

ISIS, WOMEN AND THE WEST - MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF WESTERN WOMEN JOINING TO ISIS

By
Veronika Cseke-Táskai

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of International Relations

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Paul Roe

Word Count: 13 336

Budapest, Hungary
2018

Abstract

This study analyses the media representation of Western women who joined to the Islamic State. Their case is specific because in that conflict, a terrorist organization was able to attract more women than any other before, therefore it is a question how the West explains this phenomenon. Media often represents violent women using traditional gender stereotypes, as naïve, passive victims, even if their act is political. This pattern can be found in this specific case in two narrative schemas. While both argue that women are passive agents and lack the capability for rational decision, one depicts them in a positive value, other in a negative, depending on how they fit to the standard Western norms. The thesis argues that, as placing the responsibility on other than the individual or their home society, the West is able to maintain its normative position in the fight against ISIS.

Tale of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 - Theoretical framework	7
1.1 Feminism in International Relations	7
1.1.1 Poststructural feminism.....	11
1.1.2 The representation of women and political violence.....	14
1.2 Orientalist representation of women	19
Chapter 2 - Case study	23
2.1 Overview	23
2.2 Methodology	26
Chapter 3 - Findings.....	28
3.1 Innocent Children – Teenage girls in ISIS	29
3.2 Monsters – Stories about Al-Khansaa Brigade and Sally Jones	31
3.3 The other side of the picture.....	35
3.4 Discussion	37
Conclusion.....	40
Bibliography.....	42
Online sources for the case study	46

Introduction

Jaelyn Delshaun Young, a woman from Mississippi decided to leave her country and joined to the Islamic State. Young, the daughter of a police officer, was 20 years old at that time, and just recently converted to Islam.¹ She was arrested as a result of an undercover FBI interaction, in which she was engaged in numerous conversations with FBI agents disguised as ISIS recruiters. Young was charged with conspiring to provide material support to the terrorist group in 2015.² She also had a fiancée, with whom she planned the journey,³ but the media often forgets about him.

There were many other girls who followed the example of Jaelyn Delshaun Young, and left their countries in the hope of a better life in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). These women are of different ages and have various demographic and educational background, social status and country.⁴ What is common in them, is that they all received huge attention from the media. The phenomenon of female foreign fighters – or as they call themselves, muhajirat, is very relevant, as there is an unprecedented number of women from Western countries who have decided to join to the Islamic State.⁵ This fact is even more surprising knowing that the Islamic State is famous for its brutality towards women and is in sharp opposition with the Western values of liberties. It is an interesting question, why certain women decide to leave these liberties behind, but it is even more interesting, what do we, the West, think about them and their motivations. How do we explain this decision and how does it shape popular understanding about women's place in times of conflict?

¹ The thesis is based on a paper which has been created in the framework of Új Nemzeti Kiválóság Program.

² Joshua Berlinger and Catherine E. Shoichet, "Woman Pleads Guilty on Charge That She Tried to Join ISIS," *CNN*, March 30, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/30/us/mississippi-isis-guilty-plea-jaelyn-young/index.html>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Anita Perešin, "Fatal Attraction: Western Muslimas and ISIS," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9:3 (2015), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/427>.

⁵ Perešin.

The question of this specific case of violent women is interesting in two folds. First, because these women completely contradict to mainstream female stereotypes about peaceful, naive beings who are in need of protection,⁶ as they engage in activity which is generally thought as male activity – political violence. I consider these women as ‘violent women’ as most of the women who travelled there ‘celebrate the violence of ISIS’⁷ and ‘indicate a desire to inflict violence themselves’,⁸ thus I assume that they are willing to engage in terrorism. Although there is a debate about the proper definition of terrorism, what is common in these definitions is that it is understood as a political act.⁹ However, despite the political nature of terrorism, political goals are often absent from these stereotypes about women. And second, this case is interesting because these women grown up in the West but somehow decide to join to a group which is in opposition to general Western values and is perceived as part of the Other.

In the thesis I examine the media representation of the motivation of Western women migrating to the Islamic State. As the existing literature shows, many motivating factors can be discovered behind the travelling, from political or religious to personal ones.¹⁰ However, despite these diverse push and pull factors, media usually leaves out the possibility of this rationality and objectifies women leaving no space for their agencies.¹¹ Therefore, in this thesis, I examine how this special case of female violence fits to the previous literature. To test my assumption about the representation of leaving women as passive victims, I use discourse analysis on five Western media sources. I argue that they are depicted as naturally peaceful “beautiful souls”,¹² who are influenced by men, but political reasons are completely missing. The thesis does not

⁶ For example, Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987).

⁷ Carolyn Hoyle et al. *Becoming Mulan: Female Western Migrants to ISIS*, (Institute for Strategic Dialogue: London, 2015). p. 28

⁸ Ibid. p.31

⁹ Bruce Hoffman. *Inside Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) p.1-41.

¹⁰ For example Perešin, “Fatal Attraction.”; Brigitte Nacos, „The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism”. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. 28:5 (2005) pp. 435-451.

¹¹ Jessica West, “Feminist IR and the Case of the ‘Black Widows’: Reproducing Gendered Divisions,” *Innovations: A Journal of Politics* 5 (2005): 1-16.

¹² Elshtain, *Women and War*.

take into consideration the real situation in the Caliphates and do not try to answer what are the real reasons behind this act in two reasons. First, it does not influence the way media depicts women and second, as it is a war zone, it is very difficult to access reliable information from there.

The thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach, which poses it between the field of feminism in international relations (IR) and postcolonial studies. While it finds its theoretical background in the poststructural school of feminist approach of IR theory, it also uses the works of postcolonial literature, with special attention to the topic of orientalism. The connection of the two areas is important, because it can shed a light on how women are represented when taking part in a highly man related activity, in a country far from the West. As a result, it can contribute to the field of gender in international security in two folds. In one hand, it connects to the discourse about media representation of violent women with testing how the specific case of ISIS women fits to the previous literature about the topic. On the other hand, it connects to the othering discourse of the East, and uncovers how the West could explain itself the phenomenon of women willingly participate in the action of the ‘barbaric Other’ and leave behind the ‘developed West’.¹³

As a theoretical starting point, the thesis uses the literature of poststructural feminism, media and gender, and orientalism. With the help of these theories, it gets a complex picture about the usual media representation of violent women, and about the orientalist elements behind the description of non-Western women. Therefore, it will help to understand the way media describes Western women joining to ISIS.

I choose poststructural feminism as an analytical framework, because its main aim is to deconstruct the language and find power relations in the background.¹⁴ This is important,

¹³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹⁴ Susanne Gannon and Bronwyn Davies, “Feminism/ Poststructuralism,” in: *Research methods in the social sciences*, eds: Bridget Somekh & Cathy Lewin (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage, 2005), pp.318-325

because it argues that women are not inherently peaceful, but they are constructed and shown in the language as they are – even when their act contradicts to the existing gender stereotypes. And, with making these constitutive practices visible, it makes possible to uncover the Western orientalist power politics in the fight against ISIS. In the case of female political violence, poststructural feminists are often curious how the media represents violent women. To understand this, certain recurring patterns can be found. Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry identified the narratives about Mothers, Monsters and Whores¹⁵, while Dan Berkowitz & Qi Ling, slightly similarly, found the pattern of the Good Mother, the Women Warrior, the Monster and the Innocent Child.¹⁶ What is common in most of these patterns is firstly, that they represent women as lacking agency and thus lacking responsibility for their decisions. And second, they are never shown as real women, because they are sexually or intellectually dysfunctional. Therefore, these narrative patterns reproduce existing gender stereotypes.¹⁷

Besides the literature of poststructural feminism, the case of Westerners in the East can also be observed from a postcolonial viewpoint, as it can uncover Orientalist perceptions about Muslim others. According to the dominant discourse, Muslims are passive, traditional agents in contrast to the developed West.¹⁸ However, it raises the question how does media handle women who are not from the East: are they perceived as Westerners, or as Others? I assume that emigrated women are usually perceived as one of us, that's why it is hard to understand why they consciously choose to be part of the Others. They can be depicted as passive victims, who were manipulated by others, because it is unimaginable to make this decision of their own motivation.

¹⁵ Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2007).

¹⁶ Dan Berkowitz & Qi Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child: Telling Gendered News Stories of Women terrorists", in *Handbook on Gender and War*, ed. Simona Sharoni et al. (Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

¹⁷ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

¹⁸ Said, *Orientalism*.

The sources above show that although the existing literature does not find significant differences in the radicalization and participation of men and women,¹⁹ media represents them differently, intensely applying gender stereotypes. In my thesis, I show this phenomenon in the case of Western women joining to the terrorist organization of the Islamic State.

Therefore, I argue that women are represented in Western media with using gender stereotypes: they are depicted as actors with emotional motivations (like finding true love) or under the influence of male terrorist recruiters. However, I presume that political reasons do not appear when media talks about these women. And according to my second argument, these women are depicted as members of ‘Us’, therefore their depictions is more positive and personal, which politically serve to delegitimize the enemies’ cause and to re-establish the dominant position of the West.

To develop my main argument and give a proper answer to the research question, the structure of the thesis will be the following: in the first half of the thesis, I present the theoretical background for the better understanding of the representation of Western women in the Islamic State. For this, I argue that the best tool is poststructural feminism, which uses the tool of discourse analysis to deconstruct the language and find power relations in the background. In the framework of poststructural feminism, I give a special focus to theories about the representation of violent women. Within this literature, I use the narratives identified by Sjoberg & Gentry and Berkowitz & Ling to find similar patterns in the case of ISIS women. After poststructural feminism, I present the main findings of orientalist literature, which is engaged with the question how the East is otherized and what different patterns can be seen in its description.

In the second half of the thesis, I show my case study about the media representation of Western women migrating to Syria. Following the categorization of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue,

¹⁹ Nacos, „The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media”

I characterized women as western, if they were originated from Europe (excluding Russia and Turkey), United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand.²⁰ After a short overview, I conduct a discourse analysis in five Western news portals to see how these women are represented. To understand the findings, I use the narrative patterns developed in the first section. As a methodology, the thesis uses discourse analysis on five prominent online news portals, both with European and American ownership: The Guardian, BBC, CNN, Daily Mail and Huffington Post. I focus on the Western media only, since I am looking for othering and orientalist views, therefore I leave out Eastern portals, like Al-Jazeera. The timeframe is from the appearance of the Islamic State in 2012²¹ until recent time. In the conclusion, I show that there are two main narratives in this case, which fit into the previous literature.

²⁰ Hoyle et al. *Becoming Mulan*.

²¹ BBC, "The War against 'Islamic State' in Maps and Charts," *BBC News*, March 28, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

Chapter 1 - Theoretical framework

In this section, I present the theoretical framework for the understanding of the case of the media representation of Western women migrating to the Islamic State. As the feminist perspective of international relations lays a big stress on the understanding of gender relation in international politics, I use this school of IR as my first theoretical framework. Feminist school has many approaches, however it is poststructural feminism that is able to uncover existing stereotypes and power relations in the language, therefore I concentrate on that approach more deeply. I map the existing theories about mythical narratives in the language in relation to the representation of female violence, which I will use in my case study part to identify general patterns in the case of the Islamic State. Besides poststructural feminism, I also present the orientalist theory of postcolonial literature, which is engaged with the othering representation of the East. This literature is important because, although the women that I examine were raised in Western countries, they left it behind for the sake of a group which is perceived as ‘the Other’ by the West, therefore it is a question how the West places these women in relation to this Other. With the help of these two theoretic frameworks, I am able to give an answer to my research question in the next section.

