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Terrorist Radicalization and International Security:

A Crisis of Masculinity and Gender

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<u>Abstract:</u>

This interdisciplinary ISP expands the traditional field of IR and security studies through a feminist and gendered perspective and has three aims: 1) to explore and assess the role that gender plays in creating and reproducing power relations among men and women at the level of international institutions; 2) to demonstrate that women play a wide variety of roles in conflict zones and peace building; and 3) to emphasize that terrorist organizations utilize the power relations constructed through gender and hegemonic masculinity to radicalize young men and women and to explore the relationship between hypermasculine state and terrorist masculinity. The primary methods of research used during this project were interviews conducted with experts working with gender and literature review of existing work that connects international security studies and gender. I conducted four interviews for this research project which spanned from a feminist NGO to the UN to the Gender Studies department at the University of Lausanne.

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Introduction:

By applying queer and feminist theory to the study of terrorism, I want to understand and analyze extremist radicalization as a crisis of masculinity exacerbated by issues of racism, religious instrumentalization, marginalization, and disenfranchisement. In other words, how do gender and masculinity impact the power relations that exist within conflict situations particularly violent extremism? Moreover, what role do gender norms play in the radicalization process and how can understanding these roles help us prevent radicalization? What are the larger consequences of gendering security studies especially the study of terrorism? Moreover, how do terrorist organizations create an essentially masculine identity and work through hypermasculine norms and ideals that is potentially empowering (or not) and seductive for the people they target to radicalize? This research question is born out of my fascination with the intersection of international relations and gender studies. How can a deeper understanding of gender and masculinity ultimately allow academics and policy makers to reduce toxic masculinity which could ultimately result in violence and a need to prove one's "manliness" via terrorism? What are the greater consequences of toxic masculinity for vulnerable populations, particularly LGBT communities, in areas where terrorism is a grave issue? If masculinity is something that is socially constructed, intersectional, and ultimately, a performance shaped by and through the political economy of a given culture, how can gender theory helps us better understand causes of radicalization and prevent it?

International relations especially Security Studies have traditionally been very narrow fields that have tried to postulate the working of states and non-state actors in the international arena as something inherently distant from gender and the power relations that are embedded within and reified through gender. My ISP builds upon the work of feminist IR scholars who

have taken a critical approach to Security Studies and have presented a new perspective on statehood and international relations that is essentially linked to gender and how people experience gender in everyday life. My goal for this paper is to emphasize the importance of considering gender and especially masculinity when trying to understand terrorism as while there has been work done on understanding the relation between women and terrorism, there exists a "void of masculinity" in trying to understand radicalization and how terrorist organizations use masculinity to manipulate existing gender relations that put men and women (and people outside the gender binary) at unequal positions of power within society. Gender is essentially about power and politics is also about power hence gender can help us understand processes of politics and concepts as well as the who, whom, and how of security in a way that is tangible and can show that a key element missing in the "war against terrorism" is a sociological understanding of how radicalization functions through the exploitation of social norms particularly those related to gender.

The focus of this particular research project is to describe and analyze how gender and security studies are intrinsically linked together particularly when it come to the study of terrorism. I will delve deeper into how exactly terrorist organizations radicalize young men and women through the use of recruitment materials such as propaganda texts and videos using a particular type of masculinity during my summer research and I hope to turn this ISP into a senior thesis with more detailed analysis of this topic. However, this ISP will serve as a strong foundation on which to build further research upon as I will begin to ask questions that have not been asked before within the field of feminist Critical Security Studies. I want to show that gender and masculinity should be at the heart of studying international relations and we cannot hope to tackle some of the biggest international security threats facing the world today without a

gendered lens that can help deconstruct many facets of the international relations that we take for granted. In fact, the goal of sociology and critical studies in general is to challenge the status quo, question the norms, and deconstruct the taken for granted ways of experiencing and understanding the world. Hence, performing a sociological, gender-based analysis of security studies will ultimately help academics and policymakers alike to ask crucial questions about power relations, security, and the core issues such as marginalization or lack thereof which could lead to the radicalization by terrorist organizations.

The research question is therefore an attempt to understand the relationship between gender, masculinity, and security particularly how radicalization exploits and reproduces existing gender relations and power dynamics between men and women within a given society. Of course, this research question cannot be answered without a deeper understanding of what gender and masculinity are, the types of masculinity that operate within a society simultaneously, how statehood and war-making are linked to masculinity, what roles do women play in conflict and terrorism, how are gender roles essentialized to men and women in terms of violence and extremism and how such stereotypes hinder an attempt to create a more secure world, and crucially how does gender fit into a broader set of factors such as race, class, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation that ultimately shape the power relations between people in a society that could motivate people to become radicalized. This ISP aims to persuade the reader that a study of gender particularly masculinity matters for a deeper understanding of terrorism by providing an argumentative analysis that answers the above questions while it will raise new questions for my own future research as well as research for anyone who might be interested in such interdisciplinary work that blurs the boundaries between international relations, security studies, and gender/sexuality studies.

