THE FEMALE FACE OF TERRORISM

Women's Violence and Gender Stereotypes

By
Marta Fraschetti

Submitted to Central European University - Private University
Undergraduate Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Culture, Politics and Society

Supervisor: Daniel Monterescu

Vienna, Austria
2024

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

I declare that this thesis is my independent work. All sources and literature are properly cited and included in the bibliography. I hereby declare that no portion of text in this thesis has been submitted in support of another degree, or qualification thereof, for any other university or institute of learning.

ABSTRACT

Women's involvement in terrorism has been significant, yet it has often been overlooked due to the prevailing idea that terrorism is strictly a man's domain. Despite their involvement, there persists a societal bias that fails to recognize women as terrorists and agents of violence and instead casts them in roles shaped by enduring gender stereotypes. These narratives often depict terrorist women as non-violent; if they engage in violence, they must have been forced by a man, motivated by romantic ties, driven mad by personal grievances or infertility; and when they are acknowledged as violent terrorists, they are not even seen as women at all but rather as femininities gone bad. By drawing on the theory by Gentry and Sjoberg, this thesis posits that women terrorists are guilty of a *double transgression*: their acts of violence and the violation of gendered stereotypes that traditionally depict them as incapable of such violence. Building on this framework, the thesis asserts that the gender stereotypes prevalent in the portrayal of women terrorists do not merely obscure the reality of women's participation in terrorism but also highlight a profound societal bias in the perception of women's roles in global politics and society at large.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> In almost every culture and every period of history, a she-devil emerges as an example of all that is rotten in the female sex. This Medusa draws together the many forms of female perversion: a woman whose sexuality is debauched and foul, pornographic and possibly bisexual; a woman who knows none of the fine and noble instincts when it comes to men and children; a woman who lies and deceives, manipulates and corrupts. A woman who is clever and powerful. This is a woman who is far deadlier than any male, in fact not a woman at all. (Kennedy 1993)

While terrorism has traditionally been predominantly associated with men, historical evidence reveals that women, in smaller numbers, have also been involved in it. From Leila Khaled, the Palestinian hijacker, to Samantha Lewthwaite, a British foreign fighter now considered a top leader in the Al-Shabaab terrorist group; from the Chechen Black Widows to Mara Cagol, leader of the Red Brigades during Italy's Years of Lead - the involvement of women in terrorism is substantial. Yet, the public reaction often reflects the usual astonishment: a woman did that? Despite numerous examples, there persists a reluctance to accept women as being capable of such violence. Public discourse often fails to recognize women as potential terrorists, instead casting them in roles shaped by pervasive stereotypes. These narratives frequently depict women as non-violent by nature - if they engage in violence, they must have been forced by a man, motivated by romantic ties, driven mad by personal grievances or infertility, or are simply not taken as serious threats. And when they are acknowledged as violent terrorists, they are not even considered women at all. Such portrayals raise the question: are these women seen as true perpetrators of violence or as femininities gone bad?

This thesis argues, drawing on the theory by Gentry and Sjoberg (2008), that a woman who commits herself to terrorism is guilty of a *"*double transgression*"*: "her violence, and defying

gender stereotypes that deem her incapable of that violence" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7). Building on this framework, my thesis claims that the gender stereotypes prevalent in portraying women in terrorism not only obscure their actual roles but also reflect a deeper societal misunderstanding of women's roles not just in violence and terrorism, but in global politics and society at large. These stereotypes relegate women to the periphery of discussions, marginalizing their agency and political motivations by substituting them with personal narratives and imposed gender stereotypes. To address this, the research first introduces the broader framework of gendering terrorism and how the two fields of gender studies and terrorism have intersected. It then utilizes academic works to explain how stereotypes work, how they relate to gender and how they are presented in public discourse. Following this, the concept of *double transgression* will be analyzed. This analysis initially focuses on "her violence" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7) to assess the actual roles women have played in terrorism. Then, it explores "the stereotypes that deem her incapable of that violence" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7) to uncover the narratives imposed on these women.

1. GENDERED DYNAMICS OF TERRORISM: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. The Terrorist Label

Before diving into the gendered dynamics of terrorism, it is necessary to first address the complexities of the term *terrorism* and explain here the use of such a label. Terrorism studies have long debated the definition of terrorism[1] and, therefore, that discussion won't be touched upon here, but rather an explanation of what the label *terrorist* means in this research is given. This thesis explores the roles and portrayals of women associated with various non-state armed groups often categorized by those on the receiving end under the weighty label of *terrorism*. It's essential to recognize that while these women are depicted within this framework, many would not identify themselves as terrorists. Among them are those who would rather perceive themselves as freedom fighters, nationalists and members of revolutionary movements involved in armed struggle. However, from the perspective of those to whom the violent actions are inflicted, these women are seen as terrorists. This thesis examines the violence and perceptions surrounding these women who employ violent tactics to achieve political and ideological aims. It is crucial to recognize that the label *terrorist* is one imposed upon them, rather than one they would necessarily choose for themselves. Terrorism, ultimately, is a matter of perspective. Depending on one's standpoint, the actions of a particular actor may be called terrorism or justified resistance. In this study, we adopt the perspective of the observer, the receiving end of the action, for whom labeling these women

[1] The debate surrounding the definition of terrorism centers on the absence of a universally agreed definition. Various organizations, countries and scholars interpret terrorism differently. While some emphasize the use of violence to achieve political or ideological aims, others highlight the targeting of civilians and non-combatants. Moreover, there are differing perspectives on whether to focus exclusively on non-state actors or to include states to prevent legitimizing similar actions by them.

as *terrorists* offers a way to categorize and comprehend something that would otherwise seem incomprehensible.

1.2. An Unfit Terrorist Profile

In 1969, a Palestinian revolutionary hijacked a plane. In 1991, the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in a suicide bombing attack. In January 2002, a Palestinian with 10 kilograms of explosives detonated himself, claiming two more victims in a crowded street in Jerusalem. In October 2002, Chechen insurgents besieged a theater in Moscow, holding 914 people hostage and ultimately killing 123 of them.

