ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Women in Terrorism: An Analysis of the Patriarchy via Al Qaeda and Hamas

Thesis Advisor: Professor Anne Manuel

How do gender roles in society translate into the gender ideologies of terrorist organizations, specifically Al Qaeda and Hamas? How do translations of societal gender roles into terrorist organizations affect their recruitment and employment of women? I argue that the patriarchal roles in society are reflected in the recruitment process of women into terrorism, and imposed upon the roles taken up by women within terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Hamas. This thesis compares the motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women with the motivations of women to join terrorist groups, as well as analyzes the different types of roles taken on by women in terrorist organizations. Women who join terrorist organizations may be driven by public or private reasons, while terrorists recruit women for their tactical advantages. The differences in the motivations between women and terrorists for women in terrorism are reflective of patriarchal tendencies and affect the ways these groups employ women. By using female vulnerability and desire for change, terrorist organizations can pursue their own goals, and extend the patriarchal structure of society into terrorism. The roles and recruitment of women in terrorism may be specifically analyzed through the frames of Al Qaeda and Hamas. Despite Al Qaeda's evolving tactical strategies, Al Qaeda has extended the patriarchal structure of noncombatant society into terrorism by restricting women to the private sphere and using women as cannon fodder. By adapting Islam, Hamas has changed its gender ideology and taken a step towards a less patriarchal structure. Both Al Qaeda and Hamas have worked to legitimize female participation through the selective interpretation of Islam and history because it is necessary for the both groups' wellbeing. The manipulation of female intention for terrorism is how terrorist organizations reflect society's patriarchal structure.

Women in Terrorism:
An Analysis of the Patriarchy via Al Qaeda and Hamas

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Introduction

Female participation in terrorism has been acknowledged by scholars around the world to have increased "regionally, logistically, and ideologically."[1] Contextual pressures are creating a convergence between individual women, terrorist organization leaders, and society that is not only increasing the rate of female activity within terrorist and politically violent organizations, but is also expanding their operational range.[2] Why women join terrorist groups, what types of roles they play, as well as why terrorist organizations recruit and operationalize women in a strictly patriarchal society are questions that must now be asked "…because politics, and especially revolutionary politics, has traditionally been regarded as a male affair… [and as a result] the historian has never really had to 'explain' why an individual man chose to enter political activity."[3] Therefore, trying to explain why an individual woman engages in political activity, particularly violent political activity, becomes necessary because "there is something not quite natural about it."[4] By understanding a woman's individual motivations for joining terrorism we may better understand any collective female motivations for doing so, and thus decipher the increasing trend of women in terrorism.

On the other hand, we must consider the recruitment efforts of the terrorist groups themselves, and their motivations to target women. Women's employment in terrorism may be an indication of issues a terrorist group might be facing, periods of decline, or willingness to

[1]Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 26:3, 171-195. DOI: 10.1080/10576100390211419
[2] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.
[3] Mullaney, Marie. (1984). Women and the Theory of the 'Revolutionary Personality': Comments Criticisms, and Suggestions for Further Study. *The Social Science Journal, 21(2),* p. 54.
[4] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.

engage in negotiations.[5] Identifying a terrorist organization's time of weakness presents the opportunity to understand these phenomena and facilitate the creation of effective counterterrorism strategy.[6] Analysts and leaders failed to anticipate the emergence and range of female militant actors and thus failed to create an effective counterterrorism strategy for women in terrorism. This failure must be acknowledged, examined, and rectified given the operational success of female militants.[7] By identifying the motivations of a group's use of female suicide bombers, a more effective counterterrorism plan can be developed and carried out.

How do gender roles in society translate into the gender ideologies of terrorist organizations, specifically Al Qaeda and Hamas, and how do these translations affect their recruitment and employment of women? In this thesis, I will argue that the patriarchal roles in society are reflected in the recruitment of women into terrorist organizations via the motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women, and the motivations of women to join terrorist groups. I will then assert that society's patriarchal structure is also imposed upon the roles taken up by women within terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Hamas, and may be specifically analyzed through the role of the female suicide bomber.

Chapter one will give a brief overview of the history both Al Qaeda and Hamas, as well as a background of women in terrorism. In the literature review I will then provide an explanation as to the contributions this thesis will add to the literature. Definitions of terms used in this paper are given in order to provide a foundation for the rest of the thesis. I will then explain the processes for data collection and methodology and give some conclusions.

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[5] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 36*(4), 279-291. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2013.763598
[6] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.
[7] Cunningham. (2007). Countering Female Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 30*(2), 113-129, DOI: 10.1080/10576100601101067

II. Timelines

A brief timeline and history of both Al Qaeda and Hamas are outlined here for reference throughout this thesis.

Al Qaeda

The creator of Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, was born in 1957 and went on to attend university in Saudi Arabia, where he was heavily influenced by Wahhabi religious practices. In 1979, when the Soviet invaded, bin Laden travelled to Pakistan and then to Afghanistan to aid Afghan groups against the Soviets. [8]

In 1984, Dr. Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian Jordanian, founded the Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahideen al-Arab (MAK), which came to be known as the Afghan Service Bureau. This Bureau provided social services to Arab mujahidin and their families. Bin Laden joined Azzam, who became his mentor. Together, Azzam and bin Laden recruited Arab and Muslim youth to fight against the Soviets, and raised funds and resources for the Afghan jihadi forces. Right before the Soviets completely withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden and Azzam formed a new group called al-Qaeda al-Sulbah, or "The Solid Base," based on a concept by Sayyid Qutb.[9]

Bin Laden and Azzam foresaw a revolutionary Muslim group which would overturn un-Islamic regimes in the Middle East and establish Islamic rule. However, Azzam did not envision a terrorist organization, and did not endorse the killing of noncombatants. He viewed jihad as a being invoked as a religious obligation in defense of Islam and Muslims against a clearly defined enemy. Though Azzam was the ideological "father" of the group, bin Laden gradually took over

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[8] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology. *The Hudson Institute*. https://www.hudson.org/research/9777-al-qaeda-s-ideology

[9] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology.

leadership. Together with the Egyptian members of Al Qaeda, bin Laden wished to support terrorist action against Egypt and other Muslim secular regimes. This MW led to bin Laden's 1988 infamous fatwa, which declared war on infidels and Muslim apostates, emphasizing hate towards the US and the "alliance of Jews, Christians, and their agents." Bin Laden claimed that the US had made "a clear declaration of war on God, His messenger, and Muslims" through its policies in the Islamic world. bin Laden's followers perceived The 1989 Afghan victory as the Will of God, and bolstered their belief in the power of armed jihad.[10]

After bin Laden was lionized by his followers, Egyptian members of Al Qaeda assassinated Azzam. The ideological vacuum was filled by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. He then pushed a new ideology based on a willingness to carry out armed struggle against all perceived enemies of Islam. This idea is traced back to two modern Sunni Islamic thinkers: Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, and Sayyid Qutb. Al Qaeda's new projected view was that the US and Israel were the leaders of a global conspiracy against Islam and the Muslim Nation. Al Qaeda particularly had issues with American presence in the Arabian peninsula, it is support of Israel and pro-Western dictatorships in the Middle East, and the neglected future of the Palestinians since the beginning of the First Intifada in 1987. These views generated support among who? for Al Qaeda's new mission, and helped propel the group into its present state.[11]

Al Qaeda has employed several practices to reinforce its principal goal, which is "to inspire and incite Islamist movements and the Muslim masses worldwide to attack those perceived to be enemies of Islam." Baiah, the pledge of allegiance, serves as a form of assurance that those affiliating themselves with jihad will remain committed to Al Qaeda's ideology. This pledge has given the organization some form of uniformity. In addition to this, Jihadi ideology has now

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[10] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology.
[11] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology.

encompassed the theology of martyrdom, as well as an ideological belief in the purification of

Islam through violent struggle.[12]

Table 1.1: Timeline of Al Qaeda

1957	Osama bin Laden is born
1979	Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, and Bin Laden travels to Afghanistan, to aid Afghan groups against the Soviets
1984	o Dr. Abdullah Azzam founded the Maktab al Khidmat lil Mujahideen al-Arab (MAK) and is joined by Bin Laden. Together they raised funds and resources for the Afghan jihadi forces.
1987	Women begin to marry Europe's militant Islamists and follow them to a Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.
1987-1988	Osama bin Laden and Azzam form a new group called al-Qaeda al-Sulbah (The Solid Base).
1988	Osama bin Laden issues fatwa declaring war on infidels and Muslim apostates
1988-2000s	Women began to support and encourage their male relatives to follow the "right" interpretation of Islam, facilitate the operational work of organizations, and begin to gather into Sisterhoods.
1989	Azzam was assassinated by Egyptian members of Al Qaeda, who was replaced as an ideological influence by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. He promoted a new ideology of a willingness to carry out armed struggle against all perceived enemies of Islam.
2003	Al Qaeda is first recorded by the FBI recruiting female suicide bombers.
2007	The FBI reports that Al Qaeda holds secret military training for female suicide bombers.
2008	The leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, makes a public statement that Al Qaeda does not include women in its group.
2009	The wife of Ayman al-Zawahiri releases an open letter stating that women should aid the Jihad in any way, including through martyrdom operations.

Hamas

In the 1960s, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian cleric, became an activist in the local

branches of the Muslim brotherhood, preaching and working in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

which were occupied by Israeli forces following the Six Day War in 1967.[13] Yassin established

Hamas as the Brotherhood's local political arm in 1987, after the outbreak of the First Intifada,

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[12] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology.
[13] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas. *Council on Foreign Relations.* https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/hamas

which was a Palestinian uprising against Israeli control of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.[14] Hamas was framed as a parallel to the Muslim Brotherhood, but new and rehabilitated to participate in the intifada.[15] 1988 brought the publication of the Hamas charter, which called for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic society in Palestine.[16] The subject of the charter does not differ from positions taken by the Muslim Brotherhood on the same issues, because Hamas is only a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood Society. However, the charter hardly focuses on the Brotherhood's main goal of transforming society, but rather places far greater emphasis on the Palestine problem and jihad.[17] According to the charter, there is no solution to the Palestine problem except jihad. In article 15, it states: "When an enemy occupies some of the Muslim lands, jihad becomes obligatory on every Muslim," thus, as it says in article 13, all peace initiatives are a "waste of time and acts of absurdity."[18] On peace negotiations and initiatives, article 13 of the charter states: "What are called 'peaceful solutions' and 'international conferences' to solve the Palestine question all conflict with the doctrine of the Islamic Resistance Movement, for giving up any part of the homeland is like giving up part of the religious faith itself."[19]

One year later in 1989, Hamas was transformed when Yassin was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison, causing Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi to take command of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and then Husayn Abu Kuwik, a prominent unionist, Fadil Salih, an imam, and Hasan Yusuf, a school teacher and imam to take control of Hamas in the West Bank. in t 1992, all four of these men were deported.[20]

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[14] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas.
[15] Abu-Amr, Ziad. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background. *Journal of Palestine Studies, 22(4),* 5-19.
[16] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas.
[17] Abu-Amr, Ziad. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background.
[18] Hamas Charter. (1988). The Avalon Project. Yale Law School. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp
[19] Hamas Charter. (1988).
[20] Abu-Amr, Ziad. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background.

In April of 1993, Hamas first used suicide bombing,[21] and then in September of 1993 the Oslo accords were signed. The PLO leader Yasir Arafat and Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin established limited self-government for parts of the West Bank and Gaza under the Palestinian Authority, and the PLO gave Israel its formal recognition. Hamas condemned the accords.[22] In 1997, the United States designated Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization.[23] 2000-2005 saw the Second Intifada, in which Hamas became the vanguard of the resistance.[24] Hamas's actions, including the use of arms against Israeli military targets, have been a major factor in the continuation of the uprising. The longevity of the uprising is because of the movement's wide following and mobility. Its nonparticipation in politics has allowed it to concentrate its efforts on the intifada. Hamas has become the party most involved in militant activity against Israeli targets. Hamas's military activities are intended to strike at the occupation and to embarrass the negotiating factions as well as bolster its own position as a major Palestinian force that cannot be ignored and without which no agreement can be reached.[25]

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[21] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas.
[22] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas.
[23] Laub, Zachary. (2014). Hamas.
[24] Abu-Amr, Ziad. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background.
[25] Abu-Amr, Ziad. (1993). Hamas: A Historical and Political Background.

Table 1.2: Timeline of Hamas

1960s	Sheik Ahmed Yassin became an activist in the local branches of the Muslim brotherhood in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
1967	Six Day War, afterwards Israeli forces occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
1987	o Outbreak of the First Intifada. o Yassin establishes Hamas as the Brotherhood's local political arm.
1988	Publication of Hamas charter.
1989	Yassin arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison. o Dr. Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi take command of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. o Husayn Abu Kuwik, Fadil Salih, and Hasan Yusuf, take control of Hamas in the West Bank.
April 1993	Hamas first uses suicide bombing.
September 1993	Oslo accords are signed, which Hamas condemns.
1997	The United States designates Hamas as a foreign terrorist organization.
2000-2005	Second Intifada, in which Hamas pulls through as the vanguard of the resistance
2000	Sheikh Yassin, the Islamic leader of Hamas, states that women's participation in martyrdom is problematic.
2002	o Wafa Idris carries out the first female suicide bombing attack of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. o Sheikh Yassin noted that women, just like men, were drawn to jihad, and stated "women are like the reserve army, when there is a necessity we use them." o Al-Tamimi, a female terrorist, is one of the first women to detonate bombs (not attached to her person) on behalf of Hamas.

III. Background of Women in Terrorism

The political struggle between men and women in the private and public spheres can be seen in their defined roles in traditional Muslim and Arab society. The patriarchal structure in these Muslim and Arab communities follow a hierarchy which puts women beneath men, regardless of age.[26] This structure also gives men the ability to actively earn their honor through violence, while women must passively defend their honor through sexual purity.[27] Gender roles

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[26] Sharabi, Hishan. (1975). Introduction to Studies of Arab Society.
[27] Hasan, Menar. (1999). The politics of honor: Patriarchy, the state and family honor killing.

outline the female place at home in the private sphere, and the male place in the public sphere.[28] Though women were active in political violence at the beginning of Islam, their role diminished over time as they were consigned to the private sphere.[29] The beginning of the First Intifada saw all members of society participate, with men and women both rising up against Israel. However, the end of the First Intifada and the beginning of the Second Intifada primarily consisted of male involvement, and women were often excluded from the political sphere. With few perceived outlets for gender equality, women have taken part in terrorism as an effort to break into the public sphere.

The Israeli counter-campaign during the First Intifada led to a crackdown on all terrorist organizations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which caused an increase in religious restraints and therefore increased religiosity among Palestinian terrorist organizations.[30] This religiosity caused organizations to become less likely to use women in terrorist attacks, which initiated a period of time in which women rarely participated in organizational terrorism, and instead relied on the personal initiative attacks to participate and express their political thoughts.[31] The success of these female attacks caused many terrorist organizations, even those outside of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to reevaluate the usefulness of women. Fatwas were issued over time to allow women to participate in terrorism, in correlation with the slow development of women in religious terrorist organizations.

