubio for being small, calling him by the pet name of Lil’ Marco. His “low energy” insult of Bush paralleled what he was saying at the same time about Clinton. Trump’s surrogates, and some of his campaign ads, implied to the press that low energy meant “low T,” as in low testosterone. On a CNN news show, Andy Dean, a right-wing talk show host, stated, “If you look at Jeb Bush, he is a total disaster on immigration. Plus, he is a low energy guy. Maybe he has low T” (CNN: Erin Burnett OutFront 2015). In contrast to Bush, Trump revealed that he had high testosterone. On the Dr. Oz TV show in September 2016, the studio audience applauded as Dr. Oz declared, “My goodness... your testosterone is 441... which is actually – it’s good” (Dato 2016 [np]). In short, Trump framed himself as a large man with high testosterone, and his male opponents were less fit to be president given their physical smallness or lack of testosterone.

Trump’s claims to hegemonic masculinity, or what some observers called “toxic masculinity,” expose a sexist critique against Clinton. Although the press mainly focused on the low energy claim against Bush, it should be recalled that Trump considered Clinton as even worse than Bush, for he asserted that Clinton’s “even lower-energy than Jeb Bush” (Gearan and Phillip 2016 [np]). If energy and stamina equates to testosterone, it only makes sense that Trump and many of his supporters thought Clinton, as a woman, would have even less than Bush and be even lesser qualified to lead.

The stamina critique of Hillary can be seen as sexist for several other reasons as well. One connection to sexism ties to Trump’s comments about Clinton’s un-presidential “looks.” In particular, he made this connection in the September 2016 presidential debate. An Associate Press article analyzed the “look claims” in an article entitled “Donald Trump’s stamina attack on Hillary Clinton stirs talk of gender bias,” which was republished in outlets such as the Denver Post and the Boston Herald. Whereas Trump made claims such as “I look presidential” and Mike Pence called him “broad-shouldered” to describe Trump’s leadership and foreign policy style,” Trump surrogates saw Clinton’s foreign policy experience as something that had worn her out physically and made her unable to look like and to be president of the United States (Colvin 2016, August 23 [np]). Another sexist claim raised by academic commentators in news articles pertain to the intersection of age and sex. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a communications professor at the University of Pennsylvania, in a New York Times article, asked “What does it mean that she’s not up to it? It could be ‘she’s a woman and you know what happens when a woman gets older’” (Rappeport 2016 [np]). The author of the article explains this quotation as a

“nod” to the idea that older women are too “frail” to be leaders (Rappeport 2016 [np]). A final claim from right-wing sources confirms the frail, older woman framing. They point out that in many photos of Clinton in a seated position, she is being propped up by throw pillows. If leadership against terrorism implies strength and undaunted action, Clinton, as a weak, older woman relying on pillows is unfit to lead. In other words, resting on pillows is pathetic compared to a “broad-shouldered” response to terrorism (Tobias 2016).

We also argue here that Trump’s stamina comments point to ableism embedded in hegemonic masculinity. Many of Trump’s supporters and right-wing new sources, however, would say their stamina concerns did not point to sexism but rather to serious worry over Clinton’s health status. Thus, to these sources, weakness was not a nod to feminine framing, but to the concern that Clinton was so sick and weak she literally could not serve as President. Right-wing blogs and television made these claims long before and following Trump’s August 2016 comments about ISIS. These sources paralleled the Trump comment about physical and mental stamina, for many believed both Clinton’s physical health *and* mental health were failing. In fact, social media developed a hashtag for these claims: #sickhillary. Some examples of this hashtag in tweets are as follows, and what is interesting to note is that Clinton’s ailments are tied to sexist comments about appearance and the inability to fight ISIS:

- “Walks like an 80 year old woman. She's not going to make it you stupid liberals. We need a strong leader. Does that look strong? #SickHillary 12:28PM - 30 Sep 2016”
- “No amount of make up Hillary wears can cover how elderly she looks. #SickHillary 2:21PM – 9 Sep 2016”
- “Pictured here is a delusional old woman that wears ridiculous outfits on stage. [. . .] #SickHillary 12:44 PM – 26 Aug 2016”
- “#Sick Hillary allowed ISIS to expand to 32 countries, she wants to finish us off 8:14 AM – 11 Oct 2016”

Although it seems reasonable to desire a President who is somewhat healthy so that she or he can realistically lead the nation, we, along with a very small number of media and academic sources, argue that healthier claims are laden with **ableism**, defined as *claiming inferiority of and discriminating against those with “a disability (an illness, injury, or condition that makes it difficult for them to do things that other people do)”* (see Cambridge Dictionary 2017 [np]). A tweet from September 2016 says it the best: “How we talk about Hillary Clinton’s health isn’t just sexism, it’s also ageism but most importantly, it’s giant flashing neon sign ableism. 9:34 AM – 11 Sep 2016.”

An acknowledgment of America’s history of presidents with health concerns helps to explain why references to stamina appear ableist. In a blog post, Lisa Diedrich, a professor in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, explains that illness serves as a “metaphor for individual and social weakness” (Diedrich 2016 [np]). This is the basis of what she calls “illness politics,” which she argues only started in the US in the 1960s and 1970s. Before that time, the US had presidents with illnesses, but those illnesses were less known and less subject to claims of

weakness and disqualification. Two examples of widely popular presidents who dealt with acute foreign crises, but also suffered from illnesses, are FDR who was a polio survivor and unable to walk and JFK who had Addison's disease. The rise of "illness politics" coincides with the 1960s, an era of social change "focus[ed] on gender, race, and sexuality as sites of struggle," which followed the 1950s, an era many regard as being "great" (Diedrich 2016 [np]). Thus, Diedrich is not surprised that Trump's claims of American greatness and his critiques of illness accompany one another. As in the 1960s when new populations entered the public sphere and challenged the old, illness today is a way to disqualify new challengers (i.e., women, people of color, disabled, etc.) from leadership (Diedrich 2016 [np]; also see Diedrich 2007).

To some commentators, the "healthier" anxiety about Clinton's ailments are similar to the "birthers" who questioned Obama's American citizenship. As birtherism has been critiqued as a cover for racism against Obama, healthers may be considered an ableist cover for sexism against Clinton. Gregory Krieg, in a CNN article, suggests healthers are the "new birthers" (Krieg 2016 [np]). What is more, as David Perry points out in a *Los Angeles Times* Op-ed, Trump's sexist claims about Clinton can be tied to other instances when he has been ableist, especially pertaining to fat-shaming. Fat-shaming can be a type of ableism, as those with extra weight sometimes have difficulties doing what other people do or are perceived by others as having sub-par bodies. Perry states, Trump "especially likes to mock women he deems overweight, such as Alicia Machado (the former Miss Universe) and Rosie O'Donnell" (Perry 2016 [np]). Mocking Clinton about taking naps and being weak, though not fat-shaming, is yet another way of disqualifying women based on their presumed inferior bodies.

Of final note are Trump's blatant ableist actions and claims. Most recall his portrayal of a disabled New York Time journalist in a speech; and, what is more, he asserts he has superior genes that make him excel in all pursuits (Baer 2016). However, he is also mocked by the same ableist critiques he utilizes. On a trip to Europe in spring 2017, as President, he traveled via golf cart when other G-7 leaders traversed the city of Taormina, Sicily by foot. Media taunted him for not having the stamina to walk with other leaders. Though seemingly funny to many who disapprove of Trump, the taunts reify the ableism surrounding the 2016 election cycle and Trump's presidency. It is our argument here that body difference in terms of sex or ability does not alone define the merits of one's leadership potential.

## ***Case 2: Conclusion***

This second case of framing mirrors the first in some respects. Hillary Clinton, as in the Situation Room, was critiqued for her feminine actions or attributes, but, in this case, her femininity intersects with age to produce a presidential candidate who does not have the right looks or the ability to fight terrorism. The right-wing and mainstream media showed grave concern about Clinton's health, thereby accepting Trump's framing of Clinton; but, some media pointed out that health claims were

embedded in a larger rhetoric of sexism and ableism. Thus, we see here how political actors themselves participate in framing their opponents and how the media can repeat and cement those frames or can challenge them in a proactive way. Finally, this case shows, as with Obama in case 1, that masculinity is subject to framing processes. Trump framed himself as super masculine and his opponents as lacking the masculinity needed for national leadership.

### Case 3: “Badass” Kurdish Women

Since the mid-2010s, the media have used the terminology of “badass” to refer to women who accomplish amazing feats. For example, Dana Bash, in 2017, posted a list on [cnn.com](http://cnn.com) of the “Badass Women of Washington.” The list included women in the military and women politicians, such as Diane Feinstein of California. A quick search of the internet also reveals the term badass tied to military women, currently and across history. One such example is an article called “8 Badass Women Warriors in Military History.” The same phenomenon occurred from 2014 on with regards to Kurdish military women who are fighting against ISIS in Syria.

The Kurdish women are a part of the previously discussed YPG fighters who are associated with the PKK movement in Turkey. By and large, the press describes Kurdish women fighters as young and as ready to use weaponry, like sniper rifles, against their enemy, ISIS. A few quick examples demonstrate this news framing. A Foreign Policy article (Salih 2014) describes the Kurdish women as young, feminine, and “photogenic.” The article is entitled “Meet the Badass Women Fighting the Islamic State,” yet the usage of “badass” is not repeated outside the title or explicated at all. The women also have been called “badass babes” (Smith 2014 [np]) and “girl fighters” (Gandhi 2015 [np]). The basic claim of such articles centers on these women’s challenge to ISIS, but the articles also feminized the women with the following quotation as most representative: “ISIS are afraid of girls” (Dearden 2015) (Fig. 8.6).

What does the term badass mean in the context of fighting terrorism? To answer this question, we examine the general public’s use of the term badass and two scholarly works that look at the media’s portrayals of Kurdish women fighters.

An op-ed in *The Guardian* by Hermione Hoby (2015) disentangles the popularity and meaning of the term “badass.” Hoby explains that the phrase “peaked in 2015” and could have multiple meanings. The more positive evaluation of badass terminology is that it empowers women because it highlights their abilities. In this way, Hoby claims it could be seen as a “term of endearment” and even one associated with a “feel good feminism.” Nevertheless, it is a light version of feminism because as it celebrates the actions of some women, it also genders their actions and abilities by comparing them to men.

In other words, a negative analysis of the term would see that it only applauds women when they act “ballsy,” or, rather tough, bold, and aggressive. By discussing a media circumstance surrounding the actress Jennifer Lawrence, Hoby best explains how badass is ultimately a reference to male ability:

**Fig. 8.6** Kurdish YPG Fighter (Photo courtesy of Kurdishstruggle 2015)



“The actor and filmmaker Elizabeth Banks recently had Lawrence as her “first lady-badass” on her “Ask a Badass” web-series show, where she sought to convince her guest of her own badassery by telling her: “You basically have a penis.” It was a joke, of course, but, like most jokes, there’s something true and alarming beneath the humor. If female badassery, as we understand and value it, comes down to maleness in the most basic and anatomical sense, if virtual dicks are now the yardstick for female power, then we have a problem. Because beneath the feel-good female bravura of “badass” is a decidedly feel-bad notion, namely that the only way a woman can exercise power is... “behaving like a man.”” (Hoby 2015 [np]).

Similarly, researchers studying Kurdish women find that fighters are being understood vis-à-vis a male yardstick. Benakay (2016) and Toivanen and Baser (2016) use different methods and data, but both of their studies show how women are framed as “remarkable” and “exceptional.” Although these researchers do not directly seek to analyze the badass terminology, their findings closely coincide with the Hoby critique above. The women fighters seem to surprise and impress the press, and what is surprising is that they are acting tough like men. Thus, instead of granting women agency on their own merits, their agency is dependent on a standard of men’s behavior.

Benakay (2016) uses discourse analysis to carefully examine the photos and wordings of five articles from online fashion magazines such as Marie Claire. The typical articles in these magazines are about beauty, but these magazines also chose to give their readers an overview of Kurdish actions in Kobane, Syria. The articles, according to Benakay, present women as young, and sometimes called girls, and the women are considered remarkable for their battle/struggle against ISIS. The women’s power is exaggerated and the battle is sentimentalized as one of good and evil, namely of the good, super strong women versus a ghastly and evil ISIS. Although the women’s remarkable actions seem to surprise the press, Benakay reminds us that women fighting in Kurdistan are not a new phenomenon at all. Their actions, therefore, should not surprise us, but they do because they are not the actions we expect out of women (but rather of men).

Toivanen and Baser (2016) look at 108 online news articles and, by using frame analysis, they point to the presence of four frames. They show that news articles

frame women's actions (1) as equal to men in ideological/nationalist motivations, (2) as motivated by personal/emotional reasons, (3) as related to their physical appearance, and (4) as exceptional, which means the women's combatants are seen "as extraordinary and tougher-than-men" [301].

The latter frame of exceptionality is of particular interest here because it mirrors how the term *badass* uses a male reference point. Toivanen and Baser (2016) discuss how news articles highlight women's agency, but make it contingent on men's actions. First, like the use of "remarkable," the descriptor "exceptional" makes women's agency based on male norms. Masculinity is prior to the women's actions, and because women are not expected to embody the hegemonic masculinity of toughness, when they do, they are seen as exceptional. Second, the women's agency is co-constitutive and only exists in contrast to what men in ISIS do. Just as Benakay (2016) describes a battle of good and evil, Toivanen and Baser (2016) see a feminine and masculine juxtaposition between the women and ISIS. They state, the ISIS "combatants' masculinity was undermined and disrupted by acts of courage by female combatants in an all-male arena. On the other hand, the female combatants' agency was underlined against the inability of IS combatants to match them at the frontline..." [305]. The masculinity of ISIS men is so compromised by these women that an unfounded rumor exists: when a woman fighter kills an ISIS combatant, that combatant cannot make it to heaven (see Benakay 2016; Toivanen and Baser 2016). Despite the questionable validity of the rumor, it shows how women's actions in response to terrorism are gendered and hinge on conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

The framing of the fighters' physical appearances constitutes another frame exposed by Toivanen and Baser. They explain that "combatants were at times characterized by adjectives that emphasized their femininity, including 'gracious,' 'beautiful', and 'Amazonian-like' and by references to their physical features (hair, size, etc.)" [305]. When we searched the Factiva database, we found similar statements in articles. For example, in a Wall Street Journal article, Jaszberenyi describes the "regiment's youngest woman, Rengin Yusuf" as being "strikingly attractive, with long black hair and a furtive smile" (Jaszberenyi 2014 [np]). Another woman, Asia Ramazan Antar, gained much media coverage due to her beauty and supposed likeness to Angelina Jolie. She was called the 'Kurdish Angelina Jolie' by many sources, and she died in battle fighting ISIS. It was reported that Antar approved of the nickname, for she "liked being compared to Angelina Jolie because she is beautiful and cares about people just like she did" (Coghlan 2016 [np]). That being said, the "combination of masculine-like participation in military action at the frontline with softer, feminine-like attributes is a powerful way to construct a heroic image of women in war" (Toivanen and Baser 2016 [305]). Put more simply, framing women with the ability to portray femininity and masculinity at the same time is an effective way of catching the public's attention.

A short discussion of orientalism is of final note in the Kurdish case. **Orientalism** is the Western portrayal of the Orient (or East) that expresses the West's superiority and domination over the Orient. Orientalism helps to explain the framing of physical appearance. Orientalism objectifies Middle Eastern women, thus, the framing of fighters as beautiful and youthful provides a narrative that the women are objects that are exotic (Dirik 2014; Benakay 2016). Orientalism also poses Middle Eastern men as



violent and oppressive and Middle Eastern women as weak and subject to men. When the Kurdish women fight against the forces of ISIS, Middle Eastern men are confirmed as cruel but women surprise the public for not being weak and subject to men. This scenario takes on a fantasy-like interpretation of women that Western audiences like to applaud (Toivanen and Baser 2016). Although the fantasy points to women's agency, it has the ability to cheapen women's actions. Instead of considering women as serious actors responding to terrorism, it makes them into a spectacle (Dirik 2014).

### *Case 3: Conclusion*

As in the framing of Hillary Clinton (case 2) and Audrey Tomason (case 1), Kurdish women fighters receive media attention for their looks and their age. In the case of these women, however, they are being applauded for their youth and good looks. A frame related to physical appearance, what we call above the "cover girl" frame, is a feminine frame that distracts from the fighters' empowerment and ability to respond to terrorism. Interestingly enough, this is the same frame assigned to many women terrorists (see Chap. 3 for discussion of this frame and Leila Khaled). Moreover, through Orientalism, the fighters become a novelty. They not only surprise the media and members of the public because they are badass, but they also challenge false perceptions of Middle East women as weak.

## **Conclusion**

Although the descriptive representation of women has increased over time, especially in legislatures, women are not equally present in positions to influence "masculine" policy areas, like terrorism. We can observe that most of the elite positions related to political violence only have been held by women in recent years. When women are descriptively represented in relevant policy areas, they may face a double bind as well as physical and sexual harassment. Women particularly are locked out of positions associated with strong militaries and or the use of force. Women are typically not heads of government in large military states, and they are seriously underrepresented in militaries and police forces worldwide.

Nevertheless, women in positions to influence terrorism policymaking have agency, and they sometimes express a unique ability to fight terrorism from the perspective of feminist and relational frames. That is, some women elites argue for transformation in gender relations in the realm of terrorism and some believe women can facilitate better solutions to terrorism because they are more relationship oriented than men. In case studies of the UK and Argentina, we also find that some women elites substantively represent women's interests regarding issues such as rape, acid terrorism, and political memory.

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, women political elites responding to terrorism constitute a new area of study. As such, the jury is still out regarding the

nature of their policy responses and the media's framing of them. We argue that even though some elites claim to have a woman's perspective on terrorism, more research is needed to determine whether or not there is a substantive difference in how women and men elites react as policymakers to violent conflict.

In terms of media framing, we found that the press and Clinton's political opponents describe her in feminine ways. Kurdish fighters were also framed by feminine expectations, which ultimately led to a sense of surprise that they also could be fighters, i.e., act like men. Women are not alone, however, in the gender frames attached to their leadership. The media also critique men such as President Obama for a lack of masculinity. And, even though President Trump frames himself as very manly, the media also questioned his masculinity and physical ability when they poked fun at his lack of stamina at the G-7 summit in 2017. What this means is that gender is intricately intertwined in the politics of terrorism as it relates to elites and political leadership. For this reason, we urge more scholars to study how contexts of political violence yield gendered media frames.

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# Chapter 9

## Terrorism and the Public: Gender, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior



### Introduction

In the early part of 2004, it looked as if the Right in Spain, the Popular Party (Partido Popular (PP)), was poised to easily win reelection in the Spanish national election, with public opinion polls showing a six-point margin over the moderate-left Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE). Prime Minister Aznar, leader of the PP, was in part popular with Spanish voters because of his crackdown on ETA and banning of the political wing of ETA, Batasuna. This all changed 3 days before the election on March 11th when the country was turned on its head with the largest terrorist attack in its history, the Madrid train bombings, which killed over 190 people and wounded more than 1800. Public opinion, directly influenced by the attack, quickly turned as Spaniards changed tack and rallied behind Socialist Party leader Zapatero, who had run on a platform to remove Spanish troops from Iraq. Though Prime Minister Aznar originally blamed the attack on ETA, the world quickly learned that the attack had been the work of Al Qaeda who stated they targeted the Spanish capital because of Spanish involvement in the Iraq War. The Spanish public, already war-weary and in favor of troop removal from Iraq, threw support behind the candidate who had run on a platform of removing Spanish troops from the Iraq War. Zapatero and the Socialists handily won the election with a five-percentage point win over the PP, which marked an 11-point swing in 3 days.

On September 24, 2016 about 6 weeks before the US Presidential Election, the *New York Times* ran a story entitled "Can Hillary Clinton Keep You Safe?" (Chira 2016). The article begins, "When you're scared, do you feel safer with Mommy or Daddy" (Chira 2016 [np]). The article goes on to state that Republicans are seen as stronger on security and Democrats weaker; women "with their feminine traits of compassion, warmth and caregiving" are not seen as tough on security, whereas men with their "claims to strength and aggression" poll better on national security and defense (Chira 2016 [np]). Pundits were at a loss as to how this would play in the national election. Clinton had more foreign policy experience than Trump, yet

Trump ran on a hyper-masculine agenda. In the end, Trump won those who said terrorism was the most important issue facing the country, 57–40% (CNN Staff 2016 [np]). It is difficult to say if party ID or gender played a more important role in the public's assessment, but we do know misogyny was alive and well and influenced the 2016 US Presidential election in ways scholars are still uncovering.

One only has to look at the Spanish 2004 election or any election in modern history, including the US election in 2016, to see the link between terrorism, public opinion, and voting behavior (Montalvo 2012), yet surprisingly few studies examine the effect of terrorism on voting behavior. In particular, studies generally do not pay attention to the influence of terrorism on the public opinion and voting behavior of women, with studies, when they do exist, focusing on the opinions of society at large (Kibris 2010; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009).

According to Merolla and Zechmeister (2009), terrorism influences public opinion in three key ways. First, when terrorism is more front and center in the media, trust among publics decrease. This is important, because high levels of trust are important for a healthy democracy (Poloni-Staudinger and Wolf 2015). In particular, Americans become less trusting of immigrants, particularly Arab and Muslim immigrants when there is more reporting by the media on terrorism (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009). In countries where there is freedom of the press, terrorist organizations compete for media attention. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stated that “publicity is the oxygen of terrorists” (Thatcher 1985). Terrorists benefit during the mayhem following an attack through media coverage which in turn leads to lower levels of societal trust. Second, terrorist threats serve to bolster opinion in support of some leaders and not others (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009). In the US context, leaders who are male, Republican, and have more foreign policy experience are rated more highly by the public when the terrorist threat is perceived to be higher (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009). Additionally, sitting leaders are more likely to be reelected when the public perceives terrorist threat to be high. Finally, public opinion shifts toward more hawkish policies, even at the expense of civil liberties, when the public perceives a greater terrorist threat (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009; Mendez et al. 2016). Public opinion not only intersects with terrorism to influence voting and policy preferences, but public opinion also plays a role in supporting terrorism as well as in supporting counterterrorism policies. Each of these topics is discussed in more detail in the sections below.

