GENDER IN TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM: UNRAVELLING MASCULINITIES, THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND CYBER SECURITY

WORKSHOP REPORT
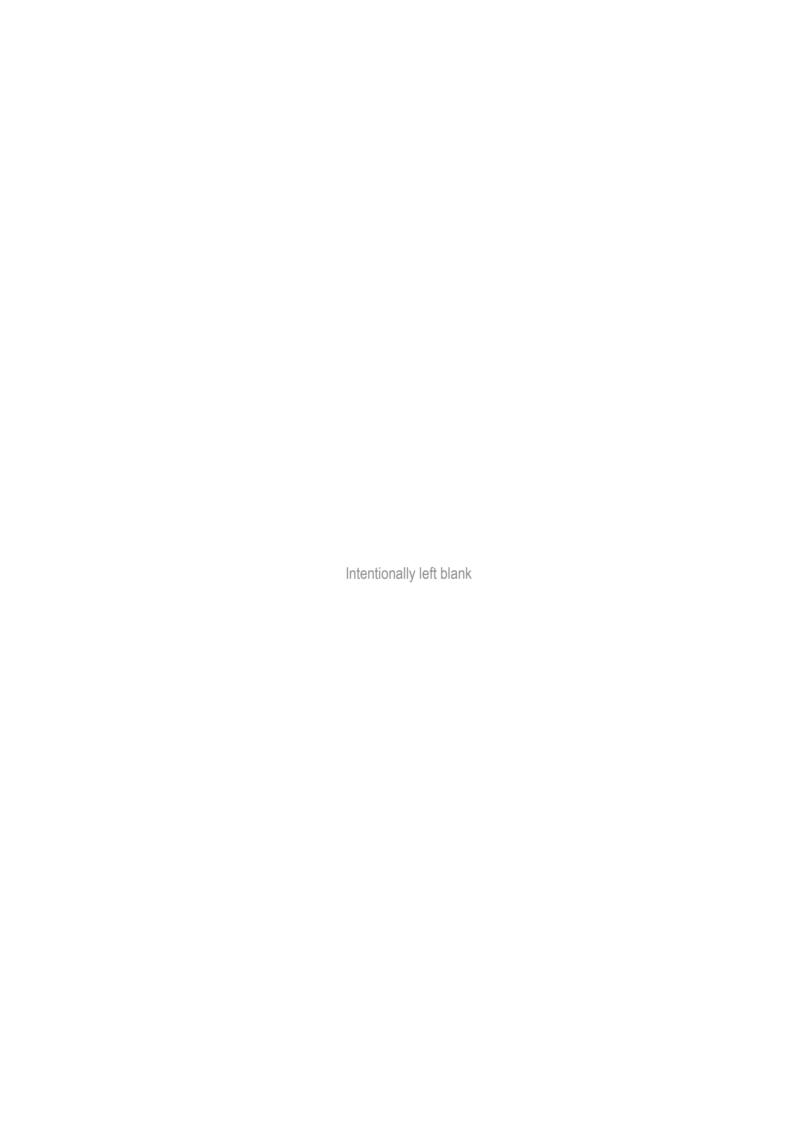by the
NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism

Gender in Terrorism and Counterterrorism:

Unravelling Masculinities, The Impact of Climate Change and Cyber Security

16-17 May 2023

COE-DAT

Ankara, Türkiye

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COE-DAT conducted its fifth workshop on Gender in Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Unravelling Masculinities, the Impact of Climate Change and Cyber Security on 16-17 May 2023 in Ankara/Türkiye in a hybrid format with the participation of nine speakers from six countries, 40 participants from 11 countries. Frankly speaking, six years' determination of COE-DAT to raise awareness on the gender aspect of terrorism and counterterrorism has been more than I could have ever imagined. In that respect, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for COE-DAT's vision that captures the spirit of our age and her commitment to global WPS and NATO's CT objectives. The increasing attention and the positive feedback we get with the COE-DAT workshop series on Gender in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism as we reach out to more people is another important thing that makes me so happy and proud as the academic advisor of the workshop series. Additionally, I would like to mention particular individuals for their contributions to the preparation and organization of the event.

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Director of COE-DAT, Col. Oğuzhan Pehlivan for his leadership and support to the workshop team. I benefited from his perspectives during our discussions about the main themes we should be addressing during the workshop and developing the workshop program. And his door has always been open to the workshop team for discussing any issues about the workshop.

I am also grateful to the Deputy Director of COE-DAT, Col. Shawn V. Young as the Workshop Director, for her unwavering guidance, support and understanding. I should note that I am inspired by her stance as a woman in the military and her communication skills.

Ms. Özge Erkan in her capacity as the Workshop Co-Director is entitled to have great appreciation for the good job she did in the preparation and organization of the workshop.

I am deeply indebted to COE-DAT CIS Specialist Mrs. Selvi Kahraman for her technical professionalism, calmness in problem-solving and never-ending support beyond her CIS capabilities.

Our workshop rapporteur Ms. Elif Merve Dumankaya deserves my appreciation for her support and meticulous work in compiling up the workshop discussions.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Gabriele Cascone, the Head of Counter-Terrorism Section at NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division for presenting NATO's approach and efforts about the workshop themes and setting the stage for discussions with his keynote speech.

Last, but not the least, I would like to express my special thanks to the distinguished speakers and participants of the workshop for their insights and contributions to the fruitful discussions.

Dr. Zeynep Sütalan

Workshop Academic Advisor

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVATIONS

ACT   : Allied Command Transformation
AI   : Artificial Intelligence
AU   : African Union
BAT   : Basic Attention Token
BF   : Britain First
CT   : Counter-terrorism
COE-DAT   : Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism
CTED   : Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate
CTRC   : Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum
CVE   : Countering Violent Extremism
DDR   : Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DPO   : Department of Peace Operations
DPPA   : Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
EDL   : English Defence League
EDT   : Emerging and Disruptive Technologies
ESCD   : Emerging Security Challenges Division
EU   : European Union
FB   : For Britain
FTF   : Foreign Terrorist Fighter
GBV   : Gender-Based Violence
IMS   : International Military Staff
Incel   : Involuntary celibate
IPCC   : Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPI   : International Peace Institute
KYC   : Know Your Customer
MIL   : Media and Information Literacy
NATO   : North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NFTs   : non-fungible tokens
OSCE   : Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P/CVERLT   : Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism
SADD   : Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data
SPS   : Science for Peace and Security
UN   : United Nations
UNDP   : United Nations Development Programme
UNEP   : United Nations Environmental Programme
UNFCCC   : United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSC   : United Nations Security Council
UNSCR   : United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women   : United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US   : United States
VE   : Violent Extremism
VEO   : Violent Extremist Organisation
VERLT   : Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism
WPS   : Women, Peace and Security

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Zeynep Sütalan
Workshop Academic Advisor

With her fifth annual workshop on Gender in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism (CT), COE-DAT reiterated her commitment to raise awareness on the gender aspect of terrorism and the value of integrating gender perspectives to counter-terrorism policy and operations in order to contribute to streamlining NATO's WPS and CT efforts. During the workshop, COE-DAT brought three important themes to the table for discussion: the role of masculinities in terrorism and counterterrorism, gender aspect of technology and terrorism in the online space and the nexus among climate change, gender and terrorism.

The conversation on integrating gender perspectives and gender mainstreaming in CT and CVE predominantly focus on 'women'. Ironically, although it is frequently underlined that 'gender' is not synonymous with 'women', there is less reference to 'men' and 'masculinities' while talking about gender perspectives in terrorism and counter-terrorism. In fact, the emphasis on 'women' is mainly deriving from the need to draw attention to the neglected roles women play in terrorism as blind spots in terrorist threat analysis. However, when trying to answer the question of 'why gender matters in CT', it is crucial to remember that there is a gender dimension of men's involvement in terrorism as well. Especially thinking of the fact that majority of the terrorists (and violent extremists) are men, it is critical to understand men's pathways to terrorism. Additionally, understanding men's disengagement from terrorist groups requires an understanding of how men are involved in those groups, their role as men in the group and how it will be once they are out the group. Terrorist organisations manipulate the existing masculinity norms and offer alternatives to the men who cannot fulfil the traits of being a man as a breadwinner such as promising status and respect as a 'fighter', economic fortune and sometimes a wife. Masculine norms of 'brotherhood', 'heroism', 'strength' are also exploited by violent extremist and terrorist groups for maintaining in-group cohesion. In this respect, understanding and addressing masculinities is critical in the development of effective disengagement and reintegration policies. Starting point should be approaching masculinity as masculinities which are plural, meaning there are multiple ways how men behave which are relational and socially constructed. Added to this should be whatever form of masculinity is associated with violence (e.g. toxic masculinity) is not separate from the wider society.

Digital space has opened up new avenues for violent extremists and terrorist in terms of recruitment, radicalization, propaganda, disinformation, mobilization and fundraising. Moreover, terrorist use of digital space is highly gendered. Thus, in today's highly digitalised world, understanding and tracking the gendered use of new technologies (e.g. big data, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, etc) and digital space by violent extremists and terrorists, which, in fact, is a blind spot that should be acknowledged when countering violent extremism and terrorism online. For instance, gaming platforms are extremely hyper-masculine and has become a venue for terrorist and violent extremist recruitment and propaganda especially endangering young boys, making it a significant concern for the families particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when socialisation and entertainment shifted to the digital space and youngsters are highly exposed to internet. In regard to artificial intelligence (AI), violent extremists and terrorists can use bots and other automated accounts to spread disinformation and/or gender-tailored messages to radicalize individuals.

Throughout the last decade climate change started grabbing attention as a 'threat multiplier' in security. Climate change is a threat multiplier, because it causes extreme weather conditions, environmental hazards and disasters which eventually result in food, water and resource scarcity, limited livelihood options, and even migration. By this way, climate change can cause and causes increasing tensions, conflict and violence in a given society. Although climate change is a global problem, some parts of the world suffer more from it compared to the other regions. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, the developing world (or the Global South) suffers drastically from the impacts of climate change because they lack enough capacity to deal with the adverse effects of the climate change.[1] The situation gets worse in the conflict-affected areas where there is weak governance, ongoing conflicts, increasing social polarization and low social resilience. Against this backdrop, it is fair to say that the connection between climate change and terrorism is underexplored so is the gender dimension of their nexus. Despite the fact that there is not a direct

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1   *Global Climate Risk Index 2021*, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-climate-risk-index-2021

correlation between climate change and terrorism, it is recognized that climate change exacerbates existing security threats. Therefore, understanding the impact of climate change crises on terrorist recruitment and radicalization together with the different challenges men and women, boys and girls face in the process is critical. It should also be underlined that the gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism is contextual, because countries have different geographical characteristics, social, economic and political contexts. In the Global South, climate change exacerbates the socio-economic conditions and paves ground for terrorist recruitment and radicalization. In the Global North, eco-fascism, a right-wing ideology which blames overpopulation, migration, over-industrialization for environmental degradation, turns out to be a motivational factor for some terrorist attacks as in the cases of Christchurch (New Zealand) Mosques mass shootings in 2019 and El Paso mass shootings same year in the US. Eco-terrorism or environmental terrorism is also a concern in the Global North despite the research based on data tells the opposite.[2]

With this report, COE-DAT hopes to raise consciousness on the importance of integrating gender perspectives in terrorism and counter-terrorism, reach out to the policy-making world as well as research community and facilitate their cooperation for the common good of humanity against the persistent threat of terrorism and contribute to the individual and collective efforts to struggle against gender stereotypes and disparities.

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[2] Andrew Silke and John Morrison, "Gathering Storm: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Climate Change and Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34, no.5 (2022): 890-91.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Col. Oğuzhan Pehlivan

COE-DAT Director

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to give my warmest regards on behalf of all COE-DAT staff and kindly welcome you all to the fifth Gender Workshop, organized by our Centre. It is our privilege to host you in COE-DAT.

Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, is the most asymmetric threat to the security of people, international peace, and prosperity.

Additionally, pervasive instability, cyberspace, emerging disruptive technologies, irregular migration, and climate change enhance the impact of terrorism and terror-related incidents.

Overall, these interconnected issues highlight the importance of taking a holistic and gender-based approach to counter-terrorism efforts.

As NATO CT Department Head, COE-DAT deals with gender perspectives in her activities and carries out the gender and women-focused solutions and projects in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

For this purpose, we continue these series of workshops, in which distinguished experts have come together to discuss gender in terrorism and CT, with great effort and commitment since 2019.

In previous gender workshops, we covered women's roles, motivations, and concepts in CT and gender dynamics in military effectiveness, prosecution, and radicalization.

Thanks to the positive feedback and support we have received from all over the world, this year we aimed to cover completely different topics from the previous ones to explore other aspects of the relationship between gender and terrorism. Thus, we aimed to cover our fifth Workshop on the role of masculinity on gender in combating terrorism, cybersecurity, and the effects of climate change and to develop effective and sustainable strategies in this field.

Gender, as a socially constructed phenomenon, needs to be evaluated from not only a femininity but also a masculinity perspective. Therefore, in 2023 we will achieve to scrutinize this issue. Furthermore, when we consider the emerging threats in terrorism, we will examine the technological differentiation of gender, especially in cyber. Additionally, as we defined earlier the roles of gender in terrorism, we will focus on the biggest potential threat to humanity, climate change, and try to understand it with a gender approach in order to mitigate terrorism footprint.

Looking at the workshop topics, and the diversity of experts and participants, I am convinced that the workshop will make a significant contribution to filling some of the gaps and generate innovative ideas and strategies to address the multifaceted issue of gender in terrorism and CT.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our distinguished speakers and participants from academia, international organizations, as well as the military for their active and invaluable involvement. Your expertise and insights will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and help us better understand the role of gender in terrorism and counterterrorism. Last but not least, I should note that we, as COE-DAT, highly appreciate Mr. Gabriel CASCONE's virtual participation in our workshop as the keynote speaker.

I wish you all a productive and engaging workshop and look forward to fruitful discussions and insights.

Thank you.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Mr. Gabriele Cascone

Head of Counter-Terrorism Section,

NATO Emerging Security Challenges Division

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have not been able to join you in person today. Please let me thank the Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) for the organization of the Workshop on Gender in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism. It is a pleasure for me to be able to contribute to these discussions and provide you with some insights on NATO's work related to emerging security challenges that will be addressed during the workshop and how each of them influences the gender and terrorism nexus.

First and foremost, I would like to recall that NATO is fully committed to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and seeks to integrate a gender perspective across all of the core tasks of the Alliance. As part of this effort, we aim to mainstream gender perspectives throughout Alliance's work and initiatives, including counter-terrorism, innovation, and climate change. All of them are dealt with in the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) that I am honoured to represent today.

I will now go through each of these work strands, with a particular emphasis on counter-terrorism, and try to give you an overview of our efforts as well as some considerations for the sake of this workshop.

Starting with terrorism, the evolving role of women and girls in terrorist groups remains a topic of concern and should not be overlooked. Women and girls have been targeted by terror groups both as recruits and victims for years now, and we have seen an increased number of female foreign terrorist fighters in recent years. Push and pull factors for them to join are various but well identified by the groups who know exactly how to attract them in their ranks, including by providing them with a sense of power, responsibility, and importance alongside male members.

Once a role, women's roles in terrorist organizations range from an increasing active participation in operations to a more supporting non-combatant role as recruiters, mobilizers, financial facilitators, or as performers of traditional gender roles within the family. But on the other hand, some women and girls are exploited by these groups as informers, spies, human shields, and suicide bombers for their tactical advantages. For example, Boko Haram became infamous for kidnapping and using young girls as suicide bombers, while other groups such as Daesh and its affiliates are known to use young boys for propaganda purposes, including execution videos and portraying their structures in a positive manner.

In parallel, we have observed that women can also be among the first to recognize extremist trends in their families and societies, which makes them best suited to detect early warning signs of radicalization and violence. Women have a level of influence in societal networks that should be recognized and leveraged in the development of effective preventive and reactive counter-terrorism measures.

Considering the diversity and complexity of roles that women may assume in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism, NATO has increasingly reflected the WPS agenda as well as gender considerations in its CT work by integrating a gender perspective into CT policies, programs, and training and education activities.

The first effort to underline is that NATO is raising awareness and understanding of Allies on gender and terrorism through intelligence products and national briefings from both civilian and military perspectives. Second, progress has been made to integrate WPS elements in training and education activities and products, including through this workshop, of course; but another example of these lies in our Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum (CTRC), which also reflects the gendered aspects of countering terrorism. Apart from developing lectures, modules on gender in NATO CT training efforts, it is also important to ensure the effective participation of men and women in such courses as both instructors and participants.

WPS is also included in important capacity-building efforts in counter-terrorism, such as in the current Defence Capacity Building Package for Jordan and in the first NATO African Union (AU) Counter-terrorism Training Course developed under the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme in 2019.

Third, it has also become standard practice to discuss gender and terrorism in staff talks with other international organizations, including Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and AU, to take stock of existing initiatives and to further scope potential joint activities in the future. Lastly, we continue to mainstream gender considerations across counter-terrorism relevant policies.

This is the case, for example, of the NATO Battlefield Evidence Policy and the related Program of Work which recognized the potential use of information and material obtained by the military NATO missions, operations, and activities in law enforcement processes and legal proceedings related to, inter alia, conflict-related sexual violence.

Coming to Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT), which are providing new opportunities for NATO militaries, helping them become more effective, resilient, cost-efficient, and sustainable. However, the EDT also represents the new threats from state and non-state actors both to military and civilian society. To embrace these opportunities and at the same time, counter these threats, NATO is working with allies to develop responsible, innovative, and agile emerging and disruptive technology policies.

NATO is developing specific plans for each key technology area, beginning with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data policies that were released in 2021. Both are relevant for counter-terrorism purposes. While AI could be used for CT aspects of border surveillance, big data could be used to detect their terrorist narrative online. And here I mean responsibly used, which includes ensuring that these technologies are not gender-biased.

We often assume machines are neutral, but they are not. Even the AI systems of the world's biggest AI companies contain racial and gender biases. NATO's AI Strategy outlines six Principles of Responsible Use. Each of them relating to gender in its own right, with the bias mitigation principle having the most immediate overlap. Mitigating bias in AI and known AI-enabled systems requires taking proactive steps during development and use.