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[28] Berko, Anat & Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 30*(6), 493-519. DOI: 10.1080/10576100701329550
[29] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?
[30] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 39*(10), 912-934. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2016.1148934
[31] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

The religious community also provided some other forms of endorsement of female participation in terrorism. "The role of women in the Jihad against Enemies," a document on a Jihadist message board, was written by an ideological leader of Al Qaeda branch of Saudi Arabia, Yussuf al-Ayyiri. The document encourages women to take an active role in Jihad, but emphasizes that this role does not involve active fighting. In the final paragraph he addresses two of the biggest problems preventing women from actually fighting jihad; that they would need the permission of their parents, and that women's Jihad is the performance on the hajj ritual. He establishes women's place in jihad by citing a tradition that enumerates the importance of certain activities, in this order: prayer, Jihad, and respect toward parents. By doing this, the document laid the intellectual ground for the full participation of women in Jihad among radical Muslims.[32] While the Islamic leaders have opposed and even condemned women's participation in violence through sharia law and terrorism in history, it has since changed its attitude. Having seen the positive effects of allowing women's participation in terrorism, the Islamic religious establishment has provided various justifications for women's involvement.[33]

IV. Literature Review

Over the past forty years, the world has seen an increase in women joining terrorist organizations. This increase has spurred the development of research analyzing the trend of women in terrorism. While the literature expresses consistent advantages of women in terrorism, it also reveals controversy on labeling women's participation in terrorism as either a form of liberation or oppression. Because of these conflicting ideas, the existing research on women and terrorism lacks adequate depth on either opinion.

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[32] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 30*(5), 397-414. DOI: 10.1080/10576100701258585
[33] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.

Current literature from authors such as Mia Bloom, Katharina Von Knop, and Devorah

Margolin have analyzed the historical incorporation of women into terrorist organizations.

However, because female terrorism is a relatively new development, there is limited scholarship

on the topic. Thus far, the academic community has argued that women have been reluctantly

included by terrorist organizations in terrorist attacks due to external pressures, the most

reluctant of these groups are ones that are religiously motivated. [34] The limited amount of

literature has left room for analysis on the various contradictions between different types leaders,

both religious and militant, on the topic of female participation in terrorism and its cohesion with

the Islamic faith. These contradictions, in addition with different terrorist organizations'

adaptations of Islamic law, create room for interpretation within terrorist organizations and affect

the ways in which groups employ women. Therefore, my research will focus on the structural

differences between Al Qaeda and Hamas, as well as in their relationships with ideology, and

how these are translated into gender relations.

The existing scholars have generally concluded that organizations have quite a few

motivations for recruiting women. First, women have a greater means of mobilizing support than

their male counterparts.[35] Female terrorists serve as encouragement for other women who seek to

become involved in terrorist activity. They also serve as a form of shame for men in the

community, because women appear to be usurping male dominance in the conflict. Female

terrorists are thus able to increase recruitment of both men and women, and sustain a high

number of members in terrorist organizations. This skill makes women valuable assets to

organizations, especially when membership is dwindling, meaning the long-term survival of a

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[34] Ness, Cindy D. (2007). The Rise in Female Violence. *Daedalus.* 84-93.
[35] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.

terrorist group often depends on female participation.[36] In addition, because women are

instinctively perceived as peaceful and kind, they are less likely to be stopped by security

personnel. This perception of females allows women to pass checkpoints more easily, and they

can hide weapons underneath their clothes and hijabs.[37] This ability causes more extensive media

coverage than a male attacker would, as well as draws a wider audience and maximizes the

audience's psychological damage.[38]

However, scholars such as Jessica Davis and Christine Sixta disagree on the factors that

motivate women to join terrorist organizations. The divide between the women being seen as

either victims or feminists when being recruited has created space for further research. How does

a terrorist group imposing a strictly patriarchal structure as seen in society, versus imposing a

more liberating approach to incorporating women, change recruitment methods and motivations

of women to join terrorist organizations? Because of these conflicting methods of female

participation, my research will explore the relationship between the motivations of the females

and the motivations of the terrorist organizations, and how the gender ideology of the groups

affect their recruitment of women.

The existing literature has grappled with the effects of societal structure on the gender

dynamics of terrorist organizations. Scholars have agreed that the patriarchal structure of society

has been somewhat imposed on the structures of Al Qaeda and Hamas.[39] However, a lack of

understanding exists about the specific ways in which gender ideologies in society compare to

the gender ideologies of Al Qaeda and Hamas, specifically in how the groups utilize women.

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[36] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[37] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?
[38] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend. *Daedalus, 136(1)*, 94-102. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1162/daed.2007.136.1.94
[39] Jacques, Karen & Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 21(3),* 499-515. DOI: 10.1080/0954655090298404

Multiple perspectives on the role of female suicide bombers and terrorists generally center around women either being victims or feminists. Anne Speckhard[40], Cindy Ness, and Karla Cunningham argue that women are used as another body to be blown up, while scholars such as Ali Farhana[41] and Berko and Erez[42] argue that the women are used in an effort to liberate women and progress past the strict patriarchal rules found in these organizations.

The current understanding of women's roles in society and terrorist organizations emphasizes their participation as either supporters and suicide bombers.[43] As factors in their operating environments put pressure on Al Qaeda and Hamas, women have taken on increasingly powerful roles in both groups. However, this widening of roles does not necessarily mean that these women are overcoming the patriarchal structure of society and the organizations. My research will explore the ways in which gender roles in society translate into gender roles within the group, and how these translations are different between Al Qaeda and Hamas. Further exploration of the dynamic between gender ideology in society and gender ideology in these groups will allow the possibility of a deeper understanding of women's liberation and oppression in terrorist organizations.

The existing literature analyzing women in terrorism is limited due to the relatively recent development of female terrorists. There is some exploration of women becoming involved over time due to environmental pressures and the need to evolve. Women became further involved due to the realization by terrorist organizations of the advantages that women can

[40] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq. *Democracy and Security. 5*(1), 34–35. DOI: 10.1080/17419160902723759

[41] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 8(1)*, p 21-35.

[42] Berko, Anat & Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?

[43] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, (28(5)*. 353-373. DOI: 10.1080/10576100500180337

provide them. The ways in which terrorist groups employ women vary, but current scholars have found that women are usually participating as supporters or suicide bombers. However, there is division among ideas regarding the application of Islamic law within terrorist organizations in regards to women in terrorism. This research will analyze what the role of suicide bomber means in terms of gender roles and the power dynamic between men and women. It will also explore the interpretation of Islamic law by Al Qaeda and Hamas, and how this affects the roles and recruitment of women into these organizations. There are also multiple perspectives in the current literature on how the patriarchal structure of society affects the ways in which women are recruited and utilized by terrorist organizations. Depending on the interactions between the terrorist organizations, the women, and the surrounding societal structure, terrorist groups develop different gender ideologies. My research will explore the ways in which gender ideologies in society compare to the gender ideologies of Al Qaeda and Hamas, and what this means for the roles and recruitment of women in these organizations.

V. Definitions

The following terms defined here are used throughout this thesis. The terms terrorism; international terrorism; and terrorist group/organization; have been defined by the United States Department of State. The remaining terms are defined from secondary sources such as academic journals.

Fatwa: "A fatwa is an Islamic legal pronouncement, issued by an expert in religious law (mufti), pertaining to a specific issue, usually at the request of an individual or judge to resolve an issue where Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), is unclear. Typically, such uncertainty arises as Muslim society works to address new issues – issues that develop as technology and society advance… We might compare a fatwa to the legal ruling of a high court or the Supreme Court, depending

on the authority of the mufti behind it. However, a fatwa is not binding as is the verdict of the secular courts; while correct and applicable to all members of the Muslim faith, the fatwa is optional for the individual to respect or not."[44]

Feminism: "…the broad goal of challenging and changing gender relations that subordinate women to men and that thereby also differentially advantage some women and men relative to others. It is assumed that there are many different strategies and practices that are consistent with this goal. It is not assumed that feminism can be or ever should be the only or primary goal of feminists, but instead gather under this banner all who include a commitment to more equal and fair gender relations as one of their goals."[45] The definition of feminism cannot be concrete, and must be addressed with caution, because a narrow and static definition often results in an understanding only applicable to white, middle-class, western women.[46]

Gender: Gender is comprised of the social norms and characteristics of women and men. While people are born as male or female, their gender is constructed based on the society in which they live.[47] In this thesis, gender is defined and understood in the context of the Middle East, which is largely shaped by the policy of the state and Islamist gender differentiation in public.[48]

International terrorism: "…means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than 1 country."[49]

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[44] Sheik Muhammad Hisham Kabbani. (2018). What is a Fatwa? *The Islamic Supreme Court of America, Understanding Islam.* http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/44-what-is-a-fatwa.html

[45] Ferree, Myra Marx and Tripp, Aili Mari. (2006). Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights.

[46] Ferree, Myra Marx and Tripp, Aili Mari. (2006). Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights.

[47] World Health Organization. (2018). "Gender." https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/

[48] Carapico, Cheriet, Fakhro, Moghadam, Morris, Norton, Saktanber, Singerman, Taraki. (1997). Gender, Politics and the State: What Do Middle Easter Women Want? *Middle East Policy Council, 5(3).*

[49] US Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Act of 2002 Congress of USA Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f [d].

Patriarchal structure: "In the Arab context, the prioritizing of the rights of males and elders (including elder women) and the justification of those rights within kinship values which are usually supported by religion."[50] It is important to note that that this definition of patriarchy/patriarchal structure is different from Western definitions which do not include age and kinship as factors.

Shahida: Deceased male suicide bombers are labelled by their living relatives and community as martyrs, or shahids. Shahidas are the female version of the shahids.[51]

Terrorism: "…premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."[52] Specifically designed to have the greatest impact with the lowest cost, terrorist attacks are intended to instill fear through violence or the threat of violence in order to send a message to an audience. While the first (quoted) part of this definition of terrorism has been outlined by the United States Department of State, there is no universal definition of terrorism. This lack of definition can lead to problems in research on terrorism, if an organization is not internationally agreed upon as a terrorist organization. Any contestation may lead to problems with punishing that group. For example, Hamas is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, but not by others, because it provides social welfare to society and monopolizes violence. A lack of universal agreement that Hamas is a terrorist group can cause issues for a country such as the United States to punish Hamas and put a stop to its use of violence.

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[50] Suad, Joseph. (1996). Patriarchy and development in the Arab world. *Gender & Development, 4(2),* 14-19. DOI: 10.1080/741922010
[51] Ness, Cindy D. (2007). The Rise in Female Violence.
[52] US Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Act of 2002 Congress of USA Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f [d].

Terrorist group/organization: "…means any group practicing, or which has significant subgroups which practice, international terrorism."[53]

VI. Methodology

I used secondary sources from academic journals to collect qualitative data on the roles and recruitment of women in Al Qaeda and Hamas. Though these journals were not primary sources, which was a weakness, they provided multiple perspectives from various authors and served as credible sources, which was a strength. The limitation when researching terrorism is the lack of primary accounts from which to draw from. Sources such as interviews, surveys, or autobiographies of female martyrs likely do not exist, because successful suicide operations should result in her death. If sources exist based on accounts from female terrorists serving in roles other than suicide bomber, they are limited because there are few female terrorists who are still alive and willing to speak out against their communities and organizations. This lack of access to first-hand accounts makes research on the topic limited to secondary sources. This form of evidence in and of itself is indicative of women's roles in terrorism. While any terrorist may be reluctant or unwilling to speak about their lives within a terrorist organization, a woman is doubly confined by the terrorist organization and her male family members in the social hierarchy. This limitation makes research on women's participation in terrorism particularly restrictive.

By analyzing the gender ideologies of Al Qaeda and Hamas we may better understand the gender ideologies of terrorist organizations. This evaluation encompasses the late 1980s to the early 2010s, beginning with the creation of both Hamas and Al Qaeda in 1987 and 1988,

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[53] US Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Act of 2002 Congress of USA Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f [d].

respectively. I chose to examine Al Qaeda and Hamas, because of their similarities and differences. Al Qaeda and Hamas share a regional and ideological similarity- both are active primarily in the Middle East, and have strong connections to Islam. Both groups were established approximately within a year of each other, and were created in the midst of conflict. This gives Al Qaeda and Hamas a common time frame, general location, and ideological basis. These similarities are important because they frame Al Qaeda and Hamas in contexts that are alike, allowing us to identify the differences between the two groups. These differences may be analyzed in context to hypothesize variables that affect gender roles in terrorist organizations. Some of these differences are the specific countries of origin, and strain of ideology. Hamas began in Israel during the first intifada and Al Qaeda began during Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Both groups have a similar creation story, but are ultimately different. They also harbor ideological differences based on their interpretations of Islam. Hamas is based in Sunni Islam and Palestinian nationalism, while Al Qaeda has a foundation of Wahhabism and Salafist jihadism. Having both a solid base of similarities as well as differences allows for the understanding of different potential variables that affect each group's interpretation of gender ideologies. Knowing the variables which affect the groups' gender ideologies will allow for an analysis of Hamas and Al Qaeda's relationship with women and gender roles, and how these relationships affect their overall operations.

VII. Conclusions

In Chapter 2 I will analyze the recruitment of women into terrorist organizations, specifically Al Qaeda and Hamas. I will first compare the motivations of women to join terrorism with the motivations of terrorists to recruit women, and then compare the motivations and tactics of Al Qaeda and Hamas. While women tend to have complex motivations based on

public and private reasons, terrorist organizations are generally motivated by the tactical value of women alone. In Chapter 2, I assert that both female motivations to join terrorist operations and terrorist motivations to recruit women are a reflection of the patriarchy. Based on the gender ideology of the society in which women are recruited, I conclude with an analysis of the gender roles within both Al Qaeda and Hamas, as well as terrorist organizations in general.

Chapter 3 will focus on women's roles in terrorist organizations. By exploring the ways in which Al Qaeda and Hamas are structurally different, I will assert how these differences affect the ways in which these groups employ women. I will then discuss suicide bombing, and analyze the idea that female suicide bombers are a progression of women's roles in terrorism. Afterwards, I will discuss the counterpoint that women are simply tactical deployments in the eyes of terrorists. I will analyze the extent to which the patriarchy has been imposed in terrorist operations, via women's roles in terrorism.

Chapter 4 will delve into a deeper analysis of patriarchy in terrorism. Terrorist organizations began to deploy modern female suicide bombers in a context that, I will argue, is patriarchal. I will then discuss the concept of dual oppression, and how this may be applied to female terrorists. Dual oppression may be considered a lens through which to view how the patriarchal structure of society has been active within terrorist organizations. From there, I will review the hierarchy and restrictions which govern the lives of Arab and Muslim women. Considering both formal (legal and religious) and informal (social norms) rules, I specifically examine the entrenchment of familial and gender roles and the repercussions these have on females in terrorism. An analysis of the Black Widows as a case study of women in terrorism then shows an example of a counterterrorism failure due to a lack of acknowledgement of the possibility of alternate gender roles. I will then discuss terrorist organizations' necessity to

appeal to society to successfully employ women. Without the approval of the society within which the terrorist group is operating, the group could be crossing a major social line in the community by employing women as militants. Using women as suicide bombers is a way to appeal to society while employing women tactically. I will then analyze possibility of the expression of feminism via women in terror. I will argue that suicide bombing takes away from female agency, and that while female's individual motivations for carrying out terrorism cannot be known, any feminist intentions become undermined by existing public opinion.