This chapter has two goals. The first goal is to understand the relationship between public opinion and terrorism, including support and non-support for terrorism and to explore how public opinion is (or is not) gendered. For example, do women provide a different type of terrorist support than men? Do women's gender roles as mothers lend legitimacy to terrorist acts, or can mothers (as examined in Chaps. 5, 6, and 10), have more influence with counterideological policies to combat terrorism? The second goal of this chapter is to explore the relationship between voting behavior, public opinion, policy preferences, and terrorism and the degree to which this relationship is or is not gendered. For example, will the public support a

woman candidate during times of high terrorist threat, or (as described in Chap. 8), will the maternal identities ascribed to women render them less acceptable candidates when people feel under threat? In addition, will the intersection between public opinion, voting behavior, and terrorism vary by sex, or do men and women display similar opinions regarding terrorism? We will augment these sections with polling data to help explain relationships between public opinion, voting behavior, and terrorism.

Before we begin, however, we need to define the key terms used in the chapter. **Voting behavior** refers to *voting patterns*. Analysis of these patterns focuses on determining why people vote as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make. **Public opinion** refers to *the aggregated opinions and beliefs held by a population*. One additional caveat is in order. While most of the research about terrorism emanates from the political science subfield of **international relations**, the subfield that *studies relationships between countries or between countries and non-state actors*, most of the work on the relationship between *terrorism and voting behavior* has been conducted by **Americanists**, or *those who study American politics*. This topic is also studied to a lesser extent by some **comparativists** or *those who compare political phenomena across countries* (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2012). Conversely, most of the work on the relationship between public opinion and support/non-support for terrorism emanates from the comparative and international relations literatures.

## Public Opinion and Terrorism: Support for Terrorism

Favorable public opinion is key to the survival of terrorist groups. According to Afzal (2012), one cannot underestimate the importance of public support for terrorism and militant groups because support is essential to these groups' operation and survival (see also Kull 2011). Terrorist groups rely on positive public opinion from the groups of people for whom they are said to be fighting (i.e., the Palestinian people for Hamas, Muslims all over the world for Al-Qaeda or ISIS, Irish Catholics for the IRA or the Basque people for ETA) (Criado 2011). These supporters constitute new recruits and informants for the terrorist group (Gupta 2008) and mobilizing them in favor of the cause is one of the goals of terrorist activity (Bloom 2004; Criado 2011). While the relationship between public opinion and terrorism is often lacking a gender dimension, research out of Pakistan suggests that, in particular, maternal support of terrorist organization goals is necessary for recruitment and financial support of the group (Abou Zahab 2007). Just as mothers are deemed important partners in counter terrorism strategies (see Chap. 10), they are also necessary supporters of terrorist organizations (OSCE Secretariat 2013).

## What Causes Support of Terrorism in the Public?

While it is conventional wisdom in American policy circles that poverty is a root cause of terrorism support, most academic research actually points to a different conclusion. In a comparative study on Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda and Israeli Jewish terrorists, Krueger (2007) finds that poverty and lack of education do not explain support for terrorism. Similar findings have emerged out of Pakistan (Abou Zahab 2007; Fair 2008; Shapiro and Fair 2010; Afzal 2012). In fact, Fair and Shepherd (2006) find that the very poor are less likely to support suicide attacks or attacks against civilians than other people.

Bueno de Mesquita (2007) examined the determinants of public support for terrorism across several Muslim countries. He did not find a relationship between education, the economy, support for democracy, and support for terrorism, meaning that these individual-level variables did not influence whether or not someone would support terrorism (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortbals 2012). Instead, Bueno de Mesquita found that support for terrorism was positively correlated with anti-Americanism (meaning those with anti-American feelings were more likely to support terrorism) and positively correlated with the belief that Islam should play a larger role in politics. Furthermore, those who thought the United States was a threat to Islam and those who thought free expression should be promoted were also more likely to support terrorism. Fear of cultural annihilation (suppression of Islam by West) is a commonly cited variable leading to terrorist support (DeAngelis 2009). Other studies point to the fact that young people, computer users, those who believe Islam is under threat, and those who want religious leaders to play a larger role in politics are more likely to support suicide bombing and other attacks against civilians (Fair and Shepherd 2006). Thus, most studies are now showing that it is group dynamics and processes rather than individual characteristics that are more predictive of terrorist support (DeAngelis 2009).

When examining the conditions that lead to support for terrorism, it is also important to keep in mind that terrorism support varies by country. While support is declining in countries like Pakistan, decline in terrorist support is not uniform across the Muslim world and is in fact increasing in other countries. In order to assess public support for terrorism, The Pew Research Center asked individuals in several Muslim countries if they support terrorism. Specifically, Pew employed the following survey question over several years in the early to mid-2000s:

“Some people think that suicide bombing and other forms of violence against civilian targets are justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. Do you personally feel that this kind of violence is often justified to defend Islam, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?” (Wike and Samaranayake 2006).

The results of this survey are shown in Table 9.1 below. Percent support represents those individuals who answer terrorism is “often” or “sometimes” justified. (NB: The Bueno de Mesquita and Fair and Shepherd studies discussed above are based on this same data collected in 2002).

**Table 9.1** Support for terrorism by country and year, early to mid-2000s

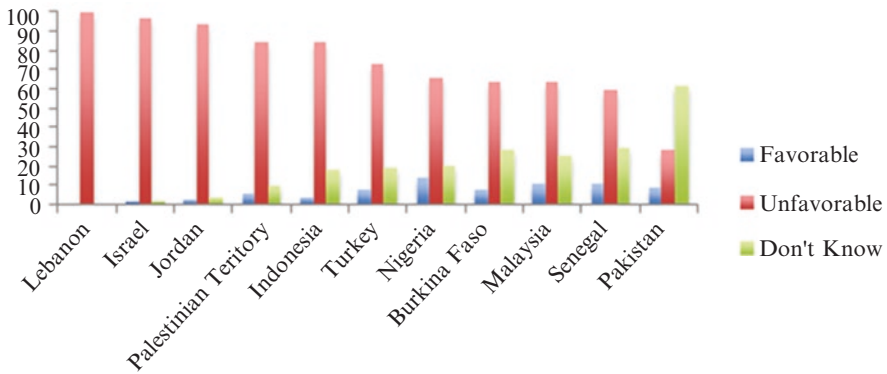
Country	Year	Percent support
Bangladesh	Spring 2007	20
Bangladesh	Summer 2002	44
Egypt	Spring 2011	28
Egypt	Spring 2010	20
Egypt	Spring 2009	15
Egypt	Spring 2008	13
Egypt	Spring 2007	8
Egypt	Spring 2006	28
Indonesia	Spring 2011	10
Indonesia	Spring 2010	15
Indonesia	Spring 2009	13
Indonesia	Spring 2008	11
Indonesia	Spring 2007	10
Indonesia	Spring 2006	10
Indonesia	Spring 2005	15
Indonesia	Summer 2002	26
Jordan	Spring 2011	13
Jordan	Spring 2010	20
Jordan	Spring 2009	12
Jordan	Spring 2008	25
Jordan	Spring 2007	23
Jordan	Spring 2006	29
Jordan	Spring 2005	57
Jordan	Summer 2002	43
Lebanon	Spring 2011	35
Lebanon	Spring 2010	39
Lebanon	Spring 2009	38
Lebanon	Spring 2008	32
Lebanon	Spring 2007	34
Lebanon	Spring 2005	39
Lebanon	Summer 2002	74
Pakistan	Spring 2011	4
Pakistan	Spring 2010	8
Pakistan	Spring 2009	5
Pakistan	Spring 2008	5
Pakistan	Spring 2007	9
Pakistan	Spring 2006	14
Pakistan	Spring 2005	25
Pakistan	Spring 2004	41
Pakistan	Summer 2002	33
Palestine	Spring 2011	68
Palestine	Spring 2009	68
Palestine	Spring 2007	70
Turkey	Spring 2011	7

(continued)

**Table 9.1** (continued)

Country	Year	Percent support
Turkey	Spring 2010	6
Turkey	Spring 2009	4
Turkey	Spring 2008	3
Turkey	Spring 2007	16
Turkey	Spring 2006	17
Turkey	Spring 2005	14
Turkey	Spring 2004	15
Turkey	Summer 2002	13

### Favorable/Unfavorable View of ISIS In Muslim Countries



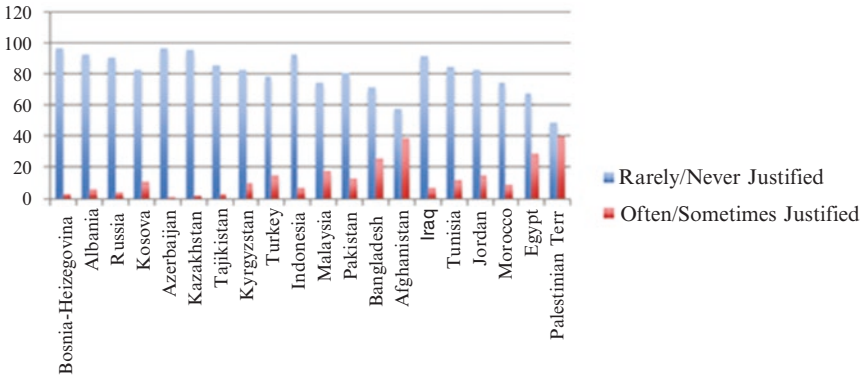
**Fig. 9.1** Support for ISIS (Data From Michael Lipka and Pew Research Center 2017)

Recent surveys by Pew have focused more on support for ISIS across the Muslim world (see Fig. 9.1). Results show that that most people in Muslim countries have an unfavorable view of ISIS. Although in some countries, like Pakistan, respondents indicate that the jury is still out on ISIS and they have yet to form an opinion (Lipka 2017).

When respondents are asked about whether or not suicide bombings is acceptable in Muslim countries, people mostly say that suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilians in the name of Islam are rarely or never justified (Pew 2013). This includes 92% of respondents in Indonesia and 91% in Iraq. Among US Muslims as well, this is the general trend, with a 2011 study showing that 86% of US Muslims state that suicide bombing is never justified. (Interestingly, 1% say that is it often justified) (Lipka 2017). In some countries, however, we see that over a quarter of the people think suicide bombings are justified, including 40% in the Palestinian territories, 39% in Afghanistan, 29% in Egypt, and 26% in Bangladesh (See Fig. 9.2).



### Percent Indicating Justification of Suicide Terrorism in Select Muslim Countries



**Fig. 9.2** Support for Suicide Bombing (Data From Pew 2013 (Numbers do not equal 100% due to responses of “don’t know”))

As touched on earlier, we also cannot underestimate the role of the media in influencing support for terrorism. Walsh (2010) found that when exposed to media reports of terrorism, support for terrorism was relatively low; however, if the media framed the terrorist acts with key words such as “brave” or “good,” public support increased. This suggests that how the media frames terrorist attacks has a significant influence on perception and the support of terrorism (Walsh 2010). Thus, the media sometimes produces exaggerated accounts of terrorist events which influences public opinion and serves to legitimize terrorist acts (Norman 2017). This in turn aids in the survival of terrorist groups, decreases the cost of funding attacks, garners support for the terrorist organization, and motivates insurgents to commit further acts of terrorism (Norman 2017). Repeated exposure to attack coverage may also cause viewers to identify with terrorists, thus producing a Stockholm effect, i.e., a tendency to have sympathy for perpetrators of violence even when one is negatively affected by said violence (Norman 2017).

## Link Between Sex, Gender, and Support for Terrorism

Public opinion agencies like Pew and Gallup have asked people across the globe about their support for terrorism. Few studies, however, examine whether or not this support varies by sex, if sex intersects with other variables (socio-economics, age, ethnicity, etc.) to impact terrorism support, and/or if support is in anyway gendered. What research has been conducted produces mixed results. In the study discussed above based on 2002 Pew data, Fair and Shepherd (2006) find that women

are more likely to support suicide attacks and attacks against civilians. This finding is echoed in work by Norman (2017); however, Bueno de Mesquita found no relationship between sex and support for terrorism in his study. A Pew study based on 2006 data of individuals from Muslim countries found some evidence that women are less likely to support suicide terrorism than men with 39% of women saying suicide bombings in Iraq were justified compared to 45% of men (Wike and Samaranyake 2006). In terms of support for overall terrorism in the 2006 study, 44% of women said they supported terrorism compared with 49% of men (Wike and Samaranyake 2006). In addition, recent polling suggests that public opinion toward ISIS across Muslim countries is overwhelmingly negative among men *and* women (see Fig. 9.1 above).

The above findings may be moderated by education level. Afzal (2012) examines the relationship between women and support for terrorism. She finds that in Pakistan as women become more educated, they are less likely to support militancy and terrorism relative to similarly educated men; whereas, uneducated women are more likely to support militancy and terrorism relative to uneducated men. That is, in Pakistan alleviation of poverty and increasing education intersect with women's support of terrorism, while it does not have similar effects for men. Afzal posits possible reasons for this finding. First, a mother's education has been found to be related to a girl's education in Pakistan—i.e., the more educated mothers are, the more likely they are to send their daughters to school and pass along anti-terrorist opinions. Second, households with more educated mothers also tend to be more liberal, suggesting that mothers' education and liberalness of household may explain the difference in results between women and men. Finally, educated men are more likely than educated women to have attended madrassas, i.e., Islamic seminaries, where they may receive pro-terrorism messages (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2012).

Western countries also have focused on gendering anti-terrorism strategies by focusing on the public opinion of women toward terrorist organizations (we will return to these counterterrorism strategies in Chap. 10). Similar to the counterideological policies and groups discussed in Chaps. 6 and 10, one goal of the United Kingdom's Prevent program is to stop radicalization of women domestically into terrorist organizations, and to do so, it has adopted an explicit strategy of "engaging women, women's organization and/or issues in preventative [anti-terrorism] issues" (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice [CHRGJ] 2012 [3]). A key component of this approach is to focus on changing public opinion among women, as women are thought to express mainstream community opinions and help to shape the opinions of others as related to support for terrorist organizations (CHRGJ 2012). The UK policy states that women are key to changing public opinion regarding terrorism because they help to build resilient communities, they provide mainstream voices to challenge ideology, and gender issues are part of addressing grievances that drive radicalization. In particular, mothers are targeted as "they have a unique viewpoint on the challenges faced by the communities they live in—whether that is the threat of violent extremism, anti-social behaviour, or young people feeling isolated and disengaged. They are also uniquely placed to solve these problems, challenging

unacceptable behaviour and supporting those in need” (CHRGJ 2012 [6]). This is similar to what “Madame Deradicalization” was doing in France, as discussed in Chap. 10, and like the French program, the British one is not without its critics who call the program too expensive and accuse it of engaging in unnecessary racial profiling. While it does treat mothers with agency, the policy is predicated on ideas of mystical powers of motherhood to elicit certain public opinions and change community behavior, powers that fathers presumably do not have.

Thus, while some research examines the causes of terrorism support, few studies link this support to differences between men and women. Even fewer studies look at gendered dimensions of support of terrorism or the way in which women and men may be differentially socialized to support terrorism or terrorist groups. Therefore, the most promise for scholarly work in the future appears to be analyses of sex and other characteristics and how these variables interact to influence support for terrorism as well as the gendered socialization of men and women who support or renounce terrorism. We suggest that counterterrorism policy that integrates sex and/or gender into its strategy will lack effectiveness if sex and gender differences in support for political violence, conceived of in an intersectional manner, is not first understood.

## **Public Opinion and Terrorism: Reactions to Terrorism and Support for Policies**

When we consider the relationship between public opinion and terrorism, we can consider the terrorists, as discussed in earlier chapters, or we can consider the “audience” of terrorism or the public being targeted. When we consider the “audience,” we can look to support for terrorism, as discussed in the sections above, or we can examine other aspects of the relationship between public opinion and terrorism. This section examines one of these other aspects by investigating how publics respond to terrorism and how those responses influence support for certain counterterrorism policies.

Terrorism influences the emotions and mental health of those witnessing it. Americans following 9–11 had more stress, anxiety, depression, and/or PTSD than prior to the attack (Fischer and Ai 2008 [343]; Huddy et al. 2003, 2005, 2007). Fifteen years later, in 2016, and with the rise of new terrorist threats like ISIS, “69% of respondents from the American National Election Studies pilot said that they were worried (moderately, very, or extremely) about terrorism in the near future” (Albertson and Gadarian 2016a [681]). Thus, research shows us that terrorism has an emotional impact on the public.

Public opinion data show that emotions influence policy preferences, with fear causing citizens to be less supportive of military interventions overseas and anxiety promoting isolationism and less aggressive foreign policy (Brader et al. 2011; Huddy et al. 2003). Anger causes citizens to prefer policies associated with force. Media contribute to emotional responses, especially fear, because media sources

emphasize the incredibly dangerous nature of terrorism and provide terrorists with a large audience for their extremist messages (Tuman 2010; Nacos 2007, 2016; Nacos et al. 2011). In experimental settings, inducing fear by way of media leads respondents to be more supportive of hawkish foreign policy (Gadarian 2010; Mendez et al. 2016).

Public opinion data suggests that women display more fear and depression related to terrorism than men (Huddy et al. 2009) and report more stress and experience more negative emotions following attacks, such as anxiety and anger (see Fischer and Ai 2008; Huddy et al. 2009). Women also report more mental illness in the aftermath of a direct experience of terrorism (see Heskin 1980 for description of this in Irish case) as well as more depression as members of the public (Huddy et al. 2003). Social norms may make it more acceptable for women than men to express fear (see, for example, Brody and Hall 2008). Alternatively, as Huddy et al. (2009) explain, women are more worried about personal victimization in many aspects of life, thus they also may feel more victimized by terrorism (see also Mendez et al. 2016).

If women are more emotional in response to terrorism, they may hold more hawkish stances, as “security moms,” seeking to keep their families safe from terrorism (Mendez et al. 2016). For instance, post-9-11, women concerned themselves with security issues (43%) more than men (11%), whereas it was the opposite before 9-11 (Grounds 2008; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortals 2012). On the other hand, women generally are *less* hawkish than men in terms of foreign policy preferences and they prefer less use of force or anti-militarism (Clements 2012; Fite et al. 1990; Gentry, 2009; Huddy and Feldman 2011; Huddy et al. 2003; Sapiro 2003; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Many International Relations studies suggest that not only have men been more likely to be active combatants in wartime situations, but they are also more likely to support warfare. Eichenberg (2016) found gender differences in support of major wars among Americans between 1982 and 2013, with men generally being more supportive of war than women. That said, the magnitude of the difference in support between men and women varies based upon the salience of the conflict and level of violence. Women tend to be more sensitive to casualties than men, thus depressing their support for war when they hear people have been killed (Eichenberg 2016; see also Burris 2008 for longstanding gender differences). In the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; however, men’s sensitivity to casualties increased over time and thus the gap between sexes decreased. The differential support to warfare is not unique to the United States, with the gender gap showing up in other countries as well, such as Germany, the UK, and Canada (Clements 2012).

New research by Mendez et al. (2016) indicates that fear associated with terrorism is so great that traditional gender differences in policy preferences related to militarism and force break down, with both men and women likely to support military action at similar levels of fear. In fact, since women were found to be more fearful of terrorism, they are often even *more likely* than men to support military action (Mendez et al. 2016). The Mendez et al. study examines whether or not the sex of the terrorist, as presented in news articles in a survey experiment, matters in eliciting these emotional and policy responses, and it shows that respondents react

similarly to men and women terrorists as well as mothers and fathers who are terrorists (Mendez et al. 2016). The way in which terrorists were framed in the media made some difference in results, with sensationalized stories garnering more emotional reactions and thus more militaristic policy responses.

## Voting Behavior and Terrorism: Background on Approaches to Voting Behavior

Not only can reactions to terrorism influence what policies individuals are willing to support, but terrorism, as filtered through the media, can also influence voting behavior. When political scientists explain voting behavior, they draw upon one (or a combination) of several different approaches. **Structural approaches to voting behavior**, also sometimes called **sociological approaches** or the **Columbia model**, *focus on the relationship between individual and social structure by placing the decision to vote in a social context and relating it to individuals' social status* (Bartels 2008; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012). Thus, structuralists look to variables such as social class, language, religion, and sex as explanatory variables for voting behavior. A structuralist may argue women are more likely to vote based upon security concerns because they are more fearful, or they may argue that those in the lower classes are more likely to support terrorists, regardless of their sex. In fact, a major finding out of the 9/11 Commission Report, an investigation into the causes and events leading up to the 9/11 attacks, is based upon a structuralist argument. The Commission argues that "Pakistan's endemic poverty, widespread corruption, and often ineffective government create opportunities for Islamist recruitment. Poor education is a particular concern" (9/11 Commission Report, 2004 in Afzal 2012 [3]). Many counterterrorism strategies also focus on structural issues like education, democracy, and poverty in their policy prescriptions. **Ecological approaches**, sometimes referred to as **aggregate statistical approaches**, *relate voting behavior to characteristic features of a geographical area*. Those relying on this approach would be likely to argue that Americans are more likely to vote based upon terrorism and security concerns than Europeans; that countries where ISIS attacks have occurred, like France or the UK, will be more likely support curtails on Syrian immigration; or that the Basque population is more likely to have a more favorable opinion of ETA than populations in other Spanish regions (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012). **Social psychological approaches**, also called the **Michigan model**, *suggest that voters make voting decisions based on psychological predispositions or attitudes and focus on attitudes and party identification as explanatory variables* (Bartels 2008). For example, scholars in this tradition may argue that those who are more nationalist in party identification will be more likely to support ETA terrorism or that Republicans in the US are more likely to support more militaristic anti-terrorism policies. Finally, **rational choice approaches**, also called **economic approaches**, *explain voting behavior as the outcome of a series of*

*cost and benefit analyses on the part of the voter where the voter is trying to maximize a particular “payoff”* (Bartels 2008). If, for example, the voter values security and maximizing security as the most important calculus in voting, the voter will evaluate the costs and benefits to security by voting for particular candidates and choosing the candidate who maximizes the payoff – in this case security – for the voter (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012).