Now envision the faces of these alleged terrorists. How do we picture them? In our collective imagination, shaped by popular narratives and media portrayals, they would likely be imagined as fitting certain stereotypes, intensively driven by radical ideologies and above all, they would all be, obviously, men. But what if the reality might defy these assumptions? What if the terrorists behind these acts were not the stereotypical figures we might expect? What if those terrorists whom we assume being probably extremist men, were instead extremist women? Indeed, those faces we might have assumed to fit the archetype of classic terrorists were, in fact, the faces of female perpetrators - figures like Leila Khaled, Kalaivani Rajaratnam[2], Wafa Idris and the Black Widows, among many others who have made the history of terrorism. These women challenge the conventional narratives, defying our ingrained biases and reminding us that terrorism knows no gender.

[2] Also known as Thenmozhi Rajaratnam or Dhanu.

1.3. Gendering Terrorism

The intersection of gender and terrorism represents, indeed, a relatively new frontier in academic inquiry, and as such, it challenges traditional understandings of both violence and gender roles. For decades, terrorism has been predominantly associated with men, a perception perpetuated by several factors. First and foremost, a significant majority of perpetrators are indeed male. However, this statistical factor, while noteworthy, is only part of the equation. Beyond mere numbers, there exists a pervasive societal bias that reinforces this perception, delving directly into the realm of gender studies. To understand this, a brief discussion of sex and gender is thereby required. As Ortbals & Poloni-Staudinger (2018) have framed in *How Gender Intersects With Political Violence and Terrorism, "*whereas sex refers to the categories of male and female and the biological characteristics and properties of bodies placed in these categories, gender is the assignment of masculine and feminine characteristics to bodies in cultural contexts" (2018, 2). Therefore, at the heart of the bias lies a bifurcated view of gender and gender roles, deeply embedded in social and cultural norms, that dictate what is considered acceptable behavior for men and for women. These assumptions on gender, which form "the socially constituted behavioral expectations, stereotypes, and rules that construct masculinity and femininity" (Sjoberg, Cooke, and Neal 2011, 6), position violence as a typical male trait, thereby relegating women to the margins of discussions concerning terrorism. As a result, this dichotomy shapes our understanding of who is capable of violence and who is not, effectively delineating gender boundaries in matters of violence and conflict. Indeed, a woman engaging in extremist violence "falls outside of these ideal-typical understandings of what it means to be a woman" (Sjoberg, Cooke, and Neal 2011, 4). Meanwhile, masculinities are militarized and mobilized, emphasizing traits such as aggressions, strength and courage. This militarized masculinity attributed to men, alongside the domesticated femininity attributed to women, is so deeply embedded in cultures and societies that it often goes unquestioned, shaping

perceptions and assumptions about the nature of terrorist activities and those who perpetrate them.

Hence, it is in the convergence of these two distinct fields of study that my research emerges. In this fusion, gendered assumptions and norms from one field intersect with the dynamics of violence from the other, giving rise to the complex framework of gendering terrorism. This approach emphasizes the importance of a gender-sensitive analysis, acknowledging that "women terrorists (like all terrorists and all people) live in a gender-unequal world but also remaining open to understanding that individuals' personal and political choices are complicated and contingent" (Sjoberg, Cooke, and Neal 2011, 2).

2. STEREOTYPES, GENDER & MEDIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

This section explores the complex relationship between stereotypes and gender as portrayed in literature, society and media, setting the ground for a broader analysis of gender dynamics within terrorism. By engaging with academic perspectives on these topics, the aim is to discover the existing discourses that frame our understanding of how stereotypes are created, what their relation to gender is and how they influence and are influenced by media representations.

2.1. Understanding Stereotypes & their Connection to Gender

Stereotypes grow out of the human necessity to categorize and simplify the complexities that surround us. As described by Zhang et al. (2023), this cognitive process is "a pervasive and persistent human tendency stemming from a basic need to categorize, simplify, and process the complex world" (2023, 2). It is not merely a way for understanding complex realities but also a means to establish a sense of order when faced with the chaos of the unknown. Gender roles – simplified, constructed expectations about the behaviors considered appropriate for men and women – are recognized as deeply ingrained conventional social beliefs and common norms. Deviation from these norms often results in confusion and chaos, leading to a further reliance on stereotypes to restore the lost order. Thus, stereotypes serve as double-edged swords: they simplify reality to make it more digestible, but in doing so, they also rigidify perceptions of gender roles, making it challenging to accept or understand behaviors that deviate from these typical and conventional norms.

2.2. Gender Stereotypes & Violence

The narrow definition of femininity, historically seeing women as "life givers and not life takers," undeniably contrasts with the roles women may have in contexts of political violence and terrorism (Ortbals and Poloni-Staudinger 2018, 8). Seen as naturally peaceful and non-violent, this idea of what femininity should be constructs an identity that is forcefully imposed on women (Yesevi 2014) - an identity that distances them from violence. This dichotomy becomes particularly felt when women engage in terrorist activities, stepping into what is traditionally considered a masculine field. Brigitte Nacos' analysis (2005) in *The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism*, highlights the destabilization that occurs when women step "outside of their assigned private domain" to partake in the public sphere of terrorism – as well as of politics. This stepping out not only challenges the traditional gender roles but also disturbs societal expectations and norms (Nacos 2005). The response to women's involvement in terrorism, as Ortbals & Poloni-Staudinger (2018) suggest, is often one of shock and discomfort, revealing the long-fixed gendered assumptions that frame our understanding of violence and of women's roles in society.

2.3. Stereotypes & Media Narratives

As scholars of terrorism and gender (Brunner 2007; Eppert and Roth 2021; Glynn 2009) have noted, when women participate in terrorism, they challenge the conventional boundaries of gender roles, therefore inducing in society the necessity to reinterpret their actions through a gendered lens. The portrayal of female terrorists often emphasizes their deviation from *normative femininity*, suggesting that their involvement in violence is both unexpected and unnatural. Scholars like Banks (2019) argue that female terrorists are seen as "interlopers in an utterly male domain", with their

actions being perceived as more "deviant" than those of men (2019, 182). This narrative is further reinforced by Sjoberg and Gentry (2008), who note that female terrorists are frequently depicted not merely as terrorists but specifically as "women terrorists", implying a distinct and more troubling transgression of societal norms (2008, 7).

This gendered portrayal in media narratives serves to reaffirm traditional gender norms, portraying women involved in terrorism as anomalies or deviations from femininity. The basic hidden assumption appears to be that violence perpetuated by women is obviously different – more irrational and emotional – than violence perpetrated by men. Cruise (2016) critiques this stereotyped narrative, arguing that media representations often try to justify or explain away women's involvement in terrorism as a deviation from "traditionally accepted behavior" (Cruise 2016, 38). Such narratives not only simplify a complex phenomenon but also reinforce the societal assumptions that view women's violence through the norms of gender stereotypes. The representation of female terrorists in the media, then, reveals a deeper problem: the reliance on stereotypes not only shapes the public's understanding of female terrorists but also limits the ability to understand their motivations and actions outside of gendered assumptions.