Chapter 5 will give a final summary of the findings of this thesis, a brief discussion on the prospects for decreasing women's involvement in terrorism, outline future policy recommendations, as well as possible next steps in research.

Chapter 2: The Recruitment of Women into Al Qaeda and Hamas

I. Introduction

Over the past thirty years, women have become increasingly desirable assets to terrorist organizations. Due to this increase in demand, terrorist organizations have more incentive to recruit women and women have grown more motivated to join terrorist organizations. What do female recruitment motivations and methods tell us about the gender ideologies of terrorist organizations? This chapter explores the relationship between the motivations of the women and the motivations of terrorist organizations, as well as the female recruitment methods employed by Al Qaeda and Hamas. I argue that the patriarchal structures of society are reflected in the methods of female recruitment into terrorist organizations, as well as in the motivations of women to join terrorism and the motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women. Understanding the ways in which terrorist organizations adopt patriarchal structures will explain the gender ideologies of Al Qaeda and Hamas and provide a better understanding of the relationship between gender roles and terrorism.

This chapter will begin with a comparison and analysis of the motivations of women to join terrorist organizations and the motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women. It will then compare the motivations and recruitment methods of Al Qaeda with those of Hamas, and analyze their differences. These two adaptations of society's patriarchal structure can be understood by comparing the motivations of terrorist organizations to the gender ideologies of the societies in which terrorist organizations operate. This chapter will conclude with an analysis of the gender ideologies of Al Qaeda and Hamas and what this may mean for gender relations in terrorism.

II. Female Motivations

Public

Women who join terrorist organizations may be driven by political or public reasons. Public reasons are defined as ideological or political, such as fighting for equality or independence. In comparison with the other women in their communities, these women are seen as feminists.[54] Public motivations for women to join terrorist organizations are often linked with women's political goals and may be something along the lines of disrupting the status quo. In these communities, from which Al Qaeda and Hamas recruit, Islam is heavily embedded in the social and political structures. For women in communities which are instilled with Islam, the status quo of gender relations is female oppression. For example, Palestinian society is hierarchical and fixed, with rank based on gender and age. In patriarchal societies, women are placed at the bottom of these hierarchies with men at the top, subjugating women to traditional Islamic ideas and the men in their communities. Another political motivation for women may be the attractive political opportunities which their mothers and female elders were denied, which may now be secured via combatant roles.[55] If not in pursuit of self-liberation, women often attempt to join the public sphere to make a stand against counterterrorism tactics. Women whose loved ones and community members have died specifically due to counterterrorism efforts may develop a political motivation in pursuit of justice.[56] This pursuit may foster a woman's desire to hinder counterterrorism efforts and to make a political statement against counterterrorism.

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[54] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

[55] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.

[56] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.

The existence of women in public spaces has been historically restricted. While many countries and cultures have created a less restrictive public space for women over time, cultures that practice Islam have experienced this change more slowly.[57] The growing desire of women to be involved in the public sphere has generated a population of Muslim women who find themselves looking for a political outlet.[58] These political motivations and the ways in which they are expressed are individual to each woman. However, there has been an increasing number of women finding a political outlet in terrorism. The growing role of the suicide bomber is evidence of the existence of the public motivations of women, because in some terrorist organizations, female suicide bombers now have the ability to be labelled as martyrs or *shahidas,* which are female martyrs.[59] This label means that terrorist organizations may give women the opportunity to achieve an elevated status among the community.[60] Women who become involved in terrorism based on public motivations create roles of liberation and power for themselves in society.

Personal

Other than political reasons, the primary motivators for women to join terrorist organizations are personal. These reasons may materialize as a chance for a woman to regain her or her family's honor, or the opportunity for revenge. The women in Al Qaeda and Hamas are often recruited from populations which are governed by strict social and cultural norms. As women are often restricted from the public sphere, many women are left with private motivations to join terrorist organizations. When women break traditional societal rules, they may be

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[57] Sharabi, Hishan. (1975). Introduction to Studies of Arab Society.
[58] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies? *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 29(2)*, 261-288. DOI: DOI: 10.1080/15544770802118645
[59] Ness, Cindy D. (2007). The Rise in Female Violence. *Daedalus.* 84-93.
[60] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors.

considered dishonorable and are ostracized from their families.[61] This dishonor increases

women's vulnerability and marginalization. Terrorist organizations are then appealing, because

they can provide opportunities for women to regain their honor.[62] They can earn honor through

actions such as suicide bombing, from which they can gain martyr status. This status, though

attained after death, is given to her name, associated with her memory, and brings her family

honor.[63] Other private reasons for women to join terrorist organizations are abandonment,

poverty, or rape.[64] When a woman is abandoned or left without a husband for any reason, she is

almost always cut off from financial resources.[65] If she has children, she is then desperate to

support her family, which is considered her primary responsibility as a woman. In a society that

is plagued by violence and little to no legitimate social services, she may be driven to joining a

terrorist organization, especially if that woman has lost her husband to counterterrorism

violence.[66] Then, not only is this woman seeking financial support, but she is also seeking

vengeance.[67] A woman may also be seeking vengeance for times when she herself was hurt by

counterterrorism intervention. If the women experienced sexual assault or rape by the soldiers of

interventionist forces, there is a chance she will participate in terrorism to exact vengeance and

regain her honor.[68]

Though certain official rules of a society depend on the interpretations of Islam, the

ostracizing of women may occur due to a violation of an unofficial rule. These unofficial rules

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[61] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[62] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[63] Hasso, Frances H. (2005). Discursive and political deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian women suicide bombers/martyrs. *Feminist Review* 81, 23–51.
[64] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[65] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[66] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[67] Ganor, Boaz. (2002). Defining Terrorism: Is one Man's Terrorist Another Man's Freedom Fighter? *Police Practice & Research – An International Journal, 3(4).*
[68] Beyler, Clara. (2003). Messengers of Death- Female Suicide Bombers. *International Institute for Counterterrorism.*

may take many forms and are often considered to be applicable to the private sphere of life.[69]

Pursuing certain sexual relationships or following dress codes are considered to belong to the private sphere. However, the unofficial guidelines for these forms of personal conduct are determined by the society in which we live.[70] When these guidelines are not followed, there are social repercussions. Social repercussions are enacted in every society, but are stricter in areas from which Al Qaeda and Hamas mainly recruit, which are usually Islamic.[71] Due to increased societal standards, women who wish to live their private lives in ways that are not approved by the public will experience marginalization. Once a woman is ostracized from the community, she will have difficulty surviving alone and will be more susceptible to recruitment efforts by terrorists.[72] For example, on February 3, 2019, Iraqi security forces arrested a woman who allegedly trained about 80 female suicide bombers of Ansar al-Sunna, an Al Qaeda affiliated group. She was suspected of sending at least 28 of these women to carry out attacks, which would account for 44 percent of the attacks carried out by women in Iraq.[73] If the charges were true, this recruiter had women raped by the terrorist group, then after the rape, she approached the women and encouraged them to join the fight for jihad to regain their honor and redeem themselves.[74]

Female Motivations and Gender Relationships

It may seem plausible that women join terrorist organizations because they are feminists, and are thus breaking the mold of a patriarchal society. However, women who join terrorist organizations for public reasons are often suspected of joining terrorist organizations for private

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[69] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[70] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors
[71] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors
[72] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[73] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[74] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.

reasons by the people in their societies. This can be seen in Figure 2.1, the results of a study done by Elizabeth Gardner are shown, in which the explanations for female terrorist acts are taken from different sources.

Table 2.1: Explanations for Female Terrorism by Source of Framing Statement[75]

| Explanation | Source (%)* | | | | | | |
	Journalist (no source)	Female terrorist	Friends or family of female terrorist	Terrorist group	Other	Analyst or academic	Government
Revenge	47	0	57	13	57	33	0
Nationalism	26	40	7	38	14	17	33
Feminist pride	11	0	0	0	0	17	0
Desire for martyrdom	5	27	7	0	0	17	0
Escape	5	7	0	38	14	17	0
Redemption	5	0	0	13	14	0	33
Religious cause	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
Victimization	0	0	29	0	0	0	33
(Valid cases)	(19)	(15)	(14)	(8)	(7)	(6)	(3)

Cramer's $V = 0.460$, $p < 0.001$.
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

The journalists, family and friends of the women, terrorist groups, and academics all had samples which believed women joined terrorism due to revenge, redemption, or victimization. Ironically, none of the female terrorists themselves believed that women joined terrorism for these reasons. The women did have a sample that believed women were motivated to join terrorist organizations by nationalism, desire for martyrdom, and religion. Their motivations are both collective and individual, by participating for independence as well as equality. The public may also see the public reasons for women to join terrorist groups as minor or underdeveloped. This perspective causes the people in their communities to view women as taking part in terrorism as "helpers" or fulfilling supporting roles.[76] While it is impossible to truly know what

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[75] Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness? *Journalism Studies, 8(6)*.
[76] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.

each woman considers herself to be accomplishing via terrorism, this minimizing of women's motivation by society is could indicate that these women are not breaking out of a patriarchal role. Rather, their motivations are shaped by their histories with men.[77] These women's lives have been shaped by their gender, and thus, actions taken to change their lives are based on the power dynamic between males and females.[78] By joining terrorist organizations to break the status quo of the patriarchy, or to regain their honor which was lost because of their gender, women are driven to join based on their experiences with men.

III. Terrorist Organizations' Motivations

General

The motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women have shifted over time. With increasing violence and conflict, growing pressures on recruitment bases have caused terrorist organizations to experience greater difficulty recruiting new members.[79] These pressures may manifest in forms such as smaller demographics due to higher death tolls and higher recruitment by other institutions.[80] A terrorist organization experiencing a compromised recruitment demographic can result in an increase in motivation for those organizations to recruit women. By involving women in terrorist organizations, men become more likely to join those organizations. Women's participation shames men into joining terrorist organizations, because women appear to be usurping male dominance in the community. These women also increase female recruitment by serving as encouragement and inspiration.[81]

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[77] Ness, Cindy D. (2007). The Rise in Female Violence.
[78] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[79] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq
[80] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[81] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women

Due to the previously stated reasons, terrorist organizations have come to recognize the value of women in fixing the problem of decreased recruitment during times of pressure. Women's ability to remedy the decreased recruitment population makes women important in the long-term survival of terrorist groups.[82] The motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women are also based on the strategic and tactical values that women can provide. Women have increased access to targets because they are generally perceived as peaceful and nurturing, which allows them to pass security checkpoints more easily and frequent public places without attracting attention. Islamic cultural norms which prohibit male security officers from doing a body search on a woman, combined with women drawing less public scrutiny, allow women to conceal weapons or contraband underneath their clothes and hijabs.[83] Since they arouse less suspicion than men, women have more access to targets. Women are also able to carry out terrorist organizations' ideal attacks, because they draw the most media attention. Seeing that women are seen as peaceful in most cultures around the world, a female terrorist contradicts expectations and shocks society. This shock value allows terrorist groups to draw a wider audience who is then inflicted with a maximized level of psychological damage.[84] Terrorists may want to use women to convey to the world that they were driven to attack by another force, such as an enemy or counterterrorism force. Redirecting the blame will allow terrorist organizations to gain more support. Or, they may try to gain public support by communicating to the audience that they are different than other terrorist groups in their usage of certain tactics, such as the employment of women. In order to maximize these effects, women are valuable assets to terrorist organizations.

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[82] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women

[83] Margolin, (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

[84] Bloom, Mia. (2009). From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists: Women and Political Violence. *Political Science Quarterly, 124*(2), 356-357. DOI: 10.1002/j.1538-165X.2009.tb01884.x

Organizations' Motivations and Gender Relations

The motivations of terrorist organizations to recruit women have developed due to male domination in society. The tactical advantages of women exist simply because women are marginalized. For example, women have an ability to be discrete that men do not because women lack power in the public space,[85] and women who join terrorist organizations can shame men into joining, because in Islamic communities women are secondary to men. Men are traditionally supposed to be the powerful, physical force of the family, sent to wage jihad, while women raise the children and care for the family. When this norm is defied, the men in the community join terrorist organizations in an attempt to reassert their dominance and restore the patriarchal structure.[86] The male recruitment increase due to female recruitment is an example of terrorism as an assertion of the patriarchy. The motivations of terrorists are patriarchal, in that women considered docile and subordinate to men, and therefore assets in the media. By breaking out of this patriarchal box, women become assets to terrorists.[87] The involvement of women in terrorist organizations has been determined by the patriarchal motivations of terrorists and the patriarchal society within which they operate.

IV. Al Qaeda and Hamas: Recruitment and Tactics

Al Qaeda

In addition to the general motivation of terrorist organizations for recruiting women, Al Qaeda fosters its own unique motivations to do so. Al Qaeda practices elements of Qutbism and Wahhabism, a doctrine based on Salafist jihadism, and is known as a fundamentalist jihad

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[85] Asal, Victor and Dalton, Angela. (2011). Is It Ideology or Desperation: Why Do Organizations Deploy Women in Violent Terrorist Attacks? *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 34(10),* 802-819. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2011.604833
[86] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[87] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.

organization. The founder of Al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, was influenced by Wahhabism in his youth, which he carried with him to Pakistan after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. There, he formed Al Qaeda, which was based on concepts attributed to Sayyid Qutb, in which revolutionary Muslims would overturn un-Islamic regimes and unite the Middle East under Islamic rule.[88] This ideology has led Al Qaeda to fight against the West via militancy movements "rooted in Islam" to usher the Salafi movement back to true Sunni Islam. This belief system has also been a large factor in the way Al Qaeda recruits its members. By appealing to Muslims via jihadist sentiment, Al Qaeda can attract large numbers of recruits. However, these recruits are primarily male. The ideological basis of the group dictates that any female involvement should be mostly restricted to support roles for their husbands, such as raising children to be jihadists, or generally a role in the private sphere of life. Most women are brought into Al Qaeda via their husband's participation, and while they are jihadists, may never be official members of Al Qaeda. In the fatwa "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places, Expel the Mushrikeen (infidels) from the Arabian Peninsula" Osama bin Laden explained that women are playing roles which are essential in the pursuit of jihad, such as supporters, facilitators, and promoters in carrying out the jihad.[89] However, women have been increasingly recruited by Al Qaeda to serve in roles other than those linked directly to the men, such as messengers, recruiters, or serving as financing or logistical support.[90] This increase in the recruitment of women may be a result of various factors in the environment Al Qaeda operates in. The increased levels of operational groups and violence may cause human resources

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[88] Gunaratna, Rohan. (2005). Al Qaeda's Ideology. *Hudson Institute.* *https://www.hudson.org/research/9777-al-qaeda-s-ideology*
[89] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[90] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2018.1430656

difficulties and the need to adapt new tactics, in which case women can be employed to increase recruitment, amplify attack effects, and attract a wider audience, thereby establishing the group's dominance.[91]