## Studies on Terrorism, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior

The next section asks how voters prioritize terrorism and anti-terrorist strategies. In other words, how is terrorism related to voting behavior? As discussed in Chap. 1, one of the characteristics of terrorism is that it has a psychological effect beyond the actual victims of a terrorist attack (Sharvit et al. 2010). One only has to look at public opinion polls directly after attacks (for example September 11<sup>th</sup> in the United States or May 11th in Spain) to see that a disproportionate number of people believe they are at risk of being affected by a terrorist attack. The attack doesn't even have to happen in a person's country for their behavior to change. Following ISIS attacks in Europe, Americans expressed more concerns about terrorism. As of late 2017, about 83% of Americans were very concerned about Islamic extremism, including ISIS (Abdo 2017). Given that the goal of terrorism is to facilitate effects broader than the victims of an attack, one should expect to see observable effects of terrorism in the voting publics of democracies (Sharvit et al. 2010). In fact, scholars often note that terrorism is more effective in democratic regimes because the responsiveness of democracies to voters makes them more vulnerable to terrorist demands (Criado 2011; Enders and Sandler 2006). Such effects are even more likely given the vast coverage of terror attacks in the media (Sharvit et al. 2010; Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals 2012). The 2004 Spanish election highlighted at the beginning of this chapter provides direct evidence of this effect.

What do we know about terrorism's impacts on voting behavior? Do sociological, social psychological, ecological, or rational models provide explanatory power? Much of the literature relating terrorism and voting behavior comes from the American literature; however, some research from the comparative literature guides the following discussion. As was seen in the Spanish example, the literature proposes a relationship between terrorism and voting behavior, and a combination of voting behavior models can help us to understand this relationship.

The rational model can be used to explain voting behavior in Turkey and Spain. In Turkey voters change their voting behavior, blaming the government and voting for right-wing parties, during times when casualties from PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) terrorist attacks increase (Kibris 2010). Lago and Montero (2006) find similar patterns for Spain. The March 11th Al Qaeda attack in Spain impacted voting behavior because voters blamed the government for failing to stop the attack. Thus, voters were not necessarily motivated out of fear to vote for the incumbent party (see discussion below), but rather blamed the incumbent party for failure to



circumvent a terrorist attack. Voters switched their vote after the attack and elected the Socialist Worker's Party (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009). These findings tend to support a rational choice interpretation of voting behavior. Voters prioritized security and voted for those parties they thought maximized their security.

Evidence of regional differences among Israeli voters provides an example of an ecological explanation of voting behavior. Research suggests that just after a terrorist attack in areas recently targeted by terrorism, voters turn to right-wing candidates; however, after attacks in areas not geographically proximal to the attack, voters turn to left-wing candidates (Berrebi and Klor 2008). Thus, voters with a heightened sense of fear (those in the attack zone) gravitate toward right-wing candidates who are known to be more retaliatory related to terrorism; however, those with a lower sense of fear (outside of the attack zone), see the Right as provoking attacks that they do not want happening in their region. The fact voting behavior varies geographically is evidence of ecological models.

Abramowitz (2004) finds that terrorism also influenced American elections after 9–11. The influence of 9–11 on voting behavior is similar to what occurs in Israel, yet it is different than in the cases of Turkey or Spain (countries with long histories of terrorist attacks). In the United States, those states most impacted by terrorist attacks (New York, Connecticut and Washington, DC) have historically swung Democratic in national elections. However, after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, voters from these states were more likely to vote for George W. Bush, a Republican, in 2004 than they had been in the previous 2000 election. The fact that George W. Bush did significantly better than expected in the three states most affected by September 11<sup>th</sup> suggests that the Republican strategy of emphasizing the continuing threat of terrorism and the President's perceived leadership in the war on terrorism was somewhat effective. This example also shows evidence for a combination of the ecological and rational approaches. Although George W. Bush lost all three of these states by wide margins, the results suggest that the issue of terrorism probably contributed to the smaller gains that the President made in the rest of the country (Abramowitz 2004). In all of these studies discussed in the above paragraphs, however, it is important to note that neither sex nor gender is considered as an explanatory variable and that likely no one model can explain the relationship between terrorism and voting behavior. Rather a combination of approaches is most effective in explaining how terrorism impacts voting behavior.

**Box 9.1: What If Political Parties Support Terrorism? The Relationship Between Terrorism, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior in Spain**

In the other countries discussed as examples in this chapter, political parties are seen to be reacting against terrorism. In fact, at the core of every definition of terrorism is the idea that terrorism is a strategy to achieve political goals through violence, which implies that terrorists do not use elections or other institutional actions to achieve their goals, but act outside normal political

(continued)

**Box 9.1** (continued)

channels, or extra-institutionally (Criado 2011). That said, some terrorist groups actually have political parties attached to them. Two of the best known are ETA with Batasuna/Bildu and the Irish Republican Army with Sinn Fein. Most of the time these groups' terrorist strategies supersede any electoral strategy; but terrorist acts by both ETA and the IRA are sometimes undertaken with electoral strategy in mind (Criado 2011). In fact, the ETA symbol of the snake (for politics) wrapped around the axe (for armed struggle) symbolizes this dual mission (Fig. 9.3).

The ETA motto, *bietan jarrai*, meaning “keep up on both” further reinforces the mission of keeping up on armed struggle *and* politics. According to Criado (2011) if a terrorist group uses violence with the intent to force a government into negotiation, it considers the effect the violence will have on public opinion. This is because public reaction to terrorist attacks is one of the ways in which terrorist violence puts pressure on a government (Criado 2011). In democratic societies, terrorist organizations have three constituencies– the government they are trying to force into concessions, the public at large, and the micro-public from whom the political party draws support (Criado 2011).



**Fig. 9.3** ETA Motif. Photo Courtesy of Zarateman 2009

Thus, the terrorist organization does not want to turn the micro-public against the party as this would be counter to the organization's goals. Social psychological approaches would expect ETA to hold more sway with those with nationalist ideology, thus ETA will not want to engage in activity off-putting to those with nationalist ideology. This is why groups like ETA and IRA engage in targeted killings and leads to gendering of killings. As discussed in Chaps. 2 and 4, more men are targeted for assassination due to their positions as police officers, bodyguards and politicians. Public opinion has turned against groups like ETA and the IRA when they have engaged in more broad-based bombings of markets or public areas where women and children are killed. That said, this turn in public opinion is not determined by sex, with men and women equally more likely to support ETA during ceasefires (Criado 2011).

## Sex, Gender, Terrorism, and Voting Behavior

Given that no prominent studies examine the effects of sex on voting behavior related to terrorism, how then does the relationship between terrorism and its effect on voting behavior intersect with gender? Two areas of the literature discuss the intersection of sex, gender, terrorism, and voting behavior. First, as evidenced in the story about Hillary Clinton in the beginning of this chapter (and in Chap. 8), the sex of a candidate and the voters' gender assumptions can influence the types of candidates and policymakers that citizens deem as acceptable. Second, just as men and women react differently to the fear inspired by terrorism, influencing policy choices, we also may see the effects of sex on voting as it pertains to terrorism and counter-terrorism.

In the 1980s Rosenwasser and colleagues examined voter sexism related to candidate preference and the voters' perceived feelings of safety, finding that American voters felt safer with male candidates; however, there has been little work in this area since that time (Rosenwasser et al. 1987). Rosenwasser et al. found in experimental work that hypothetical presidential candidates who displayed "masculine" traits (like those discussed in Chap. 8) and men candidates were evaluated by respondents as being more competent on presidential tasks such as dealing with terrorism. Conversely, candidates who displayed "feminine" traits and women candidates were rated higher on tasks such as solving problems in our educational system. In addition, men, regardless of gender role, were perceived as being more likely to win a presidential election, and "masculine" tasks were evaluated as being more important than "feminine" presidential tasks (Rosenwasser et al. 1987; Rosenwasser and Seale 1988).

In experimental work, Merolla and Zechmeister (2009) posit that in times of security crisis people experience heightened thoughts about death, which causes them to turn to leaders who appear capable of providing protection (for a further discussion see Landau et al. 2004). This causes them to more significantly value leadership ability during times of increased threat (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009).

Given the framing of women politicians as “weaker” than men or “bitchy” if they are assertive (as discussed in Chap. 8), it is not surprising to find that support for women as presidential candidates in the United States decreased during times of increased perceived threat, such as after 9–11, with men citizens decreasing support more than women citizens (Lawless 2004).

Acceptability of wartime or war-like leaders is evaluated through a gendered lens. Women leaders are framed through the media (and through socially constructed expectations) as stereotypes, based upon their private lives as mothers and spouses, their appearance, or their so-called “male” traits when they act decisively (stereotyped as bitchy) (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2014). Feminine traits associated with women are found to be undesirable in these leadership positions, because military leadership is associated with men and masculinity. It should be no surprise, then, that the American public seems unable or unwilling to accept women into positions of head of government or defense secretary, and women have yet to occupy these roles (see Chap. 8 for a broader discussion).

Lawless (2004) found that in the early part of the decade after September 11th, citizens’ preferences for male traits in leaders and men in general increased. This is because citizens deem men more competent at legislating around issues of national security and military crisis. They also think that men are superior to women at addressing the new security crises stemming from September 11th, mainly dealing with terrorist threats. As a result of this gender stereotyping, the willingness to support a qualified woman presidential candidate is lower than the willingness to support a man president with the same qualifications and lower in general for women candidates than they have been in decades (Lawless 2004). Holman et al. (2016) similarly found that over a decade after September 11th, Americans’ preference for male leadership when dealing with terrorist threats held. They also found that Democrats fared worse than Republicans in terms of who people thought was best at handling a terrorist threat. In combination, then, we see that Democratic women fare the worst in assessments of what type of lawmaker is best at handling terrorist threats. Democratic women experience a disadvantage because being male allows Democratic men to overcome party stereotypes in times of threat. Interestingly, negative gender stereotypes do not appear to impact Republican women. This perhaps suggests that in the US, party can be more important than gender to voter evaluations. This does not mean that the US will never elect a Democratic woman to President, but it does indicate that for voters who prioritize being “tough on terrorism,” we would expect to see a lower likelihood of voting for a woman Democratic leader.

Research has also examined the idea of the “security mom” in the United States (Grewal 2006). This work focuses on public reaction to perceived threats of terrorism and the influence of threats on voting behavior among women in the United States. Until the 1970s women in the United States voted more conservatively than men. In the 1960s–70s with the advent of the sexual revolution, we began to see a different gender gap, or women voting in large blocks for more liberal candidates (Grounds 2008). The terrorist attacks of September 11th in the United States led some to believe that we may again see a shift in women voters toward more conser-

**Table 9.2** Priorities of women and men in the 2012, 2016 US elections

Issue	2012		2012 Difference	2016		2016 Difference
	Women	Men		Women	Men	
Economy	88	85	3	83	85	2
Terrorism	60	57	3	78	82	4
Health Care	80	69	11	71	77	6
Gun Policy	50	44	6	69	74	5
Foreign Policy	52	51	1	74	76	2
Immigration	42	42	0	71	69	2
Treatment of racial/ethnic minorities	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	69	56	13
Education	79	65	14	69	63	6
Social Security	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	68	65	3
Supreme Court	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	64	66	2
Environment	55	46	9	57	47	10
Abortion	34	44	10	52	38	14
Trade Policy				52	62	10
Treatment of LGBTQ	Not asked	Not asked	Not asked	59	32	27

Data derived from Pew Research Center Staff [2012](#); July 7 2016; July 28 2016)

vative, security-oriented voters, thus leading to the “security mom” idea. In fact, after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, women became much more concerned with security issues than men (before September 11<sup>th</sup> it was the opposite with men more concerned (Grounds [2008](#))). In 2004, forty-three percent of women, compared to eleven percent of men, believed they or their family could become a victim of terrorism in the immediate aftermath of the attack. During the American national election of 2004, the “security mom” voter made its way firmly onto the national media landscape.

The “manifesto” of the security mom appeared in *USA Today* on August 20, 2004, and was written by conservative syndicated columnist Michelle Malkin. In this document, Malkin explains she owns a gun, votes, is married, and has two children. She writes: “Nothing matters to me right now other than the safety of my home and the survival of my homeland...” (Malkin [2004](#) [np]). Since 9/11, she writes, she has been monitoring everyone around her:

I have studied the faces on the FBI’s most-wanted-terrorists list. When I ride the train, I watch for suspicious packages in empty seats. When I am on the highways, I pay attention to larger trucks and tankers. I make my husband take his cellphone with him everywhere... We have educated our 4-year-old daughter about Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. She knows there are bad men in the world trying to kill Americans everywhere. This isn’t living in fear. This is living with reality. We drive defensively. Now, we must live defensively too (Malkin [2004](#)).

Thus, this shift toward a “security mom” suggested a major change in voting behavior because American women were seen to move away from issues such as abortion, healthcare and education – mainstays of female voting for 30 years – and toward issues such as security and protecting families. In fact, in the 2004 election, women indicated that their top issues of concern included the War in Iraq and terrorism (Grounds 2008).

This shift may have been short-lived, however. Polling around the 2012 election suggested that terrorism and security became less important to American women relative to other issues. Polling by the Pew Research Center found that 60% of women said that terrorism was an important election issue in 2012. This compares with 57% of men, but is weaker than the importance women placed on the economy, education, or healthcare (see Table 9.2). These findings are similar to those discussed from peace groups in Chap. 6, which showed some women want to spend more public money on domestic policies than on war.

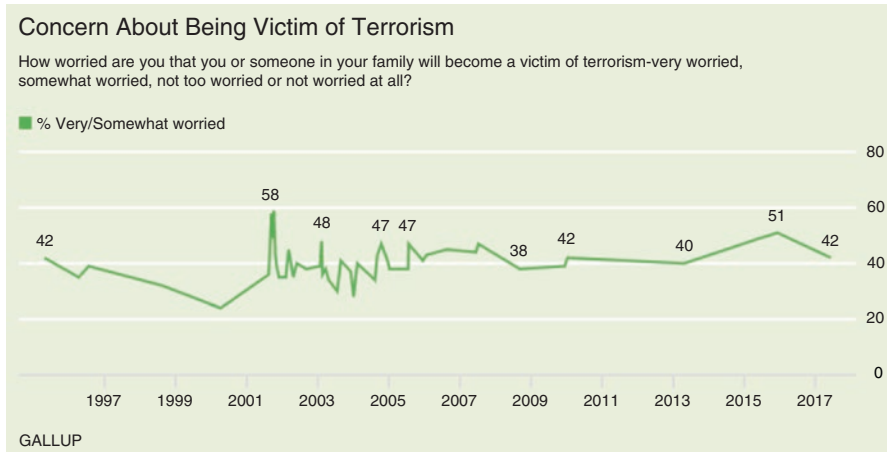
In the 2016 election, however, we again saw a shift back to security with 80% of voters indicating terrorism was the most important issue for them, second only to the economy. Some partisan differences emerged, with 74% of Clinton voters rating terrorism as important compared with 89% of Trump voters. Older voters were also more likely to rate terrorism as important compared to younger voters, with a split of 18% points between 18–29 years old respondents compared to those over 65 (Pew Research Center Staff July 7 2016 [np]). The difference between men and women was not so stark in 2016, with 82% of men rating terrorism as a top issue compared to 78% of women (Pew Research Center Staff July 28 2016 [np]). The increase in concern for terrorism in the 2016 election is likely due to the effects of media reporting on ISIS attacks in Europe and Donald Trump’s focus on ISIS on the campaign trail.

Other work disputes the security mom argument. Kaufman (2006) argues mothers with children at home were no more likely to vote for Bush in 2004 (49%) than in 2000 (50%), which she says debunks the widespread “security mom” theory. Instead Kaufman posits that the story of the 2004 election was more complex by making an intersectionality argument. The intersection between race, sex, and region had more to do with 2004 electoral patterns than sex alone or maternity. As Kaufmann argues, Southern White women moved to the Republican Party in much higher proportions than in the recent past causing implications for the gender gap in voting (Kaufmann 2006). We saw this repeated in the 2016 election as well.

Research out of the UK also suggests that women are less likely to support war – from their country acting alone with force to using force as part of NATO operations – than men (Clements 2012). In fact, using Pew opinion data, Clements finds a discernable difference by sex in support for war across European countries, with support for the Iraq War showing on average a ten-percentage point difference between men and women and support for the war in Afghanistan showing a nearly nine percentage point difference (France, UK, Spain, Poland, Germany and Italy included in analysis), with men being more likely to support the war.

Women’s voting behavior possibly differs from men’s voting behavior as related to terrorism because women and men have different perceptions of fear as it relates





**Graph 9.1** Fear of Terrorism Over Time in the United States (From Gallup 2017)

to crimes involving victimization. An American study found that women are more fearful, engage in more avoidance behaviors (such as not going to crowded locations or avoiding flying), and are more likely to seek information in response to terrorism-related incidents. In addition, women differ from men in predictors of their terrorism fears (Nellis 2009; Mendez et al. 2016). In part, this may be because women are nearly twice as fearful than men of crime (Ferraro 1995; Fisher & Sloan 2003; Madriz 1997a or b; War, 1984, 2000). Results out of Israel suggest gender differences in vulnerability to terror exist and may be attributable to a number of factors, including women’s higher sense of threat and lower self-efficacy (Solomon et al. 2005). In fact, while overall fears of terrorism have decreased over time among the American public throughout the early 2000s (see Graph 9.1 above), fear remained higher among women than men (Nellis 2009). This finding holds across geographic regions in the US, from urban to rural areas (May et al. 2011), and helps to explain how terrorism affects the voting behavior of women. Fear of terrorism spiked in 2016, likely due to ISIS attacks in Europe, and it hovered around 42% in 2017.

Why, though, are women more fearful than men of terrorism? Nellis (2009) suggests women are more fearful than men of terrorism because they are socialized to feel more vulnerable in society (see also May et al. 2011). Due to patriarchy and the violence that results from it, women remain hyper-aware and wary in many scenarios, including those of terrorism. Thus, women often choose avoidance behaviors, defined as staying out of situations that they think may be particularly risky. In addition, the literature suggests that women are fearful of all crimes, including terrorism, because women feel physically vulnerable. Their generally smaller physical stature than men’s increases women’s fear of rape and violence, which “shadows” their fear of all other crimes (May et al. 2011). Studies also suggest that women have a more complex notion of security than men, one that

“includes healthcare security, retirement security, and economic security” (Goodman 2004 [np]). Thus, disputing the security mom argument, Goodman argues that we cannot essentialize all women as mothers concerned for the safety of children (as we too have critiqued in other chapters), but must instead acknowledge that a broader definition of security, based on ideas of human security and health, are necessary for all women.

## Why It Matters: Public Opinion, Voting Behavior, and Counter-Terrorism Policies

The way in which terrorism intersects with public opinion and voting behavior has important policy implications related to counter-terrorism as it influences what sort of counter-terrorism policies publics are willing to support. In some countries, citizens are willing to curtail their own freedoms (i.e. surveillance, incommunicado detention, etc.) in the name of counter-terrorism; in other countries, they are not. In the United States, the public is supportive of terrorism being treated as a military issue; while, in Europe, publics support counter-terrorism as more of a policing issue. Regardless of public opinion surrounding counter-terrorism, gender plays a direct role in counter-terrorism policies. As discussed in Chaps. 2, 6 and 8, and 10, UN Resolution 1325 calls for integrating a gendered perspective when dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations. As a direct result of UN 1325, more women are involved in peace-building, peace-keeping, and counterterrorism campaigns and policies.

Gendering counterterrorism also means focusing on women as terrorists as we saw in Chaps. 2 and 3. In the UK, authorities warned that the next wave of attacks may come from radicalized women Muslims (Poggioli 2008a, b). Part of the *Prevent* strategy discussed above is based on the idea that a gendered approach to counter-terrorism is necessary, but *Prevent* also assumes that women as caregivers are more likely to pass along peaceful messages to the community. We will explore these themes of gendering of counter-terrorism in Chap. 10, but it is important to remember here that without more data about gender and public opinion, we cannot know whether current counterterrorism strategies accurately reflect what real people, particularly women, are thinking and feeling. Similarly, Byrd and Decker (2008) argue that gendering counter-terrorism strategies and thinking critically about how development policies impact women is necessary for any well-developed counter-terrorism policy. They write:

Since women in most societies are traditionally responsible for passing on the cultural expectations of their communities to their children, women become vehicles for transmitting norms of violence, radicalism, and martyrdom... As first caregivers and teachers, women serve as a key node for influencing and spreading cultural traits to the next generation. Historically military conflicts needed women’s support for sustainability, and today that phenomenon applies to terrorist/terrorism....” [99].