1.1 Feminism in International Relations

In the late 1980s, a feminist perspective in International Relations appeared and asked questions which had not been asked before in this field. It placed the individual at the center of its research and focused on those who were previously invisible in the field of international relations. This school of international relations, differently from other IR schools, focused on gender relations in global politics, and thus can help me to understand how this discipline explains the phenomenon of Western women in ISIS. Therefore, in the following, I will briefly show the most important cornerstones of its development and the new perspectives which it gave to the

deficiencies of IR ‘exclusionary, state-centric and positivist nature’.²² To illustrate it, I will use the works of Cynthia Enloe and Jean B. Elshtain, two early scholars, who both focused on women’s place in conflict, but from different perspectives. Then, in the following chapter, I will narrow my focus to one approach of feminist IR, poststructural feminism, which concentrates especially on the constitutive effect of language. This leads me to works about media representation of scholars, like Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry and Dan Berkowitz & Qi Ling, who found recurring patterns in these descriptions. This theoretical background will help me to understand and deconstruct the phenomenon of Western women in ISIS, which I will do in the second part of this thesis.

Feminist IR emerged as a critique of the conventional schools of IR which is, often thought, one of the most masculinist field in social sciences with reflecting men’s interests and fears only.²³ The first appearance of feminist IR was in 1988, in the journal *Millennium*, which devoted a special issue to women and international relations.²⁴ Later, feminism contributed to the Third Debate of IR, which arose from the recognition that traditional IR schools were unable to give a proper answer to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The debate questioned the effectiveness of positivist theory and scientific method and attached great importance to subjectivity instead of objective facts.²⁵ From this debate, new theoretical perspectives, like constructivism, critical theory or feminist theory arose. In 1990, the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section (FTGS) was created, at the International Studies Association²⁶ and nine

²² Jacqui True, “Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, (2010) p.5 .

²³ Jan Jindy Pettman, “Gender Issues,” in: *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). p. 583.

²⁴ True, “Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory.”

²⁵ Christine Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*, (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁶ Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

years later the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* was established.²⁷ From this time on, feminist perspectives in international relation can be seen as a new school.

Feminist perspective in IR is exposing the importance of the women's voices in international relations and places the social relations of the international in the middle of its research. It seeks to understand existing gender relations and attempts to transform how they work. It also addresses new questions for example the question of women's place in international relations, which have not been addressed before. Therefore, feminist IR is able to answer to the shortcomings of IR with thinking about people, places, authorities and activities that the conventional IR schools could not accommodate.²⁸ As it gives the proper tool for the understanding of gender and conflict, I will use it as my analytical framework in the next part of my thesis.

The early theorists of feminist IR were engaged with the visibility of women in international relations²⁹ and the construction of gendered identities in this sphere.³⁰ They found that, when talking about war and violence, women are usually absent, or if not, they are shown as innocent victims.³¹ There are unequal gender relations and gender stereotypes in international politics and men and women can be found in different places. The existing schools of IR could not give a proper answer to this phenomenon, because, although they labelled themselves as gender neutral, they were rather only blind to women.³² Therefore, the main interest of feminism in IR became to make women visible in discussion of war, to challenge the associations about

²⁷ True, "Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory."

²⁸ Lailatul Fitriyah, "Poststructuralist-Feminist International Relations: A Point of Reconciliation?," *Andalas Journal of International Studies* 4:1 (2015): 96–108.

²⁹ For example: J. Ann Tickner. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Approaches to Achieving Global Security*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).; Cynthia Enloe. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989).

³⁰ True, "Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory."

³¹ For example: Elshtain, *Women and War*; Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006).

³² True, "Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory."; Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*.

stereotypical men and women in conflict and analyze gender in relation to other identities.³³

The first theorists of this discipline was Enloe and Elshtain, who both addressed the women question but from different theoretical perspectives.

In her book *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, written in 1989, Cynthia Enloe showed the underrepresentation of women when talking about global politics and asked “Where are the women?”. In this book, she wanted to get a feminist sense of international politics with following ‘diverse women to places that are usually dismissed by conventional foreign affairs experts’.³⁴ She showed eight narratives about women’s experience of international politics and argued that they are invisible there, however, paying attention to them could help to understand power and power politics more nuancedly. In these eight narratives, the reader can take a glance in the everyday experiences of war which were previously out of sight: Enloe shows stories about women and tourism, nationalism, militarism, diplomacy, food production, multinational garment industries and domestic labor. She concludes that there is not enough attention paid to the places and the positions where women were likely to be,³⁵ and this is why a new school in IR is necessary.

While Enloe was engaged with the power relations of gendered international relations, Jean B. Elshtain analyzed the social construction of gender through ideas of war stories.³⁶ In the book *Women and Wars* from 1985, Elshtain showed the dominant symbol of male fighter and female noncombatant, with using Hegel’s dichotomy of Just Warrior and the Beautiful Soul. In this narrative, women are innocent and in need of protection therefore they are not cast as actors in the war. Moreover, very often, their protection is the reason men go to war in the first place. And because Beautiful Souls are away from the battleground, they are not even allowed to

³³ Simona Sharoni & Julia Welland, “Introduction: revisiting the relationship between gender and war: reflections on theory, research, activism and policy,” in *Handbook on Gender and War*, eds. Simona Sharoni et al. International Handbooks on Gender (Cheltenham, Glos.: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

³⁴ Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*. p.3

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations*.

engage in war-telling and remain silent.³⁷ This distinction associate violence with male and peacefulness with female. In this work, Elshtain identifies ideal typical characteristic connected to women in time of violence: they are emotional, peaceful, pure and innocent. Violence is originally distant from them, in contrast, they are the ones who need protection. This dichotomic representation is so pervasive that it still can be found in the representation on female and male participants of war, as it can be seen in the next chapter.

According to West, the creation of these typical characteristics can be understood as a hegemonic femininity, which exiles women from international affairs to the domestic sphere.³⁸ This hegemonic femininity is the complementary of hegemonic masculinity, Charlotte Hooper identified in 2001. According to hegemonic masculinity, practice of international relations actively reproduces masculine gender identity because they uphold the existing divisions between public/private and international/domestic and thus maintain the domination over the feminine.³⁹ Hegemonic femininity argues for the same identity upholding, in the case of women, which can be discovered in the depiction in violent women as well.

1.1.1 Poststructural feminism

As it can be seen above, feminist IR addressed the question of women and focuses on making those voices visible which have been left out from traditional IR before. Feminism in IR has many subfields with competing methodology, epistemology and focus,⁴⁰ therefore as Sjoberg argues, there are not one feminist approach, but many feminisms. She differentiates within this school realist, liberal, constructivist, critical poststructural and postcolonial approach.⁴¹ Realist feminism examines the role of gender in power politics between states. Liberal feminism is

³⁷ Elshtain, *Women and Wars*.

³⁸ West, "Feminist IR and the Case of the 'Black Widows'".

³⁹ Charlotte Hooper, *Manly states; masculinities, international relations and gender politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

⁴⁰ Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

⁴¹ Ibid. p.4.

committed to investigate the causes of the subordinate position of women in global politics. Critical feminism is interested in the ideational and material manifestation of gendered identity in world politics. Feminist constructivism focuses on how gender is shaped by ideas of global politics. Poststructural feminism concentrates on how gendered linguistic manifestations of meanings marginalize the feminine. And finally, postcolonial feminism is interested in the ways that colonial domination is reflected in gender relations.⁴² In the following, I will focus only on poststructural feminism because this school is the one which aims to reconstruct meaning and focuses on language and representation, therefore it is the most applicable to understand Western ideas about female political violence in the Islamic State.

By referring to poststructural feminism, I follow the term of Laura Shepherd who used ‘poststructural’ rather than ‘post-structural’ to indicate that she considers herself fitting in the traditions of structuralism rather than being completely separable from it.⁴³ Poststructural feminism stems from French poststructuralist philosophy and the works of Michael Foucault, who argued that meaning has its own social and historical context and is based on power relations.⁴⁴ Foucault attributed high importance to the analysis of discourses which feminism poststructuralism took over from him.

Poststructural feminism is primarily engaged with the gendered manifestation of meanings.⁴⁵ It aims to make the constitutive force of linguistic practices and binaries visible, such as male/female, rational/irrational or normal/abnormal.⁴⁶ In gender relations, it is curious about how individuals are made into gendered subjects and aims to deconstruct gender binaries.⁴⁷ According to Shepherd, ‘this approach allows for research that investigates the ways in which ‘women’ as subjects and objects act, speak, write and represent themselves, are represented,

⁴² Ibid. p.4

⁴³ Laura J. Shepherd, *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice* (London: Zed Books, 2008).

⁴⁴ Ann Brooks, *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory, and Cultural Forms* (London: Routledge, 1997).

⁴⁵ Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict*.

⁴⁶ Gannon and Davies, “Feminism/ Poststructuralism.”

⁴⁷ Ibid.

written about, spoken about and acted on.⁴⁸ Its most important topics are subjectivity, language and power. About subjectivity, which is ‘the conscious and unconscious thought and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relations to the world,’⁴⁹ it thinks that is constructed, therefore it is not fixed and not given, as positivist thinkers would say.⁵⁰ This construction happens through discursive practices that is why it lays a big importance on language.

In the central of its analysis is language, which constitutes social reality. According to poststructural feminists, language plays a complex part in reflecting, creating and sustaining gender divisions in society. Therefore, it attempts to deconstruct language practices which create gender binaries and uncover how certain concepts are (re)produced in a particular discursive context. Poststructural feminism also often analyses agency and the way language opens up or closes down the possibility of it. When analyzing language, it usually observes discursive fields which are ‘institutions through which social structures are organized’.⁵¹ These institutions can be, for example, the law, the political system, education or media. It also lays big stress on the analysis of practices of power and existing power relations. It sees discourses as representing political interest, therefore they are constantly vying for status.⁵² Poststructural feminism is a normative theory, therefore it does not only analyze where the power is, but it tries to find ways for resistance against it.⁵³

The most common methodology of poststructural feminism is discourse analysis, which sees discourses as the structuring element of society therefore it aims to analyze the relationship between language and social practices.⁵⁴ It is primarily interested in the constructing effect of

⁴⁸ Shepherd, *Gender, Violence and Security*. p. 4.

⁴⁹ Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 1997). p.32.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 34.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Michael J. Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). p.218.

discourse through the systematic study of texts.⁵⁵ However, there is no single ‘discourse analysis’, but, according to Rosalind Gill, fifty-seven varieties of discourse analysis practice exists. What is common in them is the curiosity for language, both for spoken and written, and the way it constructs social reality.⁵⁶

Poststructural feminism is the tool bar of those authors who seek to deconstruct the language and make binaries visible behind the depiction of female political violence while it also gives a tool for me to analyze the representation of Western women in ISIS.