For example, the growing amount of institutionalized violence in Iraq meant stronger measures being taken by coalition forces to defeat insurgent groups. This increase in strength caused suicide bombing specifically to decrease, but Al Qaeda in Iraq stood out by increasingly using women as attackers.[92] Until the conflict in Iraq in 2003, Al Qaeda had not used women as suicide bombers or had a significant number of female members, according to the FBI. In March of 2003 the FBI expressed concern over the growing number of reports of recruitment of women by Al Qaeda. There were reports of a new unit of female combatants, with members originating from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Arab countries, and various other locations. The group was said to be led by a leader called Umm Usama, which means "mother of Osama," who was reportedly in direct contact with Osama bin Laden.[93] Al Qaeda claimed:

> "We are preparing for the new strike announced by our leaders, and I declare that it will make America forget… the September 11 attacks. The idea came from the success of martyr operations carried out by young Palestinian women in the occupied territories. Our organization is open to all Muslim women wanting to serve the (Islamic)nation…"[94]

A 2007 report indicated that Al Qaeda held secret military training for women at bases near Jalalabad and Kandahar airports. On September 11 of that year, Al Qaeda leadership announced that it had created a "brigade" of women suicide bombers. This brigade clearly

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[91] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[92] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[93] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[94] "Bin Laden Has Set Up Female Suicide Squads: Report." (2003). *Arab News*.

indicates Al Qaeda's evolving tactical strategies, specifically including women in suicide bombing missions. in April 2008However, Ayman al-Zawahiri, stated that Al Qaeda does not include women in its group.[95]

Despite the statement made by al-Zawahiri in 2008, evidence shows Al Qaeda is recruiting women. Al Qaeda has utilized recruitment tactics that are not uncommon from other terrorist organizations and has adapted its methods to target women as well as men. Many female suicide bombers from Al Qaeda have been recruited and instructed by men, and there has been a growing trend of husband-and-wife-weapon-delivery-teams. Men of Al Qaeda have been known to marry women (either foreign or domestic), recruit them to Al Qaeda, train them on suicide bombing, and deliver them to the intended site of attack. Once their wives have detonated the bombs and ended their lives, the men will repeat this practice.[96] This practice demonstrates the notion of women being used as cannon fodder, and that using women as cannon fodder, is a large motivation for Al Qaeda to recruit women. Using men to recruit women via marriage to become suicide bombers has been a popular practice of Al Qaeda. Due to the patriarchal society in which recruitment efforts are being employed, once a man has married a woman, he is the dominant force in the relationship and he may persuade or force his wife to join Al Qaeda as a suicide bomber.

Existing research suggests that female combatants are a necessary but temporary addition to terrorist organizations, in a time of intense violence and crisis. This contradicts the idea of a "fundamental societal change in gender roles."[97] While there may be a momentary empowerment of women, a 're-marginalization' of women after the war may mean that women are seen as a

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[95] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[96] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[97] Miranda, Alison. (2004). "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security," *Security Dialogue, 35(4),* 548.

threat to "the nation's and state's ideological security and cohesion and the existing political culture, through their de-stabilization of gender roles."[98] However, it is possible that Al Qaeda's activity with women has opened doors for women to participate in Al Qaeda and other related terrorist organizations.

Hamas

Hamas has motivations based on Palestinian nationalism, Sunni Islam, and Islamic nationalism, such as the liberation of Palestine and the establishment if an Islamic state.[99] These ideological foundations have largely shaped the interpretation of Islam and its application in the practices of Hamas, specifically Hamas' opinion of the employment of women in terrorism. Hamas religious leadership have issued statements made and fatwas about the use of women. The idea of female participation has evolved over time from negative to relatively positive, depending on the interpretation of Islam and the surrounding environment Hamas is operating in. When Hamas was first created during the First Intifada, less institutions were established, which caused the Palestinian movement to be comprised of people who carried out violence of their own volition rather than acting on behalf of terrorist organizations. Once institutions such as political groups and welfare organizations began to rise and fight for a dominant foothold in society, attacks began to increase. Along with these organizations rose Hamas, which increased religiosity of the other terrorist groups. The increased religious aspect of terrorist groups led to the exclusion of women from participating in organizationally sanctioned violence and were restricted to support roles and home life.[100]

Article 17 of the Hamas Charter states "Muslim women have a role in the struggle for

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[98] Miranda, Alison. (2004). "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security."
[99] Dunning, Tristan. (2015). Islam and resistance: Hamas, ideology and Islamic values in Palestine, *Critical Studies on Terrorism, 8(2),* 284-305, DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2015.1042304
[100] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

liberation that does not fall from that of a man in that she is the one who produces the men."[101]

This article clearly establishes secondary roles for women by religious organizations. Their inferior position caused women to either stay at home or to carry out terrorist attacks on their own, without organizational backing. These individual attacks opened doors for women by inspiring other women to carry out their own independent attacks and by proving to terrorist organizations that women were viable combatants.[102] Wafa Idris was the first female suicide bomber of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She detonated a bomb which she carried in her backpack, outside of a store in the center of Jerusalem. The attack resulted in her death, as well as one other death and more than one hundred injuries. However, after the attack, there was a struggle among terrorist organizations to claim responsibility. Wafa's mother stated that her daughter had not been involved in any militant activist groups, but rather, carried out the attack of her own initiative because she had been angered at the deaths of children in Ramallah. Her family was proud of her martyrdom and expressed their hopes that other young women follow Wafa's example.[103] Once Hamas and other terrorist organizations saw these individual attacks succeed, they began to appreciate the advantages of a female combatant. The realization of female utility induced a change in rhetoric, which was much more accepting of women in terrorist organizations. The formal rules established by the Hamas Charter, which said that women could not participate in terrorism, were overruled by the informal rules, which stated that women could participate in terrorist operations as long as their involvement lead to success.[104]

A reinterpretation of the formal political rules to be compatible with the informal rules

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[101] Hamas Charter. (1988). The Avalon Project. Yale Law School.
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp
[102] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?
[103] Bennet, James. (2002). Arab Woman's Path to Unlikely 'Martyrdom'. *The New York Times.*
[104] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

was necessary for the survival of terrorist operations. Hamas leadership issued Various fatwas were by the which provided the organization with the necessary religious justifications for female participation, despite previous formal rules prohibiting such activity. In 2000 Sheikh Yassin stated that women's participation in martyrdom was problematic. However, by 2002 he noted that women, just like men, were drawn to jihad. Religious political organizations make decisions based on religion, traditional society, and political calculus; the involvement of women in terror operations was no different.[105] In January 2002, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Islamic leader of Hamas stated "Women are like the reserve army, when there is a necessity we use them."[106] As religious justification was found or created, Hamas took full advantage of this approval and began to increasingly recruit women. Once the support for female participation in Hamas evolved, even the leader of Hamas, Al-Rantisi, stated that there was no reason for suicide attacks to be 'monopolized' by men. [107] "Thousands of our women are looking forward to the day on which they can make a sacrifice on behalf of our children, women and elderly who are being killed daily ... This is a craving, a wave of craving among women."[108] A former special advisor on Arab affairs to the Israeli government described a Hamas bimonthly publication which was dedicated to women. The publication contained many letters to the editor from women asking for permission to participate directly in the conflict and asserting their right to be martyrs.[109] According to Dr. Samiya Sa'as Al-Din,

> "Palestinian women have torn the gender classification out of their birth certificates,

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[105] Margolin. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?
[106] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?
[107] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan. Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, 11(3-4), 417-413. DOI: 10.1080/14690764.2010.546116.
[108] Abd-al-Aziz al-Rantisi, 'Hamas', interview with CNN 2004; Ness, op. cit., p. 28.
[109] Steinberg, Matti. Interview by Mia Bloom, September 2002.

declaring that sacrifice for the Palestinian homeland would not be for men alone; on the contrary, all Palestinian women will write the history of the liberation with their blood, and will be- come time bombs in the face of the Israeli enemy. They will not settle for being mothers of martyrs."[110]

With religious justification came approval from Hamas leadership for the recruitment of women. Not only approval, but also encouragement for women to seek out and join Hamas. Islamic acceptance of women into some level terrorism turned out to be a method of recruitment. Hamas furthered this encouragement by giving women official titles in the organization, and even promised them rewards in the afterlife. While men are promised paradise and 72 black-eyed virgins, women are promised to be reunited with their husbands in paradise, or married off to Hamas members in heaven if they were not married on earth.[111] Over time Hamas created new interpretations of Islam to justify and encourage female participation.

Al Qaeda vs. Hamas

Organizations that adopt "leftist," or secular, ideals may be more likely to recruit women, because these groups foster goals which conform to social change.[112] By using women as combatants, thereby breaking the status quo, social change may be achieved.[113] Hamas has evolved its ideological basis to be compatible with the recruitment of women, and so has been able to survive. Left wing groups also tend to be progressive and foster the potential for future gender equality. However, right wing groups such as Al Qaeda usually have a stronger sense of norms and are strictly patriarchal.[114] Organizations that are considered "rightist" have not

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[110] Samiya Sa'ad Al-Din, according to Mia Bloom, Al- Akhbar (Egypt), February 1, 2002.
[111] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[112] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.
[113] Jacques, Karen & Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.
[114] Jacques, Karen & Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.

evolved at the same pace as leftist organizations, though they have somewhat realized the security and operational value of recruiting women. Al Qaeda has yet to operationalize these women completely by using them in all roles but has actively recruited them.

Both Al Qaeda and Hamas have experienced a gradual turn towards the use of women and have thus slightly blurred the lines between left-wing and right-wing organizations. Each organization's motivations to recruit women are similar, in that they are driven by environmental factors to adapt new tactics. As the institutional environment became increasingly populated with terrorist organizations, Al Qaeda and Hamas both needed to fight for their survival and reputations. They both also needed to increase recruitment levels, because of the increasing violence in which they continue to operate. Faced with diminishing power, both groups have confronted the possibility of recruiting women. Both groups needed women to ensure their long-term survival and fostered ideologies that directly conflicted with the concept of female combatants. However, while Al Qaeda made fewer religious justifications for female participation, Hamas addressed its Islamic restrictions head-on. Hamas adapted historical Islamic restrictions and put them into context of present day, manipulating them to support the recruitment of women. In both Hamas and Al Qaeda, female participation has grown, particularly in suicide bombing. In addition, more women have been recruited to Hamas who are employed as sympathizers and spies.[115]

V. Female Motivations vs Terrorist Motivations

Looking at the motivations of women to join terrorists and terrorist organizations' motivations to recruit women as mutually exclusive topics shows that each is based on

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[115] Jacques, Karen & Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.

patriarchal ideas. The female motivations to join terrorist organizations, either personal or public, are derived from patriarchal restrictions imposed upon women. By having their participation in public suppressed by men, women are left without a way to express themselves politically. By having their private lives structured by men and enforced by society, women who act outside of this structure are reprimanded and ostracized. This social isolation and suppression has resulted in women seeking out and joining terrorist organizations.

Terrorist organizations want the advantages women possess solely because of their gender. Because women are unable to participate in public on the same level as men, they operate on an inconspicuous level that makes them desirable tools for terrorists. The idea that women are peaceful and nurturing is one that is prevalent in most places throughout the world.[116] Due to this assumption of feminine identity, people tend to be to see a woman involved in violence. This shock increases the impact of terrorist attacks and makes women advantageous to terrorists. Women's roles in public and private spaces are constructed by men and a patriarchal society, and thus women become vulnerable to terrorist recruitment.

While both female and terrorist motivations to involve women in terrorism have a basis in women's subordination, they are different. Women's motivations, regardless of being public or private, are usually focused on some sort of female liberation. Terrorist organizations do not share this goal, rather they only seek to further their own political agendas. By using female vulnerability and desire for change, terrorist organizations can pursue their own goals, and extend the patriarchal structure of society into the terrorist organizations themselves.

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[116] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.

VI. Conclusion

Gender Roles and Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda's motivations for the recruitment of women can tell us the same thing as the general motivations for terrorist organizations to recruit women. Understanding women as secondary to men, and restricting women to the private sphere, Al Qaeda has extended the patriarchal structure of noncombatant society into terrorism. By not allowing women to receive official rank, women become deprived of the honor that many women become involved in terrorism for. Though recruiting women has elongated Al Qaeda's life span, the organization has not acknowledged the advantages that women can bring to a terrorist organization, other than those that exist because of her societal repression, and has therefore mainly recruited women through the men in their lives.

Gender Roles and Hamas

The motivation for Hamas to recruit has changed over time, and with it the group's gender relations have evolved. With the First Intifada, Hamas' rise established a swift eviction from women within organizationally sanctioned violence. This was not only carrying society's patriarchal structure into the organization but intensifying it. With women now severely restricted by the men, Hamas operated in an institutional environment that was increasingly crowded and threatening. Once the difficulty of operating in a violent and competitive environment began to take its toll on the organization, Hamas was forced to confront its gender ideology. By adapting Islam to accept women in terrorism, Hamas changed the status quo of Islamic gender ideology and took a step towards a less patriarchal structure.

Gender Roles and Terrorism: Recruitment and Motivations

       The fact that Al Qaeda and Hamas turned toward the use of women as a recruitment base secondary to men displays the secondary citizenship of women in the societies that these organizations operate. It is unclear whether terrorist organizations have employed women based on a heightened sense of gender equality, or simply for temporary convenience.[117] It is also questionable whether the organizations will continue to recruit women once the time of immediate crisis has passed. Something that was previously separate from its operations, gender relations became problematic as both groups were faced with the need to recruit women. While Al Qaeda encouraged female involvement via their male connections in Al Qaeda, Hamas employed religion to encourage women to become involved of their own volition. Al Qaeda has perpetuated male dominated gender roles, and Hamas has begun to alter them. Both organizations have utilized women to their advantage, though Hamas has (either intentionally or unintentionally) been able to give women a minor level of agency.

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[117] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.

Chapter 3: The Roles of Women in Al Qaeda and Hamas

I. Introduction

Over time, women have adopted new roles in terrorism based on the existential security of the terrorist organizations in which they operate. While at first women were confined to noncombatant duties, terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Hamas experienced external pressures and witnessed successful personal initiative attacks, which caused these organizations to begin to strategically deploying female suicide bombers. From this point, women extended beyond the suicide bomber and into other combatant roles, as needed by the terrorist organization. While this growth in roles may be interpreted as an advancement for female terrorists, patriarchal ideals largely dictated how terrorist organizations choose to employ women.

This chapter will begin with analyzing women's roles in terrorist organizations by comparing Al Qaeda and Hamas. Specifically, the ways in which Al Qaeda and Hamas are structurally and ideologically different, and how these differences affect how they employ women. I then focus on the phenomenon of suicide bombing, and the conflicting ideas that female suicide bombers are progress for the female's role in terrorism, and that they are simply tactical deployments. This gives way to an analysis of the depth of patriarchy in terrorist operations such as suicide bombing, women's roles in terrorism, and terrorist operations.

II. Women's Roles in Terrorist Organizations

Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda's involvement of women developed in three stages. First, about twenty years ago, women began to marry Europe's militant Islamists and follow them to a Taliban-ruled

Afghanistan. Second, women began to support and encourage their male relatives to follow the "right" interpretation of Islam, facilitate the operational work of organizations, and begin to gather into Sisterhoods. Third, women began to participate in suicide bombing.[118] In 2007 the FBI received reports that Al Qaeda held military training for women at bases near Jalalabad and Kandahar airports.[119] That same year, Al Qaeda's leadership in Iraq announced that is created a "brigade" of women suicide bombers.