Last but not the least, with the alarming acceleration of global warming, environmental issues have become more severe, and the phenomenon of climate change has become a defining issue of our time, recognized by NATO as a threat multiplier. It affects NATO's strategic environment, leading to instability and geostrategic competition and creating conditions that can be exploited by state and non-state actors that threaten or challenge the Alliance.

Climate change is causing water scarcity as well as health issues, biodiversity loss, demographic challenges, and desertification. These phenomena can fuel conflicts and lead to displacement and migration. There is also growing evidence that they have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, as well as on vulnerable or marginalized populations, which could further give rise to political and economic instability. That means a fertile ground for terrorist activities.

For this reason, in 2021, NATO leaders agreed the Climate Change and Security Action Plan with the aim of making NATO a leading organization in understanding and adapting to the impacts of climate change on security. The Action Plan provides a 360 degrees approach, including adaptation and mitigation measures to ensure that the Alliance will maintain a credible deterrence and defence posture.

I hope with these few minutes of talk, I have covered some of the main areas that you will be covering throughout the rest of the workshop and provide that possibly some elements of reflection for the rest of it.

I thank you very much for your attention and I wish you all the best for the continuation of the workshop.

MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES IN VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

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Introduction: Hegemonic Masculinity and the Rise of Indonesian Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, over 700 Indonesians have joined approximately 35,000 foreign terrorist fighters from 120 countries in travelling to Syria to join religious extremist groups fighting against the Assad regime. This raises the question: why do Indonesians seeking *jihad* choose to participate in a distant conflict instead of fighting to implement Sharia at home? In order for an individual to make such a life-altering decision to leave their country, there must be a significant shift in their belief system. The prevailing theory attributes this phenomenon to religious ideology. For instance, the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) noted that Syria is connected to Islamic eschatology predictions of the final battle at the end of time, which is believed to occur in the region encompassing Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel.[1] The report concluded that Indonesians going to Syria with this ideological belief hoped to witness Islam's ultimate victory.[2]

Similarly, David Malet argues that the mobilization of Muslim foreign terrorist fighters is driven by the need to defend a shared transnational identity, rather than individual gain.[3] Both explanations highlight the significance of transnational identities that foster a sense of belonging beyond state borders. However, these explanations are incomplete as they overlook a crucial commonality among the majority of foreign terrorist fighters: their overwhelming male representation.

This article aims to provide a new understanding of the causal relationship between masculinity and the mobilization of Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters. This topic is of significant concern not only to scholars of International Relations but also to those seeking to comprehend and address global security challenges. Historically, the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters has prolonged civil wars by introducing additional actors to the conflict theatre and complicating attempts to resolve the war through intervention or negotiation.[4] Moreover, foreign terrorist fighters acquire international networks and military skills that they may utilize to instigate conflict and violence upon their return home.

Given the male-dominated social context in which foreign terrorist fighters operate, can gender dynamics in recruitment, training, and combat better explain the pathways to violence? To what extent do constructs of masculinity support and perpetuate the rise of Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters? Is there a gendered construction of identification, belonging, and mobilization among these fighters? Do recruiters appeal to religious obligations by invoking gendered symbols and narratives cantered around notions of masculinity?

Numerous studies have sought to explain the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, including the works of Thomas Hegghammer[5], David Malet[6], Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan[7], Jessica Stern and J. M. Berger[8], Fawaz Gerges[9], and David Kilcullen[10]. However, none of these studies address the question of how gender shapes their involvement in foreign conflicts. One significant reason for this gap is the tendency to overlook masculinity and its constructions as a subject worthy of research. Men and masculinities have often been taken for granted.[11] As a result, there is a lack of systematic analysis concerning the interaction between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities, or how the performance of heterosexuality by foreign terrorist fighters relates to dominant constructs of masculinity.[12]

1   IPAC, "The Evolution of ISIS in Indonesia," *IPAC Report*, No. 13 (2014).

2   Ibid.

3   David Malet, *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civil Conflicts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

4   Kristin M. Bakke, "Help Wanted? The Mixed Record of Foreign Fighters in Domestic Insurgencies," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (Spring 2014): 150-187.

5   Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jıhad," *International Security* 35, no.3 (Winter 2010/2011): 53-84.

6   Malet, *Foreign Fighters.*

7   Micheal Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York: Regan Arts, 2015).

8   Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York: Ecco/HarperCollins Publishers, 2015).

9   Fawaz Gerges, *ISIS: A History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016).

10   David Kilcullen, *The Blood Year: Unraveling Western Counterterrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

11   Aihwa Ong and Micheal G. Peletz (ed.s), *Bewitching Women and Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

12   Michele Ford and Lenore Lyons (ed.s), *Men and Masculinities in Southeast Asia* (London, New York: Routledge, 2012).

Defining Hegemonic Masculinity

The influence of masculinity, or the socially constructed identities of men, remains underexplored in the field of terrorism studies. In this context, masculinity functions as a collective understanding, an implicit and often unconscious shorthand for processes of explanation and normative judgments.[13] It encompasses cultural norms, ideals, influential men, patriarchal authority, or a combination of these factors.[14] Connell offers an analysis of the relationship between masculinity and power, highlighting that in most societies, there exists a dominant form of masculinity that is highly valued within a specific context.[15] He terms this concept "hegemonic masculinity" to represent an idealized form of masculinity that is considered natural, socially privileged, and upholds the dominance of certain men over others who are viewed as culturally subordinate, marginalized, and women as a whole.[16]

Hegemony is not synonymous with violence, even though force can reinforce hegemonic power structures. Connell clarifies this term by stating: "Although hegemony does not imply dominance based solely on force... Indeed, it is common for the two to be intertwined... The relationship between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is close, though not straightforward. 'Hegemony' does not imply complete cultural dominance or the eradication of alternatives..."[17]

In the context of this study, the beliefs of foreign terrorist fighters primarily derive from selective religious texts, specific historical events within Islamic history, and cultural norms. These Islamic traditions form a significant foundation for the creation of masculine narratives that inspire and justify the involvement of Muslim men in combat activities and the recruitment of prospective fighters. This can be observed through the series of publications released by the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/Daesh) titled "Among the Believers Are Men," which presents biographies of 16 "martyrs" who were killed in battles. As noted by Nanninga in his commentary on these biographies, informed readers will recognize the words as part of *Sura 33:23*, which praises believers for their commitment to God until death, although not explicitly stated.[18] The beliefs held by foreign terrorist fighters are not fixed; rather, they are shaped, reproduced, and transformed by the fighters themselves according to specific contexts. In other words, they adapt their interpretation of the *Quran* based on social conditions. Using the framework of masculinities, one can analyse the intricate hierarchies of masculinities that exist before, during, and after the involvement of foreign terrorist fighters in international armed conflicts.

In this article, foreign terrorist fighters are defined as individuals who cross internationally recognized state borders to engage in armed conflict. Unlike mercenaries, they do not expect financial enrichment or personal gain. The definitions surrounding foreign terrorist fighters are often contested and ambiguous. However, in this article, foreign terrorist fighters are treated as a distinct category to differentiate them from terrorist groups. This distinction is made because the trajectories of a terrorist and a foreign terrorist fighter differ, although they may overlap and intersect in many cases. Thomas Hegghammer also draws a similar distinction in his work on "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad."[19]

The phenomenon of Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters is further situated within the broader social context that is directly connected to pre-existing masculine traits and patriarchal practices in the country. In the Indonesian context, the local expression of foreign terrorist fighters' masculinity reflects a tension in the national gender regime between the secular government and militant Islam. This tension is linked to the global contestation between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities that emerged as a result of European colonialism. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Muslim societies bifurcated into a secularist elite focused on modernization along Western lines and Islamic clusters dedicated to reforming and reorganizing society according to Islamic teachings.[20] Since then, Islam and Islamic movements have become the dominant religious discourse in the contemporary Muslim world. This implies that the rise of Indonesian foreign terrorist fighters does not occur in a vacuum. The form of masculinity they embody is shaped, influenced, and mediated by previous cultural and historical circumstances that enable this phenomenon to occur. This echoes Karl Marx's

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[13] Kimberley Hutchings, "Making Sense of Masculinity and War,"*Sociology, Gender and Cultural Studies* 10, no.4 (2008): 389–404.

[14] Michael Flood, "Between Men and Masculinity: An assessment of the term 'masculinity' in recent scholarship on men" in Pearce, Sharyn and Muller, Vivienne (eds.) *Manning the Next Millennium: Studies in Masculinities* (Sydney: Black Swan Press, 2002).

[15] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[16] R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept," *Gender & society 19* no.6 (2005): 829-859.

[17] R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, The Person and Sexual Politics* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[18] Pieter Nanninga, "Among the Believers Are Men": How the Islamic State Uses Early-Islamic Traditions to Shape Its Martyr Biographies, *Numen* 65, no.2-3, 165-184.

[19] Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters".

[20] Itzchak Weismann, "Modernity from within: Islamic fundamentalism and Sufism,"*Der Islam* 86, no.1 (2011): 142-170.

assertion that "men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances already existing, given and transmitted from the past"[21].

(Mis)interpreting *Jihad*

This article argues that the official narrative of the Indonesian military encourages recruits to embody universalized values of militarized masculinities, such as brotherhood, bravery, toughness, roughness, and heroism. The construction of these universalized militarized masculinities, which legitimize violent solutions to conflict and disorder, influences the masculinity of foreign terrorist fighters even before they interpret the religious jargon of *jihad* to construct an alternative understanding of militarized manhood.[22] However, it is essential to note that the semantic meaning of the Arabic term *jihad* has no relation to holy war or war in general.

Equating the term *jihad* with holy war is a Western invention. The word jihad is derived from the root *j.h.d*, which means "to strive, exert oneself, or take extraordinary pains".[23] Lentini cautions that *jihad* is not the same as jihadism.[24] He notes that *jihad* is a respected component of Islam with diverse meanings, sacred to Muslims. Jihadism, on the other hand, is a distinct 20th-century interpretation of Islamist writings that instrumentalize *jihad* to achieve political goals in Muslim-majority countries. This includes engaging in combat with secular states' militaries, assassinating key political leaders associated with the military, attempting to overthrow governments, or resisting foreign occupations.[25] As a modern political mobilization, jihadism likely found its original inspiration from the Egyptian thinker Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), whose ideas on pre-Islamic society (*jahiliyya*) and the sovereignty of God (*hakimiyya*) inform the analysis of reality (*waqi'*) and, consequently, the transformation of that reality through the implementation (*tatbiq*) of jihadi strategy.[26]

Gender dynamics are, of course, not the complete story of mobilization and recruitment for global jihad. Existing scholarship has made significant progress in establishing the role of religious group identity in fueling the rise of foreign terrorist fighters. However, while religious identity is important, it is insufficient to explain the mobilization of men who were initially not deeply religious or motivated by a desire to be pious. Ignoring gender analysis risks essentializing the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters as a natural outcome of identity politics across national borders.[27] Thus, focusing solely on religion overlooks other forms of identity, denying the presence of multiple competing identities in the lives of fighters, such as gender, class, ethnicity, and more. Furthermore, jihadi masculinity is not monolithic. While some foreign terrorist fighters interviewed for this study defined their masculinity through a desire to inflict harm on an enemy, limited to combatants in the conflict zone, Ramdan in Syria defined his masculinity in economic terms and the prospect of finding a new partner in life. Just as there are complexities and contradictions that characterize foreign terrorist fighter masculinity during armed conflict, there is also no single trajectory for returning foreign terrorist fighters. However, existing approaches to de-radicalization imply that 'extreme' or 'radical' ideas about religion and violence drive individuals towards violent acts, and it is these radical or extreme ideas that need to be challenged.

This study suggests that addressing the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters requires addressing harmful masculinity as a root cause of radicalization. Policy responses should thus include promoting gender equality by educating young men in ways that offer them more options to express themselves and achieve their life goals beyond stereotypical masculine values such as courage, aggression, autonomy, mastery, group solidarity, adventure, and toughness. Therefore, it is crucial to promote educational and cultural materials that do not prioritize domination, violence, or displays of strength and force at the top of the value hierarchy. Instead, they should offer more peaceful, conciliatory, and egalitarian ways of being a man in the world. In other words, we need to change the construction of masculinities, particularly their hegemonic expressions, by offering and celebrating multiple positive and nonviolent forms of masculinity. To achieve maximum results, this effort should involve not only creative methods such as documentary films or social marketing campaigns but also institutional changes. For example, UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) calls on states and UN bodies to integrate a gender dimension into all counterterrorism efforts, specifically conducting gender-sensitive research on radicalization to violence

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21 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972).

22 Shahin Gerami, "Mullahs, martyrs and *men*: Conceptualizing masculinity in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *Men and Masculinities* 5, no.3 (2003): 257-295.

23 Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

24 Pete Lentini, *Neojihadism: Towards a New Understanding of Terrorism and Extremism*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

25 Ibid.

26 Meijer, Roel, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Democratic Experience in Egypt," in E. Toguslu (ed.), *Modern Islamic Thinking and Activism: Dynamics in the West and in the Middle East* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014): 127-139.

27 David Duriesmith, *Masculinity and New War: The Gendered Dynamics of Contemporary Armed Conflict* (London and New York, Routledge, 2017).

and the impact of counterterrorism efforts on women and women's rights. This research is necessary to develop targeted and evidence-based policies and programs.

As this study has demonstrated, radicalization dynamics revolve around social networks, and women are uniquely positioned to influence their spouses, children, and siblings, both subtly and directly, to steer them away from the destructive path of violent extremism. For instance, in the case of Ramdan and another foreign terrorist fighter interviewed for this study, their mothers played two important roles: 1) encouraging them to disengage from Daesh, and 2) helping them start a new life upon their return home. Therefore, governmental and non-governmental actors must invest in preventing and countering violent extremism through a range of programs that go beyond law enforcement and criminal justice processes associated with traditional counterterrorism efforts. This includes work in education, development, conflict prevention, mediation, strategic communications, human rights, and particularly women's rights and gender equality. Lastly, this study has demonstrated that we can leverage the stories of disillusioned foreign fighters to challenge the radical narrative of religious terrorist groups like Daesh, who have made false promises to their recruits.

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GENDER, MASCULINITIES AND THE EXTREME RIGHT

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Introduction

Gender has moved from a peripheral consideration in counter-terrorism, to a necessary and, as per UNSCR 2242 of 2015, "cross-cutting theme".[1] While gender within the Women, Peace and Security agenda initially focused on the inclusion of women, for some years feminist scholars have emphasised that gender is a social construct.[2] Much gendered research has also considered the fact that most terrorist and violent extremist actors are men. What is more, these men frequently consolidate male power using gender-based violence (GBV) against both women and men. They also employ gendered propaganda – the call to 'real men' to take up arms, for instance - to further often highly gendered ideologies. Gender is therefore about men and masculinities, as well as the dynamic relations between men and women.[3]. This applies to religious extremist groups as well as far right actors and their wider extreme right networks.[4]

How are Masculinities and Radicalisation Linked?

Media and policy discourses have increasingly linked terrorism and extremism to 'toxic' masculinity.[5] This is understood as masculinity that causes harm through misogyny, violence, homophobia and aggression.[6] Toxicity is presented as monolithic, and separate from the rest of society. However, academics writing on radicalisation have stressed masculinities are plural: they are relational, and hierarchical, and about 'doing'. In any social group, particular behaviours gain status. Scholar Raewyn Connell, who has written extensively on masculinities since the 1990s, terms those masculinities with the highest status in any given culture, 'hegemonic', lower status are 'subordinate'.[7] In particular, extremism and radicalisation – the pathway towards extremism and terrorism – are frequently associated with masculinities that seek to protest the status and in gendered terms, quo for instance, feminism and women's equality.[8]

If terrorism and extremism are understood to result from toxic masculinity, the solution appears to be about making 'toxic' men fall in line with wider 'healthy' norms.

Four findings from my research challenge the idea of one toxic masculinity as the source of extremism. From 2016-8 I carried out ESRC-funded research on masculinities with three extreme right groups in the UK. The English Defence League (EDL), Britain First (BF) and For Britain (FB) all actively campaigned against Islam, which they framed as incompatible with western values of gender equality and human rights, and as enabling child sexual exploitation. The groups, while all involved in mainly legal protest, have also been implicated in terror attacks including the 2016 murder of Member of Parliament Jo Cox and the Finsbury Park mosque attack that killed one Muslim worshiper in 2017 and injured others.[9]

One: Diverse Masculinities

While the EDL, For Britain and Britain First are all understood by the British government as extreme, their values are not necessarily consistent with the gendered relationships of the traditional far right. Nationalist groups traditionally position men as breadwinners, warriors and soldiers, with high status as defenders of the state. Men's role is to protect the nation's

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1   'UNSCR 2242 & the Role of Women in Countering Violent Extremism', *GIWPS Blog* (blog), 18 November 2015, http://blog.giwps.georgetown.edu/unscr-2242-the-role-of-women-in-countering-violent-extremism/.

2   Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Lori Poloni-Staudinger and Candice D. Ortbals, Terrorism and Violent Conflict: Women's Agency, Leadership, and Responses, 2013 edition (New York: Springer, 2012); Caron E. Gentry and Laura Sjoberg, Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics,* First edition (New York: Zed Books, 2007).

3   See for instance Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 1st Revised (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); Michael S. Kimmel, 'Globalization and Its Mal(e)Contents: The Gendered Moral and Political Economy of Terrorism', *International Sociology* 18, no. 3 (September 2003): 603–20, https://doi.org/10.1177/02685809030183008; James W. Messerschmidt and Achim Rohde, 'Osama Bin Laden and His Jihadist Global Hegemonic Masculinity', *Gender & Society* 32, no. 5 (1 October 2018): 663–85, https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218770358; David Duriesmith, 'Hybrid Warriors and the Formation of New War Masculinities: A Case Study of Indonesian Foreign Fighters', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 7, no. 1 (2018), https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.633.

4   'Global Terrorism Index 2022' (Sydney Australia: Institute for Economics & Peace., 2022), https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2022.

5   See for instance Joan Smith, 'How Toxic Masculinity Is Tied to Terrorism', UnHerd, 16 May 2019, https://unherd.com/2019/05/how-toxic-masculinity-is-tied-to-terrorism/ and google for media reports.