2.4. The Paradox

The literature on gender and terrorism reveals a paradox: while female terrorists challenge gender stereotypes through their actions, the reaction of society often seeks to understand and redefine them within the borders of these very same stereotypes. Sjoberg and Gentry (2008) articulate this paradox, affirming that the act of terrorism by a woman is seen as a "*double transgression"* because a "violent woman has committed two crimes: her violence, and defying gender stereotypes that deem

her incapable of that violence" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7). This dual crime requires a narrative that simplifies the actions of women terrorists through the lens of gender stereotypes, trying to make sense of what is perceived as an anomaly, as chaos and as outside of conventional boundaries.

From this paradox, my thesis develops. In the following sections, the violence of female terrorists is explored through a historical account of the roles women have played in terrorist organizations, followed by an analysis of what gender stereotypes have been utilized in portraying these women. In doing so, the thesis presents the *dual transgression* embodied by the female face of terrorism. This exploration aims to reveal how these gendered portrayals do more than merely depict women's violence; they light up women's involvement in the global public sphere more broadly than terrorism itself. By merging gender as an essential factor in the study of terrorism, this thesis aims to challenge prevailing societal biases and stereotypes. In doing so, it hopes to enrich the discourse on gender and terrorism, potentially leading to more distinct counter-terrorism strategies that would, in the future, consider gender dynamics more thoroughly.

3. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TERRORISM

3.1. Her Violence

Despite being smaller in number compared to men, women have often been an important part of terrorist groups. Since the 20th century, as Lavina (2014) observes, women started participating in armed groups in Latin America and Europe, taking on both supportive side roles as well as leadership positions. In Europe especially, "women made up close to one third of their organizations" (Lavina 2014, 245); in other regions, however, this was not always the case. Within Islamic terrorism, for example, women have traditionally held auxiliary roles until recent decades, when they began to be more engaged in terrorist activity, particularly in suicide bombings (Spencer 2016). Meanwhile, other groups like the Tamil Tigers had entire sub-groups[3] reserved for women, fully trained for combat and suicide missions. From right-wing groups to left-wing factions to jihadist movements, women have, therefore, played diverse roles spanning the spectrum of terrorism. Despite their significant involvement, traditional gender stereotypes have often obscured their contributions, relegating their stories to the sides of terrorism studies (Banks 2019). The extent of their involvement challenges conventional narratives, presenting women not only in supporting roles but also as key operatives in the planning and execution of terrorist acts. In the following sections, I will dive into the primary roles women have played as leaders, recruiters, planners, martyrs and foreign fighters. Through this exploration we will touch upon historical accounts that exemplify the significance of women's involvement in terrorist activities, discovering the prominent examples of those who have left their mark on the history of female terrorism.

[3] Freedom Birds is the Tamil Tigers' division dedicated to women fighters.

3.1.1. *The Leader*

Margherita *Mara* Cagol was a founder and leader of Italy's Red Brigades. Like many other women involved in revolutionary, far-left struggles, she was not relegated to secondary roles but rather managed to rise through the ranks. Mara exemplifies women in leadership positions, serving as a planner and executor. Throughout her militant career, she devolved herself to planning attacks and shaping the structure of the Red Brigades during Italy's Years of Lead. After her death, she was remembered by her fellow revolutionaries as follows:

> Communist leader and member of the Executive Committee of the Red Brigades, Margherita Cagol, *Mara*, fell in combat. Her life and death are an example that no freedom fighter will ever forget. (...) As the political-military commander of the column, *Mara,* successfully led some of the organization's most important operations (Cecinini 2018, 57).

After Mara, women continued to play a significant role in the Italian Red Brigades, comprising at least one-quarter of the militants between 1969 and 1989 (Barus 2004). But the story of the women of the Red Brigades is just one of many stories in the history of women in terrorist leadership. One of the most remembered figures in the Palestinian and Islamic world is Ahlam Tamimi" (Cecinini 2018). She orchestrated the attack at the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem on August 9th, 2001, instructing a suicide bomber to detonate himself at a time when the restaurant and street would be full. The attack caused the death of 15 people, including 8 children, and injured another 130 individuals. In a later interview, she admitted to feeling a sense of satisfaction when hearing that the number of victims was rising (Cecinini 2018). Tamimi, only 21 at the time of the Jerusalem attack, is remembered as an operational mastermind, playing a strategic role in the Palestinian fight against Israeli occupation. Like Mara Cagol and Ahlam Tamimi, many other women have held prominent positions in terrorist activities, as planners of attacks, executors and strategic masters.

3.1.2. The Recruiter

In addition to their roles as leaders and planners, many other women have also taken on another crucial role in the terrorist organizational chart: that of recruiters. Recruiting means creating connections between an organization and potential supporters, with the aim of attracting new leaders, martyrs and fighters (Cragin and Daly 2009), while also establishing financial networks. In today's digitalized world, recruitment techniques have evolved significantly, and thanks to the use of technology, terrorist groups have been able to utilize online platforms extensively to recruit new supporters. Women have been particularly influential in this arena, partly due to their ability to spread the ideology also across family members and children. For instance, ISIS has heavily relied on women for online recruitment, "with over 40% of female members serving in the role" (Daniel 2022, 3). Similarly, the Al-Shabaab[4] group has been documented using women to recruit both men and women, both voluntarily and involuntarily (Badurdeen 2018). The FARC[5] has also seen similar recruitment strategies (Cragin and Daly 2009).