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on the intersection between gender and public opinion as related to terrorism. We looked at both public opinion in support of terrorism and counter-terrorism policies and the relationship between public opinion and voting behavior as related to terrorism. We found that support for terrorism varies across countries and that support for terrorism depends on an intersectional analysis that pays attention to sex, education, and location. We showed evidence that terrorism impacts public opinion, which in turn impacts policy preferences and voting behavior. The relationship between terrorism and voting behavior can be seen in two ways. First, gendered expectations related to security and “masculine” traits cause voters to shy away from women when they value security. Second, women and men may react differently to security concerns, with women feeling more vulnerable to violence and more fearful than men. This gendered response has been suggested to influence voting patterns of women as related to terrorism. Others, however, argue that the relationships are more complex and that the sex of voters intersects with other identities (motherhood, region, race) to influence voting patterns. Finally, we pointed out counterterrorism strategies that focus on shaping the opinion of women. These policies appear in various countries, and we argued that to truly know the gendered implications of said policies, we need even more studies of women’s opinion and voting preferences.

A major conclusion of this chapter, therefore, is that there has been a paucity of research related to the intersection between gender, sex, and public opinion as it relates to terrorism. As such women are absent in the research. Thus, women in the public may be acting with agency; yet, the focus of scholarly work does not allow us to evaluate this claim. Although we identified a focus on motherhood in the security mom narrative, we note that this narrative has been rejected by some scholars. Finally, shared gendered experiences cause women to be more fearful of crime in general, and terrorism in particular, than men. This statement is not meant to essentialize women but to point out that women may be socialized to fear terrorism to a greater extent than men and this can have impacts on their policy preferences and voting behaviors. This means scholars need to better recognize modes of socialization and how patriarchy influences the ways in which women interface with terrorism.

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# Chapter 10

## Gender and Counter-Terrorism



### Introduction and Definitions of Counterterrorism

“Most of the kids were sick and coughing. Our answer was handing out stuffed animals. Then we gave the women toothpaste and hygiene products and began to explain what they were. “We know what they are,” one woman said, “We just don’t have them.” I quickly felt the impact of our good intentions running head-long into systemic issues and our own ignorance.” (Tessa Poppe qtd. in Ricks 2016 [np])

These are the words of Tessa Poppe who was part of a female engagement team (FET) in 2011, sent to the Kunar region of Afghanistan to help families, particularly widows, who were struggling to thrive in daily life. A **female engagement team (FET)** is defined as an “*all-volunteer female team [in the military] of appropriate rank, experience, and maturity whose mission is to engage with female members of a community*” (Martinez 2017 [5]; see also McCullough 2012). Poppe’s team travelled with US Special Forces, and its main goal was to provide medical services and training for Afghani citizens, specifically women, to gain marketable skills. Although Poppe was personally motivated to promote women’s rights in politics and business in Afghanistan, she soon realized that women’s needs were more fundamental: to gain basic education and have electricity (Poppe 2011). She also realized that the FET’s first attempts at aid did not succinctly match the needs of the local communities. Kids needed more than the stuffed animals and candy the troops began to distribute; and the women needed household supplies more so than hygiene lessons.

Women in FETs experience combat as do the men who serve alongside them (Harding 2012). These women serve in zones riddled by conflict and terrorism, and they must be equipped with arms training as well as cultural training to help them relate to local populations. Thus, FETs exist at the intersection of hardline military responses to terrorism and softer approaches that seek to steer communities away from radical forces. This chapter discusses a variety of responses to terrorism,

**Table 10.1** Counter-terrorism measures and the participation of women

Hard measures		Soft measures	
Specific measures	Chapter examples	Specific measures	Chapter examples
Intelligence	FBI and CIA Box 10.1: Women in Alec Station: Searching for Osama bin Laden	Counter-extremism	UK's Prevent, Morocco's Murshidat, NGOs and Mothers' Schools
Police	US and Spanish police forces Box 10.2: Bodyguards in the Basque Country	Deradicalization	Programs in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and France
Military	Female Engagement Teams Special Ops in US Box 10.3: Hunter Troops in Norway	Women's Rights Promotion	US, Hillary Clinton, and Security Feminism

focusing on **counterterrorism**, which scholars define as “*proactive policies that specifically seek to eliminate terrorist environments and groups*” (Martin 2016 [169]). The US Department of Defense defines counterterrorism as “activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals” (2016 [57]). Put simply, counterterrorism is aimed at “terrorist eradication” (Wulan 2015 [2]), and many measures can be used to this end.

One way to categorize measures is by calling them “hard” and “soft,” with the former being associated with use of “the security system and law enforcement” (Wulan 2015 [4]) and the latter including policies designed to devalue the terrorist ideology, which may be at the level of addressing the radicalization of individuals or can consist of “broader foreign policy efforts—whether to promote the peaceful resolution of political disputes and grievances, economic growth, development, good governance, or human rights and the rule of law” (Rosand and Millar 2017 [np]; Wulan 2015; Boucek 2008). Another way to identify soft measures is to consider them a “war of ideas” or efforts to change the hearts and minds of terrorists and those inclined to terrorism in mass society (Boucek 2008 [4]). Soft measures also have been referred to as conciliatory responses that “do not rely on force” but rather diplomacy and social reform (Martin 2016 [358–359]). Hard line policies, on the other hand, are more repressive in nature. Intelligence efforts and increased security, for example, seek to directly “disrupt and deter terrorist organizations” and those actors and institutions that support them (Martin 2016 [358]).

Table 10.1 demonstrates a variety of counterterrorism options; in this chapter, we connect these options to women’s agency in counterterrorism. Women are often tapped to change society through their role as mothers, and thus often are included in soft strategies; however, we also find examples worldwide of women involved in hardline measures.

The chapter is divided into two sections: (1) a review of counterterrorism policies in the United States, in which we review hard and soft policies and present comparative examples, and (2) an in-depth examination of soft policies worldwide. In this second section, we analyze how women are expected to be instrumental as an influence on their families and communities. Thus, the second section presents and debates how women's agency in counterterrorism, more often than not, hinges on how they can use their private lives to make a political impact.

## **The United States in Comparative Perspective: Hard and Soft Measures to Stop Terrorism**

### ***Women in Intelligence and Federal Law Enforcement***

The two main institutions seeking intelligence about terrorism are the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency). These agencies differ in key ways. Whereas the FBI is an agency dedicated to law enforcement, the CIA aims to collect intelligence and carry out covert missions abroad (Martin 2016). The CIA's focus, therefore, is on international intelligence, while the FBI seeks intelligence in order to investigate cases of individuals who are in violation of federal laws. That means the FBI has a greater impact on homegrown terrorism than international terrorism. As of 2017, the FBI had over 1000 cases open regarding potential domestic terrorists. Conversely, due to federal law, the CIA has no law enforcement capabilities and is not to conduct itself domestically; thus, it focuses its attention on international terrorism. The CIA also has more incentive to have a long-term view of intelligence, while the FBI, with law enforcement in mind, uses intelligence more immediately to solve and prosecute individual cases (Hitz and Weiss 2004).

The aforementioned distinctions between agencies are murky, however, in a modern age of terrorism in which homegrown terrorism often links up to global networks. According to Harris, "it is conventional wisdom that previous distinctions between 'foreign' and 'domestic' are archaic and counterproductive when addressing modern national security threats" (2005 [554]). In fact, the dichotomies set up by the CIA's and FBI's history (i.e., CIA, foreign; FBI, domestic) can lead to the agencies investigating the same phenomenon, and, without adequate communication between them, significant threats can be missed. This scenario is partially to blame for the 9/11 attacks. Both the FBI and CIA had details about the incipient Al Qaeda plots, but without assembling their findings together, presidents, such as Clinton and Bush, did not receive holistic intelligence on which to act. That said, intelligence itself is always an imprecise science. In the age of global terrorism, intelligence data is even trickier than before because it must be pieced together from

many diverse sources and it pertains to more than one country at a time (in contrast to the Cold War era when intelligence focused on countries themselves) (Dearstyne 2005). In short, complete details are never available, which means leaders must choose to act without full knowledge and may act too late while waiting for full information that is never to come.

The representation of women in the CIA exceeds that of women in the FBI. This is due to the history of both agencies. J. Edgar Hoover led the FBI from 1924–1972, and, though two women were working as agents at the time he began his tenure, he disallowed any more women from becoming agents. After he died, women once again could become agents as of 1972. As of 2016, approximately 20% of the FBI's agents are women; however, women only hold 12% of senior agent positions (Goldman 2016). Adam Goldman in a New York Times article entitled “Where Are Women in F.B.I.’s Top Ranks?” lists possible reasons for the shortage of women in the FBI, especially in its leadership. First, women in the FBI lack women role models in the agency; thus, they are in need of mentors. Second, the agency maintains a competitive culture regarding promotion. In order to move up the ranks, one must be willing to “be transferred at a moment’s notice, which often requires leaving a family behind” (Goldman 2016 [np]). Arguably more women than men would be opposed to making moves frequently or leaving their families in another city as in most instances women still have primary childcare responsibilities. Moreover, as a law enforcement agency, the FBI has a culture based on masculinity, similar to the police (see in sub-section below). As such, women who are agents report sexual harassment and many have sued the agency for it. One senior agent, Voviette Morgan, succinctly explains, “We are behind the curve... There is no doubt about it” (qtd. in Goldman 2016 [np]). Interestingly enough, women agents use counterterrorism leadership as one benchmark for their advancement in the agency. According to Goldman, “female agents say they will know the F.B.I. has made progress when a woman is finally put in charge of counterterrorism, criminal investigations, counterintelligence or is appointed as deputy director” (Goldman 2016 [np]).

Women have a more consistent history of being spies and were incorporated into key positions in the CIA much earlier than women in the FBI. For instance, women served as spies in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and, by World War I, they were serving as translators, cryptologists, and switchboard operators. In World War II, women were code-breakers and were essential because of their linguistic skills. According to Linda McCarthy, a historian at the CIA, “During World War II, when it came to numbers, the war department went after women... Same with maps and codework: They specifically wanted to find women for that kind of work. They were simply better at it” (qtd. in Raja 2013 [np]). As of the establishment of the CIA in 1947, women continued in similar jobs and many also joined the agency as secretaries. It was not uncommon, however, for a secretary or typist to reach a higher position in the agency. Nonetheless, though

women were 40% of the CIA's employees as of 1953, most held low federal ranks, and thus lower salaries, compared to men (Raja 2013). More women entered the senior ranks of the CIA between the 1980s and 1990s, but, as of 2012, only 19% of the Senior Intelligence Service were women. This prompted David Petraeus, the CIA director at the time, to develop the Director's Advisory Group on Women in Leadership to investigate how to increase women's representation at higher levels. This proactive perspective from CIA leadership is laudable, and only a short time later, women comprised 31% of the Senior Intelligence Service (Schulte 2013). As of 2013, women were 46% of the CIA's entire workforce.

Some argue that women are particularly good at being spies for the CIA. Lindsay Moran, a CIA counterintelligence officer for 5 years, claims that "one of the CIA's best-kept secrets" is women's keen ability to recruit foreign agents (Ziegler 2012 [np]). Reasons she cites include women's penchant for people skills and their "street smarts," which women develop as they have experienced lives surrounded by gender violence threats and thus are always on the lookout when walking in public. Women are also thought to be good listeners, and they can "nurture" informants. Moran explains that informants are scared, and women can mother them through the process so that they can feel secure. Finally, she states that women always have a cover story, in that they can say they are "having an affair. It's plausible under any circumstances and in any part of the world" (Ziegler 2012 [np]). Another former agent explains yet another reason for women's success as spies; she claims women are able to acquire intelligence when they act like they act innocent or stupid. This agent described an interaction with a man in the field as follows: "He just told me everything and I got tons of intel out of him because I was just a woman who wasn't very bright" (Raja 2013 [np]).

Despite the positive trajectory of women in the CIA, like the FBI, it does not provide a flawless work environment for women. For example, in the 1990s, the CIA settled a class action lawsuit regarding sexual harassment and equal pay, which resulted in it paying one million dollars in back pay to women employees. Moreover, women officers also relate that the demands of CIA employment make it difficult to maintain a family life. Working for the CIA can become an "extreme job" with more than 60+ work hours a week (Martin 2015 [104]). Thus, it can be argued "little [has changed] since the 1940s, when spies were either single or had someone else to take care of home responsibilities" (Schulte 2013 [np]). It is difficult to take children on overseas assignment and, as a result, women operatives choose to have no children at all or must leave them for long stretches of time (Martin 2015). Some women desire this line of work, even with its drawbacks; however, women who are dedicated to CIA work are often perceived differently than men. According to Michael Scheuer, a former CIA intelligence officer, "men who work 20-hour days, seven days a week there are dedicated. Women who do it are obsessive shrews" (Schulte 2013 [np]). Our discussion of Scheuer and the women he worked with in the CIA continues in the textbox below.



**Box 10.1: Women in Alec Station: Searching for Osama bin Laden**

Nada Bakos, who joined the CIA in 2000, was a member of what is called “Alec Station,” a group of intelligence analysts working within the C.I.A. Counterterrorist Center and attempting to hunt down Osama bin Laden from 1996 to 2005. Alec Station had a reputation for doing “women’s work” (Windrem 2013), as women mainly staffed the unit. The unit was named after the son of the director Michael Scheuer. (He directed the unit until the late 1990s). As we explain here the reputation of “women’s work” disadvantaged the intelligence analysts searching for bin Laden. However, Bakos since has argued: “I think women make fantastic analysts. We have patience and perseverance... we’re not always looking for the sexy payoff immediately” (Barker 2013). Alec Station, therefore, shows the remarkable presence of women in counterterrorism, yet it demonstrates that counterterrorism operations are themselves gendered.

Alec Station’s composition of female analysts, combined with the CIA’s low prioritization of bin Laden in the 1990s, made the unit undervalued and under sourced. The unit was located off-site of the CIA’s headquarters in Langley, Virginia, it was not considered a desirable assignment within the CIA, and its staff was not high ranking. Many of those working in the unit felt that the CIA leadership and elected officials did not adequately heed their warnings about Al Qaeda. The intelligence community saw bin Laden more as a terrorist financier, if not a crazy man living in caves, than the leader of a global network of terrorism. In the shadow of the Cold War, state-sponsored terrorism garnered more focus than the up and coming dynamic of global terrorist networks.

The personality of Michael Scheuer contributed to gendered interpretations of Alec Station. Scheuer was considered to be pushy and difficult to work with, thus his passion for tracking down bin Laden was perceived of as zealotry. The fact that mostly women worked for Scheuer enhanced the idea that the unit was overly emotional, if not irrationally obsessed with bin Laden. Others in the intelligence community said they were “obsessed crusaders, overly emotional, you know, using all those women stereotypes.” (CNN 2013 [np]). The unit was subject to teasing, as it was referred to as the Manson family (Mazzetti 2006). Scheuer was the zealous male leader, like Manson, and he had a group of female followers working for him. The women at Alec station were even called a harem for Scheuer (Ingersoll 2012).

A vignette recalling a 1998 visit by CIA Director George Tenet further confirms the tendency to see the women of Alec Station as overly emotional. Alec Station analysts, at that point, thought bin Laden was threatening enough to justify kidnapping, if not killing, him. The CIA, however, did not agree. At the visit, a woman analyst spoke to Tenet “angrily,” saying “You and the White House are going to get thousands of Americans killed” (Bowden 2012 [np]). Director Tenet dismissed her as emotional and failed to take her complaint seriously. In fact, subtly referencing her fervor, he replied to the unit

“you will all think clearer in a couple of days” (Bowden 2012 [np]). Not long after, Al Qaeda bombed the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998.

In interviews since 9/11, the women of Alec Station reason that their emotions were beneficial to the task at hand. They own their deeply felt emotions because they see emotions as a type of passion, which, teamed with perseverance, is fitting for intelligence work. They were passionate to find bin Laden and stop him before he targeted the US on her own soil. Unfortunately, they did not recover the information necessary to stop 9/11; however, they suspected a large attack of this kind by summer 2001 and they sent multiple memos to the George W. Bush White House declaring their suspicions. Even so, blame for 9/11 often lies with the CIA and Alec Station. Though the women feel guilt regarding 9/11, the blame is hard for them to digest, considering that many of them spent years dedicated to finding bin Laden and had their claims dismissed. For example, Cindy Storer, who began tracking Osama in 1995, sent the unit’s first memo – a warning – to President Bill Clinton. Nonetheless, during her time at Alec Station, she was told she spent too much time looking for bin Laden. As analysts, the women could convey viable threats to officials but they were not in the position to implement the policies they believed could address the threats.

### *Women in Police*

Police are essential to counterterrorism because essentially all terrorist attacks are local. By this, we mean that police must be responsible for local intelligence work and community networking in order to prevent terrorism, and they must serve as first responders when terrorist attacks happen. Some countries have national police that respond to terrorism (e.g., Australia, Japan, and UK), while others—especially federalist ones—contain multiple local police forces that must coordinate to respond to terrorism (Bailey and Weisburd 2009). The United States has the FBI as its national law enforcement agency, but it represents the latter model and contains 17,000+ police departments across the country (Bailey and Weisburd 2009). Duties of these departments related to counterterrorism include: risk analysis, disruptions of terrorist plots, protection of people and infrastructure, emergency response and order maintenance during attacks, criminal investigations of terrorists, and community relations for prevention’s sake (Bailey and Weisburd 2009). Although conducting intelligence is in the purview of local police, only large metropolitan police forces—like Los Angeles, New York, etc.—have the capacity to do so (Bailey and Weisburd 2009). As such, local police rely on the **fusion center model**, which means *they coordinate through state and local agencies (called “fusion centers”) to gather, share, and analyze “threat-related information” with federal authorities and the private sector* (Department of Homeland Security 2017 [np]).

The extent to which women are involved in counterterrorism through police work hinges on their overall representation in law enforcement. Data show women make up on average 12–13% of the police forces in the United States. Leadership positions held by women are fewer, with approximately 11% of police departments, sheriff's offices and other law enforcement agencies across the U.S. with a woman at its helm. Reasons for women's low representation include their slow historical trajectory in policing as well as the police's masculine culture. Women first entered police work around the late 1800s, not as equals to men but as matrons who pursued the moral reform of women prisoners. Throughout the mid 1900s, women continued in support roles, often working in a social services capacity, with women and children, on issues such as "runaways, shoplifting, and prostitution" (National Center for Women and Policing 2001–2013 [np]). Spurred by the women's movement and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the 1970s became the decade in which women entered patrol and leadership positions. Nonetheless, police forces maintained a "male-dominated police subculture" in which women faced "tokenism, stereotyping, and sexual harassment" (Bikos 2016 [3]; see also Carlan and McMullan 2009; Rabe-Hemp 2009). As we see in the discussion of women in the military below, women in policing are assumed to be less successful on patrol because of their lesser physical strength and size in comparison to men.

Many aspects of policing terrorism, however, are not premised on the police's physical capacity to use brute force. Police at times take terrorist suspects into custody and possibly need to use force, but police more consistently must engage their communities in order to tap local sources that have intelligence about incipient terrorist plots. That means an ability to foment community relations is a higher priority than brute force. Another way to put it is to say counterterrorism depends on **community policing**, defined as *a focus on problem solving and preventing crime by interacting with communities and building trust with citizens rather than responding to crimes after the fact by apprehending assailants*. The community policing approach emerged in the US in the 1980s as a way for police to better serve minority communities.

Police outreach to Muslim communities is particularly wrought with tension because in a post-9/11 world Muslims feel targeted due to their religion and some police have stereotyped them (Cherney and Murphy 2017). How can these relationships be mended? Cherney and Murphy surveyed Muslims in Australia, and their statistical findings indicate that when police are perceived to be non-biased and respectable toward Muslims, to show interest in the needs of the community (e.g., paying attention to Muslim youth), and to offer the community avenues for voice, citizens trust them more and are more willing to work with them, such that they "report suspicious terrorist related activity to police" (2017 [1031]). This emphasizes, once again, that brute force by the police is not the only way to respond to terrorism. In fact, force is likely to exacerbate community tensions and stymie intelligence gathering.

Community policing contests the masculine culture of police as aggressive and forceful and instead draws upon what are frequently considered to be female

traits, namely empathy, care, and good communication (Miller 1999). According to scholars, “the ideologies and implementation strategies of early community policing models were very similar to the social welfare roles of early police-women” (Schuck 2017 [345]). Although it runs the risk of essentialism to say women are better at community policing because of these stereotyped feminine traits, scholars have found that “when compared to male officers, female officers express greater support for community policing principles, are more respectful towards residents, improve responses to violence against women, and characterize themselves as better at feminized forms of police work” (Schuck 2017 [346]). What is more, Cherney and Murphy (2017) report that survey respondents who are Muslim women are more trusting of police and are more willing to work with police (than men). Thus, it seems that the nexus of police-community relations could benefit from greater interactions between women citizens and women officers. In the fight against terrorism, therefore, a strong argument can be made for changing masculine police culture in favor of empathy and respect for minority and ethnic communities.

For the same reason, policewomen are believed to be essential to counterterrorism in other parts of the world. In 2012, Daniel Benjamin, US Ambassador-at-Large for Counterterrorism, spoke at a conference in DC entitled: *The Roles of Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. At the conference, he detailed the US’s support of community policing. He stated,

“And community policing, I want to underscore, is one of the absolutely key initiatives globally towards reducing radicalization, because that first contact with state power is often a decisive one in terms of radicalization. Women have a unique reach into society. And through this – through these activities they can detect when a terrorist organization may be operating with their communities” (Center for Strategic and International Studies 2012 [np])

Police women also provide necessary care as first responders; in parts of the world where women and men occupy separate spheres and do not mingle, women police must be present to care for women victims after terrorist attacks (Peters 2014). Problematically, however, women in these places are severely underrepresented in police work. For example, in Pakistan, women make up only 0.89% of police officers. This is likely the case because local populations often scoff at women in policing. Nevertheless, the United States dedicates funds to training women police in many countries, for example, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria. This fact is peculiar to observers considering that the same level of resources is not devoted within the US to increase the presence of women officers domestically (Asquith 2016).