Literature Review:

The literature that I used to conduct academic research for this ISP mostly comes from feminist IR scholars who have written on the crucial link between gender and security studies. My primary source of information on gender and IR has been *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives* by Laura Sjoberg which is a collection of essays written by feminist IR scholars that greatly informed my understanding of the issue. Sjoberg's introduction in the book outlines why studying security and IR from a gendered lens is essential to conceptualize a better, deeper understanding of international security. She defines gender and helps the reader contextualize the importance of what is at stake by ignoring gender in studying security. My goal through this ISP is to take Sjoberg's work one step further and say that it is not just gender but also *masculinity* that must be included in the study of security and particularly terrorism.

"Gendering the state: performativity and protection in international security" by Jonathan Wadley delves deeper into how states create a particular kind of masculine identity for themselves by taking the role of protection and the idea of performativity is crucial in understanding this process. This concept of performativity is also essential in understanding terrorist masculinity as one of the factors behind radicalization can be (ironically) the sense of protection terrorist groups provide to vulnerable and/or power-seeking individuals. "Gendering the cult of the offensive" by Lauren Wilcox also highlights the link between science, technology, and masculinity as the values of innovation and invention are stereotypically associated with men while of course, "bigger and better guns" reflect a bigger and more powerful kind of masculinity as well. Again, this is important to deconstruct terrorist masculinity and to see that weapons and the use of new technology are at the heart of the very "masculine" act of terrorism.

In "Women, militancy, and security: the South Asian conundrum", Swati Parashar challenges the notion that women are always hapless victims of terrorism and violence and through the examples of the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Kashmir, she highlights the complex ways in which women are also perpetrators of violence and still a part of more powerful patriarchal structures that prevent them from becoming fully independent. Jennifer Heeg Maruska deconstructs the idea of hegemonic masculinity particularly *hypermasculine* hegemonic masculinity in "When are states hypermasculine?" and analyzes American foreign policy in major points in history and particularly post-9/11 as specifically hypermasculine. This particular work was crucial for my research and greatly informed my understanding of the relationship between anti-terrorist state and anti-state terrorist hypermasculine behavior. An important question that rises from this reading is whether terrorist masculinity is essentially non-hegemonic because it is decidedly non-western or even *anti*-Western does it actually share many of the common characteristics of western hypermasculine hegemonic hypermasculinity?

Mia Bloom's book *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* and the "Women and Terrorist Radicalization" report by the OSCE also illuminated the complex ways women are radicalized and become involved in terrorism while highlighting the challenges that academics and policymakers must deal with. "Women, gender, and terrorism: the missing links" policy brief by Women in International Security emphasizes why counter-terrorism policies and strategies must consider gender to be effective. Other important sources of information for this project were the materials produced by Alex Govers and others from Le Monde Selon des Femmes in Brussels, Belgium – these materials provide a detailed analysis of what gender and masculinity are which proved to be helpful as a starting point for this research as Mr. Govers was the first person I interviewed for my ISP.

Research Methodology:

I am using an analysis of a combination of primary and secondary sources as part of my research methodology for this ISP. The bulk of the information that I am using comes from face-to-face interviews with experts from organizations such as Le Monde Selon des Femmes, the United Nations, the UN Office of the Human Rights Commissioner as well as the co-director of the Gender Studies department at the University of Lausanne. I chose these organizations and interviewees for a breadth of different perspectives on the issue of gender and security in general. The feminist NGO Le Monde Selon des Femmes helped lay the groundwork for why understanding masculinity and including men in the conversation is essential for achieving gender equality. Interviewing experts from the UN helped me understand the challenges faced by the UN in including a more gendered perspective on security and conflict resolution and also helped me realize that there are attempts within the UN to move beyond the gender binary. The interview with experts from the OHCHR was illuminating in how gender is essentially about power relations and how terrorist organizations might attract people through a promise of empowerment while the interview with Professor Sébastien Chauvin from the University of Lausanne complicated this empowerment idea further as I learned that it is not just "vulnerable" people that join terrorist groups but also people that already are well-integrated into the societies they come from but they still want to become violent to achieve certain political objectives.