3.1.3. The Martyr

In addition to their strategic roles in recruitment, women have also occupied another fundamental position in many terrorist organizations: that of martyrs. Martyrdom has long been recognized as one of terrorism's most powerful and threatening techniques, and terrorist groups are well aware of its impact. In this role, it is necessary to emphasize the growing presence of women as martyrs and suicide bombers. As Bloom claims, "worldwide, approximately 17 groups have started using the tactical innovation of suicide bombing", estimating that "almost 30 percent of suicide attackers

[4] Al-Shabaab is an Islamist armed group in Somalia, active since the early 2000s.
[5] The FARC, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, is a guerilla movement that fought against the Colombian government since 1964.

are women" (2005, 56). The term "shahida" (Bloom 2005, 59), the female form of *shahid* in Arabic, describes female martyrs who, in executing attacks against the enemy, also sacrifice their lives for a higher and noble cause. Terrorist organizations have recognized the great potential of employing female suicide bombers. Initially observed as a feature of secular terrorism, the use of female suicide bombers became prevalent even among religious extremist groups (Zedalis 2004). As one trainer of suicide bombers has revealed, "the body has become our most potent weapon. When we searched for new ways to resist the security complications facing us, we discovered that our women could be an advantage" (Zedalis 2004, 14).

Although it is challenging to classify whether female bombers are deadlier than male martyrs, Alakoc's study (2020) has found that female suicide bombers are indeed strategically effective in striking targets in places that are usually heavily controlled or crowded. This effectiveness, however, is often correlated with the general perception of women as less threatening, which allows them to evade detection more easily, and carry out attacks more successfully (Alakoc 2020). Furthermore, there exists a certain reservation in conducting extensive body searches, due to respect and sensitivity: a factor often exploited by terrorist organizations, and which makes women the perfect carriers for bombs. And, as Zedalis reveals in his report on *Female Suicide Bombers*, "women were handling explosives and familiarizing themselves with Kalashnikov sub-machine guns. They are then introduced to the bomb belts that will rip their flesh while killing and maiming those around them. Finally, the girls have to practice moving around with the weight of the explosive belts strapped to their bodies. Sometimes the explosives are distributed around the body; some strapped to their legs, others to their backs or abdomens" (2004, 17).

3.1.4. The Militant

Women in extremist violence have emerged also on the "front lines of combat, demonstrating that their revolutionary and military zeal is no less than that of men" (Bloom 2005, 58). Figures like Susanna Ronconi, named the *Amazon of Terror*, who led the Italian armed group Prima Linea, and Angela Vai, known as *Mangusta*, represent this strong dedication (Cecinini 2018). Described as "striking with a ferocity that chills even the most hardened comrades-in-arms" (Cecinini 2018, 59), Mangusta embodies the motivation and commitment of female militants. Similarly, the guerrilla women of Peru's Sendero Luminoso are also known for their cold-blooded violence, to the extent that they are feared the most during attacks (Cecinini 2018). The roles women assume within these movements often reflect pure militancy and combat will, matching their male counterparts in dedication. However, the extent of their participation often depends on the ideology of the group, with left-wing organizations typically granting more involvement compared to religious groups. Nevertheless, women in militant groups have demonstrated dedication and commitment, as clearly illustrated by the words of Elvira, who became known as one of the legendary Black Widows following the death of her son at the hands of Russian troops: "Oh, yes, I want to kill them. Kill Russians, kill their children. I want to know what it is like" (Bloom 2005, 59).

3.1.5. The Foreign Fighter

The phenomenon of foreign fighters represents another interesting facet of terrorism, particularly when talking about female involvement. Foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) are defined as individuals who "travel to conflict zones to engage in terrorist acts" (UNODC 2023). This phenomenon has notably escalated in the past decade, with a stark increase in female participation especially among those aligning with jihadist movements. Eggert (2015) highlights that "according to UN figures, 25,000 people from more than 100 countries have joined IS as of summer 2015" (Eggert 2015,

367), and women account for an estimated 30% of these foreign fighters (Sandi 2022). These women, often referred to as *muhajirat* or *female immigrants*, include both Muslim women and converts. Their involvement is particularly noticeable among Western countries, where authorities frequently intervene to prevent women from traveling to Syria to join terrorist organizations (Perešin 2015, 21).

This overview of roles and historical accounts has demonstrated the depth of the involvement of women in terrorism, ranging from auxiliary roles to leadership positions. This exploration reveals that, despite prevalent biases that often render female terrorists invisible in this field, women have indeed been active and influential participants. Having addressed this initial *transgression* committed by women through both their violent acts and their roles within these movements, this research now turns to the exploration of gender stereotypes. These stereotypes obstruct our ability to perceive women as capable of engaging in such acts of violence, a misconception this thesis aims to dismantle moving forward.

4. PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN TERRORISTS

4.1. The Stereotypes That Deem Her Incapable of That Violence

The portrayal of women's violence in public discourse is often charged with stereotypical tropes. Women who engage in terrorist violence, stepping outside the boundaries of traditionally accepted female roles, are frequently reinterpreted through a stereotypical gendered lens. This lens operates on a spectrum, marking deviations from conventional femininity. Such portrayals significantly shape our understanding of women terrorists, as well as the broader relationship between gender and violence. The existing literature on this topic has explored many narratives used to depict women involved in terrorist activities. These narratives, as analyzed by scholars like Sjoberg and Gentry (2008; 2007) in *Reduced to Bad Sex* or *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, often reduce women terrorists to stereotypes like the revengeful mother or the sexually corrupted woman. Other scholars, like Martini (2018) in *Making Women Terrorists Into Jihadi Brides* or Cruise (2016) in *Enough With The Stereotypes*, discuss and challenge the narratives that portray women as killing for love, coerced by their male relatives or naïve victims. From this body of work, I identified and summarized 6 overarching categories that represent these tropes more comprehensively. These range from depictions of women as *victims of men's doing* to *mothers*, from *lovers* to *baggage-carriers*, from *too masculine to be women* to *too beautiful to be violent*. This section outlines the main stereotypes prevalent in mainstream discourse regarding women involved in terrorism. Such categories are important for understanding how representations selectively convey only parts of reality, shaping narratives that define why certain events occur, what elements are highlighted and what elements are rather omitted.

In the following sections, an analysis of these stereotypes is displayed. The methodology here applied employs a gendered lens, defined as the process of viewing the world through "gender as a specific kind of power relation" (Krulišová 2016, 33). By adopting this gender-focused lens, Western news articles, public statements and literature are examined to offer a comprehensive portrayal of mainstream discourse. This approach allows us to uncover the gender stereotypes imposed on women, challenging our ability to perceive them as mere *terrorists* driven by their own agency or political and ideological convictions. Instead, these stereotypes frame them as non-agents, forced victims or, more simply, cases of femininity gone bad.