The following textbox about the Basque Country in Spain continues the discussion of how the policing of terrorism would benefit from more women officers. In Spain, political terrorism intersects with machista terrorism, known as extreme gender violence, and a gender interpretation is needed in order to understand how men as police bodyguards can influence women politicians and victims of gender violence who need bodyguard services.

### Box 10.2: Gendering of Bodyguards in the Basque Country

“You know that ETA has tried to kill me on seven occasions. And when they were not successful was thanks to the bodyguards.” (Luis del Olmo, journalist, qtd. in Typically Spanish 2014 [np])

During the active years of ETA terrorism, politicians and media elites lived a bodyguarded life because they were at risk for assassination. It is estimated that around 1600–2000 people maintained bodyguards (*escortas*) due to ETA threats (Woodworth 2007; Typically Spanish 2014). At all times, elites had two bodyguards accompanying them in public and into their private homes. For example, a bodyguard would go grocery shopping and to children’s schools with those whom they guarded. They also checked apartment buildings and mail slots for bombs before politicians could enter their homes. The Spanish government as well as the Basque regional government paid for the bodyguards, who worked around the clock and travelled alongside politicians if they ever spent time travelling away from home.

In an interview in 2011, when ETA terrorism was still active, a woman politician told us, as she was referring to the constant presence of bodyguards in her life, “my political and personal life is marked by terrorism” (Personal Interview 2011). Most bodyguards at the time were men, which had the propensity to make women feel awkward. One woman explained, “being a woman, and above all young, it seems that you are more stupid. .. a guard has accompanied me including to buy underwear in a store” (Varona 2009 [568]). Women politicians also reported to us that bodyguards complicated the balance between their work and private lives. ETA targeted men politicians as well, but women conveyed that they were “more acutely burdened because they hold more private responsibilities” (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2016 [138]). One woman told us: “I was not comfortable going shopping with two strangers [i.e., the bodyguards]. .. [my family] stopped going to the movies. .. I modified my ways and habits” (Personal Interview 2011).

Given ETA’s permanent ceasefire in 2011, “the risk from ETA is today is ‘low or very low’” (Typically Spanish 2014 [np]). Thus, the need for bodyguards in Spain is greatly reduced. As a result, the Spanish and Basque governments have laid them off. As one bodyguard put it, the end of ETA is a good for Spain, but “for me it means unemployment” (Hoy Online 2017 [np]). For this reason, bodyguards have created associations to represent their demands before government. The president of one association, the Forgotten Shadows of Euskadi and Navarra (Las Sombras Olvidadas de Euskadi y Navarra), reports that very few former bodyguards have found new work in the security sector, resulting in “problems paying the mortgage” and the need to “ask for food” from charities” (El País 2015 [np]). This is unfortunate, given that “they risked their lives” to fight ETA and some of them lost their lives doing so (Mateos 2017 [np]). For this reason, they feel forgotten.

A small handful of the bodyguards, however, have found new work in the state's security forces. In recent years, the Basque administration has reassigned some bodyguards to protect women from machista terrorism. Recall from earlier chapters, machista terrorism is another name for gender violence and pertains to situations of violence when masculine power is asserted over women to threaten, injure, and/or kill them. Associations like Forgotten Shadows urge the government to offer politicians' bodyguards more work either with gender violence victims or as prison guards. To lobby for the former line of employment, bodyguard associations have teamed with feminist organizations, like the Clara Campoamor Association, in an effort to push state remedies for gender violence. Forgotten Shadows has also protested "in front of the headquarters of the PP [Popular Party] in Bilbao and Vitoria [in the Basque region]" to request reassignment to victims of gender violence (El País 2015 [np]).

That said, reassigning bodyguards to protect victims of machista terrorism is not without significant concerns. First, some women's rights organizations believe that having a bodyguard can serve as a form of re-victimization for women victims of gender violence. This is because victims lose privacy and freedom, and they may be uncomfortable with male bodyguards in their lives, around the clock, since men have so recently victimized them. In this sense, women bodyguards would be preferable; however, most bodyguards have traditionally been men. Reports from the Basque police agency document that only about 5% of applicants to bodyguard positions between 2007 and 2011 were women. This is likely the case because some women do not want to take up work that could be "an impediment to their family life" (El Correo 2012 [np]). Being a bodyguard requires round-the-clock work and therefore is hard to reconcile with family life.

### *Women in the Military*

The military is an institution assumed to be masculine. Specifically, the military displays a **hegemonic masculinity**, which we defined in previous chapters as *the expectation that men are aggressive, decisive, and independent rather than having feminine traits, stereotyped as emotional, gentle, and caring* (Connell 1995). As a result of these gender expectations, and due to the "unseen" contributions of military women over its history (e.g., the roles of wives, camp followers, and laundresses), women have not achieved equality to men in the military (Cockburn 2003; Enloe 2000). When women reach high positions in the military, they must negotiate their identities and actions *vis-à-vis* the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. They must be able to convey aggression and independence rather than the "stigmatized" traits associated with femininity (Levin 2011 [4]).



As of 2017, women make up 15% of active-duty US military personnel, which is a 4% increase since 1990. Thus, the number of women in the military has increased over time. Women are most represented in the Airforce (19% of total) and Navy (18% of total), and least represented in the Marines (8% of total). Women comprise 14% of the Army (Parker et al. 2017)

Women's duties in the military have changed in recent decades. In previous eras, women did not serve in combat and instead served in support roles. However, contemporary conflicts do not allow for a succinct division between direct combat and support roles. Terrorism is a type of political violence that produces a "non-linear battlefield". Whereas a linear battlefield suggests one nation's troops facing another's troops, nonlinear battles incorporate fire from any direction, likely from non-state actors, who may target general populations and support operations as well as those in combat positions. As a result, women serving in the military in places like "Afghanistan may be exposed to a combat situation at any time" (Harding 2012 [9]).

Given the threats from insurgent and terrorist forces, women in the armed services "can no longer remain separate from the fighting that goes on around them" (Harding 2012 [12]). This stands as one justification for why women have been incorporated in combat roles in the US military in recent years. By 2013, the Defense Department had rescinded its ban on women in combat roles (Baldor 2015a), and the Department accepted women into all U.S. combat jobs in 2015 (Baldor 2015b). Thus, as of 2015, "7,200 positions within the special operations forces [had] been opened to women" (Baldor 2015a [np]).

In the sections below, we review how women respond to terrorism through their participation in the military. We discuss women in special operations since 2015, and we highlight how women work alongside special operations in female engagement teams. We place particular emphasis on special operations because these units excel in unconventional warfare against terrorists as well as building partnerships with local communities (Jones 2014). As Jones states, "special operations forces are critical since the U.S. deployment of conventional forces to fight terrorists overseas has generally been counterproductive" (2014 [7]) (Fig. 10.1).

### *Female Engagement Teams*

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Female Engagement Teams address the needs of "local women and children" during military missions abroad; thus, they constitute a "gender perspective in the field of [counterinsurgency] operations" (Egnell et al. 2014a, b [9]). **Counterinsurgency** may be defined as *operations against a hostile minority that uses insurgent tactics such as force and ideological engagement to win a war against a more power actor* (Pratt 2010). Guerillas are insurgents, and terrorist groups can be insurgents as well. Counterinsurgency relates to counterterrorism because insurgent groups use terrorism to delegitimize



**Fig. 10.1** Female US Military Linguist with Afghani Civilians (Photo Courtesy of P. Shinn (2011))

“non-compliant government[s]” (Pratt 2010 [np]). As Pratt states, “the difference between counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency is simple: counter-terrorism focuses more narrowly on combating the tactics and strategy of terrorism and those who employ it, while counter-insurgency is a broader category of responses to political violence carried out by minority groups, both terroristic and otherwise” (Pratt 2010 [np]). In responding to political violence and working with local communities, female engagement teams are put into the position of combat. Thus, women in FETs must be battlefield ready (Harding 2012).

The history of FETs in the United States goes back to the early 2000s in Iraq. The military utilized teams of women in Iraq and later in Afghanistan, and, in 2009, the Marines formalized all-women teams and named them Female Engagement Teams (Harding 2012). Since that time, the Army and Marines have formally trained women in the capacity of FETs. Though the Marines temporarily terminated its program in 2012, FET training and teams recommenced in 2015 (Seck 2015; Martinez 2017). In 2011, the Army released a Commander’s Guide to Female Engagement Teams (Public Intelligence 2011). In terms of training, women in FETs need the same preparation as men who enter combat. According to the Army, “training includes Pashto language qualification, seven-mile rucksack marches, night weapons qualification, tactical combat casualty care, combatant training and other mission-essential courses to prepare the women who will be attached to infantry battalions” (Irby 2013 [np]). Because women in FETs are serving in combat contexts, it comes as no surprise that American women have lost their lives in the line of FET work. For example, Army Specialist Krystal Fitts, at age 26, knew Pashto and was working with local populations when she was injured and killed by indirect fire in 2012.

Another way to describe the work of FETs in counterinsurgency is as “armed social work” (Dyvik 2014; Kilcullen 2006 [138]), in which troops distribute medical aid and life essentials – whether that be toiletries or foodstuffs. Further examples from FET work in Afghanistan substantiate these troops’ everyday tasks. One FET in Afghanistan in 2011 worked with women and girls to develop their agricultural skills. In classes about animal hygiene, led by veterinary technician Master Sgt. Darla Sheasley, the women learned about rabies and malaria (Poppe 2011). Another training program in Afghanistan taught women sewing skills in order that they could make clothing for themselves and to sell at bazaars, and another taught women soap-making. The goal of such programs “is to have women with different skills producing their own products in several different villages, so no single village gets saturated with the same product” (Shinn 2011 [np]).

The gendered nature of FETs is clear-cut; military women work with women in Afghanistan because it would be culturally taboo for military men to be working with them one-on-one. Due to cultural norms, men and women in society are separated in their everyday lives and military women allow the US to interact with half the population that the military would otherwise not be able to engage (Harding 2012). Beyond cultural engagement, FETs offer a way for the US military to conduct searches of homes where only women are present. Female service members therefore increase the military’s ability to gather intelligence and gain a broader understanding of any local context. While most insurgents are expected to be men, the military recognizes that women are sympathetic to terrorists in their lives and provide support networks for them (Harding 2012). The goal then of engaging women is to make them friendly, or at least neutral, to the US and situate them in opposition to insurgent goals. As David Kilcullen, a counterinsurgency expert, explains “Win the women, and you own the family unit. Own the family unit, and you take a big step forward in mobilizing the population” (qtd. in Harding 2012 [8]). Therefore, it is important to recognize that Afghan women are not powerless in the family sphere as some Westerners assume. Rather, terrorist sympathies partially depend on their political attitudes.

A further gender interpretation conveys that women are not merely helpful in cultural engagement but *more likely to be successful* than male troops in relating to women *and* men. Local populations see military women as a sort of “third gender” (Broadwell 2009; Dyvik 2014). Populations do not distrust women to the same extent as men in the US military. It has been argued that women, though taken as seriously as men, can “soften operations” because they *are women*, thereby leading to greater trust in a community (Harding 2012 [20]). A vivid example of the third gender phenomenon is present in the Tessa Poppe vignette that opened this chapter. Poppe tells of female troops entering a village holding guns and wearing helmets, in essence, appearing like their men counterparts. However, when the women removed the helmets and their hair became obvious to villagers, they became more acceptable to the villagers. As one older man, a leader in a village, expressed regarding US troops, “your men come to fight, but we know the women are here to help” (Harris 2011a [np]).

What is more, the concept of FETs has extended past the US military into the operational strategies of other countries. FETs from the US have trained women in

the British military, the Afghan National Police, and the Kuwaiti police, and some experts believe the model might work well in Nigeria to fight the influence of Boko Haram (Martinez 2017).

Disadvantages to the FET model have been cited. First, it is possible that women, replete with gear and ammunitions, might be suspicious in the same way as military men. Thus, to some in local communities, the “third gender” advantage might not be compelling. Moreover, as the vignette that opened this chapter suggests, women, like men, may not be sufficiently attuned to what local populations need. Thus, it has been argued, FETs require even greater cultural training (Martinez 2017). The Marines, for example, have improved training to include greater language competency and role play scenarios, which could increase cultural sensitivity (Harding 2012). Finally, one could argue that the FET model essentializes women’s identities and social roles (see Dyvik 2014). Women as American soldiers are “sexed” as agents who have female skills or attributes and thus can relate to women abroad, and perhaps as a result they are not viewed as “real soldiers” (McBride and Wibben 2012 [210]). Additionally, the women abroad are “othered” as women who need help from the US – and largely help related only to their function in the family and traditional societies. Therefore, the agency of women—American and those abroad—are limited by essentialist notions of traditional gender roles and women’s emotional and social dispositions.

### *Women in Special Ops*

When it was announced in 2015 that all positions in the military would be open to women, the head of US Special Operations Command, General Joseph Votel, assured people that the qualifications for women in special operations positions would remain the same as those for men (Baldor 2015a). He did so to calm the hesitations of some in military circles who felt negatively about women’s integration. He pointed out that women had already served in special operations capacities as helicopter pilots and in cultural support teams. As with the women in FETs discussed above, he noted that women had seen direct combat in these lines of work.

The fact that a great deal of controversy surrounded the full integration of women into special operations necessitates a discussion of why some in the military preferred that these positions remained men-only. The most comprehensive data about military opinion in this regard is from the RAND Corporation, which, in 2014, looked at the perceptions of 7618 persons serving in special ops (Szayna et al. 2016). With a 50.1% response rate, the RAND survey identified the following five reasons as the top hesitations to incorporating women into special operations: lower standards, reduced team cohesion, women’s lesser physical capabilities, increased sexual tensions, and concern over female health and safety. The following table explores these concerns and provides sample quotations from focus groups with the men service members who participated in the survey (Table 10.2).

**Table 10.2** Top five reasons cited as concern for women entering special operations

Reason for concern with women serving in special operations	Percent stating reason as the greatest concern about opening SOF specialties to women	Sample quotations from men service members
Standards will be lowered	18.3	“I know there are women who can do this, but they are few and far between compared to men. I’m not being an a—hole about it; just a realist. The average male in here could pick one another up, but my wife couldn’t do that. Will the standards change, is my biggest concern” (Szayna et al. 2016 [135]).
Team cohesion/morale	14.1	“There are still issues of cohesion. The ways we talk and relate to each other are going to change. It’s a scientific fact, when you put a woman in the room, the way men act changes. (Szayna et al. 2016 [141]).
Physical capabilities	13.3	“If I’m shot—I’m 220 pounds without gear—what female is going to carry me out in a timely manner? That’s a showstopper because any of the guys in this room right now could do it.” (Szayna et al. 2016 [140]).
Sexual tension	8.7	“If you have a problem with other men in your platoon, you can just fight it out, or beat him up. But with women, they will pull the sexual assault card and that will no longer be possible. This will change the way business is done” (Szayna et al. 2016 [143]).
Female health and safety	8.6	“When women first were in combat arms in Iraq and Afghanistan, there were women who were not able to properly take care of their hygiene for a set amount of time. They got sick. A woman’s job, or purpose in life, isn’t to go do what we do—kill and all. It’s to nurture. We sleep in the mud. A woman goes through that, it’s going to create so many problems on her body” (Szayna et al. 2016 [148]).

What we note from these quotations is that many men do not think women can complete the tasks of special operations personnel – either due to their lack of physical capabilities or weaker health and perseverance. Some of the quotations show that men want to maintain the masculine culture of this part of the military, particularly wanting to preserve “the way things are done” and don’t want men to have to modify their actions as related to women. One final quotation particularly illumines this sentiment. One respondent to the survey stated, “It’s a slap in the face telling us chicks can do our job” (Mulrine 2015 [np]). Not only does this quote identify some jobs as inherently male (i.e., “our job”), it also belittles women’s agency in that women are labeled “chicks,” a derogatory term for a girl.

While many serving in special operations did not want to see the full integration of women, the RAND study shows that 10–15% of respondents favored opening special operations to women. One cited reason for female integration is that it was

bound to occur some day; thus, it should be accepted now. Another justification is simply that if women can meet the same requirements as men in special operations, and not all will, those that do should serve just like men. Others suggest that women can play a special role *as women*. As we discussed with FETs, women have the capability to collect valuable intelligence if they are able to gain the trust of local populations. We see this same argument of women's trustworthiness being made with respect to Norway's Hunter Troops, which is an all-women special operations unit detailed in the textbox that follows this section.

Women in the military go beyond these basic reasons to add a justification for full participation rooted in gender analysis. They argue that integration is beneficial because it would force a change to the military's masculine culture – a culture that some men explicitly want to preserve. It is ironic that servicemen feel alarm regarding sexual tensions in an integrated force, given that some men themselves perpetrate sexual tension through sexual harassment of women in the military (Mackenzie 2015a). Data show that 20–40% of women in the forces experience rape or attempted rape (Mackenzie 2015b). Moreover, the Marine Corp controversy of 2017, of servicemen sharing photos nude servicewomen, further accentuates the argument that men, rather than women, perpetuate sexual tensions in the forces. Thus, it could be argued that male hegemony, also termed the “bro culture” (Sorvher 2013 [np]), should be mitigated by way of women's integration.

Given that all military openings are now available to women, how many women are entering special operations and with what level of success? Current events show that few women are in special operations, but the ones who are able to meet qualifications want to change the military for women who come after them. It was not until Fall 2017 that one woman was able to pass Marine Corps training for special operations, and, at the time of this book's writing, her name had not been released. In 2015, two women, Kristen Greist and Shaye Haver, passed Army Ranger Training. They received no special treatment and completed the training alongside men colleagues. Greist explained that she persevered in training because, as she states, “I was thinking really of future generations of women—that I would like them to have the opportunity” (Bellstrom 2016 [np]). Despite aforementioned RAND data showing that many men resist women in special operations, Greist and Haver report that their men colleagues accepted them and convey that the women assisted them during the training and showed every possible sign of commitment and resolve (Golgowski 2015).

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 has the ability to slow down the progress of integration in the military. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump indicated that he would close some military positions to women. Though he has not done so as of Fall 2017, he could because President Obama, along with his Defense Department, opened the positions through executive action rather than through legislation. Similarly, President Trump, through executive action, could reverse policy. We see this same dynamic in the banning of transgendered military personnel. Trump argued that they were a distraction to military effectiveness and has since, through a tweet and then through a signed directive, banned them from service. Women too have been seen as a distraction to men who are “just trying to do their jobs.”



**Box 10.3: Hunter Troops in Norway**

In Norway, women have served in all military roles, including combat ones, since the 1980s. Moreover, as of 2014, the country enacted female conscription. However, it is unlikely that most women will be called up for service, as the number of recruits needed for the military each year is much smaller than the candidates who have registered for it. In all likelihood, therefore, the most motivated women will be recruited each year. Women who serve have a new option in the form of a special operations unit, named *Jegertroppen*, or the Hunter Troops. Established in 2014, it is the world's first all-female special forces unit. Out of 317 women who initially applied to enter the unit that year, only 88 women passed the admissions test and only 13 completed the unit's one-year training program (Braw 2016).

The Hunter Troops are significant in that Norwegian troops, when serving abroad in contexts like Afghanistan, need women to communicate with women in local communities. Thus, as with the FETs from the US, the Hunter Troops provide a way to help women and children of war torn countries (Angerer 2017). Their role, however, goes beyond helping local populations. Hunter Troops are also considered essential to intelligence gathering. The troops can facilitate communication with women, and the military can gain access to information that they previously lacked. The commander of Norway's special forces, Colonel Frode Kristofferson, aptly explains the gender logic of the Hunter Troops as follows:

When [Norway] deployed to Afghanistan we saw that we needed female soldiers. Both as female advisers for the Afghan special police unit that we mentored, but also when we did an arrest... We needed female soldiers to take care of the women and children in the buildings that we searched (qtd. in Angerer 2017 [np]).

Although the physical demands of training are reduced from that of men, the Hunter Troops, similar to women in FETs, train extensively and are prepared to fight in active combat. Whereas as "*Jegertroppen* members carry 60-pound backpacks," men in Norway's special forces must learn to carry bags that weigh 80 pounds (Braw 2016 [np]). The requirement for women was set lower because the US Marine Corps has found in studies that women carrying the same amounts as men, but carrying a greater percentage than men in terms of their body weights, leads to pelvic fractures. Nevertheless, Colonel Kristofferson believes women are "just as capable as the men" and that they show men how to have greater camaraderie (Women in the World 2017). His words are revealing: "The boys see that the girls help each other, so the boys are doing better on that as well" (Women in the World 2017 [np]).

## Soft Counterterrorism Approaches in the United States

The Obama presidency, and specifically its first term with Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, is remembered for its combination of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ policies to deal with terrorism. On one hand, Obama is known for his counterterrorism use of drones and Navy Seals (see Chap. 5 for more discussion on the gendered nature of drones). On the other hand, he expressed his support for human rights and diplomacy. Secretary Clinton as well preferred diplomacy in many situations, yet she was not reluctant to invoke hard power tools such as intelligence and risky military operations to knock out terrorists. Although she was framed by the news media as emotional during the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan (see Chap. 8), she was known as the raid’s biggest supporter in the Obama administration, even though it entailed a huge risk in terms of possible failure and casualties of Navy Seals.