By conducting these interviews, I was able to pinpoint the importance that particular organizations are placing on incorporating gender and masculinity in their attempts to achieve social justice or provide equal human rights to men, women, and people outside the gender binary. These interviews complicated my understanding of the issue tremendously as I soon realized that the question of how terrorist radicalization takes place through an exploitation of

power relations embedded within gender cannot be answered without a deeper understanding of what it means to have an international system of states that is already very gendered and how gender is omnipresent in the decisions made by states as well as terrorist organizations in how they perceive and project their own power. This is where the literature review from the sources I listed above and more helped finesse my understanding of how helped create and reproduce the very political institutions that most IR scholars believe are "gender-less". My research methodology includes analyzing the existing feminist IR scholarship as well as the materials produced by international organizations working to include gender and masculinity in talking about issues of violent extremism, conflict, and terrorism. As part of my research, I also went to the "Livresse" – a feminist café in Geneva where I found some interesting and helpful sources as "Le Jihadisme des Femmes" – a book that delves into why women choose to become part of terrorist groups. I tried to use this ISP as an opportunity to understand not just the issue but also the trends in modern feminism and I tried to gather my primary and secondary sources from a variety of locations to educate myself in the best way possible on this complex topic. The dates of my interviews will be provided in the Interactive Log and I believe that I worked between 4-6 hours per week on my ISP during the regular course schedule and the number of hours increased during the ISP period depending on when I scheduled my interviews, did literature review etc.

In terms of ethical considerations, I deliberately chose to interview people that did not belong to a vulnerable group who were at-risk of being radicalized. Firstly, I think I did not have the necessary skill set to conduct such sensitive interviews and such interviews are outside of the scope of this ISP which aims at establishing a link between masculinity and radicalization and gender and security studies in general. The interviewees of this ISP helped greatly with the intended goals of the ISP and I made sure that the interviewees provided me with informed

consent and were also aware that I would protect their anonymity and privacy if they chose to remain anonymous. I was on-time for all of my interviews and remained professional and courteous throughout each of them and learned how to ask more insightful questions as each interview took place. I also made sure that the interviewees were aware what the interviews were for and that they were comfortable during the interviews.

Definitions and Analytical/Theoretical Framework:

This ISP uses the ideas of gender, gender performance, masculinity, and certain types of masculinities to be cause and product of violent extremism, radicalization, and terrorism while also highlighting the need for including a gendered lens in international relations and critical security studies. Following is a set of definitions that are useful for the purposes of this ISP:

- **Gender:** In terms of International Relations, gender can be understood as "a system of symbolic meaning that creates social hierarchies based on perceived associations with masculine and feminine characteristics" while as a feature of social and political life, gender is "a set of discourses that represent, construct, change, and enforce social meaning" (Sjoberg, 2010, 3).

- **Masculinity:** "Masculinity" refers to the behaviors, social roles, and relations of men within a given society as well as the meanings attributed to them. The term masculinity stresses gender, unlike male, which stresses biological sex.

- **Hegemonic Masculinity:** Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Sjoberg, 2010, 237).

- **Hypermasculine or Toxic Masculinity:** This particular type of masculinity "arises when agents of hegemonic masculinity feel threatened or undermined, thereby needing to inflate, exaggerate, or otherwise distort their traditional masculinity" (Sjoberg, 2010, 239).

- **Terrorism:** The deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. All terrorist acts involve violence or the threat of violence. It is specifically designed to have far reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack (Sjoberg, 2010, 168).

- **Violent Extremism:** Violent Extremism is regarded as the willingness to use violence, or to support the use of violence, to further particular beliefs of a political, social, economic or ideological nature.

- **Radicalization:** The European Commission defines radicalization as a complex phenomenon of individuals or groups becoming intolerant with regard to basic democratic values like equality and diversity, as well as a rising propensity to use means of force to reach political goals that negate and/or undermine democracy.9 Terrorist radicalization is understood as the complex phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas that could lead to committing terrorist acts.

Against a backdrop of feminist IR scholarship on gender and security, I will now present the findings from my research including primary interviews and secondary sources to show how masculinity is related to terrorism and why we cannot understand radicalization and the factors behind it until we include the missing pieces of gender and masculinity to the terrorism puzzle.

Analysis:
The Relation between Women, Gender, and International Security:

Most feminist IR scholars have critiqued traditional IR and security studies approaches because they ignore the importance of gender in how the imbalance of power relations between men and women is reflected in the international system and how without understanding gender, IR and security studies fail to truly explain how security is provided to vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Ann Tickner, "international relations is a man's world, a world of power and conflict in which warfare is a privileged activity. (Sjoberg, 2010, 2) and the lack of understanding of how gender is at the heart of international relations negatively affects *both* men and women. Gender provides the necessary perspective to understand and deconstruct status quo constructions of how politics and security *should* work and can help academics and policymakers alike come up with policies that result in reducing the pressures created by gender norms that result in disenfranchisement and marginalization of women and certain groups of men while also result in the creation of toxic and violent masculinity which ultimately results in extremist violence and in fact, violence of many different kinds against other men and especially women. Therefore, my purpose through this paper is to show that "gender is necessary, conceptually, to understanding security; crucial to explaining the causes and effects of events in the international security arena; and essential to constructing workable solutions to the world's most serious security problems" (Sjoberg, 2010, 30) particularly terrorism and radicalization.