Then, in 2009, the wife of the current leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released an open letter stating that women should aid the Jihad in any way, including through martyrdom operations.[120] Over time, various leaders of Al Qaeda have made conflicting statements and signals about the female involvement, saying either women should be involved in operations or should be restricted to working in the domestic sphere. Despite Al Qaeda's claims of both female participation and nonparticipation, women have continued to become increasingly involved in terrorism.[121]

Operation-based jihadi organizations use violence to achieve their main political goal, which is to remove Western powers from Muslim lands. In these jihadi organizations, women's tactical roles can be divided into two categories- combative, and noncombative. Some examples of these roles can be seen in Table 3.1. An operation-based jihadi organization will tactically adopt a clandestine cellular network structure to counter growing surveillance by authorities and prolong the lifetime of the organization. Women's inclusion in these groups is therefore shaped to support this structure.[122]

[118] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[119] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[120] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[121] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.
[122] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations.

Table 3.1: Roles of Women in Operation-Based Jihadi Organizations[123]
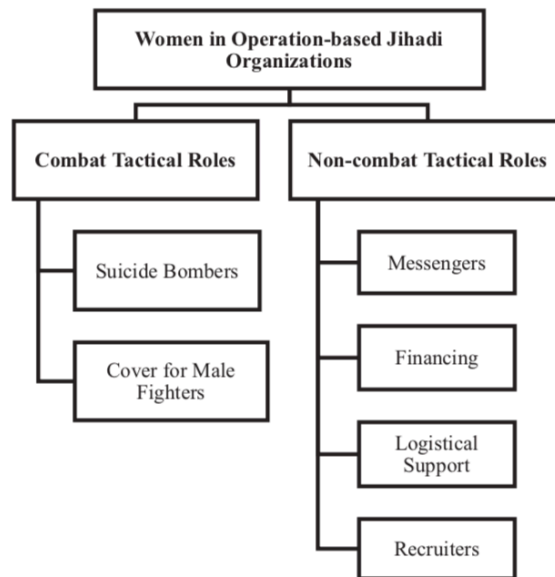
Women are valuable assets in combat tactical roles, as suicide bombers and as cover for male fighters. The average number of casualties caused by a female attacker is 8.4, compared to the average 5.3 casualties per male attack, and implies that women are more effective attackers.[124] The average number of fatalities and injuries per female suicide attack in Iraq has been increasing over time, notably spiking in 2005 and 2009, which can be seen in Table 3.2. Women have proven to be such successful suicide bombers, that many terrorist groups have begun to put women in combatant roles for the first time via the role of suicide bomber.[125] In several cases, women accompanied male jihadist suicide bombers to serve as cover, by allowing the two to portray an innocent couple. In Muslim countries, women are less likely to be subject to searches because honor is an important social code of conduct for females. Her virtue must be preserved by upholding practices such as refraining from touching women or viewing them

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[123] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations.
[124] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations.
[125] Jacques, Karen and Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.

without their hijab on. This ability to claim that cultural standards and honorable conduct be upheld allows her to have an inconspicuousness which brings her male partner greater odds of reaching his destination undetected as well as smuggling contraband under her clothes.[126]

Table 3.2: Fatalities and Injuries per Female Suicide Attack in Iraq[127]
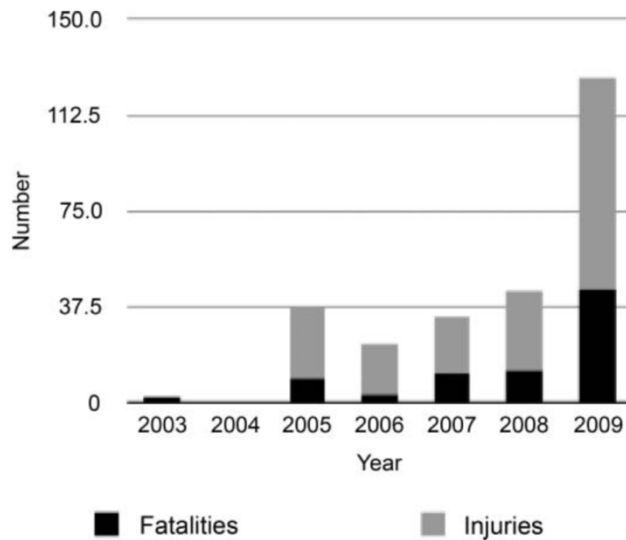
Religious restrictions protecting women's sexual purity as well as the cellular networks structure of operation-based jihadi organizations have prompted women to take on noncombatant roles. These terrorist organizations believe supporting duties are a good fit for the peaceful nature of women, and materialize in the roles of mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives, of Muslim men.[128] A common noncombatant role is financing the operations. Hawala is a way in which women are involved in funding jihadi organizations. The hawala system is a financial operation used in the Muslim world outside of the official banking system, through the which a remote third party transfers money between two people. During the US invasion of Iraq, Al Qaeda relied heavily on the hawala system to finance its operations. Al Qaeda used its female

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[126] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations.
[127] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[128] Gorka, Sebastian. (2016). Defeating Jihad: The Winnable War.

members to receive the funds, under the guise of receiving allowances from family members abroad. Other than this, women also opened bank accounts under their maiden names, raising money, and circulating cash between jihadi cells. Women took charge of the financial aspect of the hawala system, because the men who were in combat were so frequently killed or imprisoned, that the organization needed someone consistent to look after its finances. Therefore, the women who were not suicide bombers were not in direct physical danger and were able to reliably sustain the organization financially. This is ironic, because in many western countries, it is traditionally thought by conservatives that men keep track of finances. However, in this case, the gender roles flipped due to a situation of life or death.

Women may also be employed as messengers, who must distribute messages among different jihadi cells and at various levels of the organization. Jihadi organizations also use women as recruiters to "attract new logisticians, financiers, suicide bombers, or guerilla fighters into the organization."[129] Specifically, women may attract other women into the organization by preaching about the ideological goals and the organizational vison. The most important duty of the female recruiter is to maintain good relations between the organization and the grassroots supporters. Most commonly, women may provide logistical support or domestic support for terrorist organizations, such as providing safe havens, food, medical care, and clothes for combatants. In sum, as noncombatants, women are responsible for the primary functions and the details of the terrorist organizations.

Hamas

Hamas acts as both a societal and political structure which provides social benefits, and as a terrorist organization. This dual-sided structure causes the local population to rally around the

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[129] Cragin, Kim and Daly, Sara A. (2009). Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs.

terrorist group, and while the group may lose some followers after exhibiting violence, the population becomes reliant on the group for these social benefits and ultimately the terrorists stay in power. Since 1995, between the Intifadas, terrorist groups like Hamas in Palestine began to evolve, and after the Second Intifada women's roles in terrorism expanded. Greater roles within attacks which have been planned and carried out by terrorist organizations have allowed women to carry out high intensity attacks, such as suicide bombings. In Table 3.3, a dataset by Devorah Margolin, which displays the correlation of high intensity female attacks with "organizational responsibility," and low intensity female attacks with personal initiative.

Table 3.3: Attack Intensity by Level of Organizational Responsibility[130]

Level of organizational responsibility	Attack intensity			
	High intensity*	Medium intensity*	Low intensity*	Total**
Organized Attack	26 (100.0%)	11 (61.1%)	2 (3.8%)	39 (40.2%)
Personal Initiative Attack	0 (0.0%)	6 (33.3%)	50 (94.3%)	56 (57.7%)
Unknown	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (2.1%)
Total	26 (26.8%)	18 (18.6%)	53 (54.6%)	97 (100.0%)

*Percentages denote percents within a type of attack.
**Percentages in total denote percent of the 97 cases.

Women's roles in violence began to increase within Palestinian organizations that were involved in the Palestinian resistance movement, before 2002. Women began by acting as assistants to men in their violent attacks and simply collaborating with them. Women then began to carry bombs and eventually planted them, though without detonating the bombs on themselves. For example, Al-Tamimi was a female terrorist who was one of the first women to detonate bombs (not attached to her person) for Hamas, and she essentially lead the way for women to become suicide bombers. She also influenced many more young women to take on violent roles within the Palestinian movement. In July 2001, Al-Tamimi reportedly planted a

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[130] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

bomb in a West Jerusalem supermarket, though security personnel detected and defused the bomb before she could detonate it. Al-Tamimi was also linked to the suicide bomber Izzedine as-Suheil Al Masri, who successfully bombed a Jerusalem Sbarro pizzeria in August 2001. In the Sbarro bombing, Al-Tamimi provided intelligence, helped plan the operation, choose the target, and claimed that the whole bombing was her idea.[131] The failure of the supermarket attack helped Al-Tamimi and Al Masri successfully attack the pizzeria one month later. This attack constituted one of the deadliest suicide bombing attacks in Israel's history. Al-Tamimi was arrested in 2002 for lending Hamas logistical support in both of the attacks. Though she was released in 2011 as part of a prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel, the US has since released a warrant for her arrest, and the FBI has added her to its list of most wanted terrorists. Revolutionary roles taken on by women like Al-Tamimi eventually culminated into female suicide bombing as women pushed for expanded roles within Hamas.[132]

With suicide bombings on the rise, terrorist organizations were forced to change and adapt their rhetoric on female participation in terrorism, and reluctantly used women in their attacks.[133] While initially terrorist organizations condemned the participation of women in violence and terrorism, the need to incorporate women into their organizational structures forced terrorist groups to publicly accept female participation in terrorism. Terrorists made the public become more likely to accept the legitimacy of female terrorists by toning done negative rhetoric towards women in violence, as well as making statements that could be interpreted as supportive of women joining terrorist organizations. For example, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, initially stated that the participation of women was not needed in martyr operations.

[131] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[132] Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.
[133] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

Over time, with pressure, he changed his position and stated that if a Hamas woman wanted to carry out a "martyr operation" which required her to be away more than a day and a night, that she should be accompanied by a man.[134] Still, women's roles in Hamas were subject to change depending on the leader who was issuing statements on the group's behalf, how seriously these leaders interpret the Islamic faith, and the context of the statement.

Though there was a pattern of escalating violence by Palestinian women during the Second Intifada, Israeli security forces failed to anticipate female suicide bombers. Israeli failure to prepare for and prevent female suicide attacks led to Israeli attempts to portray female militants as victims or social failures. The public would not accept the female militants as legitimate threats, and thus the attacks carried out by groups using women would generate less fear. Less public fear would give the Israelis some advantage over the Palestinians after failing to anticipate the deployment of female bombers by groups such as Hamas. So, on the one hand, while the Israeli security forces could have potentially lost credibility in the eyes of the public, the public did not completely accept the attacks as legitimate because they were carried out by women. On the other hand, Israeli forces depicted female militants as "sentient missiles" [135] rather than "real terrorists" who intentionally organize violence.[136] Because the Israeli security forces portrayed female terrorists as weapons delivery systems, the women were likely to be seen as lacking a conscious, working mind. Specifically, an intelligent mind that has motivations of its own. The attacks were then considered mostly illegitimate and any intended threat from Hamas, discarded. Because the public considered the female attacks either nonthreatening or less threatening than male attacks, the public will likely underestimate the capabilities of female

134 Cunningham, Karla. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism.
135 Ucko, David and Langston, Christopher. (2002). Suicide Attacks- A Weapons Delivery System." *The International Institute for Strategic Studies.*
136 Cunningham. (2007). Countering Female Terrorism.

terrorists. This is true of Hamas in particular. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, never explicitly denied the possibility of female participation in the organization.[137] Regardless, many people were unsure if Hamas would ever recruit and employ women. Because of this, the public was blindsided by Hamas' use of female suicide bombers.

There are the roles that make Hamas different from operation-based organizations such as Al Qaeda. Hamas, a group that has a monopoly on violence while also providing social services to the community, also commits human rights abuses and acts of terror. Women therefore participate in more aspects of terrorism in Hamas than they would in Al Qaeda. For example, one of the more unique female roles to Hamas is that of the tax collector. By serving as tax collectors, women officially position themselves within the hierarchy of the organization and thus increase their chances of survival via security. Alternatively, women can work with the hierarchy (rather than within) as doctors, nurses, teachers, and educators. Working with the hierarchy allows women to maintain their traditional familial role while still taking on a vital part of operations. Another role that keeps women from combative positions, but that aligns more closely with Al Qaeda and general traditional Muslim ideals, is advocacy and recruitment. Inspiring and encouraging other women to join terrorist organizations keeps recruitment levels high. Lastly, one of the most respected roles of all is motherhood. Mothers who raise their children in Islam end up sacrificing themselves to their families due to the importance of family values and the sheer amount of duties mothers have. By giving themselves up to their children and families completely, these mothers end up becoming greatly respected for their domestic

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[137] Cook, David. (2005). Women Fighting in Jihad? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 28(5),* 375-384.

accomplishments. However, these mothers are not respected more than any man, or even put on the same plane of comparison as men.[138]

III. Suicide Bombing

The different ways in which terrorist groups employed women do not necessarily indicate whether the latter will become suicide bombers. Instead, it is suggested by scholar, Jessica Davis, that suicide bombing can be better predicted by structural and group factors.[139] How can we tell which groups will use women as suicide bombers? Islamist organizations specifically involve women as tactical operatives, because in any other role, the groups would be forced to consider granting the women post-conflict roles if faced with a political or military victory. Tactical roles are defined in this thesis as roles which are not involved in planning the infrastructure or strategic direction of the group.[140] As tactical operatives, women are restricted from entering any roles which may permanently expand their responsibilities or alter the power dynamic between men and women. If women had been given military or strategic leadership roles, women may expect a continuation of these roles post-conflict, in the case of victory.

Suicide bombers are a unique opportunity for militant groups, because there are no female ex-combatants to re-integrate into society, if the bomber is successful. Non-militant organizations might be more hesitant to employ women because they do not have the option of using women as suicide bombers. Employing women would mean running the risk of achieving power and then having to share it with these women.[141] This possibility is unacceptable, as it would disrupt the post-conflict state of gender relations. The terrorist group's ideal post-conflict

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[138] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?
[139] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[140] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[141] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.

gender ideology would be identical its pre-conflict gender relations, which is patriarchal. "The phenomenon of female suicide bombing cannot be conceptually divorced from the patriarchal societies into which these women are born and the accompanying divide in male and female roles that they uphold."[142] The patriarchal structure within the terrorist organizations is vividly affected by the vision of a post-conflict society, in which peace will allow for a strengthening of the patriarchy and a return to traditional gender norms.