Because Clinton combined hard and soft power, her perspective was pragmatic and it was termed a “smart power perspective” (Landler 2016; Athanassiou 2015). A **smart power perspective** may be defined as a *nuanced use of hawkish as well as diplomatic and cultural approaches in foreign policy* (Athanassiou 2015). The nuance in Clinton’s perspective further deepens when considering her support of feminism on the world stage. Clinton believed the elevation of women’s rights was a way to further economic development and state stability. Her use of “smart power feminism” or what we could call “security feminism” is a soft approach to counterterrorism, though it is also one that does not dismiss military power. We discuss security feminism below, and afterwards we quickly review counter-extremism measures in the United States. In doing so, we link gender perspectives (or the lack thereof) to the counterterrorism policies of the George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump administrations.

### *Security Feminism and the Hillary Doctrine*

**Security feminism** can be defined as *a soft approach to American foreign policy that promotes women’s rights as a mode of counterterrorism and national security* (Nesiah 2012). Secretary Hillary Clinton subscribed to security feminism, and it is closely related to what other scholars call the **Hillary Doctrine**, namely that “*the subjugation of women is a direct threat to the common security of the world and to the national security of the [United States]*” (Hillary Clinton qtd. in Hudson et al. 2015 [xiv]). The Hillary Doctrine, thus, proposes that the empowerment of women and girls can increase state security within given countries and, as a result, stabilize the world and the US’s foreign interests. Hillary Clinton has stood for global women’s rights since at least 1995, when she made her famed speech in Beijing, China at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. Her phrase “women’s rights are human rights” rings true in the Hillary Doctrine, as it suggests that human security is intrinsically linked to national security (Caldwell and Williams 2016) (Fig. 10.2).



**Fig. 10.2** Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Meeting with Women in Uruguayan Politics (Photo Courtesy of State Department by Vince Alongi)

In this paragraph, we review examples of how the Hillary Doctrine might work in real life. Take femicide as an example, which we defined in earlier chapters as the killing of women or girls, particularly by a man and on account of her gender. Femicide results in the loss of many women's lives, and it also contributes to a general milieu of criminality in a country (see Hudson et al. 2015). When crimes in a country significantly increase and a country's legal system lends itself to impunity, the security of that country is in question. However, if the country's leaders and the international community seek to end the gender injustice of femicide and empower women, it is possible for crime to be reduced in that country and security to increase. Another example pertains to sex-selective abortions (see Hudson et al. 2015), which occur in countries that favor boy children over girl children. With imbalances in sex ratios, however, many boys will grow up and never marry. This creates social insecurity for significant parts of the population. In this scenario too, changing gender norms and elevating the worth of girl children, could mitigate social problems that have the ability to produce insecurity. The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, an Executive Order from 2011, provides a final example. In the document, which lists the Obama administration's goals, the agricultural empowerment of women is discussed. In short, if women are empowered economically, a country's economics can improve and greater security can be achieved (The White House 2016).

How then does the Hillary Doctrine apply to terrorism and constitute a security feminism perspective on counterterrorism? First, the Hillary Doctrine is premised on the scholarly argument of Valerie M. Hudson, Professor at Texas A&M University. This argument, introduced in Chap. 1, contends that a state's peacefulness depends on its treatment of women—and particularly violence against women—rather than its economic status, culture, or level of democracy (Hudson et al. 2015). Earlier in this book, in Chap. 5, we made a similar connection between terrorist philosophies

and gender violence. Many individual terrorists have been perpetrators of gender violence in their past, and types of terrorism that target women like acid terrorism flourish in the presence of a general state of insecurity and violence. The question becomes a chicken and egg one: does a state of insecurity lead to gender violence or vice versa? Hudson argues that violence against women comes first and is a window into other forms of violence—ethnic, ideological, religious, etc. Patriarchy sustains gender violence and it causes societies to lack conflict resolution skills. Children learn from a young age that gender violence is a way of coping with differences, and violence then becomes the way to solve other conflicts (Hudson et al. 2015). Thus, if tools existed to mitigate gender conflicts, societies could learn ways to deal with other conflicts as well. The implication for terrorism, therefore, is that those invoking terrorism lack the ability to solve conflict peacefully – an ability they might otherwise have if they were able to cope with fundamental conflicts in their homes. Another interpretation situates women’s empowerment as an ideology that undermines terrorist extremism, and presumably Muslim radicalism. Hudson, Leidl, and Hunt explain that if extremists hate “all things female,” they cannot consider women as equals, and must control them; when women gain freedom from them, extremists will “have lost the very foundation” of their ideology’s “power” (2015 [91]). In other words, if gender inequality undergirds extremism, then the elimination of gender inequality destroys extremism.

Secretary Clinton furthered programs designed to eliminate gender inequality. For example, the State Department, in 2014, created a public-private network of service providers who can respond to gender violence in contexts abroad. The program was named the Gender-Based Violence Emergency Response and Protection Initiative, and it “has supported more than 130 women and girls who survived... (ISIL) captivity in Iraq” (The White House 2016 [9]). The State Department also supported counter-extremism initiatives that mobilize men and women to stop the radicalization efforts of terrorists in places such as Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

One could argue that Clinton’s actions under the Obama Administration are not a new approach; hence, security feminism is not simply a Hillary phenomenon. Recall our discussion in Chap. 5 about the perceived victimization of women in Afghanistan. In that chapter, we argued that Western countries often see women in other parts of the world as people in need of “saving.” “Saving brown women” is a trope for world powers that want to justify military action abroad. This critique has been leveled against the George W. Bush administration for its attention to Afghan women and its frequent avowal of women’s rights. The Bush Administration conveyed that pursuing women’s rights was part and parcel of US strategy to respond to terrorism; and this is precisely the definition of security feminism. In a similar way, the Hillary Doctrine is viewed by some as mere rhetoric that frames overall US policy – a policy involving military force (drones, bombings, etc.). For this reason, Clinton’s feminism fails to be feminism in the eyes of many feminist activists (see Nesiah 2012; Geier 2016; Khalek 2015). Because of her hawkishness, she projects the hard power choices of many men leaders that went before her and thus belies a feminism that calls out hard power and the way it oppresses women (and men) (Shah 2016). Other women, however, might appreciate how Clinton weds firm foreign policy with the empowerment and representation of women. “Security moms,”

namely women in the United States who fear for the security of their families during in an age of terrorism (see Chap. 9), would argue that Clinton and her “tough on terrorism” approach represents their “women’s interests.”

### Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

In comparison to the United Kingdom, the United States does not have developed counter-extremism programs. **Counter-extremist measures** are “*non-coercive attempts to reduce involvement in terrorism*” made by governments, individuals, and NGOs (Harris-Hogan et al. 2016 [6]). Another way to describe counterextremism measures is as a “hearts and minds” approach to change the behavior of potential extremists (Bleich 2010). The UK, as we discuss later in this chapter, has implemented *counter-extremist* initiatives since the early 2000s. This means that the country put in place programs to work with local communities in order to spot radicalization and prevent terrorism resulting from it. In 2011, the United States published its first policy guide related to CVE, entitled Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States (see The White House 2011). Through this plan, the government intended to network community members with police and local authorities in an effort to make communities more aware of terrorist radicalization and to find collaborative ways to stop it. In 2014, Boston, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles became pilot cities in which to test the new CVE model.

CVE programs worldwide typically fail to account for gender (Koppell 2015; but see examples in the second half of this chapter), and the United States’ program is no different. The aforementioned 2011 policy does not include gender nor does a more recent government report from 2017 (United States Government Accountability Office 2017). Although actions under the Clinton State Department and USAID furthered CVE abroad (see Satterthwaite and Huckerby 2013), we find no overwhelming evidence of a gender approach by government to be used within the US to stop home-grown terrorism (but see NGO programs to stop ISIS radicalization in Minnesota, as discussed in Chap. 6). One exception is the pilot program from Los Angeles that sought “engagement efforts with women” though little is known about said engagement (Department of Homeland Security 2015 [10]). The Trump Administration does not appear to be adding a strong gender component to counterterrorism measures, including CVE programs. Most news surrounding Trump’s perspective on CVE suggest that he wants to decrease funding for it and he wants to focus it squarely on terrorism perpetrated by radicalized Muslims (as opposed to applying it right-wing terrorism as well). Lacking resources, government officials are unlikely to add strong gender components to existing CVE programs, and focusing exclusively on Muslim radicalization only exacerbates the already bad reputation of CVE programs. In many countries, CVE is critiqued for its penchant to profile Muslims and use government-community relations as a way to gather intelligence on Muslims (Patel et al. 2017; American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee 2015). The racist implications for Muslim women are significant during Trump’s presidency. Muslim women in America already are targeted for harassment due to their clothing choices (see Chap. 5), and

narratives that pose ordinary Muslims as dangerous only increase the possibility for harassment. Moreover, failing to solicit women's participation in counterterrorism policy not only does not stop said discrimination, but it also does not acknowledge the agency of women who could combat discrimination.

### ***Women Reducing Extremism Worldwide: Soft Measures Predicated on Women's Private Lives***

As discussed in Chaps. 4 and 5, women's voices often are silenced during a country's reconstruction after political violence. Some international actors, like the United Nations, advocate for a larger role for women in post-conflict contexts, and many also suggest that women could be key to stopping violence before it starts. Some believe that if authorities, elites, and society listen to women and fully incorporate them into the fight against radicalization, fewer at-risk persons will become terrorists and terrorist attacks will be stymied. As we explain below, many countries and NGOs view women as essential to counterextremism policies (see definition above). Whereas the Prevent program in the UK emphasizes improving women's rights and harnessing the role of mothers, Morocco's Murshidat program stresses how women can moderate interpretations of Islam. We also examine below how counter-extremism programs are framed by way of motherhood, or what we earlier termed "feminine frames" (see Chap. 6). Finally, in this subsection, we argue that some view clothing bans on Muslim women as a way to counter extremism.

### ***State Counter-Extremism: Prevent in the United Kingdom***

Following September 11, 2001, the United Kingdom's counterterrorism was formulated as a four-part strategy. The government emphasized:

1. Preparation for attacks
2. Protection of the public
3. Pursuit of attackers
4. Prevention of radicalization

The fourth strategy and the policy actions that accompany it are referred to as Prevent. The Prevent strategy was articulated in 2003, it was put into action in 2007, and it experienced a significant revision in 2011 (Awan 2012). It is still being used and debated in current politics, especially considering recent terrorist attacks in the country in 2016 and 2017. The goal of the policy is to stop radicalization through counter-extremism work. Although Prevent applies to all types of radicalization, including radicalization by the far-right, it is most associated with countering Al Qaeda ideology and, most recently, ISIS. Prevent seeks to influence young people, and in large part young Muslims.



Prevent manifests itself in multiple policy actions. Education against extremism is intended to influence young people in the education system; and societal groups, including women's groups, have received funding to host seminars, such as training on internet use and how to spot radicalization online. Prevent seeks to re-envision Islam as a moderate faith, instead of an extremist one associated with political jihad and terrorism, and to integrate Muslims into community life in the UK (Rashid 2016). To do so, for example, the program funds the travel of moderate Islamic scholars from around the world to the UK to meet with Muslim youth (Bleich 2014). Prevent also includes a surveillance component. Prevent asks social service workers, "faith leaders, teachers, doctors," etc. to build relationships with the authorities so that they can report on persons who seem vulnerable to extremism or who appear to be on the path toward radicalization (BBC Reality Check 2017 [np]). Reports from the UK also claim that, through Prevent, university students have had their emails monitored (Pells 2017).

Due to the program's surveillance component, it has come under extreme scrutiny from Muslim communities, human rights experts, and many in the general public. Because the program points mainly to the Muslim faith as a factor leading to radicalization, and thus wishes to advance a moderate version of Islam on the UK Muslim population, it is essentially indicting an entire community for how they worship and marking them as an essentialized "other" – even when not all UK Muslims ascribe to fundamentalist Islam, and not all those who are conservative adherents are violent in their approach (Rashid 2016; Awan 2012; Rashid 2014). Moreover, young people feel like targets of the state, and it is possible that their growing degree of alienation might actually lead them to radicalization (Gayle 2016). Furthermore, Awan (2012) reports that the program has "undermined trust between the police and [the] Muslim community" [1161]. As a result, some of the UK's Muslim population believes the program is "toxic" to their community (Graham 2017 [np]). Finally, the public has critiqued Prevent as terrorist events continue to occur in recent years. The question left in many citizens' minds is why the program did not identify recent terrorists, such as Salman Abed who attacked the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester (see Chap. 5), and intervene before attacks were launched.

In the remaining paragraphs of this subsection, we discuss Prevent initiatives specifically involving women. These examples demonstrate that Prevent sees women as a conduit for moderate Muslim beliefs and as good influences on their families. A prominent theme in the Prevent program is that Muslim women are more "mainstream" than Muslim men (Rashid 2016). Women are the heart of the family and community, and women are therefore capable of building resilient communities (CHRGJ 2012). Resilient here means a community that resists radicalism and is integrated into national life; thus, women are gatekeepers for swaying their communities toward moderate beliefs (CHRGJ 2012). Women's intended role in communities under Prevent includes acting as mothers who influence their children's behavior. Prevent engages women "based on the fact that women have a major role in their families and are most likely to spot and influence changes in their children's behavior" leading to terrorist involvement (CHRGJ 2012 [5]).

Why exactly women should be considered moderate actors compared to men is unclear; yet, it can be assumed that many actors in policy conversations surrounding Prevent do not expect women to be radicalized toward terrorism (Rashid 2016). Women are encouraged to harness and strengthen their moderate leanings through religious empowerment and familiarity with moderate religious principles. For example, at one point, from 2008 to 2010, the UK government established a National Muslim Women's Advisory Group (NMWAG) (CHRGJ 2012 [5]). The NMWAG was to be a forum to discuss hot button issues like forced marriages and honor crimes as well as women's access to mosques (Department for Communities and Local Government). Some women did not feel empowered by the group. In fact, the NMWAG's chair resigned in 2010, stating that the group was a "political fad" and a "tick box" exercise on the part of the government. She argued, it "had failed to help Muslim women in the way ministers promised" (Taylor 2010 [np]; see also Ahmad 2017).

Despite Prevent's confidence in women's ability to influence communities, the policy is undergirded by the trope of the "oppressed Muslim woman" (Rashid 2014 [590]). In Chap. 5, we discussed how many white feminists and actors in the West see Muslim women as helpless and in need of saving (see also Ahmad 2017). In a similar way, Prevent assumes that due to misogyny in Muslim communities, women do not have voice in their communities and they need to be empowered to speak out. Increased voice on the part of women serves the government's aims in at least two ways: (1) Prevent wants women to speak out when they are in the position to inform authorities about terrorist threats and (2) the empowerment of women can serve as a way to counter extremist Islam that disallows women's voices.

As mentioned above, critiques of Prevent are rampant. The gender critique is troublesome as well. First, the program only recognizes women's agency on account of their role in the community – and not as agents of their own with personal political preferences to pursue. Second, the focus of Prevent is not on female radicalization. This belies current events in which women have joined ISIS, and it casts women in an essentialist light as incapable of being terrorists themselves. Finally, outreach from Prevent to women suggests a spying component. An expectation exists that women, and particularly mothers, are to report information to local authorities. This makes some Muslim women feel "used" by the state, and this sentiment is particularly troublesome considering that these same women may be subjected to Islamophobic harassment and have not yet seen the state respond in kind to their ill treatment in society (UK Department for Communities and Local Government 2010 [130]).

Despite significant critiques, advocates of the program remain. Sarah Khan, a Muslim woman leading counter-extremism measures through her NGO, Inspire, argues that anti-Prevent voices silence those in the Muslim community who strongly support counter-extremism measures (Khan 2016b). One of Khan's NGO programs, an educational seminar, was financed by Prevent, and she reports that many women appreciated the program because they are gravely concerned about the radicalization of children and they want solutions (Khan 2016a).

### *State Counter Extremism: Morocco's Murshidat and Religion*

Moroccan policies that train and promote women clergy are another example of counter extremism measures. A small group of women preachers who are tasked with spreading a moderate and tolerant version of Islam make up what is called the Murshidat. In May 2005, Moroccan King Mohammad VI appointed 104 women to religious scholar positions (Hoover 2015). A year later, the inaugural class of the Murshidat program graduated (El Haitami 2012). King Mohammad VI instituted the Murshidat program to combat terrorism; however, he also wanted the state, through this program, “to achieve greater equality between men and women” (Hoover 2015 [1]).

Morocco is no stranger to acts of terrorism. In 2003, the predominantly Muslim nation experienced the deadliest attacks in its history. Suicide bombers led a string of explosions in Casablanca that killed over 40 people and injured around 100 (BBC 2003). Less than 10 years later, in 2011, terror struck the city of Marrakesh, this time killing at least 15 and injuring 20 (BBC 2011). These bombings shook the nation and created unrest among the public.

After the 2003 terrorist attack, King Mohammed VI responded by forming an organization of women preachers who are sent across the country—sometimes far from their homes and families—to promote moderate Islam. According to one preacher, the main role of Murshidat is to combat extreme ideas among youths, using dialogue and simplified ideas to explain the dangers of violence and terrorism” (Al-Ashraf 2016 [np]). The program emphasizes counter-extremism work in remote areas of the country where recruitment for terrorists is traditionally high (El Haitami 2012). Thus, the preachers infiltrate breeding grounds for ISIS troops, and arguably they have contributed to a reduction in the number of terrorist recruits. Though recruitment hinges on many factors, according to a report by The New Arab, recruitment in 2016 was down 85% per month and it is possible that the counter-extremism actions of Murshidat contributed to this decrease (Al-Ashraf 2016). The Murshidat’s success has been twofold, as they have taught “a moderate version of religion to Moroccan men and women” and have “[combated] illiteracy among women” (Al-Ashraf 2016 [np]).

Therefore, the Murshidat program is viewed not only as a success in the fight against terrorism, but also as a way to transform the role of women. If women are transformed, it is believed that Islam will be altered for the better. The Murshidat have become religious authorities and community leaders. The women also work at prisons, hospitals, orphanages, schools, and nursing homes (El Haitami 2012), and they have become an important foundation for community activities and inclusivity. As effective communicators and leaders, they promote Islam as a peaceful faith. Traditionally, Islam has segregated religious space between women and men (Salime 2011). Moroccan women, therefore, have not served in many prominent religious leadership roles to date. The creation of the Murshidat, on the other hand, shows that the king and state are actively looking to educate women and change the stereotype that women cannot religiously influence men.

To enhance the lives of Moroccan women specifically, the Murshidat preachers offer counseling sessions for women (El Haitami 2012). These sessions focus on women's roles in the home as mothers. The male counterparts of the Murshidat, the Murshid, cannot reach this demographic. Hence, these counseling sessions are important for establishing relationships and building stronger sub-communities within society (Hoover 2015). The Murshidat also teach women's classes about the Koran at mosques. According to Meriem El Haitami, it is widely understood that the increased emphasis on femininity, specifically on women as emotional, sentimental, and motherly, will cultivate positive images of the Islamic faith (El Haitami 2012). It is also believed that this increase of femininity will, in return, decrease "invalid beliefs" in the Moroccan Islamic culture, specifically beliefs affiliated with radical and extremist tendencies (Hoover 2015). Through the counseling sessions women are able to practice an empowering version of Muslim femininity rather than one based on subordination (Hoover 2015).

The response of many men to the Murshidat's activities is positive. For example, Mohamed Elatife, the husband of a Murshida, claims he considers his wife's work as "serving her country." (PBS 2015 [np]). Taking pride in her accomplishments, he explained that many people within Morocco still think that a woman's place is in the home; yet, he accepts the new opportunities available for women because of how much society is changing. Moreover, El Haitami recalls (2012 [235]) a male preacher who said he would counter "any injustice that may jeopardize the legitimate role of women" in religion.

Despite the program's perceived successes, it must be noted that the existence of Murshidat does not signal full equality for women in Morocco. The Murshidat are not fully equipped to eliminate gender oppression; they are still working under the state's ultimate power – the patriarchal figure of the king (Hoover 2015). Furthermore, the program is less premised on strict equality between the sexes, but rather on the essentialist assumption of femininity that women offer something distinct from what men offer to Islam. What is more, though the program is very selective, Murshidat women do not receive as rigorous training in the Koran as men (El Haitami 2012), and they are prohibited from leading prayers and giving sermons (El-Katiri 2013). It is also questionable whether all women can follow the path to become imams because of their responsibilities to the family unit. Moroccan women's duties as mothers and wives limit them in power *vis-à-vis* their husbands and in society; however, it should be noted that women in the Murshidat program can be married and have children.

### ***Counter-Extremism Analysis: Framing Women as Mothers***

As we have seen in the above examples of counterterrorism, women are understood as a way to prevent extremism because they are understood as being more mainstream in their interpretations of Islam and because they are at the heart of their

families and communities. In this section, we further explore the motherhood frame as it relates to counter-extremism. Recall from Chap. 8, frames are a way in which media or other public actors present reality. A feminine gender frame is a social interpretation of gender that accentuates women's private lives, and specifically a private lives frame emphasizes women's status as wives or mothers.