6   Terry A. Kupers, 'Toxic Masculinity as a Barrier to Mental Health Treatment in Prison', *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 61, no. 6 (June 2005): 713–24, https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20105.

7   Connell, *Masculinities*.

8   Kimmel, 'Globalization and Its Mal(e)Contents: The Gendered Moral and Political Economy of Terrorism'.

9   Peter Walker, 'Jo Cox Murder Trial: "Thomas Mair Repeatedly Shouted 'Britain First' before Shooting and Stabbing MP" | The Independent', *The Independent*, 14 November 2016, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jo-cox-murder-trial-tommy-mair-britain-first-thomas-mp-killer-court-latest-a7416021.html; Lizzie Dearden, 'Finsbury Park Terror Suspect Darren Osborne Read Messages from Tommy Robinson Days before Attack, Court Hears | The Independent', *The Independent*, 23 January 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/tommy-robinson-darren-osborne-messages-finsbury-park-attack-mosque-van-latest-court-trial-muslims-a8174086.html.

children and women –seen as mothers and wives - from enemy men. Such gendered division is historically common in right-wing extremist groups.[10] However, in recent decades, extreme right groups opposing Islam have emphasised women's rights, and women's participation. Some groups such as the EDL have also encouraged gay activism, while opposing trans rights. This is to distinguish themselves from Islam they claim oppresses women and gay people. Such differences with traditional far right groups have led some authors to describe anti-Islam actors as the 'new' far right. Others believe this 'newness' is simply repackaging white supremacism for a different audience.[11]

Masculinities evident in the extreme right were not all the same, and different groups exploited and privileged different masculinities in their culture and symbology. For instance, Britain First, which was founded in 2011 as a political party, sought to deport immigrants, and upholds a policy of ethno-nationalism. It mobilised around military masculinities. The group organised using military terminology, with so-called 'battalions' carrying out mosque 'invasions'. These highly offensive – and later banned – actions involved uniformed BF activists entering mosques, carrying a cross. Other military symbology was evident in military marching music at demonstrations, uniforms and nationalist flags. Additionally, this group was explicitly Christian, and maintained an anti-feminist stance, opposing abortion and working women, despite having a woman Deputy Leader. BF demonstrated the most commonality with historic far right groups.

The EDL instead explicitly mobilised a muscular, subversive masculinity based on football and (white) working class culture. This group was founded in 2009, in opposition to Islamist activist Anjem Choudary and al-Muhajiroun. In contrast with BF, it had no official membership, and did not stand in elections; street protest featured explicit and offensive chanting, and singing, as well as a culture of drinking and casual violence. Symbols of protest borrowed from football culture were evident at protests. Chants against Islam were sung to tunes familiar from the football stand, and activists had allegiance to specific towns, town names emblazoned on protest flags. The EDL's original co-leader 'Tommy Robinson' – real name Stephen Yaxley Lennon – created his pseudonym based on a notorious English football hooligan. Indeed, a significant number of men engaged in the EDL came to street protest via football hooliganism.

Finally, For Britain demonstration lacked the overt masculine symbology of either the EDL or BF. For Britain, ran from 2017 to 2022 and was founded by Anne Marie Waters, a lesbian woman who identified as a 'patriot feminist'. She opposed Islam because she claimed it denied her right to exist as a lesbian, and that it was implicated in practices that denied women rights. FB protest did not mobilise symbols or iconography familiar to traditionally male collectives (the army, or the football stand). As such FB protest was an anomaly in the extreme right scene.

Two: Continuity, before and after

The extreme masculinities discussed above – football and military - were not uniquely extremist, nor always toxic. Men and women told me that particular masculinities had always been indicators of status for men. Two stood out: football, and the military and armed services. Some men had served in the army; others had failed to enter the services. All valorised those who fought and violence itself had a particular status.

Far-right actors come from many social backgrounds, but those I interviewed for this research predominantly identified as working-class. Men described how, growing up, violence enabled them to gain status in their communities. Failure at violence was understood as failure at being a man. Violence was not exceptional. It was everyday, and had certain rules and conventions they believed were fundamentally different from Muslim communities. Violence became part of identity and intrinsically associated with both class, and race. For all participants the ability to be aggressive was understood as a marker of authenticity, versus an inauthentic middle class that they associated with distant decision making. This did not have status in their communities.

Three: The Function of Masculinities

Masculinities in different groups had different functions, particularly *vis à vis* the state. Military masculinities within BF suggested the status and legitimacy of the nation's army, and therefore borrowed hegemony. Football masculinities projected a specific working-class identity, a subordinate masculinity pushing back against the status quo. Through mobilising the masculine culture of the football stand, the EDL also enabled the expression of a range of emotions including those not traditionally associated with male status (such as emotion, grief, tears). Meanwhile, lacking overt symbols of masculinity, Anne Marie Waters sought to create an alternative space in which women's rights were explicitly privileged.

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[10]   Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Women and the Biological Reproduction of "The Nation"', *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1/2 (1996): 17–24.

[11]   Paul Jackson and Matthew Feldman, 'The EDL: Britain's "New Far Right" Social Movement' (Northampton: University of Northampton, 2011).

Four: Female Masculinities? Women in the Extreme Right

Finally, toxic masculinity as an explanation for extremism suggests women are absent from extreme right action. However, women too can 'perform' masculinity, embodying traits stereotypically associated with male status.

The anti-Islam extreme right actively seeks to include women. Both BF and FB had women leaders. Jayda Fransen was the deputy leader of Britain First at the time of research. However, she did not seek to challenge men's social power in the group, or wider society. She presented herself as feminine and anti-feminist. This stance enabled men's power. Her leadership was symbolic, and she did not represent a challenge to the traditional gender roles promoted by the group. Anne Marie Waters adopted a different position. Waters was formerly a left-wing activist, and she continued to challenge extreme right actors opposing women's activism outside the home, as anything but wives and mothers. This resulted in confrontation with the wider extreme right, who, she said, frequently trolled and abused her, and in gendered terms. As a gay woman, her leadership was a direct challenge to the heteronormativity and patriarchy of the wider extreme right. While Waters therefore faced push-back from the wider movement, Fransen was revered. However, the very fact of both Fransen and Waters' leadership suggests the space in the 'new' extreme right for women's leadership, historically, a man's role.

Conclusions

The research presented here has lessons for how we think about masculinities, radicalisation, extremism and terrorism. Radicalisation is the path to extremism and masculinities matter at every stage of that process. Although the focus here is not on terrorism, extremism is frequently understood as a stage on the path of radicalisation to more extreme positions, and ultimately potential violence. The findings hold for the wider extreme right scene. They show that the masculinities of the extreme right are plural, not one thing. They are also not 'separate' or different from wider society. Nor do they exclude women, who find a space within the movement, and even leadership positions. The research warns against simple explanations of extreme right activism as a problem only of men, or of a monolithic 'toxic masculinity'. In the past, this has only led to the stigmatisation of particular groups of men. To engage with extreme right violence, counter-extremism and counter-terrorism we will need to recognise the diversity of identities within groups, and how these intersect with wider society.

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ASSESSING THE ROLE OF MASCULINITIES IN COUNTER-TERRORISM AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM[1]

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Introduction

Gender mainstreaming in counter-terrorism efforts has by and large focused on women. Given that gender is a relational concept, which refers to social, cultural, and economic power dynamics between and among people of all genders, masculinities must be part of a comprehensive approach to gender mainstreaming.[2]

The relevance of masculinities to the phenomenon of violent extremism conducive to terrorism has been recognised by the research community. A growing body of research on this topic has contributed important insights on how masculinities are relevant to our understanding of the ways in which men are recruited into terrorism groups; how these groups operate; and their ideologies. However, the question of what this deeper understanding of the phenomenon of violent extremism means for policy to prevent and counter it remains largely unanswered. In other words, how do we translate research insights into policy and practice?

This contribution identifies several concrete examples to show how a focus on masculinities can be useful in counter-terrorism policy and how its current absence has a detrimental effect both from a rights-based and an operational perspective. The contribution is based on and summarizes the key findings of the joint CTED-IPI policy paper on "Masculinities and Violent Extremism."[3]

Masculinities in Recruitment to Terrorism

Terrorist groups across the ideological spectrum have been very skilful at tapping into gendered grievances. They tailor their messages and recruitment strategies to men and women, drawing on ideas about femininity and masculinity, and prevailing gender norms in different local contexts. For example, research has highlighted how poor socioeconomic conditions can make it difficult for men to fulfil societal gender norms and expectations around manhood (i.e., to become providers for their family).[4] Where men struggle to fulfil this role, for example due to a lack of education and employment opportunities, terrorist groups exploit this by offering alternative pathways to "manhood".

Many of these groups develop narratives about masculinity that are violent and rely on the subjugation of women and often the glorification of sexual violence. In doing so, they are able to draw on prevailing notions of misogyny and male privilege within society.[5] Violent extremism must therefore be seen as part of a continuum

of violence and harmful gender norms present in society. Understanding these factors, and the interplay between structural conditions and gender norms, has direct implications for the prevention of violent extremism, where we see a continued shortage of more holistic approaches that would address root causes and conditions conducive, including gender inequality. Instead, interventions and programmes remain narrow and security-focused, rather than more holistic and preventive, while counter-narrative efforts often fail to effectively address these gender dynamics as skilfully as terrorist messaging does.

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[1] The views expressed in this summary represent those of the author and not necessarily those of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, or any of its members.

[2] This definition is adapted from CEDAW, "General Recommendation No. 28 on the Core Obligations of State Parties under Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women," 2010, para. 5.

[3] Aleksandra Dier and Gretchen Baldwin, "Masculinities and Violent Extremism," International Peace Institute and UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, June 2022.

[4] Ibid, 3.

[5] Ibid.

Masculinities in Disengagement from Violent Extremism

Masculinities play a critical role not only in attracting men to violent extremist groups but also in keeping them in these groups.[6] For many, the sense of identity and camaraderie, brotherhood or of being valued as a group member makes it difficult to break away. Initiation or bonding rituals may create a sense of loyalty or pride that encourages men to remain in these groups. As Kathleen Blee points out, masculinities manifest themselves not only in the form of aggression, anger, or domination but also in "male expressions of close bonding with other men, fear, performative displays, and submission."[7]

Again, violent extremist groups are a step ahead of many counter-terrorism institutions in understanding these factors. Programmes dealing with disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration do not always consider this dimension and the very powerful and very human aspect of social connection. This means that deep, long-lasting engagement with communities and individuals should be an essential part of the disengagement, rehabilitation, and reintegration process for members of these groups and needs to be considered by policymakers and practitioners.[8] For example, some States have proactively engaged with families in preparation for the return of ISIL-associated individuals from the conflict zone, an approach that CTED has identified as a good practice in its dialogue with Member States.[9]

Promoting Peaceful Masculinities

The lack of a nuanced engagement with masculinities in a counter-terrorism context can lead to harmful practices that compromise individuals' rights. Young men and boys are often seen as the demographic group most at risk of violent extremism, while girls are often stereotyped as victims. Both categorizations reinforce young people's feelings of alienation and marginalization.[10] These stereotypes have shaped States' responses to their own child nationals being detained in camps in north-eastern Syria. The UN Special Rapporteur on counterterrorism and human rights noted that certain male children are "being considered inherently unworthy of the status of civilian, child or victim, and presumed by virtue of gender (male), religious affiliation (Muslim) and geography (Syria) to be 'non-child' for the purposes of international law protection."[11]

In this regard, the development of alternative, peaceful masculinities and the positive involvement of men in efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism could be explored. While CVE policy and programming has largely overlooked this dimension so far, useful lessons could be drawn from efforts to address peaceful masculinities within work on gender-based violence and peacebuilding.[12] For example, peacebuilding programs focused on masculinities have highlighted the importance of understanding how some men are able to develop and sustain nonviolent masculinities in militarized or conflict-prone contexts and to use this knowledge to inform strategies for enabling others to do the same.[13] They have also pointed to the need not only to encourage men to change at the individual level but also to address the structures that may penalize them for not conforming to prevalent toxic or violent forms of masculine behaviour.

Masculinities in CT Institutions

Counterterrorism actors and institutions are themselves shaped by masculine norms.[14] The masculine norms embedded in security institutions affect their approach to counter-terrorism, favouring a 'hard security' approach. By contrast, preventive, non-violent and human-security focused work is often portrayed as "fluffy," "soft," passive, or feminine, and thus less important.[15] This is despite the fact that the shortcomings of hard security approaches have been widely documented, both from an effectiveness and rights perspective, including also the fact that they often further marginalize and alienate affected communities, thus feeding back into the cycle of radicalization.

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6   Ibid, 5.

7   Kathleen Blee, "Similarities/Differences in Gender and Far-Right Politics in Europe and the USA," in *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, Michaela Köttig, Renate Bitzan, and Andrea Petö, eds. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 201, cited in Dier and Baldwin, 'Masculinities and Violent Extremism', 8.

8   Dier and Baldwin, "Masculinities and Violent Extremism", 8.

9   *CTED Analytical Brief: The Prosecution of ISIL-associated Women*, 2020, 6.

10   UN General Assembly and Security Council, *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*, UN Doc. A/72/761–S/2018/86, March 2, 2018.

11   Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "Position of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism on the Human Rights of Adolescents/Juveniles Being Detained in North-East Syria," Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, May 2021, cited in Dier and Baldwin, 'Masculinities and Violent Extremism', p. 5.

12   Dier and Baldwin, 'Masculinities and Violent Extremism', p. 11.

13   Ibid.

14   Ibid, 8.

15   Ibid, 8.

It is therefore also important to turn our gender analysis inward to examine the relationship between the production of masculinities by security institutions and terrorist groups, and how these may mutually reinforce each other.[16] This is an approach that invites us to question existing ways of doing things and institutional cultures that are shaped by dominant masculinities and that privilege securitised approaches to countering terrorism.

Conclusion

To conclude, there is limited experience so far in integrating masculinities into counter-terrorism and CVE policy and practice. As we begin to develop initiatives in this area, there are many pitfalls and potential harms to avoid. We should therefore learn the lessons of existing gender mainstreaming efforts in counter-terrorism that have primarily been targeted at women in their different roles. There is an increasingly solid evidence base on the shortcomings of some of these approaches, including on the ways in which they have essentialised women and perpetuated gender stereotypes. Based on this experience, a key recommendation is to ensure that there is robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms built into all programmes, with particular focus on monitoring and evaluation of their human rights and gender impacts.

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[16]   Ibid, 9.

COUNTERING THE THREAT OF GENDERED USES OF TECHNOLOGY BY VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

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The gendered uses of technology by violent extremists are varied, but for the purposes of this report I will focus on three concerns that have been salient in the period surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic: Recruitment, the spread of mis- and disinformation (including conspiracy theories), and fundraising. Throughout the piece, I draw on illustrations from far-right extremist communities and especially those in the manosphere, i.e., the network of interrelated blogs, forums, websites, and social media channels purportedly created to advance men's rights and men's interests. Recent analyses have argued that, in spite of the disavowal of violent rhetoric by some subcommunities, the manosphere has become more extremist-oriented over time.[1] My own previous research in this area further shows that some manosphere sites have become repositories for the type of hate speech, violent rhetoric, and conspiracy theories banned by many mainstream social media platforms.[2] Overall, the lack of content moderation in the manosphere is a substantial concern for countering violent extremism. A related concern is the persistent presence of extremist users on mainstream social media sites and the use of outlinking to create a conduit from mainstream platforms to the decentralized sites where extremist discourse and fundraising takes place.

Recruitment

Much of the existing research on extremism in the manosphere has focused on incel ("involuntarily celibate") communities. Incels are perhaps the most well-known subcommunity in the manosphere due to their association with violence. To date, dozens of people have been killed in attacks carried out by those who self-identify as incels,[3] with other far-right terrorists like Anders Breivik also engaging with incel content.[4] However, the manosphere is quite diverse both in terms of the language/nationality/ethnicity of users[5] and in terms of its subcommunities. For example, while incels have been banned from most mainstream social media sites because of their association with violence, red pill communities—which derive their name from the film The Matrix and which are closely associated with anti-government and anti-feminist conspiracies—remain visible on many sites. For some tech companies, red pill communities fall into a category of "lawful but awful" speech, i.e., providing content that is distasteful but which purportedly does not rise to a level extreme or violent enough to warrant removal. Other communities in the manosphere, like men's rights groups and "sexual strategy" communities, similarly retain a foothold on some major social media sites.

This being said, some researchers have called into question the boundaries between these communities, pointing out the degree of shared membership and the ease with which users can be lured toward more extreme and potentially radicalizing rhetoric.[6] Such recruitment can either take place through direct contact--with users crossing into more moderate subcommunities and leading others to extreme content via outlinking--or algorithmically. One recent study on YouTube found that there is about a 10.8% chance that any YouTube user will be recommended an incel-related video within about five walks through their recommendations. When a user starts from other misogynist content, this figure increases dramatically.[7] Policy-wise, this suggests that any approach to limit recruitment by communities engaged in extreme misogyny must look at algorithmic bias in addition to user behavior.

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1   Manoel Horta Ribeiro et al., "The Evolution of the Manosphere Across the Web," 2021, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2001.07600.pdf.

2   Alexis Henshaw, *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security* (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2023).

3   Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware, and Ezra Shapiro, "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 7 (July 2, 2020): 565–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1751459.

4   Alex DiBranco, "Male Supremacist Terrorism as a Rising Threat," February 10, 2020, https://icct.nl/publication/male-supremacist-terrorism-as-a-rising-threat/.

5   Moonshot, "Understanding and Preventing Incel Violence in Canada" (Moonshot CVE, 2021), https://moonshotteam.com/preventing-incel-violence-in-canada/.

6   Tracie Farrell et al., "Exploring Misogyny across the Manosphere in Reddit," in *Proceedings of the 10th ACM Conference on Web Science* (WebSci '19, Boston, MA, 2019), 87–96; Horta Ribeiro et al., "The Evolution of the Manosphere Across the Web"; Kostantinos Papadamou et al., "Understanding the Incel Community on YouTube," 2020, https://arxiv.org/pdf/2001.08293.pdf.