1.1.2 The representation of women and political violence

Studies about the representation of women fit into the poststructuralist narrative I presented above. While the works of Enloe and Elshtain focused on the power relations of genders and their different places in conflict, this section focuses especially on their representation and the way others construct women’s identity through war stories. Its primary aim is to deconstruct the language and make those patterns visible according to which society explains the phenomenon of female political violence. The bulk of this literature argues, similarly to Elshtain, that women are usually presented as inherently peaceful beings, from which violence is apart. Therefore, it seems that there is a stronger urge to explain female violence, while men’s violence is taken as natural. Women’s action can be categorized to different archetypes, but what is common in most of them is that their agency is missing from it. In these narratives, the reproduction of the hierarchy between men and women can be found.

While in 1989, Enloe argued for the invisibility of women, by 2018, Sjoberg observed a completely opposite phenomenon: the hypervisibility and sensationalization of women in certain areas. She analyzed the phenomenon of female fighters, and found that, in comparison

⁵⁵ Cynthia Hardy. "Researching Organizational Discourse." *International Studies of Management & Organization* 31:3 (2001): 25-47.

⁵⁶ Rosalind Gill, "Discourse Analysis". in: *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. eds: Martin W. Bauer and George Gaskell (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000)

to their actual number, media pays extraordinary attention to every violent woman.⁵⁷ Violent women are often taken as exceptional, they are not characterized as regular soldiers or terrorists. While men's participation in violence is evident, women's is extraordinary therefore it needs explanation.⁵⁸ Whatever actually the case is about the visibility of women in violence, it seems that they are never taken as natural and something is always missing from the understanding of women's place in conflicts. Mia Bloom got to the same conclusion and noted that it is estimated that terrorist attacks carried out by women receive eight times the media coverage of attacks perpetrated by men.⁵⁹

But the amount of media coverage is not the only difference between the representation of men and women in political violence. There are also different stereotypes and representation patterns when talking about the two genders. Berkowitz & Ling call these representations mythical narratives. Mythical narratives are patterns which help to make sense of social life by evoking taken for granted beliefs about a society and reaffirming the existing social order. These narrative patterns can help the understanding of the society's belief about gender myths.⁶⁰ These narratives are especially interesting in the case of female political violence, because this phenomenon infringes the society's usual stereotypes of women and do not fit into the hegemonic femininity, therefore it is interesting how it appears. The best area to discover mythical narratives are news stories: they represent the world via certain narrative patterns and reassure shared experiences,⁶¹ therefore it is easy to deconstruct these patterns via the examination of the media. Media also have a framing effect in the society, according to which it can have a decision to what it present in the news and how. It can highlight some features

⁵⁷ Laura Sjöberg, "Jihadi brides and female volunteers: Reading the Islamic State's war to see gender and agency in conflict dynamics," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 35:3, (2018): 296–311.

⁵⁸ Lucy Hall, "Erasing Agency: Representations of Women Terrorists and the Intersection of Gender, Race and Ethnicity," *Amsterdam Social Science* 4:1, (2012): 9-28.

⁵⁹ Mia Bloom, "Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend," *Daedalus* 136:1, (2007): 94–102.

⁶⁰ Berkowitz & Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child."

⁶¹ Nacos, „The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media”

while obscure others, with the choice of topic, language or photographs.⁶² Some of these patterns is especially important in the case of terrorism because they have strong effect on the receivers of the news.⁶³

These mythical narratives can be discovered in the representations of female political violence as well. According to Sjoberg & Gentry, when women engage in political violence, they are not characterized as regular terrorists. Instead, they are shown in stories which deny women's agency and reify existing gender stereotypes about women, as naturally nurturing, emotional and sensitive – although their violent act contradicts these depictions. The authors discovered three very general patterns which appear when talking about violent women and which are different than the terms used for describing men's violence. All these narratives carry the expectations of appropriate female behavior. These are the Mother, the Monster and the Whore narratives.⁶⁴ In the following, I will describe them more deeply, while in the next part of my thesis, together with the work of Berkowitz & Ling, I will use these narratives to give an answer to my research question.

Behind the Mother narrative, there is the essentialist ideal-type of the peaceful mother: women who engage in violence are fulfilling – or avenging - their biological destinies as wife and mother and their need to belong and nurture. This narrative blames women's link to motherhood for their violence, therefore, according to it, women can be violent for two reasons: either they act in support role, taking care of men or out of revenge. Behind the first motivation, there is the women's instinctual desire to be mothers, while behind revenge, there are other emotional reasons, mostly because of their maternal losses or inadequacy. The Monster narrative says that women who engage in violence are pathologically damaged and there is no rational reason or ideological motivation behind their acts. They go against their role as nurturers, therefore they

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Sjoberg & Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

are no longer women. In this narrative, violent women are thought to be deadlier than men, they are inhuman because real women do not commit violence. And finally, the Whore narrative thinks women are inspired by their sexuality for their violent acts. There are three subcategories in this narrative: erotomania, erotic dysfunction and sexual slavery. According to these, what drives women's violence is either their overwhelming desire for sex, the inability to please men, or that they are forced by men who have dominion over their body.⁶⁵

Dan Berkowitz and Qi Ling get to a similar conclusion in their article. They mapped media narratives about female political violence which helped them to understand the existing beliefs in the society. They found that while men's involvement in violence is taken for granted, women's involvement requires more explanation which is often explained through the lens of normative femininity. Like Sjoberg and Gentry, they also identify certain popular archetypes about female violence in the media, but their categorization in some part is different from the previous authors'. The Good Mother archetype is characterized by her maternal nurturing qualities, it is often represented as good and self-sacrificing fighter. Similarly, the Woman Warrior archetype is also represented in a positive way, who owns the qualities of toughness, smartness, beauty, sexuality and defiance. The Female Monster – similarly to the Monster of Sjoberg and Gentry – is deviant, abnormal, psychologically problematic and can have human and animal characteristics. And finally, they found a new group, specifically relating to the appearance of the ISIS, the Innocent Child archetype. This narrative was created as a response to the increasing number of young girls joining to terror organizations, who cannot be perceived as adults. Women, represented according to this schema, are depicted as cute and silly, primarily concerned with romance and prioritizing marriage as their ultimate goal. According to the authors, these are all gender-specific narratives, which are familiar to Western societies, and

⁶⁵ Ibid.

support existing gender values and the central-margin order between the West and the non-West.⁶⁶

What is common in these representations is that, to make narratives which are plausible to women terrorists, they use extreme interpretations to make sense of this phenomenon. What can also be discovered in most of these representations is the absence of agency. Almost all of them excludes women's agency and condemn women's femininity. They portray women as intellectually dysfunctional (either out of biology or psychology) therefore they are never held accountable for their own actions. The motivating factors are placed outside of the individuals, on other factors, mostly on men or oppression. As a consequence of this, they are never seen as driven by ideology and belief, but some emotional influence can be found in most of the cases. According to the four authors, the problem with taking away agency is that these representations give an inadequate answer to the phenomenon of female violence in global politics.⁶⁷ These violent women are also not taken as real women - there is some disfunction with them, therefore our image of real femininity is not harmed.

However, there is a debate in the literature about what does agency means at all. A slightly different argument can be found in the work of Auchter, who argues that agency is often taken as a matter of common sense, however it is not an objective concept. Therefore, when deconstructing the meaning of this notion, it can be found that it is inherently the part of narratives about violent women. She questions the notion of agency itself, arguing that there is a victim/agent dichotomy in the notion, therefore no delineation is possible. She thinks that agency frames the way scholars see women and that writers of women and terrorism inscribe agency to the women's subjectivities.⁶⁸ While Auchter makes some important points about the problems of binary understanding of agency, I argue that most of the academic research does

⁶⁶ Berkowitz & Ling, „From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child ”

⁶⁷ Sjoberg & Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

⁶⁸ Jessica Auchter “Gendering Terror”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 14:1, (2012): 121-139.

not want to inscribe agency where it is missing, but instead agency is there, however the political, media and public representation does not take it into consideration when talking about women. Therefore, it is worth to include agency in my research and to examine the way it is present or absent in the depictions.

The other problem with the popular representation of violent women is that, besides taking away agency, it very often reinforces gender hierarchy order. The assumption about appropriate gender behavior can be found in all these narratives: women should be nurturing, peaceful or beautiful. It also connects emotional and personal factors to women, and, some argue that this places them to the domestic zone. Taking their violence as extraordinary, which needs to be explained, also reinforces this argument. Therefore, these representations are the modern echoes of the classical public/private sphere divide.⁶⁹

Overall, the bulk of the literature argues that there are some popular schemas according to which violent female are represented and understood. These schemas are all connected to the traditional stereotypes about women: they are depicted as peaceful, emotional and innocent. While violent women seem to contradict these stereotypes, the explanation for this infringement is that they are either mad or not female enough. These representations take away women agency and place the responsibility outside of them, while reinforce existing gender stereotypes. Although female violence seems to oppose the usual stereotypes about women, the narratives which relate to it serve to sustain exactly these stereotypes.

1.2 Orientalist representation of women

Feminist literature focuses primarily on the genders' place in international relations, however, when talking about non-Western women, other factors are also important to take into consideration besides gender. Therefore, while women are represented differently than men,

⁶⁹ Sjoberg & Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*; Hall, "Erasing Agency"

this is even more interesting and visible when we are speaking about Arabic women. In the case of non-Western women, there is usually the intersection of different factors: race, class and gender. These women can be understood in double relation: in relation to men and in relation to the West. This double effect makes an interesting interconnection of different stereotypes. Orientalist literature, that I will present in the following section, helps to understand these other factors that can have an effect in our understanding of violent women in this special case. But through the lenses of oriental representation, it is not only the stereotypes about non-Western women which can be realized but the West can know a lot about itself and its place in power politics.

Orientalist representations have been constructed to define what is non-Western thus they create an us-them division between the West and the East. The first who identified this narrative pattern was Edward Said, who mapped the cultural representation of the East by the West. According to Said, representing the East in a certain way creates a distinction between the West and the East, where the latter is marked as lacking civil society, individuality and secondary structures. In these images, the Orient is always primitive and backward against which there are the positive images of the developed Western self. Because of the above, Said argues that these representations are inherently political and serve to maintain Western dominance over the other.⁷⁰

Because of the above, these representations are less about the Orient and more about ‘the cultural representation of the West to itself by way of a detour through the other’.⁷¹ With the construction of the Other, the West constitutes the universal norm by occupying the place reached as the ‘normal’ and making itself as a reference point.⁷² Through the deconstruction of

⁷⁰ Said, *Orientalism*.

⁷¹ Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, Cambridge Cultural Social Studies (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998). p.1

⁷² Yeğenoğlu.

the discursive constitution of Otherness, ‘the political, economic, cultural, and ideological relations between Europe and the Muslim world’ can be understood at a particular historical moment.⁷³ Therefore, with the inclusion of orientalist aspects to my analysis, it is not only the representation of women which can be understood but the power politics of the West through the representation of the Other as well.