Another counter-extremism case, in which we see a feminine frame, regards the Marshall Institute, which is a nonprofit seeking to provide "rigorous, clearly written and unbiased technical analyses on a range of public policy issues" (George C. Marshall Institute 2013 [np]). The Marshall Institute is particularly known for its analysis of defense policy, and it led a counterterrorism workshop in 2017 in Germany, with an attendance of 60 counterterrorism specialists from 44 countries. A representative from Sierra Leone in attendance explained that the Marshall Center's role was crucial in developing good counterterrorism practices in her home country. The workshop aimed to look at the role women have to play in fighting terrorism, and, although the workshop report states that there is "no single pathway to engaging females more effectively in the fight against terrorism," (Marshall Center Program on Terrorism and Security Studies 2016 [1]) it largely suggests women's roles embody the private lives frame. For example, the workshop's final report concluded:

"Mothers are uniquely positioned to be able to identify processes of radicalization at an early stage in their families...Female community liaison officers or female-specific hotlines for women concerned about radicalization in their family/community might also be used to provide support and increase reporting to police" (Marshall Center Program on Terrorism and Security Studies 2016 [2])

A video regarding the workshop and posted on the center's YouTube page also reiterates the role of mothers. U.S. Army Colonel Ken Cole, Deputy Director of Marshall's Program on Terrorism and Security Studies, expresses, "There's nothing more powerful than the role of mothers, wives, and sisters embedded in society and when you think about their influence at all levels of society we really wanted to spend some time looking at the proactive approach that that element of society can contribute to counterterrorism before it happens" (George C. Marshall Institute 2017 [np]).

The Marshall Institute is not the only nonprofit that frames women's role in countering extremism as a feminine one. The German Institute for Radicalization and Deradicalization Studies (GIRDS) is a "research and network initiative focusing solely on the theory and practice of de-radicalization and counter-radicalization." (GIRDS 2017 [np]). Daniel Koehler, director of the network, explains that "family and close friends" are gatekeepers in the fight against radicalization, and the institute's project, a network of women called Mothers for Life, stresses the importance of "parents" in navigating a loved one whom ISIS has influenced. The network exists to assist women whose children have left to fight with ISIS as well as women whose husbands have been radicalized. Nevertheless, the name and central goal of the program is on mothers and they are assumed to be at the heart of preventing extremism. As Koehler explains, "Mothers are essential gatekeepers. Most of the mothers I have worked with who have lost their children to ISIS or other terrorist

groups have noticed something changing about their child but were mostly alone without any outside help” (Koehler 2017 [np]). In an effort to assist mothers, the network provides counselors that can help women conduct risk analyses regarding their loved one’s motives and actions and can liaise with law enforcement when the mother wants to take the matter to authorities.

The aforementioned Marshall Center workshop report also discusses the importance of the SAVE (Sisters Against Violent Extremism) program, a program of Women Without Borders that we discussed in Chap. 6. Women without Borders was founded in 2002, and its global campaign to target extremism, SAVE, began in 2008. The campaign is the first of its kind and, according to its leadership, it is feminist in nature because it focuses on women’s agency in response to terrorism (Personal Communication 2012). Nevertheless, motherhood is a huge emphasis of the program. An article by two leaders of the program best illustrates the intersection the campaign occupies between casting women as mothers (i.e., feminine frame) and emphasizing their agency (i.e., feminist frame). The article is called “Mothers Against Terrorism: Families are Best Placed to Address Radicalization Before it Escalates into Violence,” and we briefly review it here in order to demonstrate how mothers are seen as essential to counterterrorism.

Dr. Edit Schlaffer and Dr. Ulrich Kropiunigg begin the article by explaining how parents are primed to notice changes in their children’s behavior that may indicate radicalization. Though parents might overlook warning signs of extremism as typical adolescent rebellion or malaise, experts have studied psychological motivations to extremism and, if properly equipped, parents could become aware of changes via family settings. That said, the authors turn their attention especially toward mothers. They do so, as they argue, because mothers are able to “pre-empt and respond to radical influences” (Schlaffer and Kropiunigg 2015 [22]). They pre-empt radicalization by developing their children’s “resiliency” during their “early years,” and they are responders when they are the “first to recognize and address signs of distress such as anger, anxiety and withdrawal” in their children [20–22]. Schlaffer and Kropiunigg assert that counterterrorism strategies historically utilize a punishment framework as a deterrent to extremism rather than utilizing the “unique insights” of mothers who can act “as a buffer between radical influences and those targeted” [20].

In their role as a buffer, parents, and particularly mothers, are believed to stymie terrorism in practical ways. Given that terrorist recruitment often occurs online, mothers can gain computer skills and monitor their children’s internet use (Ní Aoláin 2015; Schlaffer and Kropiunigg 2015). Though parents may experience backlash and more intense radicalization from their children, some consider taking away children’s passports to prevent travel to conflict zones (Ioffe and Kassie 2015). A more relational approach of knowing one’s child better and communicating more often allows families the space to recognize a child’s intensifying religious beliefs and growing opinions about Syria or other areas in which terrorists are active (Ní Aoláin 2015). If a parent continues to communicate with a child who has fled to a conflict zone, s/he can “exert emotional and social pressure on the adult child to return home” (Ní Aoláin 2015).



**Table 10.3** Percentage of Mothers who Trust and Turn to Given People or Institutions to Provide Support

People or Institution	Percent
Other Mothers	94
Fathers	91
Other Relatives	81
Teachers	79
Community Organizations	61
Religious Leaders	58
Police	39
International Organizations	36
Army	35
Local Government	34
National Government	29

The SAVE program, Mothers School (MS), builds on the relational approach by using curriculum to further women’s self-esteem, parenting skills, and ability to spot indications of radicalization (Schlaffer and Kropiunigg 2015 [24]). This program was developed after an extensive research study, in which the organization interviewed two hundred mothers from Nigeria, Pakistan, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine. Key conclusions arising from the study include a lack of trust in state institutions and a desire to network with other mothers to communicate about radicalization. The fact that mothers trust other mothers as a way to reform radicalizing children is important to emphasize. The data in Table 10.3 reproduces the findings of the SAVE research. It shows that contributions by mothers to counterterrorism efforts will not coalesce with state actions unless a bridge between the state and individual women exists. When asked, “where do mothers turn when they have concerns about their children’s safety and well-being? What people or institutions do they trust to provide support?,” mothers reply that they do not turn to the national government but rather to other mothers, relatives, and the community. This means that in order to tap the insights of mothers the state must ensure a policy model in which women can talk to one another and other intermediaries, such as counselors, who can help women navigate interactions with the authorities.

While SAVE’s Mothers’ School and Mothers for Life network is doing important work, focusing on women’s private lives, and particularly motherhood, in relation to counterterrorism comes with distinct hazards. We review four criticisms of programs that tap motherhood as a way to stop extremism. The first criticism relates to the private lives frame discussed above. The frame is appealing enough to be invoked by counterterrorism organizations and the state as well as terrorists themselves. In fact, terrorists recruit women on the basis of “gender-specific appeals” to their private lives (Ní Aoláin 2015), and they too can ask mothers to further certain ideologies, but, in their case, extremist ideologies. Second, we saw above that women do not trust authorities such as the police and local and national governments. As governments, or organizations liaising with governments, continue to use motherhood for the state’s ends, it is possible for distrust, anger, and fear to grow more intense. One scenario in particular could elicit this response. In the case of the UK, some mothers have cooperated with the state in an effort to help their children, only to find that the state issued tough prison sentences to the children (Ní Aoláin 2015).

Mothers could also feel targeted by the racial profiling of their children. In 2015, a 4-year old boy drew a picture of a cucumber at school and mispronounced the word cucumber to his preschool teacher. The teacher heard him say “cooker bomb,” which led the family to be contacted by counter-extremism agents from the Prevent Program. These sorts of actions alienate the Muslim community from authorities, and the mother in question felt “distracted by the experience” (Quinn 2016 [np]). Mothers may also come to fear the state when they are regarded as possible extremists and suspects and/or when they are subject to house searches.

A third critique of the motherhood policies and programs hinges on women’s power and position within their communities. Not all actors in local communities, whether in Europe or in countries with Muslim-majority populations, will agree it is the right response to cooperate with outside actors such as national authorities or international organizations. In fact, some community members might prefer the ideology of extremists. In this case, women risk alienating themselves from their families and communities as they expose extremists and counter their efforts. It may also be the case that becoming networked with other women, acting in a political way, and leaving the home sphere will be considered unacceptable for women (Ní Aoláin 2015). Considering that women in many societies and local communities have less power and status *vis à vis* men, the state and nonprofits who ask mothers to collaborate could be putting the women at a security risk (Giscard d’Estaing 2017).

The final argument against mothers’ programs relates to women’s agency. Recall that the Marshall Institute sought to highlight the role women have to play in fighting terrorism. This chapter has shown that there are many ways for women to be involved in counterterrorism; therefore, it is limiting to emphasize women’s agency as almost exclusively tied to their role as mothers. We must question why “women are not participants at levels of decision-making, design, and implementation policies” (Giscard d’Estaing 2017 [108]). In fact, it could be argued that prevention of terrorism is a state responsibility much larger than any given mother or collective of mothers. If the state asks women to practice agency as mothers, it is not only subtly excluding them from other counterterrorism roles but also offloading security policy onto women (Giscard d’Estaing 2017 [107]). In short, scholars need to ask if women are a part of the policymaking or just subject to the state’s and to NGO programs.

Before concluding this section, it is important to recall that motherhood can be paired with agency. We especially want to recall examples from Chaps. 6 and 7, respectively about women’s movement groups and memory politics. These chapters demonstrated that women mobilize as mothers and make great political contributions when doing so. This too is true of mothers involved in counter-extremism work. Even with a controversial program like Prevent, some women report personal benefits to participation.

### ***Counter-Extremism through Clothing Bans***

Although this chapter does not provide ample space to debate religious dress for women nor a complete comparative analysis of bans on religious dress and iconography, it is important to recognize that restrictions on clothing, such as banning

the burqa, serve as a rudimentary type of counter-extremism. We argue here that discourses surrounding bans on religious dress point to eliminating terrorism, yet bans end up motivating terrorism far more than stopping it. Among the different kinds of dress that have been banned are: the hijab, which is a headscarf worn with the face showing; the burqa that covers the entire face and body with a crocheted mesh grill over the eyes; and the niqab, a full-face covering which leaves a small slit for the eyes.

Morocco's ban of the burqa was based on the claim that religious coverings can be used to facilitate crime, as it has been reported that criminals wear coverings when committing thefts (Ennaji 2017). Religious coverings arguably become an even greater threat to public order if they are used to veil terrorists committing terrorism or escaping after a terrorist attempt. This was up for debate in the United Kingdom in regard to the actions of Yassin Omar in 2005 (BBC 2007). Security cameras show Omar fleeing London in a burqa after he made an attempt to bomb public transportation. Thus, restricting religious dress may be seen as a way to stop the physical guise of terrorism.

In addition to being a disguise, some consider religious coverings to be a symbol of a person's radicalized beliefs. Although many religious adherents who are not terrorists wear religious clothing, some government officials have interpreted clothing as a sign of terrorism. In its conflict against militant Muslim Uyghurs in the Xinjiang region, authorities in China have "restrict[ed] religious practices, censor[ed] online speeches, and ban[ned] attire or beards perceived to be extremist" (Zhoi 2017 [9]). The capital of Xinjiang, Urumqi City, has banned burqas in public places. A similar reaction occurred in France regarding burkinis, a full coverage swimsuit worn in beach towns. During summer of 2016, mere months after the Nice terrorist attack, women were fined for wearing burkinis on some French beaches. A 30-year-old Muslim living in France, Feiza Ben Mohamed, explained her interpretation of the ban: "When you see someone wearing hijab, it means that she is Muslim. But for the mayor of Cannes, if you are wearing a burkini, it means that you are a part of a radicalized organization" (Falk 2016 [np]). In other words, some authorities may see bans on religious clothing as a way for the government to shut down radicalized individuals and to respond to previous attacks by radicalized Muslims. Bans may also seem like a progressive response to fundamentalist religious perspectives. In fact, "progressive women's organizations [in Morocco] argue that the ban is justified because the burqa oppresses women. Nouzha Skalli, a former Minister for Family and Social Development, welcomed the ban and described it as 'an important step in the fight against religious extremism'" (Ennaji 2017 [np]). Or, it may be the case that banning religious dress provides a "smokescreen" for government leaders who want to give the impression of fighting extremism, which is quite complex in and of itself. A ban is a fairly simple way to signal to the public a hardline response to terrorism – even when more hardline strategies are not in place (Britton 2016; Falk 2016).

Dr. Tawfik Hamid, an author and former militant, proposes a cultural, collective interpretation of religious dress, namely that as religious dress becomes more apparent in Muslim societies, a growth in Islamism associated with hardline Salafism and terrorism can be noticed. His perspective suggests that religious dress is a slippery slope toward terrorism; thus, religious dress should be limited. His opinion appeared in a document published by the US military, though it does not represent

official US policy. He claims the hijab contributes to a “passive terrorism,” or the moment when extremists dominate and “moderate segments of the population decline to speak against or actively resist terrorism” (Hamid 2015 [72]). Thus, the predominance of the hijab is part of a cycle moving toward terrorism, even as he admits “an individual wearing the hijab can be the best person ever” (Bain 2016 [np]).

Despite some politicians’ support of bans as a way to hinder extremism, it actually can be argued that religious bans lead to terrorism because they serve as a recruitment tool (Taylor 2016). When women cannot wear the religious dress they prefer, they may choose to stay home. When they are further isolated, it is possible that they hold disdain for their country of residence and cling more fully to fundamentalist, and possibly, violent philosophies. A professor in London, Sara Silvestri, explains:

“Al Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State thrive every time Western countries give them ammunition to say that the West is discriminating or stigmatizing Muslims...the effect of these laws is that Muslims feel marginalized and in turn, the feeling of being unwelcome impacts their ability and willingness to integrate into society, [and that] can cause withdrawal and lead to engagement with radical groups” (qtd. in Britton 2016 [np])

### *Gender and De-Radicalization Policies*

Many countries around the world have de-radicalization programs, including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the U.S. **Deradicalization** is the *process of changing an individual’s belief system, rejecting the extremist ideology, and embracing mainstream values* (Rabasa 2011, xiii). Deradicalization programs typically include reeducation components as well as psychological support services. The Saudi deradicalization program, dating from 2004, is arguably the most well-known of all countries’ programs because it is so well funded and because it gives intensive after-care attention to program graduates. It is geared to men; thus, it implicitly ignores women’s radicalization and their potential deradicalization. Therefore, we start by reviewing the Saudi program as a way to contrast it to other countries with programs with components relevant to women.

The central message of the Saudi government is that violence cannot be used to effect change; thus, extremist religion should be cast aside as illegitimate from authentic Islam (Boucek 2008). To convince terrorists of this message, the government offers radicals counseling sessions and re-educates them through religious debates. After successful completion of the rehabilitation process, prisoners are transferred to a halfway house. Here, they are exposed to entertainment, teamwork activities, and art therapy. The government requires the graduates to meet regularly with counselors and clerics, and the graduates are required to establish families, i.e., to get married *and* have children. The government even offers funds for the graduates’ weddings and new apartments. To prevent recidivism, family members and close friends are encouraged to monitor the former prisoners and prisoners stay in contact with one another so that they have a solid social network with which they can counter influences from radical organizations (Ezzarqui 2010). Though some observers believe the Saudi program is too lenient, soft, and kind to terrorists (Eikenberry et al. 2016), proponents cite that the program’s recidivism is low.

According to Saudi officials, there were only 35 recorded cases of recidivism in November 2007, which equates to less than 2% of prisoners (Casptack 2015). More recent figures suggest that “as many as 10 to 20% of those released may return to illicit activity” (Porges 2010 [np]).

The Saudi program pertains to women in only slight ways. First, official claims say that no women are being held in prisons nor are they participating in rehabilitation programs. In 2008, it was revealed that a couple women participated in programs similar to those of men; however, these were conducted in the home with family members as opposed to prisons. It is important to note that many people think that the women who are incarcerated for extremism are only guilty because they are accomplices to their husbands. Second, the program views women as part of marriages to men who are radicals. While men are in the program, their wives get to visit once a month. Polygamy is acceptable as well, for if a man has four wives, he would see at least one wife once a week (Hubbard 2016). To encourage men to marry and reintegrate into society, the program also assists men in finding wives (Lankford and Gillespie 2011). Therefore, women are appendages of men on their journey to recovery rather than being suitable candidates for the program themselves.

Indonesia more significantly involves women in the deradicalization process. The nature of the Indonesian deradicalization program is similar: it emphasizes reeducation and reintegration into one’s community. Like Saudi Arabia, the program seeks to establish relationships between participants and their families (Sukabdi 2015). Though Indonesia traditionally focused on men with regards to deradicalization, as of 2015 the country began a program entitled, Entrepreneurship and Proselytization Empowerment Program, which seeks to train and counsel wives of imprisoned terrorists (Varagur 2017). A former terrorist, who is now an advisor for the government, explains the intention of the program to economically and psychologically prepare women to reunite with their husbands. He states, “We need these women to be part of counterterrorism because they’re the missing link in the rehabilitation equation...When militant jihadists return from jail, we need another person in their lives to be a positive force” (Varagur 2017 [np]). It is believed that wives need to be a strong presence *vis à vis* their released husbands, and they need to be empowered because their families face stigma due to their husbands’ actions.

Governments around the world historically have not paid attention to deradicalization programs for women who are themselves terrorists (OSCE Secretariat 2013). In fact, in 2017, Ambassador Melanne Verveer, the first U.S. Ambassador for Global Women’s Issues (2009–2013), declared the deradicalization of women as “the ‘issue of our times’ that will require efforts on the part of governments, academia, and civil society to solve” (Niguidula 2017 [np]). Given the lack of programs for women, we highlight here the case of France wherein a woman funded by the French government, Dounia Bouzar, has been working to influence young people, and particularly young girls lured by ISIS. An anthropologist given the nickname “Madame Deradicalization” by the press, Bouzar works through her Center for the Prevention of Sectarian Trends Linked to Islam. According to The New York Times, in 2015, “the Center de-radicalized 234 individuals in their teens and 20s who were preparing

their departure for Syria or Iraq or were arrested at the border, after their parents alerted authorities. Sixty-six percent were girls, and of those the majority were aged between 12 and 20” (Symons 2016 [n]). Often described in both English and French language media as a “51 year old grandmother,” Bouzar focuses on deradicalization techniques that remind participants of emotions, sounds, and smells associated with their childhood memories. The goal is to “reawaken the unconscious of the child” so that the participant becomes an individual again and can see themselves apart from the terrorist group (Symons 2016 [np]).

Bouzar was chosen by the government to embark upon this program, but in 2016 she walked away from the French government in protest after it pursued a policy of detainment of individuals based upon their country of origin. She was also offended by the government’s desire to “strip dual national terror convicts of their French nationality” (Jacinto 2017 [np]). Moreover, she disapproves of the government’s restrictions on religious dress, and believes the French state acts in a way that essentializes Muslims. Because of her support of religious dress, many in France critique her. She is also critiqued for the amount of government funds spent on her program, which some doubt is very efficacious. As such, she has become a symbol for the failing French efforts at deradicalization. In a tongue and cheek article, French media described her as “priestess” of deradicalization.

## Conclusion

This chapter conveys that women are not present in counterterrorism in the same ways or to the same extent as men. In terms of employment in counterterrorism positions, women are less likely to be police, intelligence officers, and military personnel on the front lines of fighting terrorism. This means there is a descriptive representation gap for women in counterterrorism.

When women are called upon in counterterrorism programs, they are expected to harness feminine skills or their identities as mothers. Women in FETs are not only essential in the US military because they are women and can relate to women, but also because their gender identity does not convey the typical masculinity of the military that threatens local populations. Instead of the military changing its bro-culture to better appeal to local populations abroad and women integrating into the forces, it is up to women to either mimic masculinity to match the profile of the special forces and/or specifically convey womanhood in order to be considered an add-on to special forces missions as parts of FETs. Ordinary women who are members of the public, in various countries, also are expected to channel motherhood and moderation to fight back against terrorism. Counter-extremism programs assume that women can better know their families and communities and, thus, they can provide critical intelligence to police and/or stop radicalization of the youth. On the one hand, some women do want to network with other women for these purposes, *as mothers*. However, others do not and may feel like the state is pushing them to be informants and turn on their communities.



We consider these findings to demonstrate an essentialism embedded in counterterrorism. Women are seen as women, with given feminine traits, and their diversity of political opinions and types of political participation are not recognized. Moreover, the chapter conveys that counterterrorism polices are often raced. By this we mean, that Muslims are profiled and targeted by CVE as well as hard policy tactics. Intersectionality plays a role here; specifically, being Muslim and a woman means counterterrorism approaches will probably render one as helpless and in need of a feminist intervention.

We also find that women are rarely identified as possible terrorists (see Sjöberg and Gentry 2016). As per Prevent in the UK, women are to be considered moderates. In Morocco, women are seen as a way to soften Islam. With an assumed profile of moderation and softness, states fail to see women as potential threats. Even after being caught by authorities, deradicalization policies in some countries refuse to work with radicalized women. The assumption of softness carries through to the example of FETs and mothers who are organized to stop terrorism. Once again, this is essentialism. It is unrealistic to consider all women as having the same traits as they relate to terrorism. Therefore, as we have found in other chapters of this book, due to masculine expectations of terrorists and those who counter them, women occupy a strange position of being absent but at the same time ever present as feminine actors who stand in contrast to men.

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# Chapter 11

## Conclusions



### Summarizing the Findings

The story of the Abbottabad raid opened our gaze to the variety of ways in which political violence intersects with gender. Through Amal Ahmed al-Sadah's story, we begin to understand how gender influences who is considered a violent agent, a victim, and a responder in a world wrought with terror. We see how political violence influences and is shaped by political memory and counterterrorism, all the while being shaped by gender, and particularly notions of hegemonic masculinity. To this end, this book explored a gendered interpretation of political violence, describing in particular the ways in which women are present (and/or perceived as absent) in contexts involving political violence, and analyzing what gender assumptions, identities, and frames women face, express, and act upon regarding political violence. We explored how notions of gender permeate all aspects of political violence—from whom we see as aggressors, to how we conceptualize victimhood, to how we memorialize violence and evaluate politicians and policies as acceptable. These notions in turn shape the degree to which we ascribe agency to women in situations involving political violence.