7   Papadamou et al., "Understanding the Incel Community on YouTube."

Spread of Mis- and Disinformation

The spread of mis- and disinformation by online extremists has been a longstanding concern, but is an issue that arguably became more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of conspiracy theories is important in the radicalization of individuals associated with QAnon, incels, Identitarians, and a variety of other far-right movements. Research published before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic already warned of cross-platform communication and inter-community learning among various far right groups online. This included information sharing about memetic warfare, hashtags, fundraising for content creators, the use of bots, and coordinated raids to distribute content.[8] Since then, extremists have warned that we are moving toward the emergence of "big tent" conspiracies where racist, xenophobic, anti-government, homophobic, and misogynist communities intermingle in online.[9]

In previously published work, I documented the cross-pollination of conspiracies and extremist rhetoric in the manosphere following the 2020 U.S. presidential elections.[10] In addition to finding that the lack of moderation on red pill forums allowed election-related conspiracies to flourish, during a six-week content analysis of posts on one forum I identified substantial crossovers to other conspiracy theories and connections to recognized extremist groups like QAnon. While COVID-19 and vaccine-related conspiracies were dominant themes (appearing in 23.3% of postings), 8.9% of posts expressed anti-immigrant or white supremacist views, 3.9% shared QAnon content or used hashtags and slogans known to be associated with QAnon, and 6.2% explicitly advocated for the use of violence against governments, politicians, and "liberal" voters.[11]

Fundraising

Attempts by extremists to exploit technology for the purposes of fundraising remain a moving target. Continued shifts in technology, regulation, and the value of cryptocurrencies all seem to impact how fundraising efforts take shape. Use of cryptocurrency by the far right in particular is well-established; however, it is not necessarily the sole or primary avenue for fundraising. In 2017, The Southern Poverty Law Center identified over 200 alt-right and white nationalist figures and organizations with bitcoin holdings.[12] These include organizations linked to incel ideology or the targeting of feminist and LGBTQ-rights advocates. Cryptocurrency was allegedly used to fund a failed anti-Semitic plot in Germany in 2019 and provided a source of income for the individual who carried out the 2019 terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand.[13] Streaming platforms that accept cryptocurrency donations were used to stream the January 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol and to fund far-right content creators.[14] Elsewhere on the political spectrum, the Islamic State has also allegedly dabbled in cryptocurrency.[15] The emerging use of blockchain to store extremist iconography as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) has likewise been noted.[16]

Still, various limitations and emerging policy solutions may be conspiring to make cryptocurrency less attractive for extremists—at least for the time being. On the one hand, cryptocurrency carries a technological barrier to entry that may be off-putting to some. Recent fluctuations in the value of such currencies may also have made them a less attractive investment, with the price of bitcoin falling from a high of over US$67,000 in 2021 to under US$30,000 in early 2023.[17] In previous research on extremism within the manosphere, I noted that some forums appeared eager

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8   Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner, "The Fringe Insurgency--Connectivity, Convergence and Mainstreaming of the Extreme Right" (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2017), https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/The-Fringe-Insurgency-221017_2.pdf.

9   Marc-André Argentino et al., "Far From Gone: The Evolution of Extremism in the First 100 Days of the Biden Administration" (London, UK: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, 2021), https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ICSR-Report-Far-From-Gone-The-Evolution-of-Extremism-in-the-First-100-Days-of-the-Biden-Administration.pdf.

10   Henshaw, *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security*; Alexis Henshaw, "Extremism in the Manosphere During the Presidential Transition," *GNET* (blog), January 22, 2021, https://gnet-research.org/2021/01/22/extremism-in-the-manosphere-during-presidential-transition/.

11   Henshaw, *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security*.

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13   Daniel Koehler, "The Halle, Germany, Synagogue Attach and the Evolution of the Far-Right Terror Threat," *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 11 (2019): 14–20; Graham Macklin, "The Christchurch Attacks: Livestream Terror in the Viral Video Age," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, July 18, 2019, https://ctc.usma.edu/christchurch-attacks-livestream-terror-viral-video-age/.

14   Kellen Browning and Taylor Lorenz, "Pro-Trump Mob Livestreamed Its Rampage, and Made Money Doing It," *The New York Times*, January 8, 2021, sec. Technology, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/08/technology/dlive-capitol-mob.html; Cecilia D'Anastasio, "A Game Livestreaming Site Has Become an Extremist Haven," *Wired*, January 7, 2021, https://www.wired.com/story/dlive-livestreaming-site-extremist-haven/.

15   Andrew Mines, "The Risks of a Telegram Crypto-Wallet," *GNET* (blog), May 4, 2020, https://gnet-research.org/2020/05/04/the-risks-of-a-telegram-crypto-wallet/.

16   Chamila Liyanage, "Extremist NFTs: How Does Blockchain Immortalise Extremism?," *GNET* (blog), April 14, 2023, https://gnet-research.org/2023/04/14/extremist-nfts-how-does-blockchain-immortalise-extremism/.

17   Historical pricing data retrieved from Coinbase.com.

to solicit donations via bitcoin and Basic Attention Token (BAT), a token based on the Ethereum blockchain and used to "tip" content creators through the Brave privacy browser.[18] As of 2023, one site I had previously visited no longer appeared to accept BAT. This change seemed to follow the implementation of new "Know Your Customer" (KYC) policies implemented by Brave and its custodial partners.[19] The site in question still accepts bitcoin donations, however, this example may show the potential impact of KYC policies on a community that is hyper-attentive to privacy concerns.

Conclusion

This brief discussion explores the gendered uses of technology by violent extremists, touching specifically on recruitment, the spread of mis- and disinformation, and fundraising applications. While any of these aspects could be discussed in much greater detail, a few key themes emerge. The first is that extremists—especially, those within the manosphere—have learned to walk the fine line between prohibited content and "lawful but awful" speech on mainstream social media platforms. Aided by recommendation algorithms and lax policies on outlinking, extremists are easily able to move users from moderate to extremist content—in spite of the fact that the latter is now increasingly housed in decentralized blogs, channels, and forums. Related to this, the decentralization of extremist content enables cross-pollination among far-right and conspiracy-oriented communities. What follows is the development of a broad ecosystem of anti-establishment discourse in which allegiances and "memberships" in individual groups or communities become opaque. Finally, there is a concern that increased decentralization through the adoption of blockchain, cryptocurrency, and other technologies of the decentralized Web will continue to complicate efforts at content moderation.

Some potential policy solutions exist. First, it is clear that industry partnerships must continue to build beyond big tech companies, offering mentorship to smaller companies and players who may have the will—but not the resources—to root out extremist voices. Where such platforms are unwilling to engage in moderation, regulatory solutions could be envisioned to make it less profitable to host extremist content. Related to this, on the fundraising side, KYC policies have the potential to curtail abuses involving cryptocurrency. Still, given the adaptability of these communities we must remain vigilant to new trends. Recent movement by extremists into subscription- and microtransaction-based services like crowdfunding sites, newsletters, and livestreaming platforms show the entrepreneurial capacity of the community.

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INTEGRATING GENDER INTO DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

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Overview

Moonshot is a social impact business with global expertise in countering online harms and violent extremism. Since 2015, Moonshot has developed tech and digital methodologies to counter violent extremism both online and offline across the world.

While our work originally focused on disrupting violent extremism, in recent years we've expanded our mission to tackle disinformation, gender-based violence and child exploitation and abuse, among other online harms.

To best disrupt these online harms, we need to study them closely. Our tech enables us to do so and build the evidence base necessary to effectively counter the risk they pose to vulnerable communities and individuals, including individuals who themselves are at-risk of committing violence or harm.

We believe that there are many reasons why people engage in violent extremism and online harms and that there are just as many reasons why they might be dissuaded from doing so. We design and deliver a wide range of highly targeted interventions for governments and multilateral organizations to tech companies and the private sector. We focus on building evidence and awareness and develop programming on the different types and manifestations of violent extremism and other online harms.

To date, we have delivered programmes in over 60 countries, in 30 languages and across 51 (and counting) online platforms.

Moonshot's approach is rooted in Ethics, Evidence, and Human rights.

● **Ethics** – We prioritise the highest ethical standards in both our business model and in every project we undertake. This is essential in enabling the communities we work with to have confidence that their rights are respected and assuring partners that Moonshot can be relied upon to operate with the highest possible standards. We refuse to take on projects where there are significant ethical concerns.

● **Evidence** – Our work is rooted in evidence. We define risk based on evidence of specific behaviours, not assumptions about a community or group (such as demographics or location). We report actual risk, as defined by the data, not what we expected to find - but exactly what the data tells us.

● **Human rights** – We recognise that the lack of internationally accepted and precise definitions of violent extremism and other online harms has often intersected with violations and abuses of human rights, particularly experienced by religious, minority, and civil society actors. The protection of human rights sits at the heart of all Moonshot work on online harms.

We currently deliver three pillars of activity globally:

● **Understand** – All our work begins with building an evidence base on the scale of online engagement with harmful or violent extremist content through regular insight reporting and threat monitoring and investigative research to understand the online landscape and behaviour of the at-risk audience.

● **Intervene** – We develop highly targeted, tailored interventions to connect at-risk individuals with alternative messaging or established local support services.

● **Sustainable Prevention** – We aim to create sustainable bridges to link at-risk individuals with tailored support delivered by experienced and local practitioners. We support and build capacity of CSOs, NGOs, and other local partners, to design and build sustainable prevention models.

Our Interventions

All of Moonshot's interventions work is guided by behavioural health methods, building on the evidence of what works in offline prevention and disengagement. The value of behavioural health and mental health services lies in creating a safe place for individuals to talk and as an appropriate mechanism for additional support. This typically entails connecting at-risk individuals with existing wrap-around services that can facilitate change, signposting them directly to people or resources that can help them in a moment of need.

We partner with local organisations who provide counselling and support and build on their experience dealing with at-risk communities. Many countries have well-established local services providing intervention services in the community but lack the necessary infrastructure in the online space to link at-risk individuals with tailored support. Our interventions can also take the form of digital campaigns to connect users with tailored alternative messaging packaged in multiple different types of content.

For example, in Canada, we piloted an online intervention program that offers psychosocial support to internet users who exhibit risk of engaging with violent misogynistic and violent extremist content. We worked with local practitioners to build an online referral mechanism across multiple platforms to connect identified at-risk users with qualified intervention providers. To date, through this program, we have connected 786 at-risk individuals with trained mental health providers, of who, 22 people initiated a conversation with a counsellor.[1]

Since 2021, we have been running a similar program in the US. We found that users vulnerable to VE are more likely to engage with self-help and social service content than the general public. For example, in the US the far right were 48 percent more likely to engage with self-help & social service content than the general public. And, if they were looking to join a violent group, they were 115 percent more likely. For those engaging with violent extremist content on Google Search, YouTube, and Twitter – we're connecting them in to a 24/7 dedicated helpline we set up with Crisis Text Line. To date, we've facilitated over 150 conversations with Crisis Text Line.

Integrating gender

Moonshot's work promotes safety for all and recognise the cross-cutting nature of gender across all online harms. We believe in finding ways to intervene early to prevent violence of all kinds. This may involve working with perpetrators as well as victims/survivors of all genders. Here we focus on some of questions we ask ourselves when integrating gender into the design and delivery of digital campaigns and interventions.

Understanding the audience and the online landscape.

As described above, much of our work starts by identifying who the at-risk audience is and the different ways they are engaging with different types of violent extremist or harmful content across mainstream and fringe social media platforms and search engines. This enables us to understand the at-risk audience better and to establish the most appropriate and effective methods of intervention for each audience.

- **The at-risk audience**
  - What are the characteristics of the at-risk audience? Do we know their gender? How are they representing their gender?
  - Which platforms are they using? What are the characteristics of the overall user base of these platforms? (e.g., predominantly men or women – if known)
  - Do the risk indicators we have developed consider the nuances and diversity of the at-risk audience?

- **Behaviour & mobilisation**
  - What is the at-risk audience looking for? It's important to consider the differences between performative online behaviour, e.g., posting on a social media platform, which can tell us about identity or influence construction or community/group mobilisation; and non-performative behaviour e.g., searching for information or help on

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1 See more about Moonshot's work in Canada as: *Countering Radicalization to Violence in Ontario and Quebec: Canada's First Online-Offline Interventions Model*, May 2023, https://149736141.v2.pressablecdn.com/wp-content/uploads/Moonshot_Countering-Radicalization-to-Violence-in-Ontario-and-Quebec-1.pdf

Google or Facebook, which can tell us how someone might be feeling, what is shaping their engagement with a certain ideology or narrative, or why they are looking for certain information.

ο Are they looking to connect with others? Are they looking to validate their own views or learn more about a certain ideology? Or are they searching or asking for help?

ο How is gender being mobilised to engage with others? Are any specific ideas about gender being used to construct any key narratives? How are gender norms or identities being challenged or reinforced in the mobilisation of these narratives or to reach supporters?

ο Who are the key influencers or mobilisers of these narratives?

- **Dominant narratives**

ο What are the dominant narratives or themes being shared and discussed?

ο How are these narratives gendered? How are men and women or femininities and masculinities represented? Are gender norms being contested or reinforced?

ο Who is being targeted? Are any groups or identities being targeted specifically? How does gender influence the representation or targeting of these groups? (e.g., is discourse specifically anti-women or anti-LGBTQI+?)

Design & Delivery: Taking context and gender norms seriously.

Every intervention is unique but, in the design and delivery of digital interventions, there are several important factors we need to consider to ensure that the intervention is not only effective but safe and ethical. Some of these include:

- **Messaging**

ο Who is the messaging targeted at? Is it designed to challenge the views of the at-risk audience? We usually avoid this and focus on how we can offer or make support accessible.

ο How do we ensure the messaging doesn't reinforce non-equitable gender norms without aggravating the target audience or being culturally insensitive? We want to connect and reach the at-risk audience to offer help not push them further away.

- **Content – created and curated**

ο What kind of digital campaigns content are we using or creating to engage the audience? Whose views, if any, is it reinforcing? Is it reinforcing damaging gender norms? Sometimes we use comedic content, which we have found to be very effective, but jokes can often tread a fine line between being funny and harmful – e.g., reinforcing specific ideas about gender or gender roles.

ο Does the content use fictional narratives or characters? Is their gender important? How gender being performed in the content?

ο Has the content been reviewed by local SMEs? Is it both locally relevant and culturally sensitive?

ο Who is the content created by? Positionality is important, not only in research, but in interventions too.

ο If content is curated, has permission been given from the creator?

ο Are we comfortable with the origin of the video? Where else it may have been used?

ο Do we have a content moderation procedure in place on the platforms where the content will appear? Who is responsible? Can there be any indirect harm to this person based on their own experiences and identities?

- **Intervention delivery partners**

ο Who are we working with to deliver our interventions? Are they best positioned to reach the at-risk audience?

ο Are they survivor-focused or perpetrator focused? How do they deliver their programmes and who else do they work with?

ο Who is responsible in their team for delivering the intervention?

ο Can they effectively deliver programmes to the target audience?

ο Do they adhere to our practice standards for intervention providers in responding violent extremism and other harms online?

ο Are there effective off-ramps in place for all gender identities?

Presenting results: Do No (more) Harm.

In all work that seeks to counter violent extremism and online harms, it is also important to consider how we design and present research findings or program results, especially in relation to work on gender and violent extremism. In Moonshot's presentations and publications, we seek to avoid the use of:

● **Faces or personally identifiable visual or text information.** Avoiding using images of individual's faces in our work does not only protect the person behind the image but it avoids reinforcing any biases or damaging stereotypes (gender, racial, religious, or otherwise) about the 'type' of person who may be engage or may be connected with a specific form of violent extremism.

● **Icons or symbols** connected with violent extremist movements – current and historic - which can be both offensive and divisive among different audiences.

● **Screengrabs of harmful content** encouraging violence against an individual or group to avoid furthering its spread or exposing anyone directly or indirectly to any harmful narratives, images, memes, or other visual content, they would have not been otherwise exposed to.

Conclusion

While these are only some of the questions we consider when designing and delivering digital interventions and campaigns, but we hope they will provide helpful 'food for thought' for others working in the sector and beyond.

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GENDER, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CVE

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Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Gender and preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (P/CVERLT)

Historically, women's engagement in violent extremist and terrorist groups has been overlooked. Scholars and organizations alike increasingly started to take note of it with the migration of individuals to Daesh, which at the peak of its operational existence included around 40,000 persons joining from around the world of which around 17% are thought to have been women.[1] Many violent extremist groups have co-opted the message of women's empowerment, and promise better socio-economic conditions, in order to recruit women and girls. The role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (P/CVERLT) was also increasingly being recognised as important, in both civil society as well as through women's inclusion in law enforcement. When discussions around 'gender' and P/CVERLT were happening, it usually centred on either the combination of why women were joining, and/or the importance of women preventing VERLT.

However, the overwhelming majority of those committing violent crime, including related to violent extremism and terrorism, are men.[2] Yet there has been a notable deficit in organizations and academics discussing this as a gendered issue, and even fewer attempting to apply a gender analysis to any efforts to understand or developing programmes to prevent VERLT. Organizations such as the Organizations for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have been actively including a gender perspective on P/CVERLT through publications such as *Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: Good Practices for Law Enforcement*, which seeks to look at gender beyond 'the role of women'. The guidance helps both law enforcement and civil society in including a comprehensive gender perspective for more efficient and human rights-based P/CVERLT activities.

Over the past couple of years, fuelled by the violent extremist attacks by individuals who adhere to the 'Incel' ideology (which originated online), who have violent misogyny at their core[3], scholars have started to note a linkage between attitudes of violent misogyny and violent extremism, thereby expanding the gender analysis of this field. The prevalence of (violent) misogyny in violent extremist and terrorist narratives across the ideological spectrum and its co-existence with xenophobia and hatred towards minorities was noted by the UN Secretary General in 2022.[4]

The OSCE produced its own study on this topic in 2022, which served as a basis for the 'Policy Brief on the Linkages Between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism'.[5] This has become part of a growing body of research that identifies overlap between violent misogynistic attitudes and support of violent extremism, across ideologies. The relationship between support for violence against women and support for violent extremism was found to be statistically significant – respondents who agree with attitudes of violence against women are almost five times more likely to support violent extremism than people in the sample who disagree with that type of violence. This makes it a more reliable variable that might predict VERLT than any other variable, be it socio-economic status, gender, or education. [6] In discussions during the policy brief launch, experts also noted that these attitudes often form at a very early age, which must be taken into account when formulating PVE strategies. Age also has to be considered, when

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[1]   OSCE, *Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism : Good Practices for Law Enforcement* (Vienna, 2019), https://www.osce.org/secretariat/420563, 24.