How women's roles in terrorism develop partially depends on the ideology of the group, as well as social factors and context of the conflict. Though women hold a wide range of roles in terrorist organizations, there is no indication if or when groups will use women as suicide bombers. As discussed by Anne Speckhard, suicide bombing results from the interaction of several factors. First, the initiative of the women themselves; second, the social and political concerns that foster it; third, the group that decides to use it; and fourth, the ideology that promotes it as a weapon for achieving political change.[143] The interaction of these four factors can be applied to both Al Qaeda and Hamas. First, women have taken initiative by joining terrorist organizations as supporters, spies, or other roles, and then transitioning to the role of suicide bomber, or joining initially with the intent of being a suicide bomber. Second, women become suicide bombers due to motivations which may be public, such as political concerns, or private, possibly as familial duty. For reference, these motivations were more thoroughly discussed in chapter 2. Third, both Al Qaeda and Hamas have actively decided to use female suicide bombing, evidenced by the groups claiming responsibility for female suicide bombings. Hamas was first to be publicly open about their use of female suicide bombing, and Al Qaeda

[142]Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness? *Journalism Studies, 8(6).*
[143] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq. *Democracy and Security. 5*(1), 34–35. DOI: 10.1080/17419160902723759

has recently become more so. Fourth, Female suicide bombers are employed in a wide range of ideological groups, as can be seen in Table 3.4, and the ideologies of Hamas and Al Qaeda have either evolved over time or been justified to accommodate for female suicide bombing.[144] While some interpretations of Islam may not condone suicide bombing, Hamas and Al Qaeda have both issued fatwas and publicly discussed the ideological reasoning behind condoning female martyrs. As discussed by Jacques and Taylor, the role of the suicide bomber is not a progression from other roles in terrorist organizations, which suggests that female suicide bombers are not regular fighters but rather tactical deployments.[145] These suicide bombings are not an expansion on existing roles, but rather a strategic decision made by terrorist leaders. Female suicide bombers do not indicate an integrated role for, or progressive attitude towards, women in terrorism.[146]

Table 3.4: Women's Roles in Terrorism[147]

Group	Sympathizers	Spies	Warriors	Warrior Leaders	Dominant Forces	Suicide Bombers	Participation Grown?
European left-wing	X	X	X	X	X		X
LTTE	X	X	X	X	x	X	X
Domestic Latin Am.	X	X	X	X	x		X
IRA	X	X	X	X	x		X
American Right-wing	X	X	X	X			X
ETA	X	X	x	x			X
Palestinian	X	x				X	X
Chechen	X					X	X
International Latin Am.	X						
Irish Loyalists	X						
Al Qaeda						X	X

Note: **X** = females are often found in these roles within the group.
x = females positioned in these roles are typically exceptional and rare.
*Highlighted rows are the terrorist groups which are cited in this paper

[144] Jacques, Karen and Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.
[145] Jacques, Karen and Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.
[146] Gonzalez-Perez, Margaret. (2008). Women and Terrorism: Female activity in domestic and international terrorist groups. *Contemporary Terrorism Studies.*
[147] Jacques, Karen and Taylor, Paul J. (2009). Female Terrorism: A Review.

IV. Patriarchy in Terrorism

The traditional Arab woman has historically welcomed and supported the subordinate role, usually contributing to the insurgency by giving birth to males. Still today, many females involved in terrorist organizations have been involved in traditional ways, by having children, hopefully boys, who can later contribute to the organization. These women earn high respect from their communities for the sacrifice of their children via service to terrorist organizations.[148] This being said, mothers who encourage their sons to carry out a suicide bombing are considered mad, by the community. The relationship between mother and child are so strong, and the mother figure regarded so highly, that any potential suicide bomber whose mother learns of the suicide-bombing plot is immediately removed from the arrangement by the terrorist organization, and the plan of attack is cancelled.[149] A mother may panic and attempt to report the potential attack, or if the mother encourages the attack, the terrorist organization considers her mad for supporting the death of her child. After a suicide attack, when the family of a bomber is interviewed, the mother and family members tend to appear proud and encouraging to future bombers on television. However, the community expects the mother to grieve properly, because of her role as the mother and her relationship with the deceased.

Most of the time, the primary traditional duties of the women are raising the children in the culture, sustaining the family unit, and creating life. Now, ironically, some women are taking a leading role in conflicts by suicide bombing, and ending lives rather than creating them. By taking on the dominant role of suicide bombers, these women have completely reversed their gender roles in conflict, though have not changed their subordinate status in the patriarchal

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[148] Cruise, Rebecca. (2016). Enough With the Stereotypes: Representations of Women in Terrorist Organizations. *Social Science Quarterly, 97(1),* 33-43. DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.12250
[149] Gonzalez-Perez, Margaret. (2008). Women and Terrorism: Female activity in domestic and international terrorist groups. *Contemporary Terrorism Studies.*

society in which they live their everyday lives.[150] By becoming a female suicide bomber, a woman becomes a valuable asset in violence, in a way that a man is unable to be. Because of the advantages that only a woman can provide as a suicide bomber, she becomes dominant as opposed to a male in this role. However, the memory of a female suicide bomber would not outrank her male family members, because the social hierarchy is still strictly in place.

Some scholars would argue that women's increasingly large opportunities within terrorist organizations are indicative of a societal change in gender roles. However, this view is opposed by the idea that female combatants are necessary but temporary. In the former view, female terrorists destabilize gender roles permanently, and leave society reeling in a peaceful context where women have the ability to challenge the social hierarchy. In the latter, gender roles are only temporarily destabilized, if at all, depending on the organization and its policies. This destabilization can be tolerated in a time of crisis, when female participation is absolutely necessary, but not in a post-conflict society, when it is no longer needed. Even in times of crises this destabilization may not be justifiable to some terrorist organizations, and so some groups may refrain from deploying female martyrs. Examples of these groups can be found in Figure 4, such as the ETA, IRA, and right-wing American groups. This absence of female martyrs may be due to ideological or social restraints.

Many operation-based jihadi organizations are restricted by tradition and religion based on maintaining women's sexual-purity. In order maintain purity, a woman must always be accompanied by a male mahram (husband or relative in the prohibited degree of marriage) in public, private, or in the presence of other men. These confinements would make operations extremely difficult for any women participating in attacks, making terrorist organizations

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[150] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.

hesitant to involve them, regardless of the advantages they bring as combatants.[151] This is one of the same reasons that they are chosen last to be operationalized.

In order to make female participation justifiable, acts that would be otherwise forbidden were reframed by terrorists in three ways. These acts were first rationalized as desperate measures, and while the bombings symbolized a deviation from gender roles, the traditional understanding of what gender roles should be in normal times still existed. The memory of pre-conflict patriarchy was constantly present. These women were characterized by their military capabilities in the context of defending Islam, rather than by stepping outside of social norms.[152] Characterizing women as heroes of Islam presented the possibility of them being seen as destroyers of traditional social conduct. Secondly, the women bombers were framed by terrorist organizations as completing the missions of historical female militants. Early Islamic history was selectively chosen by terrorist organizations, such as "acts of female jihad" during the raids led by the Prophet Muhammed, so that the traditional past could be linked with the present.[153] Finally, female suicide bombers gain a high status, become almost revered by their communities, and are elevated above any discrepancies about their gender.[154]

By framing female violence as ethically and religiously justifiable, terrorist organizations have also redrawn boundaries that define who is defending the organization and its cause. This redefinition has caused the distinction between combatants and noncombatants to become increasingly blurred.[155] If women and girls were initially involved in a wider range of roles only

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[151] Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon. (2018). The Strategic Logic of Women in Jihadi Organizations. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.*
[152] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, (28(5).* 353-373. DOI: 10.1080/10576100500180337
[153] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[154] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[155] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.

due to necessity, over time their involvement became integrated into the actual organizational structures of many groups.[156]

If not in a traditional domestic role, women in Palestinian groups have been reported as being suicide bombers and tactical operatives, rather than working in any leadership roles.[157] Today, women organize, recruit, and carry out attacks more than ever before in history.[158] For female suicide bombers in Palestinian terrorist organizations, "even if the decision for participation in martyrdom is reached by a woman, the circumstances within which she can carry out her plan are very masculine ones…"[159] This inability to carry out her decision under her own terms speaks to a larger social issue of gender roles in patriarchal societies.[160]

V. Conclusion

Though women are now branching out into new roles, as both combatants and noncombatants, their roles and when they fulfill them are being decided on their behalf. By being used as bodies to be blown up, the producers of children, or the keeper of the family unit, the women who take on roles in Al Qaeda and Hamas are used to advance the main goal of the organizations, yes, but are mainly used to advantage the men within the organizations. It must also be considered that women are a temporary addition to terrorist organizations in times of pressure and conflict. When this time comes to a close, if women are cast out, it may then be said that women were never used via their own agency, and that at this time, women in terrorism are being used in a manner that is to the advantage of a patriarchal system.

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[156] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[157] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[158] Cruise, Rebecca. (2016). Enough With the Stereotypes: Representations of Women in Terrorist Organizations.
[159] Brunner, Claudia. (2005). "Female Suicide Bombers- male suicide bombing? Looking for reporting in the suicide bombings of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Global Society, 19(1),* 29-48.
[160] Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness?

Chapter 4: Patriarchy in Terrorism

I. Introduction

Despite historical involvement in war, women had been denied equality with men until a woman from Quraysh aristocracy, Umm Salama, asked the Prophet, "Why are men mentioned in the Quran and why are we not?" He replied with a verse, "Lo! Men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender to Allah and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey, and women who obey… Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward."[161] This moment has been cited throughout history as being monumental for women in the Muslim community, as it called into question traditional gender relations. However, regardless of their role in operations and violence, women were rarely granted elevated status. Although there is some existing anecdotal evidence, women generally did not fight in pre-modern times. While reflected in the conservative nature of Muslim law, radical Muslims recently have been attempting to legitimize female participation in jihad. These attempts are qualified by a number of problems: questions of reward for martyrdom, gender division, sexual purity, and even legal reasons.[162] Both Al Qaeda and Hamas have worked to legitimize female participation in this way[163] and I argue that they have been somewhat successful. The communities in which they operate revere female suicide bombers as martyrs and encourage the women in their communities to join terrorist organizations to become bombers. However, if a woman was to join a terrorist organization to become a combatant, she would be crossing a strong traditional

[161] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 8(1)*, p 21-35.

[162] Cook, David. (2005). Women Fighting in Jihad? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 28(5),* 375-384.

[163] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, 11(3-4),* 417-413. DOI: 10.1080/14690764.2010.546116.

boundary. This traditional idea has been established by a patriarchal structure which stands strong in both society and the terrorist organizations themselves. It is because of this traditional imposition on female terrorists, that it is important to analyze the influence of the patriarchy on traditional gender roles within terrorist organizations.

This chapter will start with a discussion of modern suicide bombing, how it began, and how its gendered nature has influenced female martyrs. I will then analyze the idea of dual oppression, a concept usually applied to black, American women, and explore how it may be applied to women in terrorist organizations. From there, I will outline the social hierarchy and restrictions which affect women in Arab society. Notably, the restrictions which are unique to Arab and Islamic societies as opposed to Western societies. It is for this reason that I analyze the case of the Chechen Black Widows as an example of Islamic women taking on new roles in terrorism. From here, I come to discuss the importance of terrorist organization appealing to society in order to successfully employ the women. Without a level of support from the community within which the organization operates, the terrorist organization would not be able to achieve its goals, and employing women would be too costly. Finally, I will address the argument of women in terrorism as being feminist or not feminist. I will argue that, while it is impossible to know each woman's individual motivations due to limited information, women in terrorism generally are not a product of feminism, but rather a product of the society in which they live, which is patriarchal.

II. The Beginning of Modern Suicide Bombing

The introduction of modern suicide terrorism by Hezbollah in 1983, suicide bombing became the trademark of other radical Islamic and secular groups. Suicide bombing added

significantly to the lethality of the terrorism which would characterize the coming decades.[164]

The locations where women participate in martyrdom operations on a large scale, Chechnya and

Palestine, are two of the more secularized and well-educated areas in the Muslim world.[165]

However, in both secular and religious settings, there are fewer women than men involved in the

violence. When women are present in suicide bombing operations, they become significant to

onlookers.[166] In some cases, only when a woman becomes involved in a struggle that she is

acknowledged as having a direct impact on the national interest.[167] The lack of other

opportunities made suicide bombing unique for women, as one of the only avenues for simple

recognition as well as higher honor. However, when suicide bombing first began, women were

usually only permitted to be involved in those of secular operations. The two defining qualities

of religious terrorism for the next 20-plus years were; its lack of female participation, and the

specific ideology that deterred female participation.[168] Table 4.1 shows attacks of female suicide

bombers per terrorist organization group type, from 1969-2000.

Table 4.1: Percentage of Female Suicide Attacks per Group Type[169]

Category	% of attacks
Ethno Nationalist	64.4
Religious Fundamentalist	28.9
Left Wing	6.7

Terrorist women are usually recruited from societies which repress women. In Muslim

communities, such as Palestine and Chechnya, society is often patriarchal where women are

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[164] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[165] Cook, David. (2005). Women Fighting in Jihad?
[166] Ness, Cindy. (2008). *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility and Organization.*
[167] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[168] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[169] Davis, Jessica. (2013). Evolution of the Global Jihad: Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.

considered second-class citizens.[170] Women in these patriarchal communities are judged based on their chastity and sexual purity, and any perceived lack purity by the women's families could result in severe punishment or death. In Palestine, about 107 women from 1988 to 1993 were victims of honor killings wherein women were killed by their families to erase dishonor for perceived immoral behavior or sexual indiscretions, including rape.[171] Some female suicide bombers become martyrs because they have had affairs, have been raped, or done something outside of the social norm. In this case, they are no longer accepted by society, and left with terrorism as her last option to die with honor.[172] Throughout the Intifada, women experienced this societal ostracization and turn toward terrorism, and women served either as symbols of purity, or disgrace.[173] An example of this is if a woman left her home to join a terrorist organization. There was no way to safely leave the organizations, and to return to what these patriarchal societies would call "normal," leaving them with martyrdom.[174] Thus, the beginning of suicide bombing saw female suicide bombers who became martyrs as a last resort. Women later in history were able to use these early female bombers as inspiration to become suicide bombers themselves. In addition to this, terrorist organizations were able to understand women who carried out successful martyr operations independently during the First Intifada, and were influenced to include women in future organizational operations as suicide bombers.

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[170] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies? *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 29(2*), 261-288. DOI: DOI: 10.1080/15544770802118645

[171] Oliver, Anne Marie and Steinberg, Paul F. (2005). The Road to Marty's Square, A Journey Into The World Of The Suicide Bomber.

[172] Beyler, Clara. (2003). Messengers of Death- Female Suicide Bombers. *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism.*

[173] Oliver, Anne Marie and Steinberg, Paul F. (2005). The Road to Marty's Square, A Journey Into The World Of The Suicide Bomber.

[174] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?

III. Dual Oppression

Many of the women who joined terrorist groups stated that they felt less oppressed in terrorist groups as opposed to in society, generally. However, women are still repressed in their own terrorist groups.[175] Herr Christian Loche, the Hamburg Director of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution believed that "…women had more to overcome just by being in a terrorist group in the first place; they had to fight sexism as well as the enemy, and the best way to prove that they were equal was to show that they were even more ruthless than men."[176] A great deal of women have been sexually assaulted by terrorists within their own organizations, which contributes to female terrorists' "sense of humiliation and powerlessness."[177] This oppression is actually multidimensional, specifically for Palestinian Arab women. In Leila Khaled's autobiography, she describes "the problem of being a Palestinian Arab woman," in that she had to "face four kinds of oppression: national, social (the weight of traditions and habits), class, and sexual."[178] This last form of oppression, sexual, tips the scale of justice in favor of men.