My first argument for the inclusion of gender in security comes through my interview with Deborah Clifton who is a senior gender advisor at the UN Office in Geneva. For Ms. Clifton, "security" is bigger than just military security and she stated that the while it is a recent

phenomenon, the UN is starting to realize that security must also encompass an availability of basic opportunities and resources such as humanitarian aid to people that live in conflict zones and places where they are at high-risk of physical, sexual, mental, and emotional insecurity. According the Ms. Clifton, the distribution of humanitarian aid is an aspect of human security that is greatly affected by constructions of gender within areas that are marked with violent conflict. Decisions regarding which affected communities are assisted, who within this community has access to humanitarian aid, and how this assistance is given are all affected gender-based considerations and a failure to understand the particular gender dynamics of the conflict zone could exacerbate the condition of women and other vulnerable groups.

States Are Created Through Gendered Processes:

Unfortunately, however, it is clear that importance of gender becomes greatly undermined because states themselves are created through a process of masculinization. Here Judith Butler's idea of *performativity* is helpful to understand that "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (Wadley, 2010, 40)." States take on the legitimatizing role of "stable and masculine protectors" and through "repeated performances" (Wadley, 2010, 40), they become gendered in the very much the same way that people are gendered. Moreover, "every state is at least partially a security state, and the legitimacy it derives from performances of protection can be explained by the fact that the same logic legitimates unequal relationships in the personal lives of men and women everywhere" (Wadley, 2010, 52) – this idea reflects the states are inherently based on a set of gendered principles that create dichotomies of masculinity and femininity. The gendering of states at the most basic level creates essentially gendered political institutions that favor perceived masculinity over femininity. The same institutions are responsible for granting an unequal access

to resources to men, women, and LGBT people while they their inherently gendered nature leads to reproduction of gender inequalities that exist at the social level. Not only are women prevented from being part of the higher decision-making processes within these institutions, but their opinions and feedback is considered inferior to their male counterparts. Therefore Ms. Clifton's work focuses on identifying who are the female key figures and voices that need to be listened to and given a platform to in order to bring women's issues and perspectives to the light particularly in the areas of peace-building and security.

Women's Roles in Conflict Zones and Peace Building:

Another important aspect that Ms. Clifton highlighted about how gender affects decisions and application of security policies is that "women and children" are lumped together into a single category which is always victimized and women are devoid of any agency in conflict zones particularly as agents of violence but also as of peace building. Swati Parashar links militancy and gender by arguing that gender matters for understanding contemporary conflicts because largest numbers of victims emanating from long-lasting conflicts are women and children (this highlights Ms. Clifton's point), women become upholders of the key values of the conflicting sides as cultural bearers, and there is an increasing militarization of women who participate in "post-modern" wars and support militant activities (2010, 169-170). Parashar focuses heavily on the role of women as militants in order to challenge the notion that women always take the back seat in times of violent conflicts. Through her examples of the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Kashmir, she makes it clear that women are often the perpetrators of violence and play a wide variety of roles in such situations.

However, as I learned from Ms. Clifton, women have not only bridged the gap in conflicts in places like Bosnia and Liberia, but they have also created ingenious disaster

management networks such as the Fiji Radio Women Network against natural disasters.

Moreover the UN Security Council adoption Resolution 1325 on October 31, 2000 which is the

Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security and this resolution "reaffirms the

important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-

building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses

the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance

and promotion of peace and security." Yet talking to Ms. Clifton made it clear that there is a

disconnect between the commitment to include women in peace and security and the reality of

how the UN actually works and how well women are included at the higher levels of decision-

making processes. Ms. Clifton stated that "any peace negotiation only includes men– it is not

considered the time and place for women to be part of peace-building processes" even though the

it is obvious that without involving women in sustainable peace-building efforts, long-lasting

peace can never be achieved as such efforts must essentially attempt to solve gender inequalities

within the conflict-ridden society and empower women to play an active role in the protection of

themselves and their families.