4.1.1. The Victim of Men's Doing

The *victim of men's doing* stereotype presents female terrorists as being manipulated or forced by male figures, such as husbands, fathers or male leaders within terrorist groups. Women are framed as victims who, by nature, would never be able to commit such violence - yet they are used by men to further their own agendas and games. Although there are many cases in which women are victims of terrorism, this is only one side of the coin. Media portrayals often focus only on the idea that women are used as weapons and are simply victims of men's actions. This marginalized and reductive narrative obscures a potentially broader understanding of the roles of women in terrorist activities and lessens the motivations, agency and ideological commitments behind a woman's actions. Media outlets often report on the phenomenon by saying that terrorists (men, obviously) "employ" (Bloom 2021) and "use women" (Malik 2018) in extremist violence, "using them" (Scott 2015) for terrorist goals. As a journalist from The Guardian suggested when reporting on three British young girls leaving for *Sham* (greater Syria), these women "aren't jihadi devil-women; they're vulnerable children", "brainwashed" (Iqbal 2015) by ISIS. Following this same style, there are numerous examples of media reporting on brainwashed women brought into

terrorism by others. Despite this portrayal, one British woman who became a foreign fighter in Syria stated that "we're not stupid young brainwashed females, we've come here to Syria for Allah alone" (Martini 2018, 470), challenging the oversimplified views often narrated in the media. These marginalized and reductive narratives, deeply embedded in Western discourse, pave the way for more insidious cultural bias that further distorts the role of women in such contexts.

Indeed, further complicating these portrayals is the influence of neo-orientalism, as depicted by Alice Martini (2018) in her study *Making Women Terrorists Into Jihadi Brides*. This view suggests that Western superiority complexes shape how Muslim women are seen and portrayed. Here, Western culture and values are understood as superior to that of the Orient, and with that, a "*Western* understanding" (Martini 2018, 459) has been applied to Muslim women. In this perspective, in public discourse "Muslim women are often portrayed as victims of the barbaric nature of Muslim men and their culture in general" (Martini 2018, 459). This distorted view, under a neo-orientalist thought, not only affects cultural perceptions but also has practical implications in security and counterterrorism strategies.

These narrative biases, indeed, manifest in how women are strategically discussed in counterterrorism contexts. For instance, women are often discussed in articles for their ability to evade detection by authorities due to prevailing stereotypes of women as naturally non-violent. As reported by The Guardian, "the advantage of using female suicide bombers for an organization can be simply tactical - they can avoid suspicion more easily, or can pose as a one half of a couple - or strategic" (Burke 2015). While this strategic rationale holds, it perpetuates the stereotypical gender dynamics where, firstly, women are not recognized as potential threats; secondly, women are largely overlooked, making them invisible; and thirdly, it ignores the possibility that a woman

may be driven by her own radical ideologies, that she chose violence willingly, and that her actions are not merely to advance a man's agenda. As long as these stereotypes persist, terrorist organizations will continue to exploit them, taking advantage of the perception of women as non-violent and thus invisible in security contexts.

4.1.2. The Lover

Building on the theme of *the victim of men's doing*, *the lover* stereotype further exemplifies how female terrorists are constructed within media narratives. This stereotype portrays female terrorists as primarily driven by emotional or romantic ties to male terrorists, suggesting that women are incapable of engaging in political violence out of ideological commitment or personal agency. Instead, they are shown as if motivated by a desire to support and be close to their male partners. One notable example is a woman foreign fighter who left the Netherlands to join the jihadist cause, portrayed as having departed Maastricht "as a Dutch teenager filled with romantic notions of marrying a *real man*"(Harriet 2014). This portrayal hides the complexity of women's roles in terrorism, reducing their involvement to mere attachments rather than acknowledging their potential for independent agency. This stereotype often appears in public discourse through stories that focus intensely on the personal relationships of female terrorists.

In many articles, the concept of the *demon-lover* (Nacos 2005) emerges, depicting women as seduced into terrorism by a man with whom they have a relationship. For instance, in a 2015 opinion piece for The Independent, Alibhai-Brown comments that "Jihadi girls are just part of a long line attracted to mad, bad men" (Alibhai-Brown 2015). She argues that these *demon-lovers*, with their "magnetism", fuel "female hormones alarmingly" (Alibhai-Brown 2015). This idea suggests that

these women are seduced into violence by male influences who personify this *demon-lover* archetype. This controversial and reductive argument thus leaves aside any motives that could be slightly related to ideological commitment or political will. This theme, however, extends beyond singular examples. For instance, members of the Red Army Faction in Germany during the 1970s were often said to have joined "as they admire someone in the terrorist movement" (Nacos 2005, 441). The media, moreover, often conducts in-depth investigations into the personal lives of female terrorists, searching for this *demon lover* who supposedly incites their violent actions. Another interesting case is that of Mariam Sharipova, one of the suicide bombers who attacked the Moscow metro in 2010 (Krulišová 2016). In the absence of a clear rational motive that could explain why she committed such violence, it was speculated that a secret husband had forced her into the attack (Harding 2010). This narrative approach reduces complex motivations and simplifies the depiction of women terrorists in the media to mere extensions of their relationships with men. Leila Khaled – the Palestinian plane hijacker – provocatively declared against such biased reductionism: "I am engaged to the revolution" (Weinraub 1970).

These narratives often end up romanticizing the involvement of women in terrorism, making them tragic, love-driven figures rather than responsible actors, reinforcing the conventional stereotypes of women as emotionally dependent on men. This stereotypical trope suggests that women's public and politically violent actions are simply extensions of their private, emotional lives. Nacos (2005) affirms that when it comes to terrorist recruitment, both genders actually work in the same way - most of the terrorists are indeed connected via friends or family. However, by stressing exclusively a woman's personal relationships, the media frequently overlooks the political or ideological motivations behind their participation in terrorism, marginalizing their stories and lessening their agency.

4.1.3. The Personal Baggage-carrier

After exploring *the victim of men's doing* and *the lover* stereotypes, another intriguing category emerges: the woman driven to extremist violence by heavy *personal baggage*. This concept was first formally identified by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which raised alarms about the increasing involvement of Palestinian women in terror attacks. Their report, published in 2003, divulged that "in each and every case these women had a large amount of *personal baggage*" (GOV.IL, 2003). It further explained that this *personal baggage* could include "women whose social standing is problematic", and "women who have acquired a *bad name* due to assumed promiscuity or extra-marital relationships" (GOV.IL, 2003). These women "have often been convinced to take part in terrorist operations as a means of rehabilitating their status and character in Palestinian society" (GOV.IL, 2003). Although some motives might still be part of one's motivation, casting ideological or political commitments to the background in favor of personal motivations alone is overly reductive and simplistic.