[2]   See for example Alexandra Thompson and Susannah N. Tapp, "Criminal Victimization, 2021," (Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 2022), https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv21.pdf and UNODC, *Handbook on Gender Dimensions of Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism* (Vienna, 2019), https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/17-8887_HB_Gender_Criminal_Justice_E_ebook.pdf

[3]   See for example: Mark Townsend, "Experts fear rising global 'incel' culture could provoke terrorism," *The Guardian*, 30 October 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/oct/30/global-incel-culture-terrorism-misogyny-violent-action-forums

[4]   UN General Assembly, "Terrorist attacks on the basis of xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief- report of the Secretary General", A/77/266, 3 August 2022, https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/450/52/PDF/N2245052.pdf?OpenElement

[5]   OSCE, *The Linkages between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism That Lead to Terrorism*, Policy Brief (Vienna, 6 September 2022) , https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/525297.pdf

[6]   Ibid and "New OSCE policy brief sheds light on linkages between violent misogyny and violent extremist attitudes", 9 September 2022, https://www.osce.org/secretariat/525570#:~:text=The%20policy%20brief%20was%20commissioned,societies%20in%20the%20OSCE%20area.

we are looking at how this manifests when and where individuals come across violent misogynistic content. This is especially relevant in the online space.

Gender, violent extremism and digital technologies

Digital technologies in general, and artificial intelligence in particular, are developing at an accelerated pace, making it challenging for security organizations and in particular non-experts, to keep track of the possibilities, and not least challenges, they present. In the digital space, increasingly hostile and open misogyny, homophobia and racism on some social media platforms and echo chambers perpetuated by algorithms that continue showing users content similar to what they have just seen, do not make a welcome environment for open democratic debate. Women and already feel the impact that this has, and alter their online behaviour as a result – for example not engaging in specific debates, trying to protect their identity online, or by leaving certain platforms altogether. This, in itself, is a challenge to a free and democratic public discourse.[7] But it also has other implications, some of which are connected to VERLT.

Terrorists and violent extremists exploit gender in support of their ideology and operations. VERLT is highly gendered, and awareness of how this manifests in terms of how violent extremist (VE) and terrorist groups use rigid gender stereotypes and roles to provide both a framework for in-group justification and sustainability, and as part of the dehumanization of out-groups, is evident.

Some studies have found that men tend to use technology more for entertainment and experimentation, while women use it more for communication.[8] Although these lines are by no means clear-cut, it could indicate why recruitment and spread of VE and terrorist material through gaming platforms, for example, is often hyper-masculine in nature and tailored to attract men and boys. Violent extremists and terrorists across the ideological spectrum use gender as a tool in the 'digital information disorder', to recruit followers, and spread propaganda. For example, a study by the International Centre for Counter-terrorism in the Hague found that anti-feminist conspiracy theories claiming that society is controlled by feminists pushing anti-male agendas were spread by men and women on the far right.[9] A study on the use of TikTok show that they often favour a combination of racism, anti-Semitism, anti-feminism and anti-immigration rhetoric, and that groups across the ideological spectrum exploit existing algorithms to get reach.[10] Bots and other automated accounts can be used to amplify violent extremist messaging, and target individuals based on their gender, to radicalize them to accepting violence or contribute to community/social polarization.

This trend accelerated during, and was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as interaction shifted largely to the online space. Conspiracy theories, including about women, spread quicker than ever, in a time of great uncertainty. With the rapid development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, we are facing an online environment where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fake. There have already been examples of chatbots developed to behave in racist, anti-semitic and deeply misogynistic ways, as a data leak gave users of 4chan access to advanced AI models. The potential for hate speech and fuelling polarization and violent extremism is cause for concern.[11]

Moderating content, while securing freedom of expression and anti-discrimination

Social media platforms have been widely criticized for their inability to curb hate speech targeting minority groups. As a result, legislation aimed at identifying and removing illegal content is becoming increasingly prevalent. Violent Extremist and terrorist groups are adapting to circumvent algorithms both by deploying their own technology and by exploiting existing ones. In addition, hateful language can be nuanced and may not always be flagged

7   Lucina Di Meco, "Gender trolling is curbing women's rights and making money for digital platforms", *The Guardian*, 17 February 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/feb/17/gender-trolling-women-rights-money-digital-platforms-social-media-hate-politics

8   Sabrina Sobieraj and Nicole C. Krämer, "Similarities and differences between genders in the usage of computers with different levels of technological complexity," *Computers in Human Behavior* 104 (March 2022), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.09.021, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563219303498?via%3Dihub

9   Arie Perliger, Catherine Stevens, and Eviane Leidig, "Mapping the Ideological Landscape of Extreme Misogyny," *ICCT Research Paper*, January 2023, Mapping-the-Ideological-Landscape-of-Misogyny (2).pdf (icct.nl)

10 RAN, *Extremists' Targeting Young Women on Social Media and Lessons for P/CVE* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), ad_hoc_young_women_social_media_Lessons-p-cve_022022_en.pdf (europa.eu)

11 Daniel Siegel, "'Red Pilled AI': A New Weapon for Online Radicalisation on 4chan," *GNET*, 7 June 2023, 'RedPilled AI': A New Weapon for Online Radicalisation on 4chan – GNET (gnet-research.org)

by algorithms. Most tech platforms are using a combination of algorithms/AI and human moderation to approach this issue.[12] Some governments turn to overly restrictive access to the internet and information to try and tackle what they deem harmful content. But in addition to violating rights to expression it also does not help challenge disinformation or propaganda, as noted by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.[13] Governments need to seek multilateral solutions to challenges related to the 'information disorder' in the digital space.

The Office of the Representative on the Freedom of the Media published a Policy Manual – 'Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression' - which aims at providing guidance to states on how to create regulatory responses that protect human rights, specifically the right to freedom of expression, and provide policy solutions over content governance and data use, including the ability to opt-out of automated decision-making.[14] The paper points out the challenges with AI lacking context and causing over-removal of content. To ensure a balance between combating hate speech and preserving freedom of expression, it is crucial for platforms to be transparent about their policies and criteria for content moderation. This transparency helps enhance public trust, but also enable a more consistent and effective approach to tackling violent extremism and terrorism online.

AI systems are only as good as the data they work with and it is important to ensure diverse datasets based on diverse attributes to combat intersectional discriminatory bias inherent in algorithmic systems, as characteristics like sexual orientation and gender identity are often not observed. When failing to do so, AI algorithms can inadvertently perpetuate gender biases present in the data they are trained on. For example, if an AI system is trained on a dataset that contains gender stereotypes or discriminatory language, the system will learn to reproduce these biases in its own output. This could lead to the system making decisions or recommendations that are discriminatory towards certain genders.[15] Discrimination is already happening through so-called 'shadowbanning', where for example, images containing pictures of women bodies being more often flagged as sexualized than those of men, limiting the reach of many women in online spaces, including women-led organizations and businesses. [16] So-called 'deep-fakes' powered by AI algorithms can be used to personalize content and target individuals with violent extremist messaging based on their gender, interests, or other demographic factors.[17] This can lead to individuals being exposed to increasingly more extreme and polarizing content, as well as victims of deep fakes themselves – an obviously gendered issue.

To mitigate these risks, it is important to develop AI systems that are designed with diversity and inclusion in mind, and that they are trained on diverse and representative datasets, working alongside human moderators. There is a need for greater transparency and accountability in the use of AI in online platforms, so that malicious actors will find it more difficult to manipulate the technology to spread violent extremist ideas.

Risks of using AI in P/CVERLT

Knowing that AI can act biased and lack context, the use of AI in P/CVERLT raises significant concerns around profiling, discrimination, and privacy. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of human rights while countering terrorism, also expressed concern in her report to the Human Rights Council in March 2023 on the misuse of technologies, "including drones, biometrics, artificial intelligence (AI) and spyware – in the global fight against terrorism, without due regard for the rule of law, governance and human rights."[18]

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[12] Andrew Kersley, "The one problem with AI content moderation: It does not work", *ComputerWeekly*, 7 February 2023, https://www.computerweekly.com/feature/The-one-problem-with-AI-content-moderation-It-doesnt-work

[13] Teresa Ribeiro (OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media), *Regular Report to the Permanent Council: for the Period from 4 November 2022 to 11 May 2023*, 11 May 2023, https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/a/543366_0.pdf

[14] Office of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, *Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression: A Policy Manual*, (Vienna, 2021),https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/f/510332_1.pdf

[15] FRA, *BIAS in Algorithms: Artificial Intelligence and Discrimination* (Vienna, 2022), https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-bias-in-algorithms_en.pdf

[16] Shadowbanning refers to "…the decision of a social media platform to limit the reach of a post or account. While a regular ban involves actively blocking a post or account and notifying the user, shadowbanning is less transparent - often the reach will be suppressed without the user's knowledge." See Gianluca Mauro and Hilke Schellmann, " 'There is no standard': Investigation finds AI Algorithms objectify women's bodies", *The Guardian*, 8 February 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/feb/08/biased-ai-algorithms-racy-women-bodies?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other

[17] RAN Practitioners, "What's going on online? Dealing with (potential) deepfake technology by extremists", *Conclusion Paper*, 25/01/2022, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/ran_cn_dealing_with_use_deepfakes_technology_by_extremism_10-11112022_en.pdf

[18] "Alarming misuse of high-risk technologies in global fight against terrorism says UN expert", Press Release, OHCHR, 14 March 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/alarming-misuse-high-risk-technologies-global-fight-against-terrorism-says

One way AI already is used to support P/CVERLT efforts is by analysing online content, including social media posts and websites, to flag potential violent extremist activity. This is done with machine learning algorithms that identify patterns and indicators of violent extremism, such as the use of certain keywords, images, or symbols of hate speech, and supplemented by human moderators.[19] While there are examples of organizations experimenting with AI in P/CVERLT, significant caution should be taken. The European Parliament has adopted the first draft rules on AI systems, taking a risk-based approach, and establishes obligations for providers and users based on the levels of risk the AI can generate. Unacceptable levels of risk might include "biometric categorisation systems using sensitive characteristics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship status, religion, political orientation)". Additionally, any system that exploits vulnerabilities and employs manipulative techniques based on factors such as social behaviour and socio-economic status could also be considered high risk.[20]

Regardless of how we feel about it, AI is here to stay. But so far, meaningful prevention of violence still needs to include human interaction and support to the public, as well as organizations and governments on how to best think critically around how they engage with online content.

Taking a media and information literacy approach

The OSCE is working to strengthen media- and information literacy as a response to the 'digital information disorder' in a P/CVERLT context.[21] Media and information literacy (MIL) can help individuals to become more aware of the risks associated with online content and develop the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the digital world safely. This includes being able to identify fake news, propaganda, and violent extremist messaging, as well as being able to evaluate sources of information for credibility and bias. Moreover, MIL can help individuals to become more resilient to violent extremist messaging and to develop the skills needed to counter and challenge this messaging both online and offline. This includes being able to identify and challenge violent extremist narratives, as well as being able to engage in constructive dialogue with others who may have different views or beliefs.

MIL is one of the OSCE's priority areas in P/CVERLT. Increasing critical thinking skills is crucial to prevent VERLT online, particularly when AI is involved in perpetuating misinformation. MIL can help individuals and societies to become critical consumers of media and to identify and challenge extremist messaging, both online and offline. We believe that a joint effort across sectors, that brings together policymakers, civil society, educators, media representatives and law enforcement is necessary, to identify national/local solutions.

Until there is sufficient regulation in place, states should be careful of deployment of AI in P/CVERLT beyond content moderation and curation alongside human moderators. At the same time, AI tools should be trained on more diverse non-discriminatory data sets that does not undermine the protection of human rights, especially the right to freedom of expression. This must be done alongside human moderation and investment in media- and information literacy, including AI literacy, programmes across sectors. By doing so, states can help ensure that automated decision-making is working in favour of the anti-discrimination and tolerance, thereby providing a useful antidote to the mind-set of violent extremist and terrorist ideologies.

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[19] EU Internet Referral Unit, Monitoring Terrorism Online, https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-counter-terrorism-centre-ectc/eu-internet-referal-unit-eu-iru

[20] "EU AI Act: First Regulation on Artificial Intelligence", European Parliament News, updated on 14/06/2023, AI Act: a step closer to the first rules on Artificial Intelligence | News | European Parliament (europa.eu)

[21] **Information disorder:** Information disorder encapsulates the concepts of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation. Some of its best-known forms are satire or parody, false connections, misleading content, false context, imposter content, manipulated content and fabricated content. The term refers to different harmful developments in the domain of mass media and information technology and the way that they impact the world. UNESCO defines *disinformation* as information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country; *misinformation* as information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm; and *malinformation* as information that is based on reality and used to inflict harm on a person, social group, organization or country. Propaganda is conceptually close to disinformation but is frequently considered to more blatantly appeal to emotion. These techniques are exploited by violent extremists to spread their narratives in an attempt to recruit individuals to their cause.

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CLIMATE CHANGE, GENDER AND TERRORISM

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Introduction

Climate change exacerbates existing security issues. However, it has only recently been viewed as an emerging security challenge. At the 2022 ACT Strategic Futures Conference, climate change was highlighted as the "substrate of all future decision-making". Societal breakdown, existing conflicts, competition for scarce resources, loss of livelihoods and migration are all exacerbated by climate change, and can worsen a security situation, weaken societal resilience and the ability to withstand climate-related shocks. Out of the 15 countries most exposed to climate risks, eight have hosted a UN peacekeeping or special political mission[1] - a further example of the impact of climate on security.

While terrorism is acknowledged as a security challenge, climate change and the gender perspective have traditionally been perceived as "soft security" issues with the main focus on protecting vulnerable civilians. Therefore, these have been more in the remit of international development rather than defence and security. However, both climate change and the gender perspective impact "hard security" issues such as terrorism and violent extremism. Soft security issues such as loss of livelihoods, resource scarcity, social or gender inequality can transition to hard security issues if ignored. National investments still tend to favour hard security issues, once threat is deemed kinetic and lethal. Second, attributing causality between climate change, gender and a hard security threat such as terrorism, is complicated further by climate change being only one of many factors affecting a deteriorating security situation. For the two reasons above, it is useful to view the climate, gender, terrorism nexus through the lens of a soft security/hard security continuum.

This paper aims to highlight key reasons why the climate, gender, terrorism nexus is relevant in a defence and security context.

Climate Change and Human Security

Climate change has a gender perspective because of its disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable. Poverty gives people fewer options. The majority of the world's poor are women and children, making them more vulnerable to human security challenges such as human trafficking, bonded labour and sexual violence. Climate change also creates a destabilising influence through competition for scarce resources; reducing the options for economic livelihoods through drought and flooding, which in turn puts additional strain on regional government and security sector. The link to terrorism is that, with fewer options, a climate-affected population is fertile ground for recruitment into a violent extremist organisation (VEO) and VEOs exploit these vulnerabilities. A strained security situation or power vacuum also provides VEOs the opportunity to profit from greater freedom to trade on grey or black economies, with wildlife and stolen cultural property providing income streams for terrorist financing. While the causality of climate change and terrorism is generally omni-directional, terrorism can deplete resources such as human capital, minerals and cultural property from a climate-affected region. In this way, monitoring human security issues using a gender perspective is not just important in order to report and respond to the victims, but also as an indicator of a deteriorating security situation.

Civilian Agency

While, women are more vulnerable to human security issues above, they still have agency. Both men and women can fall into the four categories shown in the A3E Model at fig 1.

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[1]   "People, Countries Impacted by Climate Change Also Vulnerable to Terrorist Recruitment, Violence, Speakers Tell Security Council in Open Debate", SC/14728, UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 9 December 2021, https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14728.doc.htm
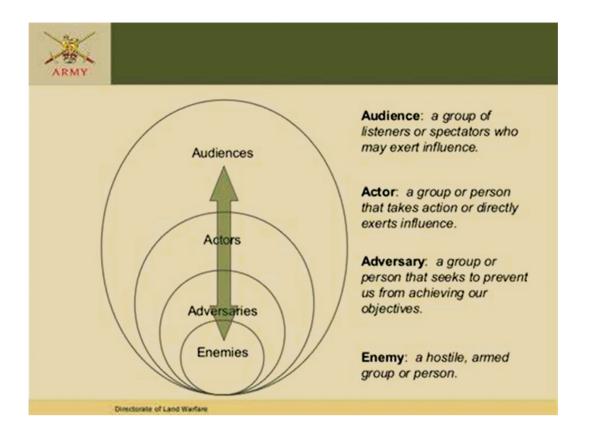
Fig 1: A3E Model – British Army Directorate for Land Warfare

Women may choose to stay in a climate-affected area due to lack of economic resources, safety concerns or child-care responsibilities. In this instance, NATO needs to be aware of the high proportion of female-headed households and children when operating in a climate-affected area. Women may also choose to join a VEO. Women are not just victims, but can also be actors, adversaries or the enemy: online influencers, supporters, part of the terrorist supply chain and per-petrators of armed violence. They can also be part of the solution. Likewise, men, boys and girls can also be victims and perpetrators of violence. Climate change impacts the options people have and the decisions they make. For example, if a substance farmer's crops fail due to drought, they may be driven to bonded labour or violent extremism. If there are high levels of unemployment, earning money from illegal wildlife trafficking or working for a VEO may become a viable alterna-tive. Perceived government failure to provide security could further aid VEO recruitment. What is important is that NATO includes a Gender Perspective within a threat analysis to ensure a comprehensive and accurate intelligence picture, and where applicable, factor this into military planning and activity.