     Ms. Clifton also emphasized the need to include LGBT people in the conversation about

peace and security as they are often the most vulnerable to conflicts and in general are

marginalized, discriminated against, and their presence in many countries not even

acknowledged which makes it almost impossible for them to gain political agency. LGBT people

are also at high-risk of radicalization as they ironically often find refuge in the security provided

by terrorist organizations as the can use violent extremism to channel the frustrations they feel

against mainstream society. Once again, the UN and most international organizations are lagging

behind in realizing the importance of including LGBT people in the policies and efforts to

combat terrorism and violent extremism because these institutions are gendered and favor a status-quo and very masculine understanding of these conflicts.

Some of above mentioned challenges faced by the UN were also echoed by the experts I had the privilege of interviewing from the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section at the OHCHR in Geneva. I learned that the OHCHR works by using a human rights based approach to various issues including violent extremism and terrorism and their basic goal is to prevent human rights violations in conflict zones. The WHRG section in particular works to promote women's presence in the security agenda and deal with issues related to participation of women, issues related to disarmament, justice processes, and making women's voices heard at international platforms. I was surprised to learn during my interview that even though the Resolution 1325 was adopted in 2000, only recently during the peace negotiations in Columbia were 50 or so recommendations included that emphasized the importance of women and gender in the peace-building process. It was also found through the Columbia peace negotiations that including women and having a gender-based approach changes the focus of transitional justice efforts and they become considerably more aware of the actual problems on the ground affecting vulnerable populations and they are ultimately more beneficial for everyone involved.

Another surprising (or not so surprising) thing I learned was that even though women are often involved in conflict resolution and peace building, their efforts are easily ignored and forgotten post-conflict in most examples that we have seen, and the power imbalance embedded within gender relations that existed before the conflict is restored. The result: women's efforts are rendered meaningless resulting in deeper, more long-lasting problems in the post-conflict zone where there is a higher chance of conflict resurging. According to the OHCHR experts, each peace-building effort is an opportunity to acknowledge that a change happened in the
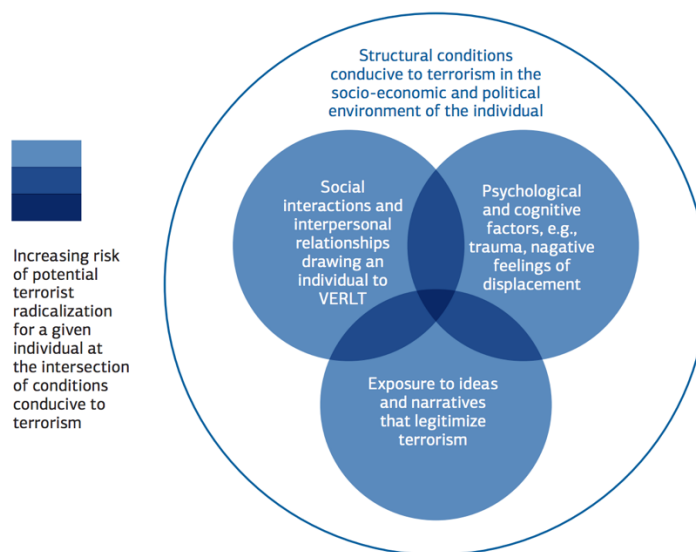
society and that women's efforts should be the basis of making decisions that allow women to have a better life. Unfortunately, however, it has been documented that when "when women enter politics, particularly in areas of foreign policy, they enter an already constructed masculine world where role expectations are defined in terms of adherence to preferred masculine attributes such as rationality, autonomy, and power. (Maruska, 2010, 248). This means that there is already a standard within international politics and peace-building negotiations that puts women and other minorities at a disadvantage and compels them to conform to the masculine status quo.

The OHCHR experts also emphasized the need to deal with the root causes of human rights violations particularly sexual violence and to avoid seeing sexual violence as something that happens in isolation from other human rights violations. According to the experts, there exists a problem of "fragmentation" within the UN through which the root causes of various problems are ignored because they are broken down into so many parts that it's impossible to create comprehensive policies that effectively deal with these issues. This interview greatly complicated my understanding of how gender should be included in the conversation. The experts stated that while it is true that gender is not just about women but everyone in society, we have to remind ourselves that gender is also power structures and we have to consider whose power are we increasing and for what? We should not avoid talking about men, and their issues, resources, and political resources. We should engage men in the conversation about gender and their own masculinity but NGOs have to be careful so that the resources and political attention are not directed towards men only and we have to keep in mind that different power structures exist within men's groups as well so we cannot simplify "men" as a homogenous entity – I will visit these two issues later by engaging with the interview I conducted in Brussels.