As it often happens, media outlets dissect the personal histories of the women involved in terrorism after their attacks. For example, Wafa Idris, a 27-year-old Palestinian woman who detonated herself with 10 kg of explosives in Jerusalem in 2002, killing herself and two others (Bloom 2005), had her life scrutinized after her death. Reports focused on her personal tragedies: "Idris's father died when she was a child"; "there had been other sadnesses, too"; "after marriage, Idris had a late miscarriage"; "the doctors said she could have no more children"; "her husband's response was to divorce her and marry again" (Foden 2003). Others suggested that "a woman raped or shamed cannot marry and are told they will gain absolution by blowing themselves up" (Krulišová 2016, 45), casting women terrorists as simple victims, burdened by the weighty personal tragedies that have driven them to violence.

While these personal circumstances might be important and significantly relative to one's culture and customs, it is still necessary to keep in mind that when women terrorists are portrayed, the possibility of political or ideological motivation and agency is completely omitted, as if a *personal baggage* must always be discovered; as if a woman's political motivation always hides a bigger emotional burden. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the narratives presenting male terrorists never suggest personal losses or the inability to have children as influencing their choices in committing violence. Instead, it is typically assumed that men who engage in terrorism do so purely based on rational decisions and ideological will.

4.1.4. The Mother

The mother stereotype in the portrayal of female terrorists is another powerful narrative that mingles traditional ideas of femininity and motherhood with the involvement of women in terrorism and violence. This stereotype suggests that female terrorists' actions are primarily driven by maternal instincts gone bad, often represented as being pushed by failures. Indeed, Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) note that "violent women are often depicted as avenging lost love and/or a destroyed happy home" (2007, 32). They argue that the devastation of the maternal dream or the "inability/failure to serve as mothers is so dehumanizing (or dewomanizing) that it drives a woman to violence" (2007, 33).

A famous example of this narrative is the portrayal of Chechen *Black Widows* – women who became self-martyrs to avenge the deaths of their husbands killed by Russian troops (Krulišová 2016). For instance, a report on a 2003 rock concert attack describes one Black Widow who "had lost her husband, then had her child taken from her. Her attempt to steal back her child had left her in

debt and disgrace, and becoming a suicide bomber was the only way she could see of redeeming both" (Bullough 2010). Especially in the context of the Black Widows, widowhood is deeply connected with motherhood, where the disappointment in maternal life, tied to losing a husband or children, is used to justify their motivations. While many Chechen women have indeed lost a loved one, it is very reductive to assume that all women are motivated simply by revenge or that it is their "maternal losses" that drove them to violence (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 34). In this narrative, the loss of a husband is seen as causing their failure in motherhood, and "because motherhood was her purpose for existence", this failure has "caused her to act outside of the non-violent tendencies of normal women who are able to have children" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 35).

The notion of *motherhood gone bad* is also echoed in news reports of suicide bombers, where their wombs metaphorically become explosive devices (Bloom 2010, 95). For example, an article mentions women of Al-Qaeda having "the explosives strapped around their womb" (Dickey 2005). Muriel Degauque, the first female suicide bomber in Europe, was also described as having "a succession of failed relationships with Muslim men" and being unable to "have children" (Dickey 2005). The choices of these women to become suicide martyrs were, therefore, attributed to their "revolutionary womb" (Bloom 2010, 95) - a direct link to their failed motherhood. In all these portrayed stories, women are shown in terms of their maternal failures that have left them unable to find a husband, create a family or stand the loss of a family member, thus pushing them toward violence and transforming them into women "who use their capacity for motherhood to kill after their motherhood has been killed" (Krulišová 2016, 42). It is worth noting that when media outlets cannot identify a mother-failure while dissecting the stories of women terrorists, the *brainwashed* frame is then employed. This has been described in the case of Chechen Black Widows as "zombification", where the "use of drugs, hypnosis, or blackmail (via videotapes of rape of

themselves or their relatives), turns simple village girls into brainwashed terrorist slaves" (Krulišová 2016, 42).

4.1.5. Too Masculine to Be a Woman

Being *too masculine to be a woman* is a stereotypical portrayal applied to women who choose violence. This stereotype epitomizes the gender biases discussed in this thesis. The underlying idea of this framework is that women who act outside their gender norms are not truly women. Therefore, a woman who engages in terrorism is seen as a strange - or rather, a deviant - expression of femininity. A journalist in the New York Times reported Freda Adler, a leading figure in female criminality, who said that "people are asking me why so many women are becoming terrorists, which is the ultimate of masculine roles" (Klemesrud 1978). Adler further commented, "women are doing something to prove they can do the same thing as men - and more" (Klemesrud 1978).

Indeed, many reports suggest that these women are often tougher than men. The Guardian explained that women "tend to be more cold-blooded and lethal than the men" (Tremlett 2002). During the siege of the Moscow theatre by Chechens, the female participants were indeed reported to be colder and more cruel than their male counterparts in taking hostages (Schabner 2002), and some appeared "like on drugs", "barely blinked" and were very "scary" (Levy and Barry 2010). All these examples suggest how women who choose violence defy every traditional notion of femininity, and as such, they are not recognized as women but rather as deviations from it. They are perceived as monsters and as departing from the norm. Those, whom society has considered "*normal*" (Australian Associated Press 2015) girls, are now being transformed into devils in the public eye.

4.1.6. Too Beautiful to Be Violent

The stereotype of being *too beautiful to be violent* is a classic one applied to women who are seen as scary and deviant, yet fascinating. This stereotype includes descriptions such as a "pretty face" turned violent, a "bloodthirsty" woman with "spectacular blue eyes and mounds of curly hair", or one with a "delicate Audrey Hepburn face" who hijacks planes (Foden 2003; Vincent 2020; Viner 2001). These stereotypical descriptions provide a sharp contrast with the conventional image of a terrorist, reinforcing the notion that they are too beautiful or too feminine to be terrorists. This beauty often captivates the audience, as exemplified by Leila Khaled, depicted with "the gun held in fragile hands, the shiny hair wrapped in a keffiah", embodying the concept of "beauty mixed with violence" (Viner 2001). Khaled, a symbol of women's terrorism and the Palestinian fight, was often referred to as "the hijack queen" (Nacos 2005, 439). Similarly, Bernardine Dohrn, one of the leaders of the Weather Underground, a US militant organization in the 1960s, was often mentioned for her "miniskirt, high boots, and breasts" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 6; Dominguez 2022).