Urbanisation

Droughts and desertification are leading to increased urbanisation. By 2050, 68% of the world's population will live in cities.[2] Urbanisation impacts stability, from the spread of pandemics and food shortages to the need for increased policing to protect from terrorist attacks. Urban centres also provide a hub for the spread of terrorist ideologies.[3] Migration also affects societal resilience and can make people more vulnerable to shocks such as a climate event or terror attack. The gender perspective of migration should be considered through a security lens. For example, as a result of male climate migration, has there been an increase in attacks on female-headed households? Are women more or less likely to become radicalised and join non-state armed groups as a result of climate-induced economic hardship? The military response to climate change has traditionally focussed on physical response measures such as carbon neutral vehicles or crisis mana-gement. However, the military also need to consider the societal impact of climate change to understand the root causes

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[2] UN Department of Public Information, "68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050, says UN," *Press Release*, 16 May 2018, https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html

[3] Grace Ewor Egwu, & Bashir, Mohammed & Ibrahim, Mustapha, "Urbanisation and the Breeding of Terrorism in Maiduguri Metropolitan Urbanisation and the Breeding of Terrorism in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council of Borno State, Nigeria," *Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences* 4, no.2 (October 2022): 183-193.

of conflict within climate-affected states and therefore be able to build layered resilience in climate-affected populations. Building social resilience is particularly important when VEOs are using a combination of kinetic and hybrid tactics[4] in order to build resilience against adversarial narratives.

Climate Change as a Factor in Globalising Violent Extremism

Climate change exacerbates security issues within a climate-affected state. Climate migration, combined with widespread access to social media, can also exacerbate the trans-national spread of terrorist ideologies and modus operandi. Drought and instability within the Sahel created one migration route between countries such as Niger, Mali and Chad to North African nations such as Libya[5], with reverse migration then occurring back to the Sahel. Mobility enables mercenaries to develop skills, absorb new extremist ideologies, and strengthen links to global VEOs[6], then spread this new-found knowledge to fight elsewhere. Taking a different example, the incel (involuntary celibate) threat deliberately targets women in line with their violent misogynistic social outlook. Incel attacks tend to be in the Global North, in receiving countries for climate migration.[7] As climate migration continues, countries in the Global North will increasingly combat the complex problems of incoming violent extremist ideologies from the Global South while mitigating the domestic problem of incels, all which fuels extremism in an increasingly multi-ethnic society. Climate migration has the potential to develop new regional flashpoints for violent extremism with associated human security issues in traditionally peaceful regions. NATO must be aware of the changing nature of the violent extremist threat and the potential associated "Protection of Civilians" requirement within NATO's borders in the Global North.

Conclusion

The complex nature of the climate, gender, terrorism nexus emphasises the need for a cross-domain, integrated military response. Use of big data, overlaid with AI, will be crucial to understanding the nuances of changing societal and gender dynamics resulting from climate change, climate migration and the associated security impact from violent extremism. Monitoring climate change and capturing sex- and age-disaggregated data (SADD) are both crucial factors in building a more comprehensive intelligence picture of motives, behaviours and ultimately the likelihood of kinetic threat.

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Prevention is better than cure. Considering terrorism in the context of gender and climate will also help identify how to prevent a terrorist threat before it becomes a kinetic, hard security threat. If the terrorist threat is a combination of capability plus intent[8], then understanding the intent of both male and female terrorists will help to better build societal resilience and also better target Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programmes. Climate change and the gender perspective may have traditionally been perceived as "soft security" issues; however, they are critical in understanding and responding to terrorism.

From the military perspective, the climate, gender, terrorism nexus highlights the importance of monitoring human security issues through a gendered lens to provide indicator of a deteriorating security situation. It also highlights the importance of mitigating cognitive bias, where women are only viewed as victims. Incorporating a gender perspective within threat analysis is one way of mitigating this bias and will provide a more accurate intelligence picture that can, in turn, inform military planning and activities. Finally, the climate, gender, terrorism nexus highlights the importance of considering the societal impact of climate change to better build layered resilience to protect civilians on operations and within our own populations.

4   Orlin Nikolov,"Building Societal Resilience against Hybrid Threats," *Information & Security: An International Journal* 39, no. 1 (2018): 91-109, http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/isij.3908.

5   "Violent Extremism, Conflict and Trafficking Dynamics in Libya and The Sahel", *Libya-Sahel Rapid Study Briefing Note* (USAID, 2020), https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X1K1.pdf

6   "The world's centre of terrorism has shifted to the Sahel", *The Economist*, 5 March 2022, https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2022/03/05/the-worlds-centre-of-terrorism-has-shifted-to-the-sahel

7   RAN Practitioners, "The Incel Phenomenon: Exploring Internal and External Issues Around Involuntary Celibates," Conclusion Paper, 28/07/2021, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-08/ran_cn_incel_phenomenon_20210803_en.pdf

8   Kevin P. Riehle, "Assessing Foreign Intelligence Threats," *American Intelligence Journal* 31, no.1 (2013): 96-101 and Bart Schuurman &Quirine Eijkman, "Indicators of Terrorist Intent and Capability: Tools for Threat Assessment," *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* (2015) http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17467586.2015.1040426.

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A GENDER IN CLIMATE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE OF PVE

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Introduction

Many countries and territories highly vulnerable to climate change, also suffering from conflict, violent extremism, and significant hurdles in gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite this, there are few efforts to critically examine the interactions between climate, violent extremism, and gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. The intersection of climate and violent extremism itself is still little examined.[1] One recent study by Asaka shows that of 112 articles published over the period January 2000 – February 2020, less than half considered climate-related security risks and of those, less than 20 of which examined specific interactions with violent extremism.[2]

Climate change can act as a risk-multiplier in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Climate impacts but also vulnerability can interact with the root causes of violent extremism, contribute to push and pull factors for recruitment, and alter the broader strategic environment in ways that strengthen the power of violent extremist groups, giving them increased control or room to manoeuvre. In turn, extremist activity, and security operations to counter violent extremism, can increase the exposure and vulnerability of a population to climate hazards and in unstable environments, violent extremism can disrupt livelihoods, damage economic performance and limit the feasibility of measures which strengthen climate adaptation and resilience.

Climate change can contribute to food and water insecurity, but also increase competition for natural resources, livelihoods and coping strategies. It can drive forced displacement and rural-urban migration as well as alter transhumance patterns, potentially fuelling social tensions between different communities and exacerbating the drivers of conflict and fragility. The cumulative effects of climate change can stress governance and institutions, which may struggle to respond in a timely and effective manner. Insufficient responses further reinforce climate vulnerability, but also exacerbate grievances and intercommunal tensions between affected groups, particularly over access to natural capital.

Emerging Practice and Response

There are examples where violent extremist groups have gained control over scarce natural resources to boost recruitment and sustain illicit networks, also driving the destruction of natural capital and ecosystems, the effects of which may further be exacerbated by climate change. Daesh seized control of water infrastructure in Iraq to exert control in a power vacuum, where instability, severe droughts, tenuous water governance and climate change adversely affected fragility[3] and aided recruitment.[4] It wilfully cut-off the water supply to farming communities and flooded government and military installations alike to punish political opponents, while supplying water and electricity to conquered territories to strengthen its control and legitimacy.[5] Energy sector attacks were intended to destabilize the government[6] and its engagement in the black market oil trade, became a major income stream, through which it could payroll fighters and fund its operations.[7]

1   UNDP, *The Climate Security Nexus and the Prevention of Violent Extremism* (New York: UNDP, 2020). https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP-Climate-Security-Nexus-and-Prevention-of-violent-extremism.pdf

2   Jeremiah O. Asaka, "Climate Change - Terrorism Nexus? A Preliminary Review/Analysis of the Literature." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15, no.1 (2021): 81–92. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26984799

3   Kawa Hassan, Camilla Born and Pernilla Nordqvist, *Iraq Climate-related security risk assessment* (SIPRI: Stockholm, August 2018), https://www.eastwest.ngo/sites/default/files/iraq-climate-related-security-risk-assessment.pdf

4   Peter Schwartzstein, "Climate change and water woes drove ISIS recruiting in Iraq," *National Geographic*, 14 November 2017, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/11/climate-change-drought-drove-isis-terrorist-recruiting-iraq/

5   Tobias Von Lossow, "The role of water in the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars," *ISPI Commentary*, (ISPI, 26 February 2020), https://www.ispionline.it/en/pubblicazione/role-water-syrian-and-iraqi-civil-wars-25175

6   Lukáš Tichý, "The Islamic State oil and gas strategy in North Africa," *Energy Strategy Reviews* 24 (April 2019): 254-260, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esr.2019.04.001

7   See Lukáš Tichý and Jan Eichler, "Terrorist Attacks on the Energy Sector: The Case of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 41, no.6 (2018): 450-473 https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2017.1323469 and Ana Swanson, "How the Islamic State makes its money," *The Washington Post,* 18 November 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/11/18/how-isis-makes-its-money/

Climate- and environmental-driven resource scarcity has also been an enabling force for recruitment in Somalia, by compounding grievances and marginalization. In the face of drought, internal displacement and chronic food insecurity, Al Shabaab became an effective alternative service provider, strengthened its legitimacy by doing so and bolstered recruitment. Its illicit activities have been sustained in part, by the illegal charcoal trade which is subject to bans by the government, since 1969 and the UN Security Council Resolution 2036 of 2012. Logging driven by charcoal production has in turn resulted in land degradation and deforestation,[8] increasing vulnerability and pressure on livelihoods and coping strategies, as the preferred hardwood feedstock, acacia bussei, is also depended upon by pastoralists as fodder for their livestock.[9]

As abovementioned, in some situations, violent extremist groups have been more agile and quick to manoeuvre in fast changing circumstances. This includes in their operational environments where climate change has contributed to increased environmental variability and unpredictability, where they fill gaps in services and deliver responses not provided by state actors, thereby strengthening their legitimacy. To effectively counter such dynamics, an integrated approach that addresses climate change vulnerability, increases human security and strengthens climate-resilient livelihoods can increase the opportunity cost of fighting[10] for affected populations and, in certain contexts, weaken the case for joining non-state armed groups including violent extremist groups. For example, in the Sahel region concerted efforts by the UN entities with together governments, local communities, civil society and development partners are helping to strengthen local adaptation and resilience, through approaches including: dialogue, local governance, income diversification, rainwater harvesting and soil conservation. The deployment of decentralized energy solutions, including photovoltaic systems, in conflict-affected/post-crisis contexts can unlock opportunities not only for resilient low-carbon development, but also to basic and emergency services in communities, to support the needs of rural populations and those on the move, and to help restart local economic development and decent livelihoods.[11]

In climate-affected contexts, the needs of women and girls are distinct as they experience the stresses of climate change differently than boys and men as a result of greater political and economic marginalization, and less mobility and access to resources, which disproportionately affects their vulnerabilities. Many violent extremist groups have successfully co-opted the message around women's empowerment in their recruitment campaigns, promising better socioeconomic conditions to attract women and girls.[12] Given the role that natural resources play in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) as recognized by the Secretary General's 2011 report (A/65/741),[13] the return, integration and rehabilitation of women requires responses which are not only gender sensitive but also consider climate-related security risks. Violent extremist groups may exploit young people's desire for change to advance their agenda.

UNDP Sudan (2019) observed that climate change and environmental degradation have contributed to changing transhumance patterns, social composition of communities and feminization of villages like Al Rahad, in North Kordofan.[14] As women take on a greater role in productive activities, 2019 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) finds that climate change has transformed traditional gender norms and roles,[15] while UN Security Council resolution 2242 (2015)[16] recognizes that in view of the "changing global context of peace and security" including inter alia, violent extremism and climate change, considerations of women, peace and security need to be cross-cutting.

Given that the risks related to climate change, and that violent extremist activity extend beyond national boundaries, engaging regional actors and informing regional approaches is important to addressing the confluence of risks related

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[8]   Felix Rembold et al., "Mapping charcoal driven forest degradation during the main period of Al Shabaab control Somalia," *Energy for Sustainable Development* 17, no.5 (October 2013): 510-514. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esd.2013.07.001

[9]   Oli Brown, "How Somalia's charcoal trade is fueling the Acacia's demise," *UNEP* (Nairobi, 21 March 2018), https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/how-somalias-charcoal-trade-fuelling-acacias-demise

[10]   Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson, "Wars and state capacity," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6 no.2–3 (2008): 522–530.

[11]   UNDP, *Regional policy brief: energy for crisis recovery*, (Amman: *UNDP,* 8 March 2018) https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/climate-and-disaster-resilience-/regional-policy-brief--energy-in-crisis.html

[12]   Sanam Naraghi Anderlini and Melinda Holmes, *Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Reintegration and Rehabilitation*, (*UNDP & the International Civil Society Action Network* (ICAN), January 2019), https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/invisible-women.html

[13]   *Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration - Report of the Secretary-General*, A/65/741, (UNGA, 21 March 2011).

[14]   UNEP, UN Women & UNDP, *Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace in North Kordofan, Sudan*. (UNEP, UN Women & UNDP, March 2019). https://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/Sudan_Gender_NRM2019.pdf

[15]   UNFCCC. *Differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men; the integration of gender considerations in climate policies, plans and actions; and progress in enhancing gender balance in national climate delegations - synthesis report by the secretariat*, Subsidiary Body for Implementation, Fiftieth session (Bonn, 17–27 June 2019), FCCC/SBI/2019/INF.8, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbi2019_inf8.pdf

[16]   UN Security Council, *Security Council Resolution 2242*, S/RES/2242, (13 October 2015), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/807245?ln=en

to climate, conflict and violent extremism for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. In terms of supporting regional approaches, UNDP's work under the Climate Security Mechanism[17] together with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), and Department of Peace Operations (DPO) also strengthens the capacities of regional entities, including the Liptako Gourma Authority, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and the League of Arab States to mainstream climate-related security risks.

Conclusion

In recent years, there is now a greater understanding of climate change in terms of its impacts on peace, stability and human security. The UNDP (2022), 'Special Report on Human Security' includes a dedicated chapter on 'Unearthing the human dimension of violent conflict' and highlights the need for a *"new generation of human security based on protection, empowerment and solidarity can shed light on blind-spots support the building of just and peaceful societies"* as well as *"compounding human security threats and people living in conflict-affected areas."*[18] Moreover, the COP27 Presidency initiative, "Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace" broke new ground by putting attention to the sustaining peace agenda for the first time in the context of the climate change negotiations.[19] Similarly, greater awareness of climate change interactions with PVE and gender is needed. In this regard, a nuanced and contextualized understanding of climate change is important to avoid environmental determinism[20] and the instrumentalizing of climate change to justify disproportional responses, but also the potential "backdraft" effects[21] on extant grievances and conflict dynamics. While the state of policy and practice do not substantiate a direct causal relationship between climate change and conflict, or violent extremism, the latest IPCC report (2022) does recognize the opportunities of reduced "[r]isks to peace… for example, by supporting people in climate-sensitive economic activities (medium confidence) and advancing women's empowerment (high confidence)".[22]

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18   UNDP, *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity*, Special Report, (New York, UNDP, 2022), https://hs.hdr.undp.org/pdf/srhs2022.pdf

19   COP27 Presidency, *Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) COP27 Presidency Initiative*, 2022, https://www.cccpa-eg.org/publications-details/1107

20   Mark Cane et al, "Temperature and violence," *Nature Climate Change* 4 (2014): 234–235, https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2171

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Introduction

The intersection of climate change, terrorism, and gender has far-reaching consequences that disproportionately affect women and girls. This presentation examines the specific ways in which women are impacted by climate change and environmental degradation in conflict contexts. It also highlights the crucial roles women play in overcoming the challenges created by climatic and environmental shifts at various levels.

Gender Inequality and Climate Vulnerability

Countries with high levels of gender inequality not only experience instability, violent extremism, and conflict, but also face increased vulnerabilities to climate change. Unfortunately, women are often more severely impacted by climate shocks due to existing gender disparities. They have fewer resources to cope with and recover from these events. Limited ownership and control over land, property, and other assets further exacerbate their vulnerability. According to the World Economic Forum, women grow around 70% of Africa's food, but in many cases they have few rights over the land they tend. In Kenya for example, much of the land ownership remains in the hands of men, as does decision-making about livelihoods. (Although the Land Act approved some years ago by President Kenyatta says communities cannot discriminate based on gender; it says nothing about how to ensure that women also have more land rights.)[1] Climate-induced resource scarcity could widen the gaps. As families struggle harder to earn a living, for example, it is likely that more girls will drop out of school to help at home. Early marriage will also likely to increase. Additionally, women are often excluded from processes and discussions related to natural resource management and conflict mediation, denying them the opportunity to advocate for their own needs and provide valuable information to decision-makers.[2]

Climate Change, Terrorism, and Livelihood Pressures

The connection between climate change and violent extremism remains understudied. Understanding whether people, regardless of gender, join armed groups as a result of livelihood pressures stemming from climate change is crucial. Women and men face distinct challenges, with men often feeling pressured to take personal risks to fulfil social expectations of providing and protecting their families and communities. The norms around masculinity among herders in Kenya's Rift Valley for example, such as being the main breadwinner and gathering resources for marriage, can intensify conflicts over resources affected by climate change and sometimes motivate men to join armed groups.[3]

Unequal Distribution of Labour and Care Work

The climate link can also exacerbate the existing unequal distribution of labour between men and women. Women perform a disproportionate amount of care work, including caring for those affected by conflict and climate hazards.[4] In many cases, women become de facto heads of households and take on increased workloads when their husbands leave because of conflict or are forced into extremist organizations. Low-income and rural women, due to gendered divisions of labour, are usually responsible for collecting water and sourcing firewood. These activities make them vulnerable to climate change and terrorism, as they must travel long distances, risking their time, health, and safety, including heightened exposure to gender-based violence.[5] Many water points in southern Somalia for example, are controlled by

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[1] Crisis Group, *Absorbing Climate Shocks and Easing Conflict in Kenya's Rift Valley*, Briefing N°189, (Nairobi/Brussels, 20 April 2023).

[2] Jessica Smith, Lauren Olosky, and Jennifer Grosman Fernández, *The Climate-Gender-Conflict Nexus? Amplifying Women's Contributions at the Grassroots*, (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security -GIWPS, 2021), https://giwps.georgetown.edu/resource/the-climate-gender-conflict-nexus/.