Narratives about non-Western women fit into this opposition, as they are used as subjects in international relations⁷⁴ their bodies are being positioned upon the geopolitical stage.⁷⁵ As Yegenoglou argues in her book *Colonial Fantasies*, women are usually at the very center of Orientalism,⁷⁶ which means that these women are often the exemplification of the East: the primitive and backward Other, who are inferior to the modern West. They are usually shown as irrational, childlike and submissive⁷⁷ and often represented through sexualized images.⁷⁸ In these narratives, Muslim women are essentialized and shown as a homogenous category which does not take into consideration the very diverse population of Muslims.⁷⁹

The war against Afghanistan is a good example when Muslim women were objectified and used to create a legitimate justification for America to go to the war. In that case, American leaders called for war because of the liberation of Muslim women and because ‘Afghan women know, through hard experience, what the rest of the world is discovering: the brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists’.⁸⁰ These discourses are interesting because they want to liberate women with helping them to become more like us. This ‘reinforces the notion of

⁷³ Jasmin Zine, “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19:4 (2002) p. 22.

⁷⁴ Kevin J. Ayotte and Mary E. Hussain, “Securing Afghan Women: Neocolonialism, Epistemic Violence, and the Rhetoric of the Veil” *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 17:3, (2005): 112-133.

⁷⁵ Zine, “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation.”

⁷⁶ Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*.

⁷⁷ Hall, “Erasing Agency”

⁷⁸ Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*.

⁷⁹ Zine, “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation.”

⁸⁰ David Stout, “A Nation Challenged: The First Lady; Mrs. Bush Cites Women’s Plight Under Taliban,” *The New York Times*, November 18, 2001, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/18/us/a-nation-challenged-the-first-lady-mrs-bush-cites-women-s-plight-under-taliban.html>.

conversion to American cultural norms and values as the medium of liberation for Muslim women.’⁸¹

As it can be seen in the example of intervention in Afghanistan, Muslim women are often represented as passive agents. These women are usually shown as oppressed and silenced victims who cannot stand up for their rights.⁸² This ‘essentializes the representation of Muslim women and limits their agency’,⁸³ which remind very much on the representation of women participating in political violence. Therefore, a homology between the patriarchal and colonial discourses can be discovered: they both discursively constructed categories and both use this othering technique to confirm a world view about existing stereotypes. However, oriental representations serve not only to reinforce these stereotypes, but it can be understood in context of global politics and the relation of East and West to each other. Therefore, these depictions can help us to know more about the West itself.

Orientalist female representation is especially interesting in the case of women in ISIS because, although they are from the West, they left it behind for the sake of a non-Western terror organization. Therefore, I would like to address the question how the West explains this phenomenon to itself: are these women depicted as one of Us, or as members of the Other? However, placing the question in a wider perspective, the literature of orientalism can also help to understand how the West aims to uphold its hegemonic position through the representation of these women. Following the poststructural feminist and orientalist literature discussed above, the remaining part of this essay is focusing on my own research about the media appearance of Western women who left their countries to join to ISIS.

⁸¹ Zine, “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation.” p.14.

⁸² Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2*:12/13 (1984): 333-58.

⁸³ Zine, “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation.” p.2.

Chapter 2 - Case study

In the second part of my thesis I will conduct my own research about media representation of Western women joining to the Islamic State. As the literature background showed in the previous section, there are certain patterns according to which media categorize violent women. I would like to explore whether these schemas are present in the case of the Islamic State, which is especially interesting because it was able to lure more women than any other terrorist organization before.

Although the existing literature shows that they have many different motivations to join, I will argue that media depicts them under the same schema, which takes away agency and places responsibility on somebody else. This representation is relevant because it shed a light on the orientalist politics of the West, which serves to reestablish existing power relations with placing the responsibility over the terrorists instead of the women.

2.1 Overview

Using the definition of RAND Corporation, the so called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ‘is a Sunni jihadist group with a particularly violent ideology that calls itself a caliphate and claims religious authority over all Muslims. It was inspired by Al-Qaida but later publicly expelled from it.’⁸⁴ Its goal is the foundation of a Sunni Islamic State and it is famous for its brutality and the extreme interpretation of Sunni Islam. ISIS gained global prominence in the beginning of 2014 when it controlled seven major cities in Syria and Iraq,⁸⁵ but by 2017, thanks to the international cooperation against it, it lost 98% of the area it previously had.⁸⁶ What

⁸⁴ RAND Corporation, „The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)”, <https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html>.

⁸⁵ BBC, “The War against ‘Islamic State’ in Maps and Charts,” *BBC News*, March 28, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

⁸⁶ FOX, “ISIS has lost 98 percent of its territory, officials say”, *Fox 32*, December 26, 2017, <http://www.fox32chicago.com/news/dont-miss/isis-has-lost-98-percent-of-its-territory-officials-say>.

differentiates it from other terrorist organizations is that it systematically uses modern technology and social media, therefore capable of presenting propaganda all over the world.⁸⁷

Thanks to this propaganda, its membership does not only composed by people from Iraq or Syria, but there are a significant number of foreign fighters from the neighboring countries and even from the West. According to the National Counterterrorism Center, this number was more than 28.000 in 2015, from which the number of Westerners was more than 5000.⁸⁸ But not only men travel to the area of the terrorist organization, but it successfully recruits women in a high number as well. According to the statistics, by the end of 2017 more than 1000 Western women joined to the organization, which indicates that it was able to address an unprecedented number of women, a bigger number than any terrorist organization before.⁸⁹ It is even more surprising as ISIS is famous for its sexual exploitation and brutality towards women.

These women, who often call themselves as muhajirat, or female migrants, are from diverse socioeconomic background. They have different age, country of origin and family backgrounds. Some of them are members of the Muslim diaspora, second or third generation migrants, others are converts.⁹⁰ There are women from every Western country, but the majority of them is from the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Belgium.⁹¹

Just like their demographic background, their motivations are also diverse. When analyzing migrated women's social media accounts, Saltman and Smith found three distinct pull factors women self-identified as their reasons to leave. These were the desire to participate in the building of the new society, an aim to fulfil their religious duty and other personal

⁸⁷ Ali Mah-Rukh, "ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women," *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2015.

⁸⁸ BBC, „What Is »Islamic State«?", *BBC News*, December 2, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>.

⁸⁹ Perešin, "Fatal Attraction."

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Bibi van Ginkel et al., „The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies", *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2016.

motivations.⁹² Among the political reasons the aim to participate in preventing the oppression of Muslims and save the Ummah under attack were the most often cited. Among religious reasons, the most frequent was the desire to ‘practice their religion in a more congenial environment,’⁹³ while among personal motivations this was to find adventure or love, camaraderie and sisterhood.⁹⁴ These factors, combining with the push factors Anita Peresin called as ‘the feelings of alienation and inequality, racism and a lack of religious freedom, xenophobia or negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants in the West, is used by ISIS’ recruiters’⁹⁵ can all contribute to the decision to leave their country of origin.

In other terrorist organizations, women were not a visible part of the society therefore they were never an important part of the propaganda.⁹⁶ Differently to this, Islamic State lays a big stress on recruiting Western women and have a social media campaign especially targeting them. They are in demand, because they are needed to be wives and to give birth to the new generation of jihadists. They usually became the wives of foreign fighters, because foreign women are considered to be more valuable and committed. Western fighters also often prefer Western women, because culturally and linguistically they are closer to them.⁹⁷

Foreign women are usually recruited through social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Kik, WhatsApp, YouTube, SureSpot, Ask.FM, Tumblr).⁹⁸ The recruiters are most often those women who already left behind a Western country for the sake of ISIS. Through social media, they post romanticized pictures about the life in the Caliphates and give practical advices for the process to join ISIS, for example tips about what to bring or how to contact their families

⁹² Erin Saltman and Melanie Smith. “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part’ Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon”, (*Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2015).

⁹³ Perešin, “Fatal Attraction.”

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Mah-Rukh, “ISIS and Propaganda”

⁹⁷ Perešin, “Fatal Attraction.”

⁹⁸ Ibid.

back home.⁹⁹ These posts are very idealistic and, thanks to them, as Erin Saltman is quoted in the article of Petrou, 'there is a strong sense that you are joining a family. They really play up the fact that you are among sisters, that everyone is treated equally. Part of it almost plays out a feminist narrative, which says the West sexualizes women and, in Islamic State territory, you are treated with respect'.¹⁰⁰

In the Caliphates, women's role is usually domestic supporting roles, nurturing of the children or recruiting other women through social media. They are allowed to fight only in very extreme and special circumstances,¹⁰¹ when the enemy is attacking the country and there are not enough men to protect it.¹⁰² One exception from this rule is Al-Khansaa Brigade. It is an all-female religious police, composed of 25-30 women, mostly British, aged between 18 and 25, who receive a monthly salary of 25,000 Syrian lira (less than 200 USD).¹⁰³ Its task is to guard proper religious behaviour among women, and punish those who do not abide the rules. These rules include the requirement to wear black only and cover their body fully. It is also often called as the morality police of ISIS.

As it can be seen above, the case of the Islamic State is especially interesting, because it was able to lure more women than any other non-Western terrorist organization before. The next part of this research will focus on how the West understand this high number and what implications can be drawn from this.

2.2 Methodology

In my research, my aim was to analyze the representation of violent Western women in the media and find a pattern behind the news coverages. I argue that this is relevant, because

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Petrou, "What's Driving Teen Girls to Jihad?," May 17, 2015, <https://www.macleans.ca/society/teen-girl-jihadists/>.

¹⁰¹ Women of the Islamic State: A Manifesto on women by Al-Khansaa Brigade, translated by Charlie Winter, (Quilliam Foundation, 2015).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "Al-Khansaa Brigade" accessed April 29, 2018, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/al-khansaa-brigade>.

through the media representation of these women we can get a deeper understanding to Western self-reflection in the fight against ISIS. I expected that I would find signs of passive agency, and stereotypical depictions, just like the Mother, the Monster and the Whore archetypes Sjoberg & Gentry identified in their book.¹⁰⁴ To examine this question, I conducted a discourse analysis on the most popular international news portals, following the methodology of prominent scholars (for example Sjoberg, Hall, West) in similar topics.

I chose discourse analysis as a methodology, because it is appropriate to unfold hidden power relations behind the texts of the articles and can give a wider view how these women are perceived in the West. As Rosalind Gill states, this methodology places discourse in the focus of its research and has a conviction that they have central importance in organizing social life.¹⁰⁵ For discourse analysis, media is a good choice because it can reflect the general public opinion of a society, therefore it is suitable to measure how the West explains this phenomenon to itself. The timeframe of the research is between 2012 and 2018, but the majority of the articles are from 2015 because traveling to the Islamic State reached its peak point at this year. Since then, it has been losing areas, thanks to the international cooperation against it.¹⁰⁶ Besides this, lot of information reached Europe about the actual, horrible circumstances of the foreigners in the Islamic State, which all could influence the decrease of the number of new foreign fighters.

For the analysis, I chose five prominent Western news websites, which were among the top fifteen most popular English news portals in May 2018.¹⁰⁷ They are both from Europe and from the United States: BBC, CNN, The Guardian, Huffington Post and Daily Mail. It was not a goal to map the whole media market; I only chose portals which have an opinion-shaper role in the English language Western media and have a relatively huge social access. The five chosen

¹⁰⁴ Sjoberg & Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

¹⁰⁵ Gill, "Discourse Analysis".