This focus on physical aspects and sexualized descriptions serves to exoticize the portrayal of female terrorists. Once again, their physical appearance gets more attention than the reasons behind their violence, reducing women to their external looks rather than their internal political motives.

CONCLUSION

The portrayals of women who have committed themselves to political violence reveal persistent stereotypes that marginalize them within traditional conventions and gender expectations. Women are depicted as victims of men's decisions, driven by love, revenge for their children or by maternal instincts gone mad. Others are portrayed as carrying heavy personal dramas that have pushed them to violence, or their womanhood is questioned because *a woman would never do that* or *a pretty face could never be violent*. These stereotypes are not limited to terrorist women; they apply to all women, reinforcing the status quo and suggesting that women do not belong in the public sphere but should be confined to the private domain. When women do enter the public sphere and engage in violence and terrorism, it is often portrayed as if they were led and forced by a man. These stereotypes imply that terrorism is not a woman's domain, although evidence of the female face of terrorism presented here tells a different story. They embody societal expectations of femininity - women as caregivers, mothers, wives and inherently non-violent. A woman terrorist defies these norms and is therefore seen not as a woman but as a monster, a deviation, her femininity corrupted. The polarity here is striking: whereas the violence perpetrated by men is viewed as rational and ideologically motivated – no matter how extreme – a woman terrorist's violence is always seen as irrational and more deviant than that of her male counterpart. Violence is gendered differently, with militarized masculinities on one side and domesticated femininities on the other. Public discourse often uses such stereotypical explanations when it cannot understand women in roles traditionally perceived as reserved to men. As Nacos (2005) notes, "when we cannot understand women in roles that cultural norms and prejudices perceive as inherently male, there is a tendency to resort to stereotypical explanations" (2005, 437). She also observes that "realistic assessments of female terrorists and the threats they pose" are "rare in the media", which continue to "frame these stories along the lines of traditional stereotypes that portray the female terrorist as a paradox" (2005, 446).

The reality is that women can be violent, and in choosing to commit violence, they challenge the gender stereotypes that have relegated them. This reality is hidden behind the marginalized narratives presented in this thesis. These narratives obscure an uncomfortable truth, because acknowledging the reality of women choosing violence could change the way we perceive women's roles in violence, terrorism and global politics more broadly. It is necessary to recognize these tropes, to realize that the narratives that have been presented to us do not always correspond to reality, but rather to an imposed worldview – a worldview that wants us to see women in one way rather than another, a terrorist with one face rather than another, a motive being one rather than another. Learning to recognize these biases, from the most visible to the more subtle, is the reason why discussing this here is important, to contribute to bringing this reality to the forefront and leaving the stereotypes behind. It is crucial to understand that these stereotypes in public discourse represent more than just narrative biases - they reflect and perpetuate society's broader thoughts and perceptions. Ultimately, these stereotypes have revealed that a woman terrorist has committed two crimes: "her violence, and defying gender stereotypes that deem her incapable of that violence" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7). Until we recognize and eliminate the stereotypes that relegate women behind these narratives, terrorism will continue to exploit these biases, blinding us from the reality that terrorism is indeed a woman's business too.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alakoc, Burcu Pinar. 2020. "Femme Fatale: The Lethality of Female Suicide Bombers." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 796–814.

Alibhai-Brown, Yasmin. 2015. "The Jihadi Girls Are Just Part of a Long Line Attracted to Mad, Bad Men | The Independent." *The Independent*, February 22, 2015, sec. Voices. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-jihadi-girls-are-just-part-of-a-long-line-attracted-to-mad-bad-men-10062909.html.

Australian Associated Press. 2015. "Sydney Mother Allegedly Abandoned Her Two Children to Join Isis in Syria." *The Guardian*, May 26, 2015, sec. Australia news. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/may/26/sydney-mother-allegedly-abandoned-her-two-children-to-join-isis-in-syria.

Badurdeen, Fathima A. 2018. "Women and Recruitment in the Al-Shabaab Network: Stories of Women Being Recruited by Women Recruiters in the Coastal Region of Kenya." *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs* 45 (1): 19–48.

Banks, Cyndi. 2019. "Introduction: Women, Gender, and Terrorism: Gendering Terrorism." *Women & Criminal Justice* 29 (4–5): 181–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2019.1633612.

Barus, Donatella. 2004. "Venere A Mano Armata. Donne e Violenza Politica Nella Stampa Italiana (1060-1989)." http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Zap05_04-Zoom3.pdf.

Bloom, Mia. 2005. "Mother. Daughter. Sister. Bomber." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 61 (6): 54–62. https://doi.org/10.2968/061006015.

———. 2021. "Female Suicide Bombers Are Not a New Phenomenon." *Washington Post*, December 7, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/08/06/female-suicide-bombers-are-not-a-new-phenomenon/.

Bloom, Mia Mellissa. 2010. "The ChangingNature of Women's Role in Terror."

Brunner, Claudia. 2007. "Occidentalism Meets the Female Suicide Bomber: A Critical Reflection on Recent Terrorism Debates; A Review Essay." *Signs* 32 (4): 957–71. https://doi.org/10.1086/512490.

Bullough, Oliver. 2010. "The Echoes of Savagery." *The Guardian*, March 29, 2010, sec. Opinion. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/mar/29/echoes-savagery-moscow-attacks-retribution.

Burke, Jason. 2015. "St-Denis Female Suicide Bomber Is Not the First, and Will Not Be the Last." *The Guardian*, November 18, 2015, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/st-denis-female-suicide-bomber-is-not-the-first-and-will-not-be-the-last.

Cecinini, Sofia. 2018. *Le Sanguinarie*. LUISS University Press. https://www.perlego.com/book/1078943/le-sanguinarie-pdf.

Cragin, R. Kim, and Sara A. Daly. 2009. *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Cruise, Rebecca S. 2016. "Enough with the Stereotypes: Representations of Women in Terrorist Organizations." *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (1): 33–43.

Daniel, Laura. 2022. "Tactical Mistakes: Women's Role in Terrorism." *Public Policy* 2.

Dickey, Christopher. 2005. "Women of Al Qaeda." Newsweek. December 11, 2005. https://www.newsweek.com/women-al-qaeda-113757.