Factors That Promote Terrorist Radicalization - The Wants and the Want Nots:

On the issue of gender and terrorist radicalization, the experts mentioned that we must look at the factors that drive people into extremism. We have to consider the micro-level, the regional, community level and the individual level gender relations and how they impact a person's life and could potentially lead them towards radicalization. Many times, radicalization is seen as an opportunity of empowerment. Hence, women joined armed groups in Sri Lanka probably saw a way of gaining some power and claiming a civic space when no such spaces were otherwise offered to them in society. For women and even minorities, joining a terrorist group might be the only way they feel empowered. In her book *Bombshell*, Mia Bloom states that female suicide bombers are even more effective than men because until recently their use as operatives has been totally unexpected because soldiers and security personnel have been guided by profiles and stereotypes of men as terrorists (Bloom, 2011, 21). Hence, terrorist organizations are recruiting more women than before because they exploit the stereotypes against women that prevent counter-terrorism efforts to view women as even capable of committing violence.

Figure No. 1: Conditions conducive to terrorist radicalization in an individual case

Increasing risk of potential terrorist radicalization for a given individual at the intersection of conditions conducive to terrorism

Structural conditions conducive to terrorism in the socio-economic and political environment of the individual

Social interactions and interpersonal relationships drawing an individual to VERLT

Psychological and cognitive factors, e.g., trauma, nagative feelings of displacement

Exposure to ideas and narratives that legitimize terrorism

For women, unfortunately, joining a terrorist organization is not always a choice or a struggle for empowerment. Bloom argues that in many cases of women's involvement, the woman "has been abused, victimized, or targeted in ways that leave her little choice but to join the terrorist" whether to reclaim her honor if she brought shame to her family (for example if she was raped) or to meet the demands of terrorist recruiters that essentially kidnap women. Even when women join terrorist organizations willing in hopes of becoming empowered, they are often stuck in a patriarchal and extremely misogynistic system in which all the lowest roles are delegated to them. Gender roles are concretely defined within the armed and terrorist groups therefore women often find themselves in disadvantageous positions. In the example of the FARC in Colombia, women have been obliged to take contraception and undergo forced abolitions to meet the demands of their male superiors. Hence, it is clear to see that gender is an omnipresent force that determines behavior within terrorist groups as well.

Why Masculinity Matters for the Study of Terrorist Radicalization:

My third interview with Mr. Alex Govers who works as a researcher for Le Monde Selon des Femmes in Brussels, Belgium and my fourth interview with Professor Sébastien Chauvin at the University of Lausanne served an important role for my ISP research because these interviews solidified the idea that the study of masculinity is indeed necessary for understanding terrorist radicalization and deconstructing masculinity also matters for issues of gender equality and resolving conflicts. Talking to them further helped me understand the connection between masculinity and a particular type of masculinity as it is linked to violence against women and other minorities particularly the LGBT community. Gender norms are structured as dichotomous pairs and they establish a hierarchy among actors in society through qualities such as rationality/irrationality, civilized/barbaric, autonomous/dependent, active/passive, and

powerful/weak (Wadley, 2010, 49). It must also be recognized that there exist multiple different types of masculinity and within the range of masculinities, there are dominant and subordinate types. Thus, *hegemonic masculinity* is an "idealized, rational, and historical model of masculinity" (Wadley, 2010, 49) and its "idealization and cultural pervasiveness require other actors to position themselves in relation to it". This idea was also echoed by Professor Chauvin who mentioned that when we think about how men learn gender and gender relations, we tend to think that gender is relational and that men learn gender by interacting with women but actually they learn gender performance by interacting with other men particularly hegemonic men. And in their relationships with women, men utilize the same hierarchies that they affect their relationships with other men. Hence, gender is a very strong signifying factor in power struggles but it is not just about men vs. women but it is actually about men vs. smaller men. And the relationships between men and women are created through norms that affects relationships among different groups of men.

Mr. Govers, on the other hand, mentioned that M/F (Le monde selon les femmes) recently hired him because he is conducting research on deconstructing masculinity and its effects particularly in the context of Belgium. He mentioned that understanding masculinity is of vital importance in an effort to gain gender equality because we have to study men and masculinity within feminism for it to gain legitimacy. He stated that masculinity is a complex issue and is the other side of the gender question; while we focus on women as the victims of the patriarchy, we tend to forget that men also have a big responsibility in changing gender relations. Hence, effective long-term efforts to gain gender equality will necessarily have to bring men into the conversation and an essential first step for this is to deconstruct and try to understand what masculinity is and why it matters.