¹⁰⁶ FOX, "ISIS has lost 98 percent of its territory"

¹⁰⁷ eBizMBA, „Top 15 Most Popular News Websites | May 2018“, <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/news-websites>.

portals have a slightly different profile: Huffington Post is thought to be value-driven, Daily Mail is rather click hunter, Guardian has an investigative profile while BBC and CNN endeavour to be as objective as possible. All of these portals are opinion-shapers, but because of these different characters, they are representative units for the research and can give a broad picture about the English language media. I chose to focus on Western media only and leave out Eastern portals like Al-Jazeera, because this is where othering and orientalist views could appear. I analysed 79 articles, 19 from CNN, 17 from Daily Mail, 16 from the Guardian, 13 from BBC and 14 from Huffington Post. I conducted searches for the terms 'ISIS women', 'ISIS wives' and 'Al-Khansaa Brigade'. As the result of my research, I found elements which support the argument of previous authors about the passive agency of violent women, however I found counternarrative as well.

Chapter 3 - Findings

After conducting the discourse analysis on the media articles, I found similar patterns Sjöberg & Gentry, and Berkowitz & Ling mentioned in their works. I found two dominant narratives about the women of ISIS: the first highlighted the young age of the girls, and in connection with this, their naivety. This narrative shows girls as not being responsible over what happened to them, because they were lured and manipulated. I also found elements of the irrational, deviant woman narrative who is so fanatic that has no rational reasons behind her acts. The first example for this depiction is Sally Jones, who travelled to Iraq with her nine-year-old son, not caring about endangering him. The other example which fits into this pattern is news stories about women who are the member of Al-Khansaa Brigade. Both narratives I found fit into the patterns identified by previous authors, which eliminate women's agency and do not take political and religious motivations into consideration.

However, my findings are more diverse than I expected based on the previous literature. I found a substantial amount of articles – mostly on BBC and CNN - which depicted the complicated relationships and motivations behind women’s decision to leave. They usually present experts of the topic, who highlight that besides personal factors, other factors can also contribute to the decision to leave. Some of them even questioned the responsibility of Europe in this phenomenon. Therefore, as depictions with irrationality and passive agency is still very common in media, it is not exclusive and rather depends on the source of media.

3.1 Innocent Children – Teenage girls in ISIS

Most of the articles about ISIS women show teenage girls who left the West to join ISIS. Although, as previous research shows, women from all age migrated to Iraq and Syria,¹⁰⁸ young girls appear in a disproportionately bigger weight in these articles. The story of the three teenage schoolgirls from Bethnal Green Academy, Amira Abase, Khadiza Sultana and Shamima Begum fits into this narrative. Articles about them appear 10 times in the news searches I found. Similarly, twins Salma and Zahra Halane, Yura Hussein or Aqsa Mahmood are all parts of this narrative. Media often references these girls as ISIS brides, which notion implies some hierarchical relations and a suggestion that they are not individual actors but the brides of someone.

Their depiction fits into the Innocent Child narrative Berkowitz & Ling identified.¹⁰⁹ According to this narrative, women are personalized, depicted as naïve, innocent children who had no influence on what happened to them. My analysis found these elements in the depictions: they are pictured in their home, as ordinary teenage girls, listening to pop music, having problems with statistics subject at school or being especially outstanding students. In lot of articles, their

¹⁰⁸ Perešin, “Fatal Attraction.”

¹⁰⁹ Berkowitz & Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child"

parents or relatives are interviewed, these interviews are full of emotions, the parents are sometimes even crying while in the videos.¹¹⁰

With this personalization, the reader gets closer to the women appearing in the articles. He can get to know their parents, their normal life back home or the process step by step as they arranged their travel. In these articles, there are lot of personal information about the women, however, one appears in almost every article: they were bright students - therefore it was totally unimaginable that they engage in such an evil act and no sign showed that it would happen. These depictions intend to show the reader that these women are definitely one of us, which does not only mean that we feel sorry for them, but that what happened to them could happen to any of us. Therefore, to my question how they fit to the Us versus Them dichotomy between the West and the East, the answer is that they are shown as part of the West, and thus are positive protagonists in the articles.

Why this depiction is problematic is that it takes away agency and lays the responsibility of what happened to them on somebody else.¹¹¹ In the articles, their migration is usually showed as something which happened under the influence of terrorists who ‘lured’ them into doing it. The word ‘brainwashed’ also appears in lot of articles. Besides being lured, personal factors also appear often in the explanations behind the migration, like romantic love or childish fantasies (‘propaganda videos making the rounds play to the ideals and fantasies of teenage girls’¹¹²). These frequent elements of the stories about young girls suggest that it was not their rational decisions to leave but somebody influenced and lured them. As it was not their own decision, it is easy to see them as vulnerable victims who are not responsible for what happened to them. It reinforces the assumption that these girls became terrorists because they were

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Berkowitz & Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child"; Sjöberg & Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

¹¹² John Hall, „Jewish girl has joined ISIS, French intelligence official reveals”, *Mail Online*, October 10, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2787892/jewish-girl-joined-isis-french-intelligence-official-reveals-dozens-teenagers-fled-syria-iraq-france-horror-families.html>.

manipulated with the use of personal factors, but it has nothing to do with political ones. An other common element in the articles is that, although the girls somehow travelled to the Caliphates, they do not feel well there and want to come home. This also serves to demonstrate that, although they made a bad decision, they are positive actors on the whole.

3.2 Monsters – Stories about Al-Khansaa Brigade and Sally Jones

Besides the narratives about Innocent Children, there is an other common depiction of ISIS women. According to this narrative, they are often shown as heartless monsters who either enjoy violence or are so fanatic that they even endanger their own children for the sake of the Islamic State. Stories about Al-Khansaa Brigade fit into the first pattern, while into the second pattern the news coverage about Sally Jones fits.

Articles about Al-Khansaa Brigade are much less frequent than about young Western girls, however these fit into a different storytelling pattern, which Sjoberg & Gentry called the Monster narrative. According to this narrative, violent women are pathologically damaged, who go against their roles as nurturers, therefore they are not women anymore.¹¹³ Berkowitz and Ling complete this depiction with saying that they can embody human and animal characteristics and are often described as having troubled past.¹¹⁴ They also think that these women often play active roles in terrorist organizations, like being recruiters, propagandists or even commanders.¹¹⁵

When talking about the Brigade, articles usually lists the horrific acts the members of the brigade committed. There are many articles about a mother who was caught breastfeeding in public and thus, punished. Other articles are about an other mother, who let her daughter bitten

¹¹³ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

¹¹⁴ Berkowitz & Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child."

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

to deaths because the girl overstepped the threshold of her home while cleaning.¹¹⁶ The members of this brigade are usually shown as monsters, who enjoy violence and ‘take pleasure in torturing women’.¹¹⁷ They also brag about these acts.¹¹⁸ It is even questioned whether they are human beings at all (‘She’s not a normal female.’¹¹⁹ ‘I never felt like I was a human being.’¹²⁰) These narratives fit into the Monster category of Sjoberg & Gentry, as it shows women as deviant, pathologically damaged. We do not know anything about their motivations except that they enjoy torturing people.

The other example which fits into the Monster narrative is the media coverage about Sally Jones. She was an emblematic figure of the Islamic State. Her story resembles the examples of Jessie Lynch and Lynndie England, who both became the faces of the war against terrorism. Jones was often called ‘Britain’s most notorious terrorists’, who was placed on the wanted list of the United Nations, at the request of prime minister David Cameron. She was a Briton, living in Kent with her two sons and sold cosmetics at L’Oreal. Besides this, she was also a guitarist and singer in an all-female punk band.¹²¹

In 2013, she converted to Islam and travelled to Syria to join her husband, Junaid Hussain. She also took her younger son, JoJo, with her, who was 9 years old at the time. After the death of Hussein, the press started to refer to her as the White Widow. Jones received a huge media attention, as she became the top recruiter of ISIS, persuading hundreds of British women to work for the terrorist organization. She was also supposedly behind a plot to assassinate the

¹¹⁶ Dave Burke, “Girl, 10, ‘bitten to Death’ with Torture Device by ISIS,” Mail Online, February 7, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4199024/index.html>.

¹¹⁷ Sara Malm, “Woman ISIS Torturer Speak of Horror She Inflicted, Says Brit Was Worse,” Mail Online, September 8, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4865326/index.html>.

¹¹⁸ Damien Gayle, “Islamic State ‘Tortured Nursing Mother with Bear Trap-like Device,’” Mail Online, December 30, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2890911/All-female-Islamic-State-police-squad-tortured-woman-device-called-biter-caught-breastfeeding-public.html>.

¹¹⁹ Arwa Damon and Gul Tuysuz, “Exclusive: Confessions of a Female ISIS Member,” CNN, October 6, 2014, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/10/06/world/meast/isis-female-fighter/index.html>.

¹²⁰ Burke, ‘Girl, 10’

¹²¹ “Sally Jones,” Counter Extremism Project, February 21, 2016, <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/sally-jones>.

Queen and Prince Philip and was calling upon women to launch terrorist attacks in the UK, during Ramadan. She is believed to have been killed in 2017.¹²²

Her figure can be understood in the frame of symbolic women, who became determining in the fight against terrorism: Jessica Lynch and Lynndie England. Jessica was an American soldier who was kidnapped in Iraq and was rescued by the US special forces – followed by high media attention.¹²³ She became the example of the beautiful soul, a body that is worth saving, with her blond hair and blue eyes and the ‘girl next door’ look. She was handled as the embodiment of ‘The American values’, therefore her rescue was also a symbolic act. Unlike the case of Lynndie England.

Lynndie England was one of the female soldiers who tortured and abused Abu Ghraib prisoners. She appeared in unsettling pictures about humiliated prisoners: in one, she was smoking a cigarette while pointing her fingers like two guns at an Iraqi prisoner standing naked with a bag over his head. Or in an other picture, she was holding a prisoner like a dog on a leash.¹²⁴ In the media, she became presented as a monster, as the face of everything which is un-American. Therefore, while Jessica Lynch became everything that is worth fighting for, Lynndie England became everything that is worth fighting against.

Sally Jones fits into these female symbols in the war against terror. Just like the other two women, she also got huge media attention and was often called the ISIS’s poster girl.¹²⁵ Her case is interesting, because, although she is European, she betrayed Western values, therefore she became the example of the fanaticism of ISIS, against which the West has to fight. Just like in the case of young girls, in the articles about her a lot of personal information is presented

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Cristina Masters, „Femina Sacra: The ‘War on/of Terror’, Women and the Feminine”, *Security Dialogue* 40:1 (2009): 29–49.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Anthony Joseph, “Punk Rocker Sally Jones Who Became ISIS Poster Girl Wants UK Return,” Mail Online, July 4, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4663216/index.html>.

about her life. However, these are somehow all problematic: she was a punk singer, left her school at young age and was interested in witchcraft.¹²⁶ But it is not only her life before ISIS which is far from normal, but she acts mad in the Caliphates as well. She recruited and trained female extremists and threatened the UK several times with suicide bombings.¹²⁷ She also endangers her own child for the sake of the Caliphates: she ‘enrolled Joe at a camp for boys which teach children ISIS's interpretation of sharia as well as how to use weapons’¹²⁸ and ‘believed to be using her 11-year-old son Jojo as a human shield’.¹²⁹ With being placed on the UN’s sanction list,¹³⁰ she became one of the worst enemies of the West.¹³¹ Therefore, unlike the schoolgirls, she is definitely not pictured as one of us, and it is rather her son, JoJo, with whom we can sympathize.¹³²

On the whole, two distinct patterns can be discovered within the depiction of women as irrational, fanatic agents. The first shows them as brutal actors, as someone who commits violent acts for the sake of it. The examples of this category are usually the members of Al-Khansaa Brigade. The second narrative is the Bad Mother, who is so fanatic that she does not care at all what happens to her children. Both of these narrative highlights irrationality and brutality which – similarly to the Innocent Child narrative – takes away women’s agency. But what is different from the previous narrative is that they are not taken as one of us, but as part of the evil other. Therefore, in this part of the research, I found elements which support the

¹²⁶ “Sally Jones.”