The first part of the book dealt with perpetrators of violence and discussed women as terrorists, guerillas, genocidaires (Chap. 2), and suicide bombers (Chap. 3). Chapter 2 explored women as perpetrators of political violence with political agency to act upon their goals. Women's participation as terrorists, guerillas, and genocidaires showed the "dark" side of women's agency. Chapter 2 found that women are active fighters in "supporting" or "feminine" capacities related to political violence. In some groups, like ETA, women have advanced to leadership positions, while in other groups women are conceived as wives or as participants who are behind the scenes. Women often act with agency as perpetrators of violence; however, when they do, their actions clash with societal expectations of a "peaceful woman," thereby sometimes causing the media and the general public to see them as abhorrent or "lesser women". Chapter 3 looked specifically at women as suicide

bombers, a phenomenon that has historical precedence but is growing since the mid-2000s. While a suicide attack may serve as the ultimate act of political agency, we see that media often sensationalize these women's actions and treat them as even more abhorrent, sexually deprived, or as fallen mothers. Thus, although media and scholarship occasionally cast women as victims of men and of patriarchal, violent contexts, women are agents and can possibly be victims and agents at the same time. Ignoring women as combatants, or sensationalizing their participation, can be dangerous, because doing so allows "terrorists [to] reap tactical, operational, and strategic benefits" (Alexander 2016 [123]).

The second part of the book looked at victims of violence, exploring the gendered dynamics of genocide, gendercide, and rape as a weapon (Chap. 4) as well as issues related to women as targets of terrorism (Chap. 5). Chapter 4 detailed women as victims of violence, yet emphasized how some women regain agency after violence occurs. The chapter examined the concepts of genocide and gendercide and discussed women and men as victims. Chapter 4 covered rape in wartime, by which women's bodies have been used as battlefields. However, with gendercide, we pointed out that men typically are killed more so than women, and men are also victims of sexualized violence. Chapter 5 focused specifically on women and girls as particular targets of terrorism. We explored gendered reasons for this, attached to hegemonic masculinity as well as types of terrorism that particularly target women, including terrorism machista, acid terrorism, and narcoterrorism. In this chapter as well, we find women as survivors of violence, some of whom become activists on the world stage.

The third, and largest, part of the book dealt with responses to political violence, examining social movements (Chap. 6), political memory (Chap. 7), elites (Chap. 8), public opinion (Chap. 9), and counterterrorism (Chap. 10). Each of these chapters delved into questions of how gender intersected with political violence to create particular responses.

Chapter 6 discussed the relationship between social groups and political violence, examining the agency of women in movements advocating for peace, victims' rights, and alleged terrorists'/prisoners' rights. We found that women acting in movements are both feminists and non-feminists, and motherhood is often a unifying theme of their action. Other women more exclusively espouse feminism instead of motherhood, and they argue that patriarchy needs to be dismantled if violent extremism is to end.

Chapter 7 explored political memory and its relation to political violence. We asked how political memory is gendered and interrogated whether or not a feminist counter-memory related to political violence and terrorism can be constructed. The chapter concluded that while political violence is most often memorized through monuments, protests and other performative acts show the most promise for a feminist counter-memory. The cases throughout the chapter emphasized one of our major themes: that women are active in the context of terrorism, particularly as they work to construct political memory, which is itself always contested.

Chapter 8 examined women elites responding to political violence, and especially terrorism. We found that women elites respond to terrorism by advocating for

more women in counterterrorism roles and by emphasizing that stopping gender violence should be a priority of security forces, yet women tend to be descriptively absent from many of the positions that influence terrorism policymaking. In addition, elites were found to be gendered by the media in feminine ways while they themselves would describe their own agency in feminist *and* feminine ways.

Chapter 9 examined the intersection of terrorism, public opinion, and voting behavior as related to gender. We found that support for terrorism varies by sex, education, and location. Moreover, Chap. 9 highlighted how voters' gender expectations about security can cause them to prefer men to women as political candidates, as voters believe men will keep them "safe". This phenomenon is especially acute during times of heightened security, such as the time period following 9–11.

Finally, Chap. 10 explored counterterrorism from the perspective of gender. We looked at so-called hard and soft responses to counterterrorism and examined the extent to which women were present in leading said responses. We found that women are very much underrepresented in policing and the military, but that gendered reasons exist as to why a country might want women in these institutions. Particularly, it has been argued that women in the police and military can better respond to women in local communities, abroad and at home. Women are also heralded as key responders in terms of counter-extremism policies because of the gender assumption that they are mothers and are more moderate than men, and, thus, can steer men (brothers, sons, etc.) away from terrorism. In cases as diverse as the UK and Morocco, we find that these gender assumptions of motherhood buttress counter-extremism efforts.

## Revisiting the Book's Themes

In Chap. 1, we stated the five themes that guide the book:

1. We investigate the presence or absence of women in violent politics and discuss if/how women have agency and why they act in the way that they do.
2. We show how women's private lives as related to family and motherhood involve and position women in terrorism and genocide contexts, in terms of perpetrators of, victims of, *and* responders to terrorism.
3. We explain how political actors, the media, and women themselves claim women possess special feminine qualities like maternal identities, preferences for peace, and feminine appearances *because they are women*.
4. We report how women influence violent politics through the framework of feminist activism. By feminists, we mean those who advance women's status as well as fight the "political, social, and other power arrangements of domination and subordination on the basis of gender" (Beckwith 2000).
5. Because society, media, and women themselves understand gender and violence in various ways, we describe differences among women and between contexts in

order to convey the varied landscape of political violence, including responses to terrorism, public opinion, and public policies.

Table 11.1 explores these themes by chapter, showing how the themes emerged in relation to women as perpetrators of violence, victims/survivors of violence, as activists and political elites, and as the mass public responding to violence.

While this book investigated the way in which gender intersects with political violence, we stated at the outset that we privilege the stories and investigations of women throughout our analysis. That is, we acknowledge gender as a construct and we examine the impact of political violence on women, men, and gender fluid individuals; but, our research is most interested in understanding political violence as it relates to women. To that end, we focused on three broad questions in each chapter. In some chapters, certain questions occupied our inquiries more than others, but all three were important in our discovery.

1. Are women present (and/or perceived as absent) in political contexts involving political violence?
2. What is the gendered impact that war, genocide/state terror, and terrorism has on women and men?
3. How do women (and men) act in contexts of war, genocide/state terror, and terrorism (and, particularly, how do women deal with gender assumptions, express gender identities, and frame their actions regarding political violence encountered in their lives)?

We address some of the answers to these questions in the table above, but we reiterate here the most important findings related to these questions. First, this book brings to light the fact that women are very much present in contexts involving political violence, even if they do not always occupy the highest levels of leadership in relevant institutions and organizations. From genocide to guerilla warfare to suicide terrorism, from memory making to post-conflict healing to political responses, we see women involved in political violence. That said, societal expectations lead to the assumption that women are absent in situations of political violence, or that their presence is somehow noteworthy and extraordinary. This is reinforced by how the media treats issues of gender and political violence. Nevertheless, we stress that women's actions are not extraordinary but rather quite common and in need of further investigations.

Women, men, and gender fluid individuals are impacted by war, genocide, and terrorism. That said, victimization may take different forms. This is also due to societal expectations based on gender as well as notions of hegemonic masculinity that permeate all cultures. It is easier for the general public to accept women as victims rather than see them as agents of violence. Even so, we know that women are violent actors *and* men are more likely to be killed in gendercide situations and that both men and women (and non-heteronormative or fluid individuals as well) are sexually targeted during times of political violence. As we see in Chap. 5, however, sometimes women are particular targets of terror groups. This is also related to societal concepts of gender, because an attack on women, to some terrorist groups,



**Table 11.1** Review of themes expressed in each chapter

	Theme 1: Women's agency	Theme 2: Motherhood/private life	Theme 3: Motherhood/peace	Theme 4: Feminist activism	Theme 5: Variations and reactions
Chapter 2: Women as perpetrators of violence	Women have agency, but they are perpetrating violence. Thus, we must question if this is the type of agency we <i>want</i> them to have. Given the structure of society and government, violence may be the only form of agency they can pursue. Women are motivated to violent action for many of the same reasons as men. Thus, they are "terrorists, who happen to be women.	Women acting violently clashes with motherhood stereotypes. Gender constructions, construct femininity as passive; women are 'supposed' to be life givers not life takers. However, violent women often are portrayed as mothers or wives. As such, they are seen as deviant mothers or duped into terrorism for the love of a man or through sexual depravity.	Gender stereotypes consider women to be peaceful, but their participation in political violence challenges stereotypes. Thus, women who act violently, even with agency, are seen as deviant and broken more so than men.	Some women seek and find gender empowerment through participation in terrorist organizations and guerilla groups. However, most women in violent groups do not have feminist motivations and they take on feminine, supportive tasks.	Women, like men, have a variety of reasons for participation, some of them political and some of them idiosyncratic. Women terrorists may be thought of as violent perpetrators who simply happen to be women. But media often portray women as sexualized and/or bloodthirsty, thus overhyping their actions because they challenge gender stereotypes.
Chapter 3: Women as suicide bombers	As with Chap. 2, women suicide bombers act with agency, but we must question if this is the type of agency we want women to have or if this is the best way for them to reclaim agency? In some instances, women are forced by circumstances into roles as suicide terrorists. The media often reinforces this victim narrative.	When suicide bombers are mothers, the media interrogates her motives more so than we see with men bombers. Women bombers are also often portrayed as victims, being duped into bombing or undertaking suicide attacks for the "love of a man".	This is even more magnified for suicide bombers. Women are less suspected as suicide bombers precisely because we expect them to be peaceful and care for children.	This is less of a theme with suicide bombers. While women may engage in suicide terrorism completely of their own volition, it is rarely for feminist ideals. Although, they may do it to redeem themselves in the eyes of society.	Groups can manipulate notions of hegemonic masculinity to shame men into suicide bombing and terrorist actions by using women. In short, they call men out for having fights fought for them by women, thus challenging their masculinity and in turn motivating additional male recruits.

(continued)

**Table 11.1** (continued)

	Theme 1: Women's agency	Theme 2: Motherhood/private life	Theme 3: Motherhood/peace	Theme 4: Feminist activism	Theme 5: Variations and reactions
Chapter 4: Gendered victims of violence, genocide, and gendercide	<p>While women often are marked as "victims," some women reclaim agency and seek justice in post-conflict contexts. Victimization is an easy narrative for the media to use related to women, so this is often the narrative most associated with women and political violence.</p>	<p>Not as prominent, although themes of motherhood and reproduction come up in some gendercides and the use of rape as a weapon of war.</p>	<p>Not as prominent,</p>	<p>Some women reclaim agency through feminist activism.</p>	<p>Some women will never find justice and closure, but other women reject the label "victim" and seek empowerment. Men are more likely to be the victims of gendercide than women due to the fact that battle-aged men are often targeted for extermination during genocidal situations. Notions of hegemonic masculinity also play into issues of victimization as women are often raped as a way to get back at the man to whom she "belongs". Rape and sexual violence can also be used to emasculate men in situations of violence, and non-heteronormative individuals are often targeted during political violence.</p>

<p>Chapter 5: Gendered victims of terrorism, when women are targeted</p>	<p>Many women are victims, and even mortal victims, of terrorism. However, some women reclaim agency and work to end the influence of terrorism in other women's and communities' lives.</p>	<p>Not as prominent, but women are associated with children in their victimhood. Drones, for example, are argued to kill women and children, thereby placing women in the private sphere as innocents who should not be killed.</p>	<p>Not as prominent.</p>	<p>Some women reclaim agency through feminist activism, for example, promoting equality for women in education.</p>	<p>Some women are indiscriminate victims of large-scale terrorist attacks, and some women are targeted by men who do not want the women to be in the public sphere. Other women become targets in the context of impunity, in which many actors violate women because they will not be held accountable.</p>
<p>Chapter 6: Women in social movements</p>	<p>Women demonstrate agency by participation in social groups. They do so by either advocating for peace, on behalf of alleged terrorists, and/or as victims of genocide or terrorism.</p>	<p>Women often act on issues regarding their private lives, and they draw upon maternal identity when advancing social and political claims. Motherhood mobilizes women and provides them with legitimacy.</p>	<p>Women are viewed and essentialized as peaceful because they are life and care givers. Women pursue peace through feminist and non-feminist activism, and counterterrorism invokes women's participation to encourage peaceful solutions.</p>	<p>Some groups claim a feminist agenda, arguing that a feminist agenda, and not women essentialized as peaceful, unites women.</p>	<p>Some women activists are in direct conflict with each other (e.g., prisoners' rights and victims' groups). Some women are seen as terrorist collaborators when they speak out against the state, and some women are endangered by their social activism.</p>

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**Table 11.1** (continued)

	Theme 1: Women's agency	Theme 2: Motherhood/private life	Theme 3: Motherhood/peace	Theme 4: Feminist activism	Theme 5: Variations and reactions
Chapter 7: Gendered political memory	Women's stories are often missing from memorials of political violence. Instead, men as warriors tend to be valorized. A feminist counter-memory has the ability to recapture and tell the stories of women and in the process regain their agency.	In monuments women are often memorialized for their support roles or the way they keep the "home front" during periods of wartime.	Not as prominent	Not as prominent, but sometimes we see these themes in protests held by victims' rights groups. Also, some groups seek feminist counter-memory as a way to respond to patriarchal violence.	While monuments are less able to achieve this goal, performative acts and protests in some instances are more likely to increase feminist agency and activism. A feminist counter-memory looks for these moments of activism and tries to bring them into greater prominence in the public.
Chapter 8: Women as political elites	Fewer women than men are acting in high-level positions to influence terrorism policymaking. Women elites who are present in these policy areas have agency, but the media may overlook their agency and focus on feminine frames.	Women's positions in private life parlay into the policy positions they occupy. Terrorism is a "masculine" policy area that does not coincide with women's private responsibilities and their presumed aptitude in "feminine" policy areas. Women elites may feel that their families are at risk of terrorist violence. Or women in intelligence may not be able to balance family demands with the masculine model of much travel and long work hours.	Women may be more inclined to craft peaceful policies and/focus on alternative meaning of security because of their concern for their children and families. Women may also be more relational, able and more focused to work on issues related to gender.	Women elites use feminist frames to stress their equality in fighting terrorism. Some elites also anticipate transformational change, especially in the presence of women in terrorism leadership. Some elites self-define as feminists and want substantive change in defense and security policy.	The media sometimes uses feminine frames to describe women, particularly casting them as emotional, beautiful, and/or young/old. However, women elites describe their actions with feminine and feminist frames. Media can also frame men's actions in terms of hegemonic or inferior masculinities.

<p>Chapter 9: Women, public opinion and voting behavior</p>	<p>Women have agency as voters who make decisions based on security concerns, yet women politicians are perceived as absent in terrorism policymaking when voters consider them ill-fit to protect their countries. Moreover, the lack of research about how gender, public opinion, and voting behavior intersect means that women's agency is unseen.</p>	<p>Some researchers support and others reject the idea of the "security mom" voter. Women's voting patterns likely are influenced by motherhood, but intersectionality indicates a more complex picture.</p>	<p>Counterterrorism arguments (UN 1325, 2122, 2242) are based in part on the idea of women's participation in counterterrorism because of their peaceful nature. In turn counterterrorism policies require public support in order to be enacted.</p>	<p>Not as prominent</p>	<p>Men and women react differently to threats, but these reactions, and hence, their public opinion and voting behavior, also intersect with other identities. Women are socialized to be more fearful overall in society. As a result, their generally dovish responses to military and security often vanish when exploring policy responses to terrorism. Fear can be manipulated so that women are just as likely as men to support military actions against terrorism.</p>
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**Table 11.1** (continued)

<p>Chapter 10: Counter terrorism</p>	<p>Theme 1: Women's agency As in Chap. 8, fewer women than men are in counterterrorism, especially regarding headline approaches. However, women are consequential in FETs and in their perceived influence on soft policies geared to counter-extremism. Thus, many women have political agency as it relates to counterterrorism.</p>	<p>Theme 2: Motherhood/private life Women as mothers are believed to be essential to counter-extremism policies, because they have a keen understanding of their children's lives and may be able to spot radicalization and stop it.</p>	<p>Theme 3: Motherhood/peace Women are believed to be a moderating influence on their families and communities. Thus, they are less expected to be terrorists and more expected to strive for peace. Women in the military as well may be thought of as a feminine or non-threatening influence on local communities in conflict regions.</p>	<p>Theme 4: Feminist activism Security feminism is a foreign policy perspective that serves as a soft approach to counterterrorism. However, many feminist activists question the extent to which security feminism captures what they believe to be an authentic feminist approach to violence.</p>	<p>Theme 5: Variations and reactions Some women want to participate in counterterrorism policies "as mothers," whereas others consider the motherhood focus in foreign policy and NGO work to be essentialist. Some women want to enter special operations forces and act in the same capacities as men, whereas others find value in the FET approach.</p>
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amounts to an attack on progressive values that have blocked their fundamentalist goal to keep women in the private sphere.

To paraphrase Laura Sjoberg (2009) and rephrase what we have said throughout this book, women act in political violence as individuals, who happen to be women. That is, women are present throughout our exploration of political violence and terrorism from perpetrators to victims to responders and to elites. While gendered expectations sometimes cause us to not to fully recognize them, they are present and they are engaging in similar activities as men. Work such as ours seeks to shine light on the actions of women and to bring forth their agency in the area of political violence.

## Future Research

The area of women and political violence is an area ripe for research. The majority of scholarship thus far relates to topics discussed in Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, that is women as victims or as perpetrators of violence. These essential topics will continue to be studied; however, an opportunity for research about the topics in other chapters in this book exists and will likely provide more opportunities for future breakthroughs in theorizing and empirical generalizations (social movements, memory, political elites, public opinion, voting behavior, and counter-terrorism), as these topics are grossly under-researched. Future research in these areas is vitally important. Women are active in social movements, and overlooking them means scholarship neglects ways women are agentic as related to terrorism and political violence. Moreover, as gender quotas worldwide promote women's descriptive representation, we need to know if and how women are influencing terrorism policymaking. Are women occupying all types of policy positions, including those related to combating political violence, or are they only found in policy areas designated as "women's areas"? Finally, voting preferences and behavior influence who is elected and what policy positions are supported. Gender expectations influence women politicians' chances for election, and they are a basis for the formulation of counter-terrorism policies. Thus, we suggest three main areas for future research.

First, terrorism studies increasingly emphasize how terrorists leave violent organizations and how terrorists experience de-radicalization (Horgan 2008). This is a topic related to our discussions in Chap. 10. De-radicalization relates to counterterrorism and also points to many *post-conflict puzzles related to gender*. When leaving terrorist and combatant organizations, participants must negotiate new social networks and find employment (Finke and Hearne 2008). Violent conflict sometimes disrupts traditional gender relations in favor of gender empowerment, but lessons from revolutions teach that gender relations typically return to traditional arrangements following conflict and that women combatants struggle to reintegrate in post-conflict society (Sørensen 1998). As a result, it is imperative to continue to study how women terrorists and women guerrillas function in new social and employment contexts after leaving violent groups or at the termination of

organizational violence. Political memory also comes to the forefront following the cessation of terrorist or wartime violence. Political science has yet to fully embrace the interdisciplinary study of memory politics (but see Auchter 2014; Resende and Budryte 2013), even though memory can be politically contentious for many years, as it implies who was right/wrong and guilty/innocent during political violence. Although there are individual memory projects related to women in war, such as statues erected to recognize the comfort women of Korea, a comparative understanding of gender and memory or memory regarding terrorism does not exist. The Basque case shows that women are essential actors in the memory process and that memory itself is gendered. In other cases too, we need to understand how women in movements and women elites are constructing memory and if memory takes on the form of feminist counter-memory.

Second, scholars are looking more closely at *lone-wolf terrorists*, who act autonomously from terrorist groups (Spaaij and Hamm 2015). Given the gendered argument that women join terrorist organizations because of relationships with men, one might expect to find fewer women lone wolves. In a recent book about lone-wolf terrorists, Simon poses a related argument when asking “where are the women?” (Simon 2016). He explains that men are more likely to be risk takers than women, which he believes partially explains why women do not act alone. More research on this topic is needed because data are circumstantial at this point.

Third, research about violent conflict struggles to employ original, empirical data (Schuurman and Eijkman 2013; Jacques and Taylor 2009). Narrative and post-positivist studies have provided the study of international relations with an excellent grasp of how institutions, the media, and society construct gender, as it relates to political violence, and they critique essentialism found in the framing of women terrorists. Empirical work can further engage critical perspectives in an effort to better understand “where and how women participate in political violence” (Sjoberg et al. 2016 [10]). A couple of types of research that generate new data and understandings would move this field of study forward. The study of gender, war, and terrorism, as argued, includes analyses of women participating in and responding to violence as political leaders and social movement activists. The latter group of women are easier to interview than terrorists, thus researchers should engage with women in social movements and women political leaders to see how they gender their work or respond to gender effects of war and terrorism. What are their motivations for participating in this policy area? How does their status *as women* impact their ability to act as peacekeepers or policymakers related to terrorism and political violence? Moreover, men’s and women’s public opinion about terrorism and war in the United States is mixed. It is not clear whether women are less supportive of war and strong counterterrorism measures or whether they are “security moms” who favor strong and decisive actions. Additionally, very little is known about women’s public opinion toward war and terrorism in comparative perspective. As a result, future research should focus on the collection of data related to the public’s (gendered) response to violence.

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