Alex and I also talked about the differences between personal and collective masculinities and how men feel the need to perform their gender in particularly emotion-less, violent, and degrading ways to women when they are in large all-male groups. Alex helped me realize that masculinity does change depending on the context and this is directly linked to understanding the construction of a "radical terrorist masculinity" as it acts on a personal and collective level as well. Terrorist organizations rely on creating a collective masculinity that can legitimize violence and till this interview, I had not made that connection. In fact, through my literature review, I learned that "statemaking and warmaking are cognate activities and warmaking has long been a way of defining and demonstrating a range of stereotypical masculinist traits" and that "war imparts upon its performers a masculinity that cannot be accomplished by other means" (Wadley, 2010, 44). It is important to keep in mind that "protection" has also been theorized by feminist scholars as a masculinizing performance (Wadley, 2010, 51). These traits of warmaking and protection while traditionally provide legitimacy to states based on the masculinizing effect of these processes also ironically provide legitimacy to terrorist organizations and this greatly explains why joining a terrorist organization might be tempting for people who wish to be empowered or seek some form of external protection. Alex mentioned that according to one research, almost 70% of the people who were radicalized and went to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq, for example, were men. Therefore, being a terrorist in itself seems to be a very "masculine" activity and is linked to performing a particular kind of masculinity.

Hypermasculine Commonalities in State Masculinity and Terrorist Masculinity:

This masculinity that compels people (not just men) to become violent is not simply hegemonic but is actually a *hypermasculine* form of hegemonic masculinity. It should be obvious

by now that "hegemonic masculinity is dominant in international politics, and it occasionally takes hypermasculine forms" (Maruska, 2010, 235). This hypermasculine variant is more violent, aggressive, morally self-righteous, and considers physical violence as a legitimate means of achieving whatever goals are being set out – it is an inflation, distortion, or exaggeration of traditional masculinity in times when agents of hegemonic masculinity feel threatened or undermined (Maruska, 2010, 239). However, it must be noted that it is "impossible to define what exactly constitutes hypermasculinity because it is time- and place-dependent" (Maruska, 2010, 247) and therefore, hypermasculinity changes from one context to another and it does not occur only within hegemonic masculine groups but also groups who are associated with subordinated masculinities (aggressive Asian masculinity in low-income households, for example). Hypermasculinity is created as a result of the interactions between the general population of a country and the political and military elites – in the American context for example, "presidential hypermasculinity is often attended by hypermasculinity in mainstream American culture" (Maruska, 2010, 250).

It is clear that terrorist ideology is founded in a political instrumentalization of violent hypermasculinity that seeks to change or completely overturn status-quo political institutions. Ironically, however, the "war on terror has [also] been presented as a hyper-masculine war where virile and aggressive men, fighting for the honor of their nations, and freedom, lead the forces on either side". This leads to a very important question: is terrorist masculinity inherently subordinate because it is decidedly not Western? Since a straight, white, and essentially western masculinity is considered the most hegemonic in most areas of the world, how does terrorist masculinity compare to this hegemonic masculinity when both take hypermasculine forms that use violence as a solution to achieve political goals? I believe the answer to this question lies in

the fact that most terrorist and counter-terrorist masculinities have a lot more in common than we tend to accept, and they can be seen not just as a dichotomy of hegemonic-subordinate masculinities but in fact as part of a larger violent, patriarchal system of political power. In this system, the particular hypermasculine masculinity is privileged while women, LGBT people, and men who do not fit the mold of hegemonic masculinity are oppressed and prevented access to security. In state-making, hypermasculinity exists as a recruiting force and in the context of terrorists, such masculinity is used to radicalize young men, women, and LGBT people.

However, this is not to say that both masculinities are exactly similar as terrorist masculinity uses violence as a tool *more often* and *more violently* than governments in the contemporary international system. Histories of colonialism and imperialism, of course, also reflect such extreme violence used by states against other states or groups of people and legitimized through a masculinizing performance of protection and moral righteousness. However, states no longer use violence as a primary means of expressing their masculinity since diplomacy, economic relations, and other means of projecting power such as scientific innovations (As Lauren Wilcox suggests, science and technology are inherently masculine, and the "harder" the technology, the more masculine it is (Wilcox, 2010, 65)) have become a lot more acceptable than war-making today. Yet it is clear to see that the relationship between state masculinity and terrorist masculinity cannot be denied and that they share many features of hypermasculinity and counter-terrorism efforts should be self-aware about this crucial fact in order to combat terrorist masculinity in a more effective manner.

Another aspect of this puzzle that Mr. Govers from M/F touched on was the deradicalization policies used by European countries in particular are already aimed mostly at men and at problematizing what it means to be a man. The goal of my ISP itself is to help

academics and policy makers to realize that understanding masculinity is crucial for deradicalization efforts and we must start talking about masculinity more. However, my understanding of deradicalization efforts based around hegemonic masculinity was complicated through my interview with the experts from OHCHR who mentioned that we must pay attention to how deradicalization can also be instrumentalized to target certain groups and could potentially end up causing more damage by exacerbating the disenfranchisement faced by those groups. Professor Chauvin further complicated my understanding of hegemonic masculinity by arguing that we cannot simply associate "everything evil in the world" with hegemonic masculinity – it does not just exist as an oppressing force but can also play a positive role as men invest hegemonic masculinity in various different kinds of economic, anti-imperialistic efforts in different societies in the world.