¹²⁷ Matthew Weaver, “Sally Jones: UK Punk Singer Who Became Leading Isis Recruiter,” *The Guardian*, October 12, 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/sally-jones-the-uk-punk-singer-who-became-isis-white-widow>.

¹²⁸ Iain Burns and Thommas Burrows, “British ISIS Recruiter Sally Jones ‘Killed in US Drone Strike,’” Mail Online, October 11, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4971652/index.html>.

¹²⁹ Joseph, “Punk Rocker Sally Jones Who Became ISIS Poster Girl Wants UK Return.”

¹³⁰ Weaver, “Sally Jones.”

¹³¹ “British Jihadist Jones ‘Killed by Drone,’” *BBC News*, October 12, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41593659>.

¹³² Burns and Burrows, “British ISIS Recruiter Sally Jones ‘Killed in US Drone Strike.’”

theories of Sjoberg & Gentry and Berkowitz & Ling. However, in the big bulk of the articles, an other picture evolves about these women.

3.3 The other side of the picture

As I expected before the discourse analysis, I found numerous examples about treating violent women differently, as actors who have less agency and less responsibility over what happens to them. However, despite the bigger weight of stories about personal factors, I also found articles which do not fit into the general schemas which were identified earlier by other authors. Some articles highlight other than personal factors which could contribute to the decision to leave, others mention rationality behind this decision or the responsibility of the West in this phenomenon. I found 14 articles fitting in this pattern out of the 79 which I analysed, which is a surprisingly big number.

Some of these articles mention that the motivation for joining ISIS is often more complicated than finding a husband and fulfilling romantic aspirations.¹³³ These articles often highlight that there can be political and ideological motivations in the background too, which can be as important as the desire to find a husband. They call for paying attention to the ideology and the reason why it is so appealing to women. Other articles argue that women's life is more complex in the Caliphates as it is often thought and 'women are far from passive agents, with some involved in aspects of IS life including propaganda and recruitment.'¹³⁴ And finally some sources question the responsibility of Europe in the radicalization of so many people.¹³⁵ These articles mention the Islamophobic atmosphere which can be a self-fulfilling prophecy¹³⁶ and

¹³³ Dr Katherine Brown, „Analysis: Why Are Western Women Joining IS?”, *BBC News*, October 6, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29507410>.

¹³⁴ BBC, „Islamic State: Women who join discover »harsh realities«" *BBC News*, May 28, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32910462>.

¹³⁵ Humaira Patel, “Without More Support, Muslim Girls May Well Be Tempted by Isis's HR Department,” *the Guardian*, February 24, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/24/muslim-girls-isis-teenage-east-london>.

¹³⁶ Katherine Brown, “How IS Message Lures Western Women,” *BBC*, April 8, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32208217>.

talk about the harmful public discourse in regard to Islamism. They argue that to stop this phenomenon, these false stereotypes have to be changed.¹³⁷

One example for this representation is the article of Manal Omar, where she argues that ISIS has a message that appeals to women because it gives a chance to them to reinvent themselves as jihadists. According to her, to understand the motivation of these women, we have to 'challenge prevalent media portrayal of women in Daesh (an Arabic acronym for ISIS) as 'Jihadi Brides,' passive victims, or subsidiary supporters of male fighters with little to no influence in the organization's overall structure.'¹³⁸

On the whole, some articles do not fit into the general narratives identified by previous authors of the topic. They do not try to eliminate women's agency and aim to reveal the other side of the story, behind the simplified depictions. This poses the question, why this tendency appeared, and why it could not be found in the works of previous authors. I argue that there are major differences between the news portals, therefore it influences the result of one's research. Among the articles with counternarratives, articles from BBC and CNN are in clear majority. It is not much of a surprise, as their general profile is being objective and reliable. Therefore, it is more general for them to present experts of the topic in their articles.¹³⁹ In this case, it is usually these experts who raise attention to the false media portrayal of women and highlight that the reality is much more complex.

On the other hand, Daily Mail seems to be more biased, highlighting the "brainwashing" element of the Islamic State on European women and children.¹⁴⁰ Its reports contain sensation-seeker elements and most of the time they fit in one of the essentializing narratives I mentioned

¹³⁷ Manal Omar, "Why Women Are a Not-so-Secret Weapon for ISIS," CNN, March 31, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/31/opinions/female-fighters-isis-behind-the-mask-omar-opinion/index.html>.

¹³⁸ Omar.

¹³⁹ For example, Brown, "Analysis."

¹⁴⁰ For example, Charlie Moore and Julian Robinson, "German Girl Who Joined ISIS Reveals How She Was Groomed," Mail Online, October 4, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4947820/index.html>.

above. Although in 2012, Daily Mail was the most visited newspaper website in the world,¹⁴¹ there are several critics about the reliability and objective representation of the news portal. There were so many concerns over its reliability that in 2017, Wikipedia even banned the use Daily Mail sources as a reference of its English language page, referring to its 'poor fact checking, sensationalism, and flat-out fabrication'.¹⁴²

3.4 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine how the depiction of Western women joining ISIS fits into the existing literature about presenting women as passive victims with no agency. I wanted to give an answer to two specific question: how the media depicts women and how it fits into the oriental Us versus Them dichotomy between the West and the East. What I found partly reinforces the findings of previous authors, however it also opens new questions.

Most of the articles I analyzed fit into the general narratives identified by previous authors. In the case of Western women and ISIS, I found two examples of those mythical narratives other authors identified previously: the Innocent Child and the Monster narratives. Articles, which fit into the first narrative show teenager girls through very personal stories. They usually present girls' life back home, highlighting that they were ordinary girls, and nothing implicated that they would be radicalized. Therefore, their decision is never shown as a rational one, but as something which happened through the manipulation of others. These stories serve to create sympathy toward the girls and reinforces the feeling that they could be any of us.

The other, Monster narrative can be discovered in two typical topics of the articles. One example for it are stories about Sally Jones, who is depicted as deviant and extremely

¹⁴¹ Brian Wheeler, "How the Daily Mail Stormed the US," *BBC News*, January 27, 2012, sec. Magazine, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16746785>.

¹⁴² Jasper Jackson, "Wikipedia Bans Daily Mail as 'unreliable' Source," *The Guardian*, February 8, 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/feb/08/wikipedia-bans-daily-mail-as-unreliable-source-for-website>.

dangerous. She does not fulfil her role as a mother as she endangered her son and became one of the most wanted female terrorist. The other example is the presentation of the members of Al-Khansaa Brigade, who are shown as pathologically damaged who torture people for their own pleasure. Unlike the first narrative, women in this category are shown in opposition to Western values, sometimes even depicted as symbols of everything against which it is worth fighting. They are not shown as part of Us, but rather as part of the Other, with having orientalist characteristics, identified by Hall, for example being irrational or deviant.¹⁴³ Therefore, they fit to the orientalist narrative, which is even more surprising as these women were born in the West.

The common point in the two narratives is that they both leave out women's agency and justify the travel and their place in Syria with other than rational factors: in the first case, emotions and manipulation, while in the second deviancy and fanaticism. An other recurring element in both depiction is showing women regretting their decision and being desperate to come home. Both their lack of agency and their desire to come home serve to reinforce the feeling that they are only victims and give a gender-stereotypical assumption about women's helplessness, even as those victims have taken part in the fights. However, while the members of the first narrative are depicted in a positive way and are shown that they can be any of us, women in the second narrative are rather understood as members of ISIS, instead of Westerners.

Erasing those women's agency who decided to join to ISIS can have political implication, because, as Said argues, these representations are inherently political and serve to maintain Western dominance over the other.¹⁴⁴ The findings show that, although the number of Western women who joined is higher than in the case of any other terrorist organization, the rationality

¹⁴³ Hall, "Erasing Agency"

¹⁴⁴ Said, *Orientalism*.

of this decision is taken away which delegitimizes the terrorists' cause and gives a normative dominance to the West.

Although simplified characterizations dominate in the articles, I also found counternarratives which shade the situation more complexly, contrary to my previous expectations. These narratives often mention other push and pull factors than personal ones, highlight the possible responsibility of the West or state that it is not always clear whether these women are innocent victims or willing agents.¹⁴⁵ This poses new questions about the reason why this phenomenon emerged as it was not mentioned in the previous literature. Therefore, a more systematic examination on the news portals is needed considering their timeframe and the difference between them.

¹⁴⁵ Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, "The ISIS Bride Problem: Don't Take It out on the Children," CNN, April 20, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/20/opinions/isis-bride-children-opinion-lemmon/index.html>.

Conclusion

The purpose of my research was to show how Western media represents women who migrated to the Islamic State. Conceptually, this research is built on the poststructural feminist claim that violent women are often represented as passive victims. Besides this theoretical framework, it is also built on the literature of orientalism which argues that with the technique of othering the non-Western, the West can maintain its place in power politics.

To study this phenomenon, I conducted a discourse analysis on five prominent news portals with the aim of deconstructing their language and find narrative patterns behind their stories about women in ISIS. As my results showed, two general narrative patterns can be observed in the specific case of Western women in ISIS. According to the first narrative, they are innocent victims who had no idea what happened to them when they were lured to the Caliphates by the terrorists. This pattern fits to the Innocent Girl narrative, identified by Berkowitz and Ling.¹⁴⁶

The second narrative shows women as heartless monsters, who moved to the Caliphates because they are deviant and lack the capability for rational decision, which echoes the pattern of Monster by Sjoberg and Gentry.¹⁴⁷ For different reasons, but both narratives take away women's agency and places the responsibility on somebody else. The findings are important, because they shed a light to the construction of the understanding of conflict by the West and the way the West sees its responsibility in the phenomenon of female foreign fighters.

Building on this frame, I argue that the representation of violent women is highly political and serves to maintain the West's normative position in the fight against ISIS. Although in this conflict, the number of Western women who decided to join to a non-Western terrorist organization is higher than ever, the West could not find a reassuring answer to this phenomenon. It can be seen through these representations that the West blames the terrorists

¹⁴⁶ Berkowitz & Ling, "From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child".

¹⁴⁷ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

almost exclusively for the phenomenon as it places the responsibility on the Others instead of placing it on the individual or on the society. This serves to reestablish Western dominant position and values with delegitimizing the enemy's cause, thus the West's self-concept is not harmed. This is problematic, because it excludes the possibility to fully understand the phenomenon of foreign fighters. And without properly understanding it, standing up against radicalization also gets more difficult.