Similarly, this type of suppression has been seen in America. Feminists have coined the term 'dual oppression' to discuss the twofold persecution of black women in America. Black women experience oppression within society and within their own race. Similarly, women in terror face both societal oppression as well as oppression within their patriarchal terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Hamas. In a dynamic similar to that of Black American women, female

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[175] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?
[176] MacDonald, Eileen. (1991). Shoot the Women First: Inside the Secret World of Female Terrorists.
[177] Bloom, Mia. (2007). Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.
[178] Khaled, Leila. (1973). *My People Shall Live.*

terrorists must face this dual oppression and struggle for gender equality in their private lives as well as within their chosen terrorist organizations.[179]

IV. Hierarchy and Restrictions

The social order in Palestinian society, like in other collective societies, is hierarchical and fixed. Individuals must obey directions given by those holding higher rank on the social scale, which is usually determined by gender and age.[180] Most collective societies are patriarchal, meaning males are placed at the highest point, while women and children are at the bottom. Notably, young women must obey older men and women as well as men younger than themselves.[181] This hierarchy puts women at the mercy of all males in their families, communities, or terrorist organizations. The traditional patriarchal structure also emphasizes the importance of tradition, while keeping harmony in the hierarchy of social relations.[182] This tradition implies that the hierarchical structure is upheld and that no one strays or differs from its boundaries.

The family is critical in providing assistance that, in many democratic states, are expected from formal social services. For example, mutual support in protection, financial support, employment, child rearing, etc. [183] The importance of the family unit causes family members to have clearly defined roles. For women, their roles involve putting the wellbeing of the family before their own, showing unconditional devotion to and continuous care for the family, as well

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[179] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?
[180] Ahmed, Leila. (1992). *Women and gender in Islam: Historical roots of a modern debate.*
[181] Sharabi, Hishan. (1975). Introduction to Studies of Arab Society.
[182] Barakat, Halim. (1985). The Arab family and the challenge of social transformation. *Women and the family in the Middle East: New voices of change,* p. 27-48.
[183] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?

as support for members of her family of origin and her husband. For mothers, personal behavior, marriage, and child rearing is the determinant of the success or failure of the family. Her role as a mother becomes "master status," and overshadows all other aspects of her life.[184] The engulfment of roles causes the rest of her identity to dissolve into that of the mother. This singular identity causes mothers to go to extremes to protect her children; from raising her children in the way of jihad to detonating a bomb strapped to her own chest.

Women experience social restrictions such as constraint to the private sphere, limitation from the public sphere, and a morality that stresses traditional ideals. A woman's identity, worth, and physical existence is therefore dependent on her obedience and child bearing ability. Berko and Erez argue that the restrictions imposed by the patriarchal family with its dual system of age and gender oppression, together with the translation of women's sexuality into a social norm of "honor," have become a tool that subjugates and controls Palestinian women, while strengthening men's domination.[185] Women are expected to preserve the family's honor by staying sexually pure and chaste, while men are expected to gain the family honor by exuding courage, religiosity, and hospitality.[186] Women's honor is passive, meaning it can be lost or diminished. In contrast, men's honor can be said to be active, and can be increased or expanded by carrying out acts of heroism.[187]

The social order of Palestinian/Arab society, and its cultural codes regarding gender relations, provide the context for Palestinian women's pathways to terrorism.[188] Women's pre-existing vulnerability in Arab society is increased by male supremacy and the patriarchal

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[184] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?
[185] Hasan, Menar. (1999). The politics of honor: Patriarchy, the state and family honor killing.
[186] Fernea, E. W. (1985). *Women and the family in the Middle East: New voices of change.*
[187] Hasan, Menar. (1999). The politics of honor: Patriarchy, the state and family honor killing.
[188] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?

structure of Arab families which justify inequality between men and women, and allow male family members to control the females. This vulnerability is furthered by the Arab idea that children or young adults are considered the father's property rather than the mother's and that, especially in times of crises, the welfare of the collective takes precedence over the welfare of the individual.[189] If a woman's misconduct becomes known, and she is thought to have brought dishonor to her family, society may take this as an indication that her family has failed to discipline her. This perception of fault puts the power of male family members, especially the father, into question by society and demands that the males respond in order to restore their masculinity.[190]

Entrenched attitudes regarding Islamic and Arab cultures have caused western cultures such as the United States and even Russia to assume that Muslim women would never be involved in terrorism or be given the task of suicide bombing. Although the assumption has been shown to be incorrect, it is entrenched and resistant to change, explaining counterterrorism failures in the Chechen case and the dangers facing an emergent case such as global Islamism.[191]

V. Example: Chechnya

Chechen women in violence have helped pave the way for other Islamic females to engage in jihad. In 2000, Hawa Barayev became a suicide bomber and influenced future Chechen women to do the same. There were six female Chechen suicide bombings carried out in 2003 alone.[192] The motivation of Chechen female suicide bombers has mostly been characterized along the lines of grief and revenge, rather than political agency.[193] Russian officials prefer to

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[189] Al-Khayyat. (1990). *Honour & Shame: Women in Modern Iraq.*
[190] Hasan, Menar. (1999). The politics of honor: Patriarchy, the state and family honor killing.
[191] Cunningham. (2007). Countering Female Terrorism.
[192] Ness, Cindy. (2008). *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility and Organization.*
[193] Ness, Cindy. (2008). *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility and Organization*

utilize a profile of Chechen female terrorists as young, widowed, desperate, or forced into the attack through blackmail or rape. These women have been named the "Black Widows" because many of them have lost husbands, brothers, or sons in the war. They were involved in the Beslan school and Moscow theatre attacks and have been monumental in the Chechen struggle.

Chechnya's conflict with Russia began as a secular struggle for independence, and then radicalized in Islamic terms as casualties increased. However, Chechnya's turn to Wahhabism seemed to be the result of political compromise for funding, rather than a commitment to Islam. This historical progression accounts for the ease in which women were introduced to militancy.[194] One month after Barayev's bombing, Chechen rebels issued an unsigned fatwa sanctioning female suicide bombing:

> "The young woman who was—inshaa-Allah—martyred, Hawa Barayev, is one of the few women whose name will be recorded in history. Undoubt- edly, she has set the most marvelous example by her sacrifice. The Russians may well await death from every quarter now, and their hearts may appropriately be filled with terror on account of women like her. Let every jealous one perish in his rage! Let every sluggish individual bury his head in the dirt! She has done what few men have done."[195]

Barayev and this fatwa are important milestones for female participation in terrorism, because both serve as preliminary tests to gauge the reaction of the traditional Islamic community to the prospect of female martyrs.[196] With the Chechen fatwa serving as an example, the High Islamic Council issued a fatwa encouraging Palestinian women to become suicide bombers.

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[194] Ness, Cindy. (2008). *Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility and Organization.*
[195] Unsigned Fatwa. (July 2000). "The Islamic Ruling on the Permissibility of Martyrdom Operations: Did Hawa Barayev Commit Suicide or Achieve Martyrdom?" Although unsigned, the fatwa is widely accepted as being the statement of Chechen militants. Available at (http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:PRvfixqkL2IJ:www.religioscope.com/pdf/martyrdom.pdf+did+hawa+barayev+commit&hl=en).
[196] Cook, David. (2005). Women Fighting in Jihad?

Counterterrorism success against female terrorists is centered in cultural and ideological assumptions. Despite evidence that women were participating in militancy, Russian leaders were unwilling to acknowledge the possibility of female activity, leaving women's roles in the Black Widows unchallenged.[197] Russian unwillingness to acknowledge female terrorists is an example of a structural failure to anticipate female terrorism. Counterterrorism setbacks today due to misconstrued public perception of women in terrorism could have been a factor in which extends further back in time, possibly allowing the women of Al Qaeda to develop women's roles during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[198]

VI. Appealing to Society

The male and female domains, as well as the public and private domains of Palestinians, are dominated by formal rules and structures. For example, Article 18 of the Hamas Charter (1988) describes the important role of women in the home.[199] Though the formal rules of Palestinian society dictated that women not participate in terrorism, the informal rule was that women could participate in terrorist activities as long as their involvement helped lead to successful operations.[200] Then, as a result of successful female terrorists, the informal rules of the political reality forced a change in the formal rules of political life. Fatwas were issued and hadiths were found to allow women to participate by providing them with religious justifications despite the formal regulations against such participation.[201]

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[197] Cunningham. (2007). Countering Female Terrorism.
[198] Blua, Antoine. (2016). "Afghan Women Take Up Arms Against The Taliban" https://www.rferl.org/a/women-militia-springs-from-northern-afghan-firefight/28111869.html
[199] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors? *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 39*(10), 912-934. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2016.1148934
[200] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?
[201] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

Nationalist aspirations take priority over feminist ones; the frequently cited reason being that equality between men and women cannot be realized under conditions of oppression, although a more trenchant analysis of the situation would include the reluctance that movement leaders and their surrounding societies have shown toward fundamentally challenging the structure of gender relations.[202] A review of the literature on women militants in traditional societies reveals a pattern whereby women combatants are viewed as equal to men in issues relating to the struggle, but not outside of it.[203] Similarly, the female martyr is portrayed as fierce, courageous, and the equal of men to enemies, in the name of the cause. But in her personal life, she is seen as modest, chaste, and a purveyor of family honor. The female martyr is portrayed as stepping outside culturally traditional gender norms, while at the same time embracing them.[204]

Women have always acted in patriarchal structures to prove their worth, to be as good as men, rather than to be as good as women. The criteria against which women are judged are masculine,[205] inducing the need for analysis on the relationship between gender and militant acts.[206] Gender performativity is defined by Judith Butler[207] as an act of stylized and repetitive performance of one's gender. Employed by Aslam, gender performativity is used to analyze the relationship between masculinity and militant jihadism.[208] If Muslim men are likely to participate in jihad as an act of gender performativity, how can women participate in militant activity attributed to gender performativity? Social norms would call for women to be restricted to the

[202] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[203] Khaled, Leila. (1973). *My People Shall Live.*
[204] Ness, Cindy. (2005). In the Name of the Cause: Women's Work in Secular and Religious Terrorism.
[205] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[206] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[207] Butler, Judith. (1999). Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of the Subversion of Identity.
[208] Aslam, Maleeha. (2011). "Islamism, Terrorism, and Muslim Masculinity."

private sphere, and therefore an act of gender performativity would be something along the lines of domestication, rather than militancy or violence. If men's participation in jihad can be explained by gender performativity, can women's participation in jihad be explained similarly? Since militancy is not a traditional female gender role, then how can it become acceptable for women to participate in violence?[209]

Gender dynamics are not permanently changed when women are involved in violence. Their participation is temporary, and when the crisis is over, they are expected to revert to traditional gender roles. Even during crises, a female combatant operates within outlined gender roles. Her behavior is justified by contextualizing her militancy with history and already accepted cultural ideas. In her personal life, and to her family, she maintains an image of chastity, modesty, honor, and subordination to men. But to her enemies, she is trained to portray an image of courage, ferociousness, and equality to men. In other words, women perform traditionally, while only acting somewhat contemporarily when justified by history or previously appealed by the community by reviving certain cultural ideas or practices.[210] Female terrorism is also made to be more palatable to the Muslim community by clerics, who have addressed the topic of female suicide bombings and have adapted religious narratives to make the change in traditional gender arrangements more understandable and acceptable.[211] For example, women are told they will not receive the same rewards as men in paradise, particularly sexual rewards. A

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[209] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[210] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[211] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.

woman is to have one eternal husband, because that is thought to fit her nature. Perceived codes of behavior and intentions remain mostly unchallenged.[212]

VII. Feminism

It may be a mistake to view the actions of female suicide bombers as feminist ones. To do so may be an imposition of Western thinking onto a conservative culture.[213] While it is possible for women in a conservative country to be frustrated and wish for increased freedom, it is a stretch to conclude that the short career of female suicide bombers are actually fulfilling their feminist motivations.[214] From the point of view of the bomber, she may be empowered by letting go of the concerns of life, and finds peace in believing she is defending her community. She understands that she lives on as a hero in the minds of those still living and will continue to live on in Paradise. For those women who are acting as religious martyrs, there is a hope that she can help her family in the present day as well as ensuring that they may enter Paradise when they die.[215] Speckhard argues that this ideology is much more likely than a feminist motivation to result in the manifestation of an actual bombing operation. Ideology will also give a deeper sense of empowerment and earned respect as a female jihadist bomber than engaging in suicide terrorism as a means of fighting for feminist goals.[216] It is impossible to know the motivation of each individual female bomber, and that this limitation prevents research from understanding the reach of the patriarchal structure through time and into female motivation to bomb. However, women's participation in terrorist or guerilla violence often fails to accomplish their feminist

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[212] Aslam, Maleeha. (2010). 'New Vulnerabilities" of Muslim Women in the Age of Terror: The Case of the Red Mosque Siege in Islamabad, Pakistan.
[213] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[214] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[215] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.
[216] Speckhard, Anne. (2009). Female Suicide Bombers in Iraq.

objectives. This failure may be due to the male domination within the organizational structures, cultures, and modes of operation in terrorist organizations.[217]

> "Female terrorism has, as yet, no autonomy. It is part of a male engineered, male dominated activity and even the most ardent feminist must recognize both the fact and the remote likelihood of it changing. Terrorism is all about power. The male terrorist struggling for power is not about to share it with the female…"[218]

Since terrorism is one of the only ways women are able to gain honor in the public realm, it is clear that women have little access to the public sphere, and have second-class status in society.[219] This second-class status means that female participation in terrorism stems from subordination. The collectivist nature of the Palestinian community and its gendered social norms have bestowed women with the duty to uphold family honor via adherence to rules and expected social behavior.[220] When these duties are not fulfilled, women are often left with terrorism, particularly suicide bombing, as the only way to make amends for their failure. When women are involved in terrorism, there is a risk that they will invest themselves in a misinterpreted understanding of female liberation. "In a society where the only way to become a female hero is by carrying out a suicide attack, women believe that gender equality means being as violent as their male counterparts."[221] However, female motivations for joining terrorist organizations are undermined by public opinion, and terrorist attacks carried out by women are reinterpreted as inauthentic. in Table 4.2, a study conducted by Elizabeth Gardner demonstrates

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[217] Asal, Victor and Dalton, Angela. (2011). Is It Ideology or Desperation: Why Do Organizations Deploy Women in Violent Terrorist Attacks?

[218] Galvin, Deborah M. (1983). "The Female Terrorist: A Socio-Psychological Perspective," *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 1.* p. 19-32.

[219] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.

[220] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?

[221] Von Knop, Katharina. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women.

that "the sources of the first explanatory statements in the 72 articles that contained at least one explanation for women committing terrorist acts."[222] In this table, most female terrorists explained female terrorism as being due to nationalism, desire for martyrdom, or a religious cause. In contrast, almost half of all journalists, "other" sources, and family/friends of female terrorists, explained female terrorism as being due to revenge, while no female terrorists themselves used this as an explanation.