The Influence of Religion and Sexuality on Radicalization Through Gender:

My understanding of the relationship between gender and terrorist radicalization became more nuanced when I learned from Professor Chauvin that we also have to consider the influence of religion on the process of radicalization and how religion itself is gendered and reproduces gender inequalities within society and within the structure of terrorist organizations. People who become radicalized undergo a process of religious re-identification through which they view religion is a way of redemption and as a way of providing meaning to their own lives. This is particularly true for individuals who do not accept their own desires or struggles with their identity particularly identities that are socially marginalized such as LGBT identities – hence, joining a terrorist group in the name of religion becomes a way of finding and embracing a "normal" form of gender relations and sexual expression. Internalized misogyny and internalized homophobia lead people to see terrorist organizations as a source of repressing their own

"deviant" sexual or gender identities since gender roles and sexual identities are extremely defined and policed within such organizations.

The sexuality aspect of the gender and terrorist radicalization issue deserves more attention as the particular type of sexual masculinity that is disseminated through terrorist propaganda materials is attractive in the literal sense to both men and women who are seduced by the figure of the Jihadists. Men's desire to embrace terrorist masculinity reflects deeper sexual desires which through the promise of devoted wives in this world and of virgins in the hereafter are exploited by terrorist organizations. For those whose sexualities are deviant, terrorist organizations might represent a chance at redemption and self-acceptance that social norms otherwise prevent them from achieving. The sexual dimension of radicalization is intrinsically connected with the gender norms and expectations that permeate society in general and particularly those that affect the more marginalized and vulnerable parts of a given culture.

Ironically, according to Professor Chauvin, the number of people at risk in a LGBT group could actually be higher than in a mosque because members of such a group are more vulnerable and therefore have more incentive to join terrorists organization to seek empowerment, redemption, or revenge on a society that marginalized them. Individual motivations notwithstanding, sexuality and gender must both be taken into consideration while trying to understand the power relations that exist within a society that might potentially make people vulnerable to radicalization. Therefore, for effective deradicalization and for a society that allows each individual to live with freedom and security, efforts should be focused on lessening "hierarchies of power based on gender as well as race, class, and sexuality" (Maruska, 2010, 270). A feminist and gendered lens on security studies allows us to humanize the victims and the

perpetrators of violent extremism and terrorism which ultimately can help us understand, prevent, and alleviate the conflicts that arise from them.

Conclusion:

Through this ISP, I have tried to show that gender and masculinity should not only be an essential lens through which to study international relations and security studies but also that states and political institutions are themselves gendered and they derive their legitimacy from perceptions of masculinity which are sustained through gender norms within society. I have also made the case that terrorist radicalization exploits existing power relations within different genders in society and that an understanding of these power relations helps us understand people's motivation for joining terrorist groups which could (in the minds of the people that become radicalized) provide them with protection, empowerment, or in certain cases, redemption.

The strength of this ISP lies in the fact that it builds upon existing feminist IR scholarship as well as real-life evidence that show how gender privileges hegemonic masculinity and those who perform this masculinity in the arena of international relations and prevents certain women and men with subordinate masculinities or perceived femininity from decision-making power or even a voice with which they impact change. The absence of quantitative data on radicalization, however, accounts for a weakness of this ISP as most of the analysis in this research project has been qualitative and I have not included figures and numbers that substantiate the claims that I (and other feminist IR scholars) have made. Unfortunately, such data does not exist because feminist IR is still a very new field and not enough academics are yet interested in undertaking more quantitative work in determining the impact of gender on radicalization.

This ISP is inspired from and hopes to inspire work that expands the field of international relations and particularly critical security studies that focus on the study of terrorist radicalization through a feminist and gendered perspective. A statistical analysis that explores the relation between gender and radicalization would greatly benefit this research in the future. Moreover, exploring the relation between state masculinity and terrorist masculinity as well as the impact of religion and sexuality on gender norms and how they shape power relations that originate through gender norms would be important questions to consider for future research. A gender and performative analysis of propaganda material produced by terrorist organizations that is shared on social media could potentially provide statistical data as well based on the kind of gendered imagery and messages that are present in such materials. These questions were outside the scope of this ISP which aimed at concretely establishing the relationship between the gender and state-making as well as terrorism and how the power relations that arise from gender norms put certain members of the society at higher risk of radicalization.

Abbreviations:

LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender

M/F: Le Monde Selon Des Femmes

NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations

OHCHR: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

UN: United Nations

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