Although the majority of the media representation fits into the existing literature about the representation of violent women, the research found a surprising result which did not appear in any previous literature. A relatively huge number of counternarrative appeared on two of my media sources, which do not essentialize women and argue for the complexity of the phenomenon. A further research is needed on this phenomenon with analyzing more systematically the difference between the news portals and their timeframe to see whether it emerged at a specific time.

Bibliography

- “Al-Khansaa Brigade,” Tracking Terrorism <https://www.trackterrorism.org/group/al-khansaa-brigade>. [Accessed April 29, 2018]
- “Sally Jones.” Counter Extremism Project, February 21, 2016. <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/sally-jones>. [Accessed May 20, 2018.]
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” *American Anthropologist*, 104:3 (2002), pp. 783-790
- Ali, Mah-Rukh. “ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women.” *Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper, University of Oxford*, 2015.
- Atkinson, Paul, ed. *Handbook of Ethnography*. (London: SAGE, 2001).
- Auchter, Jessica “Gendering Terror”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 14:1, (2012): 121-139.
- Ayotte Kevin J. and Hussain, Mary E. “Securing Afghan Women: Neocolonialism, Epistemic Violence, and the Rhetoric of the Veil” *National Women's Studies Association Journal*, 17:3, (2005), pp. 112-133
- BBC, “The War against ‘Islamic State’ in Maps and Charts.” *BBC News*, March 28, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- BBC, “What Is ‘Islamic State’?” *BBC News*, December 2, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Bloom, Mia. “Female Suicide Bombers: A Global Trend.” *Daedalus* 136:1 (2007): 94–102.
- Brooks, Ann. *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory, and Cultural Forms*. (London: Routledge, 1997).
- Dan Berkowitz & Qi Ling, “From Woman Warrior to Innocent Child: Telling Gendered News

- Stories of Women terrorists”, in *Handbook on Gender and War*, edited by Simona Sharoni et al. (Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).
- eBizMBA. “Top 15 Most Popular News Websites | May 2018.” <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/news-websites>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Women and War*. (Brighton: Harvester, 1987).
- Fitriyah, Lailatul. “Poststructuralist-Feminist International Relations: A Point of Reconciliation?” *Andalas Journal of International Studies* 4:1 (2015): 96–108.
- FOX. “ISIS Has Lost 98 Percent of Its Territory, Officials Say.” *Fox* 32, December 26, 2017. <http://www.fox32chicago.com/news/dont-miss/isis-has-lost-98-percent-of-its-territory-officials-say>. [Accessed May 20, 2018]
- Gannon, Susanne, and Bronwyn Davies. “Feminism/ Poststructuralism,” in: *Research methods in the social sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh & Cathy Lewin (London: Sage, 2005), pp.318-325
- Ginkel, Bibi van et al. “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies.” *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2016.
- Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006).
- Hall, Lucy. “Erasing Agency: Representations of Women Terrorists and the Intersection of Gender, Race and Ethnicity,” *Amsterdam Social Science* 4:1, (2012): 9-28
- Hardy, Cynthia. "Researching Organizational Discourse." *International Studies of Management & Organization* 31:3 (2001): 25-47.
- Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) p.1-41.
- Hooper, Charlotte. *Manly states; masculinities, international relations and gender politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)
- Hoyle, Carolyn et al. *Becoming Mulan: Female Western Migrants to ISIS*, (Institute for

Strategic Dialogue: London, 2015).

Jackson, Jasper. "Wikipedia Bans Daily Mail as 'unreliable' Source." *The Guardian*, February 8, 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/feb/08/wikipedia-bans-daily-mail-as-unreliable-source-for-website>. [Accessed May 9, 2018]

Masters, Cristina. "Femina Sacra: The 'War on/of Terror', Women and the Feminine." *Security Dialogue* 40:1 (2009): 29–49.

Moallem, Minoo. "Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation in a Transnational Context." *Journal of Feminist Studies in religion*. 24:1 (2008): 106-110.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2* 12/13 (1984): 333-58.

Nacos, Brigitte. „The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism". *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. 28:5 (2005) pp. 435-451.

Perešin, Anita. "Fatal Attraction: Western Muslimas and ISIS." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9:3 (2015). <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/427>. [Accessed May 9, 2018]

Petrou, Michael. "What's Driving Teen Girls to Jihad?," *MacLeans*, May 17, 2015. <https://www.macleans.ca/society/teen-girl-jihadists/>. [Accessed May 20, 2018.]

Pettman, Jan Jindy "Gender Issues," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* edited by John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

RAND Corporation. "The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)." <https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html>. [Accessed May 7, 2018]

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

- Saltman, Erin, and Melanie Smith. “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part’ Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon”, (*Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2015).
- Shapiro, Michael J. *Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
- Shepherd, Laura J. *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice*. (London: Zed Books, 2008).
- Shubert, Atika and Bharati Naik. “From Food Recipes to AK-47s: Inside Online World of Women of ISIS.” *CNN*, September 9, 2014, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/09/10/world/meast/iraq-syria-isis-women/index.html>. [Accessed May 20, 2018]
- Simona Sharoni & Julia Welland, “Introduction: revisiting the relationship between gender and war: reflections on theory, research, activism and policy,” in *Handbook on Gender and War*, edited by Simona Sharoni et al. (Cheltenham, Glos: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).
- Sjoberg, Laura, and Caron E. Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women’s Violence in Global Politics*. (London: Zed Books, 2007).
- Sjoberg, Laura. “Jihadi brides and female volunteers: Reading the Islamic State’s war to see gender and agency in conflict dynamics,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 35:3, (2018): 296–311.
- Sjoberg, Laura. *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).
- Stout, David. “A Nation Challenged: The First Lady; Mrs. Bush Cites Women’s Plight Under Taliban.” *The New York Times*, November 18, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/18/us/a-nation-challenged-the-first-lady-mrs-bush-cites-women-s-plight-under-taliban.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018.]

- Sylvester, Christine. *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- . *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*. (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Tickner, J. Ann. *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Approaches to Achieving Global Security*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992)
- True, Jacqui. “Feminism and Gender Studies in International Relations Theory.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, (2010).
- Weedon, Chris. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*. (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Pub, 1997).
- West, Jessica. “Feminist IR and the Case of the ‘Black Widows’: Reproducing Gendered Divisions.” *Innovations: A Journal of Politics* 5 (2005): 16.
- Wheeler, Brian. “How the Daily Mail Stormed the US.” *BBC News*, January 27, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-16746785>. [Accessed May 17, 2018.]
- Women of the Islamic State: A Manifesto on women by Al-Khansaa Brigade, translated by Charlie Winter, (Quilliam Foundation, 2015).
- Yeğenoğlu, Meyda. *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- Zine, Jasmin. “Muslim Women and the Politics of Representation,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 19:4 (2002)

Online sources for the case study

- Abdelaziz, Salma. “Kidnapped Boy Raised by American ISIS Woman in Raqqa.” *CNN*, January 23, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/23/middleeast/yazidi-boy-isis-american-wife->

raqqa-intl/index.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Akbar, Jay. "ISIS Plans to Send Its Fearsome All-Female Police Force to Europe." *Mail Online*, July 13, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3159004/ISIS-send-members-feared-female-police-Europe-disguised-tourists-attack-holy-sites-spark-religious-war-against-Christians.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Ap, Tiffany. "What ISIS Wants from Women." *CNN*, November 20, 2015. <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/20/europe/isis-role-of-women/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC, "Aqsa's Parents Say 'Come Home.'" *BBC News*, September 6, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-29082435>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC, "Attractive Jihadists Lure UK Girls." *BBC News*, March 3, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-31704408>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC, "British Jihadist Jones 'Killed by Drone.'" *BBC News*, October 12, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41593659>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC, "Canada Woman Who Pledged Support to IS Charged with Terrorism," *BBC News*, July 4, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40501044>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC, "Dutch Mum Rescues Daughter from IS." *BBC News*, November 19, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30111040>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC. "Islamic State: Women Who Join Discover 'Harsh Realities,'" *BBC News*, May 28, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32910462>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

BBC. "Life under IS 'Hard', Rescued Girl Says." *BBC News*, February 24, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35650620>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Berlinger, Joshua, and Catherine E. Shoichet. "Woman Pleads Guilty on Charge That She Tried

- to Join ISIS.” *CNN*, March 30, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/30/us/mississippi-isis-guilty-plea-jaelyn-young/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Bloom, Mia. “How ISIS Is Using Marriage as a Trap.” *Huffington Post*, March 2, 2015. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/mia-bloom/isis-marriage-trap_b_6773576.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Bradford, Alexandra. “Western Women of ISIS.” *Huffington Post*, January 29, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/alexandra-bradford-isis-women_b_6570494.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Brown, Dr Katherine. “Analysis: Why Are Western Women Joining IS?” *BBC News*, October 6, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29507410>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Brown, Katherine. “How IS Message Lures Western Women.” *BBC News*, April 8, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32208217>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Brumfield, Ben. “3 Girls Skipped School to Sneak off and Join ISIS.” *CNN*, October 22, 2014. <https://www.cnn.com/2014/10/22/us/colorado-teens-syria-odyssey/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Burke, Dave. “Girl, 10, ‘bitten to Death’ with Torture Device by ISIS.” *Mail Online*, February 7, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4199024/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Burns, Iain, and Thommas Burrows. “British ISIS Recruiter Sally Jones ‘Killed in US Drone Strike.’” *Mail Online*, October 11, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4971652/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Casciani, Dominic. “Why Did Tareena Shakil Join IS?” *BBC News*, January 29, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35291347>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Chrisafis, Angelique. “Cell of French Women Guided by Isis behind Failed Notre Dame Attack.” *The Guardian*, September 9, 2016.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/09/cell-of-french-women-radicalised-by-isis-behind-failed-notre-dame-attack>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Chulov, Martin. "Sally Jones Was Fleeing Raqqa as Isis's Capital Fell." *The Guardian*, October 12, 2017. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/white-widow-sally-jones-was-fleeing-raqqa-as-isis-capital-fell>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

CNN. "Colorado Woman Gets 4 Years for Wanting to Join ISIS." *CNN*. January 23, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/23/us/colorado-woman-isis-sentencing/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

CNN. "The Women of ISIS: Who Are They?" *CNN*, May 29, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/05/29/middleeast/who-are-the-women-of-isis/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Daily Mail. "German Jihadi Bride, 17, Jailed for Six Years in Iraq." *Mail Online*, February 19, 2018. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5407957/German-jihadi-bride-17-jailed-six-years-Iraq.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Daily Mail. "Revealed: 60 Brit 'jihadettes' in ISIS' Feared, Brutal Secret Police." *Mail Online*, December 4, 2014. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2858819/Up-60-British-Jihadette-women-rule-ISIS-s-capital-fear.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Daily Mail. "Top German Spy Warns of ISIS Women and Children Returning." *Mail Online*, December 3, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-5141149/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Daily Mail. "Woman ISIS Torturer Speak of Horror She Inflicted, Says Brit Was Worse." *Mail Online*, September 8, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4865326/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Damon, Arwa, and Gul Tuysuz. "Exclusive: Confessions of a Female ISIS Member." *CNN*, October 6, 2014. <https://www.cnn.com/2014/10/06/world/meast/isis-female->