Table 4.2: Explanations for Female Terrorism by Source of Framing Statement[223]

Explanation	Source (%)*						
	Journalist (no source)	Female terrorist	Friends or family of female terrorist	Terrorist group	Other	Analyst or academic	Government
Revenge	47	0	57	13	57	33	0
Nationalism	26	40	7	38	14	17	33
Feminist pride	11	0	0	0	0	17	0
Desire for martyrdom	5	27	7	0	0	17	0
Escape	5	7	0	38	14	17	0
Redemption	5	0	0	13	14	0	33
Religious cause	0	27	0	0	0	0	0
Victimization	0	0	29	0	0	0	33
(Valid cases)	(19)	(15)	(14)	(8)	(7)	(6)	(3)

Cramer's $V=0.460$, $p<0.001$.
*Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

The explanations for female terrorism by female terrorists are not agreed upon by the other sources, particularly the family and friends of the female terrorist and the terrorist group itself. Because the family is critical in raising and shaping any person, it would be easy to assume that a family or friend would best understand the motives of a female, even a female terrorist. However, the hierarchical structure of the family may cause an informational block between the

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[222] Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness?
[223] Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness?

woman and the rest of her family, in terms of her emotional motivations for terrorism. In regards to the lack of frequency between the women and the terrorist organizations' understanding of each other, there is a difference in values between two groups of people. Women represented in this table have committed acts of terror because of personal decisions and opinions, due to their own religious beliefs, nationalistic political ideas, or desires to become martyrs. In contrast, terrorist organizations have chosen to believe that women commit acts of terrorism because of escape, revenge, and redemption, in addition to nationalism. Escape, revenge, and redemption are all justifications based on women's relationship with men. Escaping the patriarchal structure of the society in which the women live, revenge for any harm men have done to them during times of conflict, and redemption for any sexual misconduct or assault they may have experienced. By framing women's motivations as patriarchal, terrorist organizations attempt to justify and as well as understate their own patriarchal compositions.

This mis-framing is how the patriarchal structure of society continues to be reflected in Palestinian terrorist organizations, even though women have been increasingly involved in terrorism. Despite women's reasoning for joining terrorist organizations and committing acts of terror being either public or private, their rationale has become overtaken by terrorist organizations' manipulation of attacks to fit the vision of the organization. Whether this manipulation happens intentionally, or due to a lack of understanding of these women's true motive, either way this miscommunication or freeze-out leads to a smothering of the female voice. Because there are few options for public assertion of the female voice, and terrorism is often a last resort for doing so, the manipulation of women's inspiration for terrorism is a final extinguishing blow to the female voice.

VIII. Conclusion

Throughout history, women's roles in violence have evolved and changed, depending on the interpretation and application of Islam. Initially, though there had been examples of women in violence, women were considered far from equal to men, until there was justification from the Prophet. Women who are recruited to terrorist organizations are those who were repressed in Arab society due to the patriarchal structure. Once in the terrorist organization, these women experience a patriarchal structure which mirrors that of society and dictates their roles and involvement within the organization. This oppression then becomes twofold, via gender and private life, leading to phenomena such as female suicide bombing. This can be seen in the example of the stark rise in female martyrs in Chechnya, specifically the Black Widows. However, another layer of patriarchy is imposed upon this example, because these women are said to be bombers, particularly because of the deaths of their husbands. By framing women militants in this way, and using Islam in context, terrorists have attempted to justify the use of women in violence to gain support from the public and to carry out successful attacks.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

I. Introduction

With the increase of female terrorism over time, an accompanying increase in research on the topic has found women being recruited and employed by groups such as Al Qaeda and Hamas in ways that I assert are patriarchal. The reasons for terrorist organizations to recruit women in comparison with the desire of women to join terrorist organizations indicates the patriarchal tendencies within Islam-based terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Hamas. While women's roles in these terrorist groups have evolved over time, this change has happened because of the groups' wavering existential security, rather than an increased sense of gender equality.

II. Summary of Findings

The social hierarchy of Arab society and its cultural codes and gender norms have generated the context for Palestinian women's pathways to terrorism and the analysis of women in terrorism.[224] Though the formal rules of Palestinian society dictated that women not participate in terrorism, the informal rule was that women could participate in terrorist activities as long as their involvement helped lead to successful operations.[225] Then, when female participation resulted in successful attacks, and when the public saw successful female martyrs, the formal rules of political life were forced to adapt to accept women in terror. In order to justify female participation, reinterpretations of text were proclaimed by the issuing of various

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[224] Berko, Anat and Erez, Edna. (2007). Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?

[225] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

fatwas, and hadiths were found despite the formal regulations against such participation.[226]

Terrorist organizations framed female violence as ethically and religiously justifiable to incorporate women into their groups, and by doing so redefined who was defending the organization and its cause. By allowing women to defend the organization, gender roles within the organization became temporarily destabilized. This destabilization is tolerated in a time of crisis, when female participation is needed, but not in post-conflict society.

How women's individual involvement within terrorism develops partially depends on the ideology of the terrorist group, as well as social factors and context of the conflict. Though women may hold a wide range of roles in terrorist organizations, this does not indicate when, if at all, groups will use women as suicide bombers. Their roles also depend on the fact that women in terrorism face both societal oppression as well as oppression within their patriarchal terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and Hamas. Female terrorists lack gender equality in their private lives and in the terrorist organizations within which they operate.[227] This means that women's participation in terrorist violence often fails to accomplish their objectives due to the patriarchal domination within the organizational structures, internal relations and modes of operation within terrorist organizations.[228]

III. How to Decrease Women's Involvement in Terrorism

The relationship between education level and terrorist activity has been investigated and has come back with little evidence supporting the hypothesis that an increase in education could lead

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[226] Margolin, Devorah. (2016). A Palestinian Woman's Place in Terrorism: Organized Perpetrators or Individual Actors?

[227] Sixta, Christine. (2008). The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New "New Women" in Developing Societies?

[228] Asal, Victor and Dalton, Angela. (2011). Is It Ideology or Desperation: Why Do Organizations Deploy Women in Violent Terrorist Attacks?

to a reduction in terrorism. As seen in Figure 5.1 from Dalton and Asal, the probability of

women's participation in terrorism increases by .15 when their average educational attainment

increases from .5 years to 12 years. This means that education and likelihood of female

participation in terrorism have a positive relationship, and so education alone is insufficient to

diminish women's involvement in terrorism.

Figure 5.1: Predicted Probabilities for Educational Attainment[229]
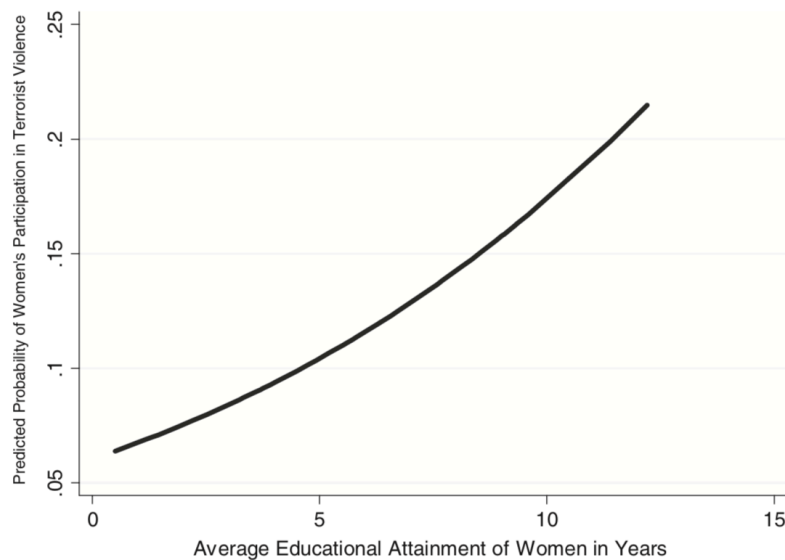
Similarly, women being added to the workforce cannot alone change the trend of increasing

female terrorism. Education and other opportunities which women are denied cannot be

addressed alone to combat female terrorism. These issues stem from a deeper lack of gender

equality in the society which Al Qaeda and Hamas have recruited from. Though, it must be noted

that these steps are important. A society that increases the amount of women in the workforce

experiences benefits to its general public safety.[230] The safety increase is because empowered
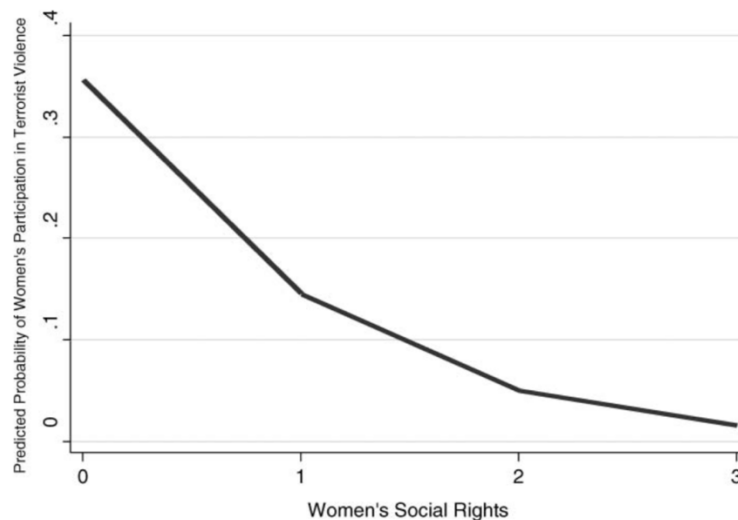
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[229] Asal, Victor and Dalton, Angela. (2011). Is It Ideology or Desperation: Why Do Organizations Deploy Women in Violent Terrorist Attacks?

[230] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 33(8),* 735-756. DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2010.494171

women, as a historically disenfranchised group, are more likely to fight for other socially marginalized groups and cut off the sources that feed dissent, which turns into political violence.[231] However, there is no evidence that women being in the workforce has an effect directly on women's rights. Women in the workplace likely leads to more public safety because they generate a more diverse labor force, and thus promote more tolerant attitudes.[232]

Understanding that the problem of increasing female terrorism and thus increasing terrorism in general stems from a lack of female rights is crucial. In a study by Dalton and Asal, shown in Figure 5.2, as women's social rights increase women are less likely to participate in terrorism.

Figure 5.2: Predicted Probabilities for Women's Social Rights[233]

In particular, the trend of women in terrorism is a political and social issue, and must be addressed on both fronts in future policy recommendations.

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[231] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism.

[232] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism.

[233] Asal, Victor and Dalton, Angela. (2011). Is It Ideology or Desperation: Why Do Organizations Deploy Women in Violent Terrorist Attacks?

IV. Policy Recommendations for the Future

A new approach is needed to address increasing terrorism in the Middle East, because military interventions and operations of the past have done little to bring peace and stability to the region.[234] The use of force and tightening of anti-terror laws has played out to the benefit of terrorists and allowed them to widen their operations and recruitment base.[235]

For the West

As the West, meaning the United States and its allies, moves forward in addressing terrorism, it must not be overbearing in its relationship with the Middle East. While it should promote democracy and democratic institutions, it cannot impose these values by force. Rather, the United States must establish a stronger diplomatic relationship with countries that support terrorist organizations and then put pressure on these countries, with the support of the international community, to seize hostilities. Besides pressure from the outside, the West can provide financial and organizational support to the local level, to help those groups counter terrorism within their own societies. Aid should be granted particularly to groups which aim to improve the lives of women in their communities.[236]

This relationship style will promote support from the bottom-up, by funding local organizations. At the same time, the international community pressuring Middle Eastern state governments to crack down on terrorism will facilitate a top-down approach. With the

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[234] Saikal, Amin.(2016). Women and Jihad: Combating Violent Extremism and Developing new Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Greater Middle East, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 36(3),* 313-322. DOI: 10.1080/13602004.2016.1216628

[235] Saikal, Amin.(2016). Women and Jihad: Combating Violent Extremism and Developing new Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Greater Middle East.

[236] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 8(1)*, 21-35.

cooperation of local states and organizations, and without invasive Western strategy, the US and other Western states will be able to support combat terrorism from the outside.

For the Middle East

With the West funding its local organizations and adequate state participation, the Middle East will have to do a majority of the ideological work on the local level to combat terrorism in the region. First, the Muslim community will need to reclaim the right to the interpretation and reexamination of Islam. In order to do this, Muslims need to "unread the patriarchal interpretations of Qur'anic teachings…"[237] The reinterpretation of Islam in a more liberal mindset will promote gender equality. It would also be beneficial for state governments of the Middle East to reserve political seats and memberships in religious organizations for women.[238] These measures, which promote gender equality, will produce a society of empowered women, and "…empowered women are able to reduce political violence…".[239]

Other than focusing on gender equality, specifically, rebuilding civil society to help people become self-sufficient will upset terrorist recruitment.[240] Because terrorist organizations generally attract recruits from populations in need of social services and benefits, those which are self-reliant are less likely to fall prey to terrorist recruitment tactics.

In sum, a regional conference, which facilitates the cooperation between the UN or general West and local states of the Middle East will be beneficial to combating the rise of female terrorism and thus terrorism in general. Ultimately, however, responsibility must fall to a

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[237] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters.
[238] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters.
[239] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism.
[240] Ali, Farhana. (2006). Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the World: The Role of Muslim Female Fighters.

state or organization that can hold the confidence and respect of the regional actors as well as major international powers.[241]

V. Future Research

Future Research should focus on the voices of failed female suicide bombers or other female terrorists, to better understand individual female terrorists' motivations. This thesis was limited, in that contact with individual terrorists was not possible. However, academics in the future should bring to light the different motivations of real women, rather than relying on generalizations, to understand each woman in her own right. With the escalation of female suicide bombing and terrorist attacks, future research will be able to expand on the increasing accounts of women terrorists.[242]

More data is needed on the current occupations of women in the Middle East, because this information can be used to develop a better understanding of the role of women at the societal level in attenuating terrorism.[243] Future research is needed to collect data on the cultural norms and attitudes towards women in society and workplace, as well as cultural diversity in terms of religion, traditionalism, and modernity of state leaders. [244] It would also be beneficial to study how factors that have traditionally been considered when studying male terrorists affect female terrorists, in addition to analyzing the factors that are specific to women.[245]

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[241] Saikal, Amin.(2016). Women and Jihad: Combating Violent Extremism and Developing new Approaches to Conflict Resolution in the Greater Middle East.
[242] Gardner, Elizabeth. (2007). Is There Method the Madness? *Journalism Studies, 8(6).*
[243] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism.
[244] Robison, Kristopher K. (2010). Unpacking the Social Origins of Terrorism: The Role of Women's Empowerment in Reducing Terrorism.
[245] Ness, Cindy D. (2007). The Rise in Female Violence. *Daedalus.* 84-93.

VI. Conclusion

The recruitment of women into Al Qaeda and Hamas has demonstrated the use of women by terrorist organizations as being driven by a patriarchal self-service. No female objective in joining the group is able to become truly fulfilled, let alone any feminist objective an individual woman may have had. In the culmination of previous roles, the suicide bomber is an explicit depiction of patriarchal domination as a tactical deployment of women rather than progress for the female voice. It is because female progress is claimed in the name of terrorism, that the combatting of terrorism must begin with the combatting of female terrorism, specifically. By addressing women's social and political rights, Arab communities will generate communities with a stronger sense of gender equality, and will be less likely to submit to terrorism.

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