Dominguez, Alessa. 2022. "Bernardine Dohrn Was Called The Most Dangerous Woman In America. Now, Her Son Reconsiders Her Legacy.," 2022.

https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alessadominguez/mother-country-radicals-zayd-dohrn.
Eggert, Jennifer Philippa. 2015. "Women Fighters in the 'Islamic State' and Al-Qaida in Iraq: A Comparative Analysis." *Die Friedens-Warte* 90 (3/4): 363–80.
Eppert, Kerstin, and Viktoria Roth. 2021. "Radical Men and Sympathizing Women? Gendered Constructions of Agency in Charges of Terrorism in Germany." *New Journal of European Criminal Law* 12 (4): 552–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/20322844211060227.
Foden, Giles. 2003. "Death and the Maidens." *The Guardian*, July 18, 2003, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jul/18/gender.uk.
Glynn, Ruth. 2009. "Writing the Terrorist Self: The Unspeakable Alterity of Italy's Female Perpetrators." *Feminist Review*, no. 92: 1–18.
GOV.IL. 2003. "The Role of Palestinian Women in Suicide Terrorism." https://www.gov.il/en/Departments/General/the-role-of-palestinian-women-in-suicide-terrorism.
Harding, Luke. 2010. "Dagestan: My Daughter the Terrorist." *The Guardian*, June 18, 2010, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jun/19/dagestan-suicide-bombers-terrorism-russia.
Harriet, Alexander. 2014. "Dutch Jihadi Bride: 'Is She a Victim or a Suspect?,'" 2014. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11247941/Dutch-jihadi-bride-Is-she-a-victim-or-a-suspect.html.
Iqbal, Nosheen. 2015. "The Syria-Bound Schoolgirls Aren't Jihadi Devil-Women, They're Vulnerable Children." *The Guardian*, February 24, 2015, sec. Opinion. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/24/syria-bound-schoolgirls-arent-jihadi-devil-women-theyre-vulnerable-children.
Kennedy, Helena. 1993. *Eve Was Framed: Women and British Justice*. Vintage.
Klemesrud, Judy. 1978. "A Criminologist's View Of Women Terrorists." *The New York Times*, January 9, 1978, sec. Archives. https://www.nytimes.com/1978/01/09/archives/a-criminologists-view-of-women-terrorists-dr-freda-adler-right-sees.html.
Krulišová, Kateřina. 2016. "The 'Black Widow' Media Discourse: 'Desperation, Irrationality and Vendetta' in Dagestan." http://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/33099/1/10644_%20Kruli%C5%A1ov%C3%A1.pdf.
Lavina, Rachael. 2014. "Women in Terrorism: How the Rise of Female Terrorists Impacts International Law Notes." *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 30 (2): [iv]-261.
Levy, Clifford J., and Ellen Barry. 2010. "Behind Attacks in Moscow, a Teenage Widow's Revenge - The New York Times," 2010. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/03/world/europe/03moscow.html.
Malik, Nikita. 2018. "Why Do Terrorist Organizations Use Women As Suicide Bombers?" *Forbes*, 2018. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nikitamalik/2018/11/02/why-do-terrorist-organizations-use-women-as-suicide-bombers/?sh=434c4b23621d.
Martini, Alice. 2018. "Making Women Terrorists into 'Jihadi Brides': An Analysis of Media Narratives on Women Joining ISIS." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11 (3): 458–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2018.1448204.
Nacos, Brigitte L. 2005. "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 & Terrorism* 28 (5): 435–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500180352.
Ortbals, Candice, and Lori Poloni-Staudinger. 2018. "How Gender Intersects With Political Violence and Terrorism." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.308.
Perešin, Anita. 2015. "Fatal Attraction: Western Muslimas and ISIS." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9 (3): 21–38.

Sandi, Ouafae. 2022. "Between Perpetration and Prevention of Violent Extremism: Accounting for Gender." United Nations Development Programme Iraq. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-10/Between%20Perpetration%20and%20prevention-EN%20signed.pdf.

Schabner, Dean. 2002. "Chechen 'Black Widows' Bring New Fears." *ABC News*, 2002. https://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=79819.

Scott, Stewart. 2015. "An Unprecedented Use of Female Suicide Bombers." Stratfor. 2015. https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/article/unprecedented-use-female-suicide-bombers.

Sjoberg, Laura, Grace D. Cooke, and Stacy Reiter Neal. 2011. "Introduction. WOMEN, GENDER, AND TERRORISM." In *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, edited by Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, 1–26. University of Georgia Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt46nnjp.5.

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

———. 2008. "Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror." *International Relations* 22 (1): 5–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117807087240.

Spencer, Amanda. 2016. "The Hidden Face of Terrorism: An Analysis of the Women in Islamic State." *Journal of Strategic Security* 9 (3): 74–98. https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.9.3.1549.

Tremlett, Giles. 2002. "Eta Brings Women Fighters to the Fore." *The Guardian*, August 27, 2002, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/aug/27/spain.gilestremlett.

UNODC. 2023. "Achievements Report 2019-2023: The Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters Detention Program." https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-prison-reform_html/FTF_Achievements_Report_2019-2023.pdf.

Vincent, Isabel. 2020. "Real 'Killing Eve' Villanelle Screwed up a Hit While Admiring Herself," May 23, 2020. https://nypost.com/2020/05/23/real-killing-eve-villanelle-screwed-up-a-hit-while-admiring-herself/.

Viner, Katharine. 2001. "'I Made the Ring from a Bullet and the Pin of a Hand Grenade.'" *The Guardian*, January 26, 2001, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jan/26/israel.

Weinraub, Bernard. 1970. "Woman Hijacker Feels 'Engaged to the Revolution.'" *The New York Times*, September 9, 1970, sec. Archives. https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/09/archives/woman-hijacker-feels-engaged-to-the-revolution.html.

Yesevi, Cagla Gul. 2014. "FEMALE TERRORISM." *European Scientific Journal Edition* 10.

Zedalis, Debra D. 2004. "Female Suicide Bombers (Carlisle Papers in Security Strategy):" Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center. https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA430128.

Zhang, Baoshan, Yibo Hu, Fengqing Zhao, Fangfang Wen, Junhua Dang, and Magdalena Zawisza. 2023. "Editorial: The Psychological Process of Stereotyping: Content, Forming, Internalizing, Mechanisms, Effects, and Interventions." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (January): 1117901. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1117901.