[fighter/index.html](#). [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Dodd, Vikram, Alexandra Topping, and Aisha Gani. "Missing Girls Lured by Isis Won't Face Terrorism Charges, Says Met Chief." *The Guardian*, March 10, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/10/missing-girls-stole-family-jewellery-syria-trip-police>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Dodd, Vikram, and Nadia Khomami. "Two Bethnal Green Schoolgirls 'now Married to Isis Men' in Syria." *The Guardian*, July 3, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/04/two-bethnal-green-schoolgirls-now-married-isis-men-syria>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Dodd, Vikram. "Four London Schoolgirls Who Left UK for Syria Married Men Approved by Isis." *The Guardian*, January 19, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/19/four-london-schoolgirls-who-left-uk-for-syria-married-men-approved-by-isis>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Elgot, Jessica. "Desperate Hunt For Three Girls From Top London School 'Headed To Syria To Join ISIS.'" *Huffington Post*, February 20, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/02/20/schoolgirls-syria_n_6720352.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Fantz, Ashley, and Atika Shubert. "The Story of a Scottish Girl Turned ISIS Recruiter." *CNN*, February 23, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/02/23/world/scottish-teen-isis-recruiter/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Gardner, Frank. "The Crucial Role of Women within Islamic State." *BBC News*, August 20, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33985441>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Gayle, Damien. "Islamic State 'Tortured Nursing Mother with Bear Trap-like Device.'" *Mail Online*, December 30, 2014. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2890911/All->

[female-Islamic-State-police-squad-tortured-woman-device-called-biter-caught-breastfeeding-public.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5407957/German-jihadi-bride-17-jailed-six-years-Iraq.html). [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hall, Allan. "German Jihadi Bride Wenzel Jailed for Six Years in Iraq," *Mail Online*, February 19, 2018. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5407957/German-jihadi-bride-17-jailed-six-years-Iraq.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hall, John. "Jewish Girl Has Joined ISIS, French Intelligence Official Reveals." *Mail Online*, October 10, 2014. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2787892/jewish-girl-joined-isis-french-intelligence-official-reveals-dozens-teenagers-fled-syria-iraq-france-horror-families.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hartley, Eve. "London Schoolgirls Who Joined Isis Could Be 'Brutalised To Death', Lawyer Says." *Huffington Post*, January 19, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2016/01/19/london-schoolgirls-who-fled-to-isis-are-being-held-hostage-reveals-lawyer_n_9016900.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hopkins, Steven. "British 'Punk Rocker' Married To Dead Isis Fighter Tweets About Undying Love." *Huffington Post*, September 15, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/09/15/isis-wife-sally-jones-says-she-will-never-love-again-after-husbands-death_n_8138494.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Huffington Post, "Inside The Private Lives Of The British Jihadi Women Who Have Married Into The Islamic State." *Huffington Post*, September 2, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/09/02/the-british-jihadi-janes-who-have-left-to-fight-with-islamic-state_n_5752804.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Huffington Post. "'Leaving ISIS Is Like Trying To Escape Alcatraz': Why London Teens Will Never Return Home." *Huffington Post*, August 12, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/london-teens-held-in-syria-by-isis-will-never-return_uk_57adacb2e4b0f475601bcdcc. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Huffington Post. “Here’s Why Isis Recruiter Sally Jones Is Holding A Jack Russell In This Picture.” *Huffington Post*, October 12, 2017.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/white-widow-sally-jones-divorcing-jack_uk_59df384de4b00abf364671dc. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Huffington Post. “Widowed British Mother Sally Jones Hints She Will Become Suicide Bomber.” *Huffington Post*, November 30, 2015.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/30/nun-with-a-gun-sally-jones-hints-she-will-become-suicide-bomber_n_8679818.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hughes, Tammy. “ISIS Recruiter Sally Jones ‘Training All-Female Unit of Jihadis.’” *Mail Online*, September 12, 2016. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-3784860/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Hume, Tim. “Swedish Teen Rescued from ISIS: ‘It Was ... a Hard Life.’” *CNN*, February 24, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/24/middleeast/swedish-teen-freed-from-isis/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Jaffer, Nabeelah. “The Secret World of Isis Brides: ‘U Dnt Hav 2 Pay 4 ANYTHING If u r Wife of a Martyr.’” *The Guardian*, June 24, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/24/isis-brides-secret-world-jihad-western-women-syria>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Joseph, Anthony. “Punk Rocker Sally Jones Who Became ISIS Poster Girl Wants UK Return.” *Mail Online*, July 4, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4663216/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Lemmon, Gayle Tzemach. “The ISIS Bride Problem: Don’t Take It out on the Children.” *CNN*, April 20, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/20/opinions/isis-bride-children-opinion-lemmon/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Lichter, Ida. “Follies of Denial: Women and the Islamic State.” *Huffington Post*, June 1, 2015.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/ida-lichter-md/follies-of-denial-women-a_b_7101374.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

MacAskill, Ewen. "British Isis Member Sally Jones 'Killed in Airstrike with 12-Year-Old Son.'" *The Guardian*, October 12, 2017. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/british-isis-member-sally-jones-white-widow-killed-airstrike-son-islamic-state-syria>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Mahmood, Mona. "Double-Layered Veils and Despair ... Women Describe Life under Isis," *The Guardian*, February 17, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/17/isis-orders-women-iraq-syria-veils-gloves>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Malik, Shiv. "Lured by Isis: How the Young Girls Who Revel in Brutality Are Offered Cause." *The Guardian*, February 21, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/20/push-pull-lure-western-women-isis>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Malm, Sara. "Mother Was Mutilated and Murdered by ISIS for Breastfeeding in Public." *Mail Online*, December 29, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3377183/Mother-mutilated-murdered-ISIS-breastfeeding-baby-public-woman-spotted-child-burkha-Syria.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Martinez, Michael, and Ana Cabrera. "Colorado Woman Faces ISIS Plan Sentencing." *CNN*. January 22, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/22/us/colorado-woman-isis-sentencing/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

McCauley, Ciaran. "IS 'nun with a Gun' Image's Novel Origin." *BBC News*, October 12, 2017, sec. Northern Ireland. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-41592482>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Melvin, Don. "2 Missing British Teen Girls Believed Married in Syria." *CNN*, July 5, 2015.

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/07/05/middleeast/uk-isis-missing-girls-married/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Moore, Charlie, and Julian Robinson. "German Girl Who Joined ISIS Reveals How She Was Groomed." *Mail Online*, October 4, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~/article-4947820/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Morris, Steven. "Family of Missing Girl Feared to Be Going to Syria Make Emotional Appeal," October 1, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/01/yusra-hussien-emotional-appeal>.

———. "Missing Yusra Hussien Showed No Sign of Radicalisation, Family and Friends Say." *The Guardian*, October 3, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/03/yusra-hussein-teenager-uk-missing-bristol-syria>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Mullen, Jethro. "What Is ISIS' Appeal for Young People?" *CNN*, February 25, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/02/25/middleeast/isis-kids-propaganda/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Mustafah, Ruwayda. "Teenage Rebellion or Radicalisation of Schoolgirls in UK?" *Huffington Post*, February 24, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ruwayda-mustafah/isis-girls_b_6732326.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Nelson, Sara. "British Punk Rocker Turned Jihadi Bride 'Desperate To Return To UK.'" *Huffington Post*, July 4, 2017. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/sally-jones-british-jihadi-bride-who-fled-uk-to-join-isis-desperate-to-return-home_uk_595b628be4b0da2c73252567. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Omar, Manal. "Why Women Are a Not-so-Secret Weapon for ISIS." *CNN*, March 31, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/31/opinions/female-fighters-isis-behind-the-mask-omar-opinion/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

- Patel, Humaira. "Without More Support, Muslim Girls May Well Be Tempted by Isis's HR Department." *The Guardian*, February 24, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/24/muslim-girls-isis-teenage-east-london>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Quinn, Ben. "UK Schoolgirls Lured to Syria by Isis 'Have Made Contact with Their Families.'" *The Guardian*, May 28, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/28/uk-schoolgirls-lured-syria-isis-contact-families>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Robinson, Julian. "British Female Doctor 'Is Made an ISIS Health Chief.'" *Mail Online*, August 16, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~article-4795016/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Schneider, Peter. "Rise of the Female Jihadists (Opinion)." *CNN*, January 10, 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/10/opinion/bergen-female-jihadists/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Sherwood, Harriet. "Schoolgirl Jihadis: The Female Islamists Leaving Home to Join Isis Fighters," *The Guardian*, September 29, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/29/schoolgirl-jihadis-female-islamists-leaving-home-join-isis-iraq-syria>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Shubert, Atika. "Escaping ISIS: 'I Thought Recruiters Loved Me.'" *CNN*, January 19, 2016. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/19/europe/escaping-isis-paris-attacker-radicalized-teen/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Sommers, Jack. "Chilling Video 'Shows British Mother And Isis Child Soldier.'" *Huffington Post*, January 4, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2016/01/04/islamic-state-propaganda_n_8910960.html. [Accessed May 17, 2018]
- Speckhard, Anne. "The ISIS Call for Women to Join Their Jihad: Love and Romance as Motivators." *Huffington Post*, September 5, 2014.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/anne-speckhard/isis-women_b_5762820.html.

[Accessed May 17, 2018]

Tuysuz, Gul. "Police: British Teens Detained En Route to Join ISIS." *CNN*, March 15, 2015.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/15/europe/turkey-isis-british-teens-detained/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Vonberg, Judith. "German Girl Who Allegedly Joined ISIS May Be Tried in Iraq." *CNN*, July

24, 2017. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/24/europe/german-schoolgirl-isis-iraq/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Wahid, Omar. "Britain Braces for a Jihadi Bride Invasion." *Mail Online*, February 18, 2017.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/~/article-4238236/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Weaver, Matthew. "Sally Jones: UK Punk Singer Who Became Leading Isis Recruiter." *The*

Guardian, October 12, 2017, sec. World news. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/sally-jones-the-uk-punk-singer-who-became-isis-white-widow>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Willgress, Lydia. "Two Jihadi Brides Who Worked IN ISIS Secret Police Unit Escape." *Mail*

Online, April 20, 2015. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3047071/Two-jihadi-brides-worked-ISIS-secret-police-unit-escape-reveal-gave-women-40-lashes-breaking-strict-Islamic-dress-code.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Willsher, Kim. "I Went to Join Isis in Syria, Taking My Four-Year-Old. It Was a Journey into

Hell." *The Guardian*, January 9, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/09/sophie-kasiki-isis-raqqa-child-radicalised>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Yan, Holly, and Nima Elbagir. "Police Scramble to Find Teens before They Join ISIS." *CNN*,

February 23, 2015. <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/23/europe/uk-syria-missing-girls/index.html>. [Accessed May 17, 2018]

Zurcher, Anthony. "FBI Translator Wed IS Recruiter in Syria." *BBC News*, May 2, 2017.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39783> [Accessed May 17, 2018]