[3] Crisis Group, *Absorbing Climate Shocks.*

[4] Smith et al., *The Climate-Gender-Conflict Nexus?*

[5] Ibid.

extremist groups, such as Al-Shabaab, and become sites where women face abuse, while young girls are forced into early marriages in areas under their control.[6] Al-Shabaab has a track record of blockading towns to deprive populations of food, water and other supplies in order to force them into submission.[7] The group also has a history of destroying key infrastructure, including water points, as a retaliatory tactic, notably against communities in areas where it loses control.[8] Data collected by Crisis Group shows at least 49 Al-Shabaab attacks on community food supplies or local water sources (boreholes, shallow wells and springs) in the 28 months since the beginning of the drought in November 2020 – almost twice the number of attacks as during the period of the same length before the drought.[9] But more significantly, the geographic spread of the attacks has increased.

In situations where traditional livelihoods, such as rain-fed farming and livestock herding, fail due to measures imposed by extremist groups like Al-Shabaab and climate extremes like drought or flash floods, both women and men often turn to alternative income-generating activities as coping mechanisms. In addition to gathering firewood, women may engage in the sale of Khat, tobacco, and cigarettes to supplement their incomes.[10] However, Al-Shabaab deems these products as drugs and prohibits their use, further limiting the economic opportunities available to women in Somalia.[11] During an interview with Halima Abdullahi Usman, a single mother who was displaced from the Jamaame area, an Al-Shabaab stronghold, she revealed the challenges she faced. Militants controlled her area and imposed a monthly tax of $30 or $40, which she couldn't afford to pay. Halima explained, "You cannot sell the things that poor people often resort to for daily sustenance such as cigarettes, tobacco, and Khat. If you do sell, AS fines you $1000 or $500, or you have to buy a gun depending on the quantity you are found with. If you are found with a smartphone, you have to buy a gun and its magazine holder as a fine." Eventually, Halima had to sell four surviving goats from the drought to bring her children to the Ceel Jaale IDP camp in Kismayo. She has no plans she said to return until the government retakes control of the area. A similar interview conducted in Baidoa in September 2022, involved a woman who was imprisoned by Al-Shabaab for selling Khat.

Movement Restrictions and Displacements

The gender-climate-terrorism triad also leads to significant displacement, with women and girls being the most affected. Women form the majority in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, as men either stay behind to tend to animals or land or become fighters. Displaced women and girls face a high risk of violence, including rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence.[12] Displaced youth are also vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups. Movement restrictions imposed by terrorist organizations limit freedom of movement, with dire consequences for women. Pregnant and breastfeeding women often face malnutrition, as they cannot leave conflict areas to access essential services. In some cases, terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab demand taxes during droughts, leaving people no choice but to flee their areas of control. When Crisis Group spoke with displaced families in Baidoa in March 2023 who had recently fled from Al-Shabaab-controlled Lower Juba, they confirmed they had decided to leave because of the drought and consequent small harvests, as well as because of the group's burdensome crop taxation. One or the other might have been survivable, but not the two in combination.

Impact on Access to Essential Services in Conflict-Affected Areas

The presence of conflict and terrorism also disrupts access to essential services, posing significant challenges, particularly for women and vulnerable populations. Access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, becomes severely compromised, exacerbating the already dire circumstances faced by displaced women. Furthermore, education and healthcare services become scarce in areas controlled by extremist groups, creating additional barriers to vital support.

In regions such as Tillabery in Western Niger, where Islamic State influence prevails, women in villages have reported a significant reduction in transportation options. The regular movement of vehicles between these villages and larger towns, located approximately 60 kilometres away, has been greatly restricted. The only exception to this limited mobility

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6   UNFPA Somalia, *Situation of Women and Girls: Drought in Somalia*, Briefing Note, March 2021.

7   Crisis Group Interviews, Somali local government officials and humanitarian aidr workers, Baidoa, Hudur, February-March 2023.

8   "Al Shabaab destroyed wells in Adan Yabal before fleeing, Hirshabelle leaders promise to rebuild," *Hiiraan Online*, 10 December 2022.

9   In comparison, punitive measures not related to food or water increased by only 14 per cent.

10   Crisis Group Interview, Kismayo, Halima Abdullahi Usman, Displaced person, 30 February 2023.

11   Ibid.

12   "In Somalia, Spike in Gender-Based Attacks Compounds Plight of Displaced Women, Girls", *VOA News*, 23 May 2023.

is the weekly market day in the town. Consequently, women facing complications during childbirth on days other than the designated market day face immense risks. Without the ability to be evacuated to better-equipped medical facilities, their lives and the lives of their infants are put in jeopardy.[13]

Similarly, women residing in the Ménaka Region on the Malian side of the border, which is now predominantly controlled by the Islamic State, face heightened difficulties due to the closure of the border between Niger and Mali, enacted for counter-terrorism purposes. This closure has further complicated their access to specialized medical care in Niamey, the nearest capital city. Women now have to navigate the border portion of the journey using donkey-drawn carts, as vehicles are no longer permitted to cross.[14]

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive efforts to restore and improve access to essential services in climate and conflict-affected regions. By prioritizing the restoration of essential services, particularly for women, societies can begin to alleviate the burdens imposed by climate change conflict and terrorism and provide much-needed support to vulnerable populations.

Gender and Terrorism: Understanding the Role of Women

Terrorism and violent extremism are driven by various factors, and understanding the involvement of women in these activities is crucial for effective counterterrorism efforts, particularly in areas that are suffering from climate shocks. Women play diverse roles within extremist networks, and their participation can provide unique insights and early warning signs. Additionally, female security officials possess valuable skills and perspectives that can be critical in combating terrorism.

In recent years, there has been a rise in both the number and severity of attacks perpetrated by women. For instance, a tragic incident in Nigeria saw three women bombers kill twenty people in a crowded marketplace in 2018.[15] While some women are coerced into joining extremist groups through forced marriages, many others join voluntarily due to ideological commitment or the allure of accessing resources.[16]

Gender biases regarding women's roles can lead to misconceptions in counterterrorism efforts. There is a common assumption that women are inherently non-violent, primarily fulfilling nurturing roles as mothers. However, this misperception can hinder the accurate assessment of women's involvement in terrorist activities.[17]

Women contribute to terrorism in various ways, including recruitment, fundraising, and propaganda dissemination. Notably, a network of fifteen women in the United States was charged in 2014 for transferring funds to the Al-Shabaab terrorist group in Somalia, employing small transactions and coded language to evade detection.[18] Women's participation also enhances community support, strengthens perceived legitimacy, and bolsters tactical effectiveness within extremist groups.

Some women are trafficked into extremist organizations and forced to commit crimes. For example, Boko Haram strategically kidnaps young girls and teenagers, coercing them into carrying out suicide missions.[19] Moreover, women often utilize their unique position and gender stereotypes to smuggle goods across checkpoints, evading security checks and contributing to the logistical operations of extremist networks.[20]

Conclusion

The gendered impact of the climate-terrorism link is a pressing issue that we need to address. Women and girls bear a disproportionate burden when it comes to the intersection of climate change, terrorism, and gender inequality. They face increased vulnerability, displacement, and violence, both as direct victims and through their involvement in extremist groups. It's important to recognize the diverse roles that women play in these contexts, including their contributions to resilience, intelligence gathering, and peacebuilding efforts.

13   Crisis Group Research, Sahel, January - April 2023.

14   Ibid.

15   Dionne Searcey, "Three Suicide Bombers Kill at Least 20 in Nigeria," *The New York Times*, 12 April 2018.

16   Jamille Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein. "Women and Terrorism: Hidden Threats, Forgotten Partners" (Council on Foreign Relations, May 2019).

17   Ibid.

18   Audrey Alexander, "Cruel Intentions: Female Jihadists in America," (Washington DC: George Washington University Program on Extremism, November 2016).

19   Vladimir Hernandez & Stephanie Hegarty, "Made-up to look beautiful. Sent out to die.", *BBC News.*

20   Crisis Group, Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency," Africa Briefing N°145, 27 June 2019.

To tackle these issues, governments should actively promote the leadership and participation of women in discussions and decision-making processes related to climate change and counterterrorism efforts. Empowering women economically for example through gender-responsive cash transfer schemes to ensure that women can use these funds as they adapt to these challenges. Furthermore, providing education on navigating the gender-climate-terrorism nexus, and addressing gender-based violence are crucial steps toward creating inclusive and sustainable societies. Addressing the gendered impact of climate change and terrorism requires collaboration among governments, civil society organizations, and international actors. By acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by women, we can develop more comprehensive and effective strategies that promote climate action, peace, and security.

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KEY FINDINGS

Masculinities and Femininities in Violent Extremism and Terrorism

- The process of joining, staying and leaving violent extremist and terrorist groups is not gender neutral. Men and women are radicalized differently. Neither men are violent by nature nor are women are always peaceful.

- Ideology has a role in terrorist radicalization and recruitment, but men and women are not joining terrorist organisations just because of the allure of a particular ideology. There are other issues that include individual problems revenge, the feeling of alienation, redemption and even social relations that include gender, race and class.

- Violent extremist and terrorist groups manipulate, borrow, modify and exaggerate social constructions of gender. The local and national political dynamics influence violent extremist and terrorist groups' gendered strategies and tactics. In cases where men cannot fulfill prevalent gender norms of being a man as breadwinners and providers for family, terrorist organizations may offer them alternative ways to achieve manhood such as perpetrators of violence.

- Social media has change the landscape of terrorist recruitment from "collective action" to "connective action".

- Regional and international armed conflicts serve as magnet for terrorist recruitment and mobilization and facilitate production and use of online and offline gendered narratives.

- Masculinities in violent extremism and terrorism are predominantly linked to 'toxicity' and 'toxic masculinities' are presented as the sources of misogyny, aggression, and violent political action. By this way, toxicity presented as monolithic and out of society. In fact, neither the masculinity is a single model for how men behave nor toxicity is separate from the rest of the society.

- There is no single model for how men behave, but multiple ways which are relationally defined, socially constructed and hierarchal. Therefore, masculinities are plural. Raewyn Connell terms those masculinities with the highest status in any given culture, 'hegemonic', lower status are 'subordinate'.[1]

- Radicalisation, as the pathway towards extremism and terrorism, is frequently associated with masculinities that seek to protest the *status quo* and in gendered terms, feminism and women's equality.

Masculinities in the Extreme Right

- Masculinities in the extreme right groups are plural and not monolith, and they are not 'separate' from wider society.

- In the extreme right, different groups exploited and privileged different masculinities in their culture and symbology. For instance, Britain First, mobilised around military masculinities whereas The English Defence League mobilised a muscular, subversive masculinity based on football and (white) working class culture.

- Right-wing extremist groups or extreme right groups are predominantly known for their relegating women to specific and limited roles within the group as in society. However, there are instances where women also perform masculinity, embodying qualities stereotypically associated with male status such as leadership. However, their leadership traits might differ. For instance, Jayda Fransen of Britain First presented an anti-feminist stance enabling men's power, and perpetuation of traditional gender stereotypical roles whereas Anne Marie Waters as a former left-wing activist and a gay women challenged the heteronormativity and patriarchy of the wider extreme right.

Masculinities in the CT Institutions

- CT actors and institutions are male-dominant and are built upon masculine norms. Therefore, their decision and policy-making is also shaped by these norms and reflected itself in the view of CT as a highly militarized and offensive response.

- The masculinities that shape security institutions in general and CT institutions particular and masculinities manipulated and (re)produced by terrorist organizations influence and reinforce each other.

Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism

- An OSCE Policy Brief[2] displays a statistically significant relationship between support for violence against women and support for violence against extremism. It is also revealed that individuals who concur with attitudes of violence against

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1 See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, (London: Routledge, 2020).

2 OSCE, *The Linkages between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism That Lead to Terrorism*, Policy Brief (Vienna, 6 September 2022), https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/525297.pdf.

women are five times more likely to support violent extremism. Therefore, it makes misogyny a more reliable variable to predict violent extremism compared to other variables like socio-economic status, gender and education.

Gendered Use of Technology

- Research indicate that men tend to use technology more for entertainment and experimentation whereas women tend to use technology for communication. This demonstrates why gaming platforms are hyper-masculine and has become a venue for terrorist and violent extremist recruitment and propaganda in order to attract men and boys.

- Violent extremists and terrorists can use bots and other automated accounts to spread their messages and target individuals according to their gender and radicalize them.

- With the shifting of interaction to the online space during the COVID- 19 pandemic, conspiracy theories including those about women spread much more quickly than ever.

- The gendered uses of technology by terrorists and violent extremists include recruitment, mis/disinformation and fundraising.

- Online trends indicate diffusion of extremism away from major social media platforms, toward the decentralized web. However, some of the violent extremists have footprints in mainstream social media, making it a concern for CVE practitioners.

Manosphere

- Manosphere is a network of interrelated blogs, forums, websites and social media channels created to advance men's rights and interests and is an example of gendered use of technology.

- Over time manosphere has become more extremist-oriented, and some manosphere sites have become repositories for the type of hate speech, violent rhetoric, and conspiracy theories banned by many mainstream social media platforms.

- The manosphere enjoys diversity both in terms of the language/nationality/ethnicity of users and in terms of its sub-communities.

- Among the sub-communities of manosphere, the most well-known is the incels because of their association to violence.

- Some manosphere communities have footholds on mainstream social media, which is a critical concern for CVE.

- One of the critical concerns for CVE is the lack of content moderation in the manosphere.

- Content moderation efforts are getting increasingly complicated because of the increased decentralisation through the adoption of blockchain, cryptocurrency and other technologies of the decentralized web.

- Extremist users on the mainstream social media platforms are using outlinks to create a conduit from those mainstream platforms to decentralized websites where the extremist discourse is prevalent.

- Most of the mainstream social media websites ban incels since they are associated with violence, but red pill communities despite their association with anti-government and anti-feminist conspiracies, maintain their visibility on many websites.

The Risks and Opportunities AI in P/CVE and CT

- AI algorithms can perpetuate gender biases. If an AI system is trained on a dataset that contains gender stereotypes or discriminatory language, the system will learn to reproduce these biases in its own output. This could lead to the system making decisions or recommendations that are discriminatory towards certain genders. For instance, some shadowbanning practices turn out to be discriminatory when they are flagging images with women bodies as sexualized, but not applying it to the images of men. Unfortunately, such practices limit the reach of many women in online spaces including women-led organisations.

- AI is being used for supporting P/CVE efforts by doing content analysis to pinpoint potential violent extremist activity. This can help law enforcement and intelligence agencies to identify and track threats to prevent terrorist attacks. However, it is necessary to be cautious against possible risks of biometric categorisation systems using sensitive characteristics such as gender, race, religion and political orientation.

Digital Interventions to Counter Violent Extremism Online

- The work done by Moonshot (a tech driven company with global expertise in countering online harms and violent extremism) in terms of identifying and targeting at-risk individuals searching for violent extremist content and redirects them to deradicalization resources including behavioural health and mental health services is a good example of digital efforts to P/CVE.

- Moonshot initiated an online intervention program in Canada, which provided psychosocial support to internet users who shows the risk of engaging with violent misogynist and violent extremist content. Through the program, up to date, 786 at-risk individuals were connected to trained mental health providers and of these people 22 individuals initiated a conversation with counsellor. Such initiatives are important contributions to CVE efforts in the digital space.

Climate Change, Gender and Terrorism

- Climate change and gender has long been viewed as soft security issues and thought to have fallen into the international development's area of responsibility.

- Defence and security have been blind to the impact of climate change and gender on hard security issues such as terrorism.

- Nations still refrain from investing on issues other than kinetic and lethal threats.

- The connection between climate change and terrorism is understudied. Added to this is the lack of gender dimension. Understanding how climate change crises impact pathways to terrorism is critical. Equally important is to identify different challenges men and women, boys and girls face in terms of terrorist recruitment and radicalization.

- The mainstream approach underlines that there is not a direct correlation between climate change and terrorism, and climate change serves as a 'threat multiplier' in terrorism. This means that climate change does not directly lead to terrorism, but exacerbate the already existing inequalities and social polarization.

- Gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism is contextual, because countries have different geographical characteristics, social, economic and political contexts. For instance, the impacts of climate change on terrorism is different for Africa and Europe and in terms of a different classification it is different for the Global South and Global North as well. In the Global South, climate change exacerbates the socio-economic conditions and paves ground for terrorist recruitment and radicalization. In the Global North, eco-fascism turns out to be a motivational factor for some terrorist attacks.

- Research based on data reveals that environmental terrorism linked to climate change is not currently a substantial threat (in the Global North), but many governments and counterterrorism practitioners are concerned that it could become one.[3] Therefore, governments should be cautious about not to misuse CT laws and pursue disproportional response to climate change activism.

- According to 2022 Global Terrorism Index[4] and 2022 Ecological Threats Report[5], six of ten countries most affected by terrorism are also among the twenty-five countries with the worst ecological threats and low societal resilience, revealing the connection between ecological degradation and conflict.

Gendered impacts of climate change

- The impact of climate change is not gender-neutral meaning women and men, girls and boys are affected differently from climate change, mainly because of the already existing gender disparities in a given society. Gender disparity exists in each and every society in varying degrees.

- At times of drought, women struggle more to collect water and they drink less and at times of food scarcity they eat less than men and this risks their health and security.

- At times of natural disasters, the number of women forced to leave the land they are living in or farming.

- At times of climate-induced resource scarcity, because of the declined family incomes, girls are most probably drop out of school to help at home, and early marriage is also likely to increase.

3   Andrew Silke and John Morrison, "Gathering Storm: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Climate Change and Terrorism", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34, no.5 (2022): 890-91.

4   Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2022: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (Sydney, March 2022), http://visionofhumanity.org/resources.

5   Institute for Economics & Peace, *Ecological Threat Report 2022: Analysing Ecological Threats, Resilience & Peace* (Sydney, October 2022), http://visionofhumanity.org/resources

- At times of climate-induced resource scarcity, women's vulnerability increases since they neither have control over resource management or land ownership or a say on the management of the resources or advocate for their own needs.

Gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism

- Gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism in the Global South includes increasing livelihood pressures, unequal distribution of labour and care work, movement restrictions and displacements, and degrade access to essential services especially in conflict-affected areas.

- Climate change- induced dire environmental conditions generally lead to migration within a state, and generally from rural to urban. However, there are also cases where people are forced to leave their homelands. Sometimes this movement of migration is from Global South to Global North. In the Global North, climate-induced migration from the Global South may result in incoming violent extremist ideologies as well as playing into the hands of the far-right violent extremists and right-wing terrorism which rely on anti-immigration rhetoric and narratives.

Gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism in the Global South

- Masculine norms such as being the main provider for and protector of the family and gathering for marriages put pressures on men in fulfilling social expectations about manhood. Resource scarcity as a result of climate change might increase such pressures and motivate men to join terrorist and violent extremist groups.

- Climate change exacerbates existing unequal division labour in the households to the disadvantage of women. Women's working load increases and they turn out to become sole providers and caregivers for the household, in many cases making them de facto heads of the household since their husbands either died, left because of conflict or for joining terrorist groups.

- Climate change increases vulnerabilities of women risking their health and security when they had to travel long distances for collecting water and firewood, and making them targets of sexual and gender based violence by the terrorists.

- In areas highly affected by terrorism and climate change induced dire conditions, women form the majority of IDP camps whereas men join terrorists, or fight against terrorist and/or stay to protect their livestock, fields, and houses. Displaced women and girls confront high risks of violence and sexual abuse, including rape and sexual harassment.

Manipulation of Climate Change by the Terrorist Groups

- Terrorist organisations exploit the vulnerabilities exacerbated by the impacts of the climate change. They manipulate resource scarcity for terrorist recruitment and radicalisation. A strained security situation or power vacuum also provides terrorist organisations the opportunity to profit from greater freedom to trade on grey or black economies, with wildlife and stolen cultural property providing income streams for terrorist financing.

- Terrorist organisations restrict the movement of people, goods and resources and this have serious consequences for women. Women, especially the pregnant and breastfeeding, face malnutrition as well as no access to essential services including healthcare.

- Terrorist organisations like Al Shabaab can demand taxes in the areas they control and at hard times of climate change-induced dire conditions like droughts, people may not have any choice but to leave their land.

- In conflict and climate affected areas, women and girls are sexually abused by terrorist organisations and forced into marriage.

- Terrorist organisations can deprive populations of food, water and other supplies by blockading towns for forcing them to submission.

- Terrorist organisations can also force women to join them to perpetrate suicide attack or coerce them to smuggle goods by exploiting gender biases that women can evade security checks and raise less suspicion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

- Policy-oriented research for promoting healthy positive masculinities should be done including research on what kind of lessons learned can be exported from the works on masculinities in preventing gender-based violence and peacebuilding programmes.

- More research is needed, including comparative case studies, on the role of masculinities on different ideologically motivated terrorist groups as well as on the similar ideologically motivated ones in order to flag similarities and differences that can guide especially the development of gender-responsive disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

- Present literature on right-wing extremist and terrorist groups is also based on gender biases in femininities and masculinities preventing accurate assessment of gender roles within these groups. More research is required to reveal these gender biases.

- Research exploring the link between terrorism and climate change is scarce. The gender dimension of the connection between terrorism and climate change is almost absent. Therefore, further research is required on the triad of gender, climate change and terrorism.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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- While integrating gender into CT and CVE efforts, a holistic approach to gender should be adopted, meaning that gender is not equal to women and gender perspectives should take into account masculinities as well as femininities.

- Effective CT strategies should recognize the diversity of identities within groups, and how these intersect with wider society.

- In order to understand the trend, future threat and risks of terrorism and violent extremism, the role of masculinities and femininities in the ever-changing context at local, national, regional and global levels should be understood.

- Masculinities prevalent in security institutions and organisations including CT should be analysed to question present institutional cultures and securitised approaches to CT.

- Promoting alternative narrative to the ones produced by violent extremist and terrorist groups is one of important steps that government should do to prevent terrorist recruitment. Amplifying the role of 'credible voice' coming from a former member of violent extremist and terrorist groups is something that governments should consider using it.

- There should be industry partnerships built beyond big tech companies. Such partnerships should offer mentorship to smaller companies that are willing to get rid of extremist voices, but do not have enough resources to do so. In case such platforms are unwilling to engage in content moderation, regulatory solutions could be envisaged so that it will become less profitable for these platforms to host extremist content**.**

- Know Your Customer Policies (KYC) have the potential to curtail abuses involving cryptocurrencies by the extremists. However, since these extremist communities are very adaptive, we need to be cautious about new trends. Recent movement by extremists into subscription- and micro transaction-based services like crowdfunding sites, newsletters, and livestreaming platforms show the entrepreneurial capacity of the community.

- Digital interventions to counter online harms and violent extremism by professional companies like Moonshot is an important contribution to the global P/CVE efforts as long as they are ethical, evidence-based, gender-sensitive, and human-rights compliant.

- Any approach to limit recruitment by communities engaged in extreme misogyny must look at algorithmic bias in addition to user behaviour, because research shows that the probability of an ordinary YouTube user to be recommended an incel-related video is almost one over ten.

- Designing AI systems with diversity and inclusion is critical in P/CVE. Moreover, AI tools should be trained on non-discriminatory datasets that does not undermine the protection of human rights.

- P/CVE and preventing terrorism efforts should include developing policies to increase media and information literacy (MIL as termed by OSCE). Increasing media and information literacy will help increasing awareness about the risks associated with online content and develop necessary skills through knowledge to ensure safe navigation in the digital world. Those skills should include being able to identify fake news, propaganda, and violent extremist messaging. Achieving this necessitates joint effort by policymakers, civil society actors, educators, media representatives and law enforcement.

- For the military, in order to notice a deteriorating security situation, monitoring human security issues through a gendered lens is critical. For that reason, the nexus among climate change, gender and terrorism requires a closer look for having a more accurate intelligence picture that can inform military planning and activities. Additionally, analysing such nexus is vital to have a layered resilience to protect civilians on operations and within our own populations.

- When operating in a climate-affected area, NATO needs to be aware of the high proportion of female-headed households and children since women may choose to stay in a climate-affected area due to lack of economic resources, safety concerns or childcare responsibilities.

- Governments should actively promote leadership and participation of women in discussions and decision-making processes related to climate change and CT efforts.

- Women should be economically empowered to decrease their vulnerabilities against terrorist groups in climate-affected areas.

- Raising awareness and providing education on the climate change, gender and terrorism nexus and addressing gender-based violence are vital in creating inclusive, resilient and sustainable societies.

- In order to address gendered impacts of climate change on terrorism different actors like governments, civil society organizations, regional and international organizations should work collaboratively.

- Climate change induced migration and immigration should be approached from a human security perspective rather than a border security perspective.

- Military should also consider the societal impact of climate change in order to understand the root causes of the conflict in the climate-affected areas and therefore, be able to build layered resilience in climate affected populations.

ANNEX-A

COE-DAT WORKSHOP

Gender in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism:
Unravelling Masculinities, The Impact of Climate Change and Cyber Security

16-17 May 2023
COE-DAT, Ankara/Türkiye

Workshop Director: Col. Shawn V. YOUNG (USAF)
Workshop Co-Director: Ms. Özge ERKAN (TÜR)
Workshop Academic Advisor: Dr. Zeynep SÜTALAN (TÜR)
Workshop Assistant: Ms. Aslıhan KEMER (TÜR)
Rapporteur: Ms. Elif Merve DUMANKAYA (TÜR)

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

	Tuesday, 16 May 2023 (1stDay)
13:00 – 14:00	**Meet-and-greet**
14:00 – 14:10	**Welcome Address-** Col. Oğuzhan PEHLİVAN (PhD) (TÜR A), COE-DAT Director
14:10 – 14:25	**COE-DAT Introduction-**Col. Shawn V. YOUNG (USAF), WS Director, COE-DAT Deputy Director
14:25 – 14:35	**Admin Briefing-** Ms. Özge Erkan, WS CO-Director
14:35– 14:55	**Keynote Speech**- Mr. Gabriele Cascone, Head of Counter-Terrorism Section, Emerging Security Challenges Division, NATO
14:55 – 15:10	Break
15:10 – 18.00	**Session – 1 Masculinities, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism Moderator:** Dr. Zeynep SÜTALAN (TÜR)
15:10 – 15:30	*Masculinities and Femininities in Violent Extremism and Terrorism* – Dr. Noor Huda ISMAIL (Nanyang Technology University, Singapore)
15:30 – 15:50	*Gender, Masculinities and The Extreme Right*- Dr. Elizabeth PEARSON (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)
15:50 – 16:05	Break
16:05 – 16:25	*Assessing the Role of Masculinities in CT and CVE*– Dr. Aleksandra DIER (United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate -CTED)
16:25 – 17:55	Open Discussion
17:55 – 18:00	'Hot wash-up' of day 1 discussions
	Wednesday, 17 May 2023 (2nd Day)
10:00 – 13:00	**Session – 2 Gender, Cyber Security and New Technologies in Countering Terrorism Moderator:** Dr. Zeynep SÜTALAN (TÜR)
10:00 – 10:20	*Countering the Threat of Gendered Uses of Technology by Violent Extremists*– Prof. Alexis L. HENSHAW (Troy University, USA)
10:20 – 10:40	*Integrating Gender into Digital Interventions and Campaigns*- Dr. Katie WASHINGTON (Moonshot, UK)
10:40 – 10:55	Break
10:55 – 11:15	*Gender, Artificial Intelligence and CVE* – Ms. Camilla BOGNOE (Action Against Terrorism Unit-OSCE)
11:15 – 12:45	Open Discussion
12:45 – 13:00	'Hot wash-up' of day 2 discussions
13:00 – 15:00	Lunch
	Thursday, 17 May 2022 (2nd Day)
15:00 – 18:00	**Session – 3 Gendered Impacts of Climate Change on Terrorism Moderator:** Dr. Zeynep SÜTALAN (TÜR)
15:00 – 15:20	*Gender, Climate Change and Terrorism*- LTC Katherine PRUDHOE (NATO IMS GENAD Office)
15:20 – 15:40	*Gender in Climate Security Perspective of PVE*– Ms. Catherine WONG (United Nations Development Program- UNDP)
16:00 – 16:10	Break
15:50 – 16:10	*Gender, Climate Change and Terrorism in Africa* – Ms. Nazanine MOSHIRI (International Crisis Group)
16:10 – 17:40	Open Discussion
17:40 – 18:00	'Hot wash-up' of day 3 discussions and Closing Remarks

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ANNEX-B

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS (in alphabetical order)

BOGNOE, CAMILLA

Camilla Bognoe has more than one decade of experience on anti-terrorism and criminal justice issues. Since 2016 she has worked on preventing and countering violent extremism for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Transnational Threats department. She has been a driving force behind the work to include gender analysis as a core component in OSCE's P/CVE work, along with human rights-based approaches. This has resulted in publications such as *Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism - Good Practices for Law Enforcement,* with a subsequent training course, and the *OSCE Policy Brief – Linkages between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism*. She is currently managing a multi-year project on media- and information literacy in the context of P/CVE, which addresses gendered challenges in the digital 'information disorder'.

Previously she supported UNDP in Tajikistan with the development of a toolkit for PVE stakeholders on rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and their families. She is a former Senior Adviser on Counterterrorism for the Norwegian police security service, and she worked for several years with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Pakistan on criminal justice capacity-building projects. Camilla holds a Master's of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Boston University, an MA in Near and Middle Eastern Studies from SOAS University of London, in addition to a B.A. in Arabic from the American University in Cairo and the University of Bergen, Norway.

CASCONE, GABRIELE

Mr. Gabriele Cascone spent the first part of his career as an officer in the Carabinieri Corps. This included two tours of duty in Bosnia and Herzegovina with IFOR/SFOR in 1996 and 1997. In 1998, he joined the NATO International Staff, where he still works, having served in three divisions (NATO Office of Security, Political Affairs and Emerging Security Challenges).
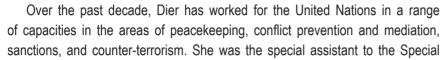
The focus of his twenty-year career at NATO, has been mostly on the Western Balkans and the Middle East and North Africa. Since July 2019 he is the Head of the Counterterrorism Section in the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD).

Mr. Cascone holds a B.A. in Law from the University of Parma (Italy) and a M.A. in International Relations from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium).

DIER, ALEKSANDRA

Dr. Aleksandra Dier is the Gender Coordinator at the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). In this role, she works towards the greater integration of the UN's agendas on Women, Peace and Security, and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, and is responsible for mainstreaming gender in all of CTED's activities, including its expert assessments of Member States' implementation of counter-terrorism and CVE measures.

Over the past decade, Dier has worked for the United Nations in a range of capacities in the areas of peacekeeping, conflict prevention and mediation, sanctions, and counter-terrorism. She was the special assistant to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, held positions in the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and served in UN field missions in Afghanistan and Burundi. Prior to joining the United Nations, Dier was a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich and a Volkswagen Stiftung fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin.

Dier received her Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Oxford. She also holds an M.Phil from the University of Oxford and a B.A. from University College London.

HENSHAW, ALEXIS L.

Prof. Alexis Henshaw is Associate Professor of Political Science at Troy University. She is the author of *Why Women Rebel* (Routledge 2017), *Digital Frontiers in Gender and Security* (Bristol University Press 2023), and a co-author of *Insurgent Women* (Georgetown University Press 2019).

Her research interests include gender issues in international politics, civil wars, conflict management, and Latin America. She has also published work on research methods and design, including pieces focused on pedagogy, data analysis & visualization, and inclusivity. Her work on gender and international relations has also appeared in peer-reviewed journals including *Politics & Gender, International Feminist Journal of Politics, and Journal of Global Security Studies.*

She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and an M.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She previously taught at Duke University and Miami University and was an Associate Fellow with the Global Network on Extremism and Technology.

ISMAIL, NOOR HUDA

Dr. Noor Huda Ismail is a visiting fellow at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

He is an author, filmmaker, activist, and self-described "repentant journalist", and has a desire to tell a larger story about terrorism, foreign fighters and why people join violent organisations. Through research, arts, and civil society initiatives, Dr. Huda is developing the means to rehabilitate former terrorists and reincorporate them back into mainstream Indonesian society.

Dr. Huda's PhD dissertation is on "The Indonesian Foreign Fighters, Hegemonic Masculinity and Globalisation". In his research he argues that understanding early socialisation into a specific type of masculinity of a foreign fighter is much more important that understanding globalised political Islam. Based on his desire to understand how people are driven to join foreign fighter groups and to commit atrocities, the fieldwork for his doctoral research includes interviewing former Indonesian foreign fighters.

Dr. Huda was inspired to get involved with peacebuilding after the 2002 Bali bombings, when he learned that his former classmate had been involved in the attack. His book, *My Friend the Terrorist* is where he revealed this story. Dr. Huda then founded the Institute of International Peace Building, which

MOSHIRI, NAZANINE

Nazanine Moshiri is Crisis Group's senior analyst for Climate, Environment & Conflict, Africa. In this role she conducts field research, provides analysis through reports and media contributions, and contributes fact-based insights for policy makers on how to best respond to climate-related security risks.

Prior to joining the International Crisis Group, Nazanine worked for two decades as a journalist, including roles at Reuters, Independent Television News and Al Jazeera English. At Reuters, she managed a large team of journalists in East Africa. At Al Jazeera English, she was part of a team recognised as news channel of the year by the Royal Television Society for their coverage of the Arab Spring. She was also a finalist for journalist of the year at the One World Media Awards of 2014.

Nazanine served as an expert on the United Nations Panel of Experts on Somalia, where she led several investigations, including on the use of improvised explosive devices in Somalia by Al-Shabaab. Nazanine obtained her Master's degree from the University of Leicester in International Security Studies, where she won an award for best dissertation of the year. She is currently finishing a Master of Laws from the University of London in International Dispute Resolution.

PEARSON, ELIZABETH

Dr. Elizabeth Pearson is a Lecturer in Criminology with the Conflict, Violence and Terrorism Research Centre at Royal Holloway. Her research interests are in gender, extremism and counter-extremism.

Elizabeth is the lead author of the book Countering Violent Extremism: Making Gender Matter, co-authored with Emily Winterbotham of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and Dr. Katherine Brown. The book is based on research in 2015-6 looking at the gender dynamics of extremism and countering violent extremism, and in five countries (Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK). Elizabeth's ESRC-funded PhD research at King's College London focused on masculinities in Islamist and radical right movements in the UK. She is interested in extremism online and off, and in 2015 conducted research on Islamic State supporters on Twitter on a Fellowship with VOX-Pol, the European Union Network of Excellence for the study of extremism online. Elizabeth has also written on gender and the West African jihadist group Boko Haram, and worked with the European Union Technical Assistance to Nigeria's Evolving Security Challenges (EUTANS) in 2015.

Elizabeth worked as a radio journalist, mainly for the BBC, for some fifteen years prior to academia.

PRUDHOE, KATHERINE

LTC Katherine Prudhoe currently serves at NATO as the Gender Advisor (GENAD) for the International Military Staff at NATO HQ. Her military background is in Human Security and Information Operations and prior to working at NATO, she was involved in training AMISOM and NATO partner nations deploying on UN missions. Her operational deployments include to Iraq during the conflict, and subsequently to Bosnia and Türkiye. She joined the army after studying modern languages at St Andrews University.

She has combined her military career with a civilian career in culture and change management for private sector organisations, which has led to her interest in how strategic threats affect men, women, boys and girls differently..

WASHINGTON, KATIE

Dr. Katie Washington is Communications Lead and International Programmes Manager at Moonshot. She holds a PhD (DPhil) in International Development from the University of Oxford, where her research focused on the role and impact of gender, faith, and identity in the experiences of second- and third-generation British South Asian Muslim women who had engaged with violent or non-violent extremist causes.

Prior to joining Moonshot, Katie worked with UNDP, ODI, NATO, the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP), and Plan International, managing projects ranging from extremism and online harms, GBV, gender norms, Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, and feminist foreign policy.

WONG, CATHERINE

With more than 15 years' experience working on climate change and environment at headquarters and in-the-field, Catherine is a policy specialist in climate and security risk and the technical lead on climate and security under UNDP's Global Policy Network. She is UNDP's focal point on the DPPA-UNDP-UN Environment Climate Security Mechanism and UN Water-led core group on Leveraging Water for Peace. Catherine was recognized as one of 25 Young Security Leaders by the Körber-Stiftung and the Munich Security Conference (2020) and is an observer of the International Military Council for Climate Security

ANNEX-C

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