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The representation of extremists in Western media

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The Representation of Extremists in Western Media

As radicalised Muslim converts gain ever greater attention within the War on Terror (WoT) and the media, an investigation into their portrayal and the associated discourses becomes ever more relevant. This study aims to shed more light on the representation of these extremist individuals in the Western media, specifically white converts to Islam who become radicalised. It explores whether there is indeed a difference between the portrayal of female and male extremists within this context and seeks to reveal any related social or national anxieties. This research paper has a qualitative research design, comprising the comparative case study model and discourse analysis. The main sources for the discourse analysis are English-speaking Western newspapers.

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise. This research report is submitted towards the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations by coursework and research report at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Laura Kapelari

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“If you are not careful,
the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed,
and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”
– Malcolm X

Chapter 1. Introduction

With the events of 9/11 came the Bush administration's rewritten national security policy, branded the War on Terror (WoT), which not only brought with it a cultural construction and political rationale that reinforced this slogan and facilitated its purpose, but a powerful organising principle that has become a widely accepted framing and resultantly created a news discourse favourable to military action in Iraq and elsewhere (Reese and Lewis 2009). In times of conflict, language will often take on a more substantial role, as staging and sustaining a war relies on collecting public emotion through the "visceral impact of propagandistic language" (Steuter and Wills 2010, 152). It has been no different with the WoT, which has given rise to an all-new set of propaganda tools used to frame the enemy within the "us versus them" dialectic and justify ongoing conflict.

In the wake of 9/11, terrorism has assumed an ever larger and more permanent position globally and therefore in the media. The Global Terrorist Index recorded a total of 9 814 terrorist attacks in 2013, up from 6 825 in 2012 – an alarming increase of 44 percent (Allison 2014). This was accompanied by a 61 percent increase in loss of life, with 17 958 deaths in 2013 compared with 11 133 in 2012 (Allison 2014). While this is in line with the upsurge in terrorism since 9/11 and resulting efforts to combat it, the way individuals participating in terrorism, in this specific case white Muslim converts, are portrayed in the media, is highly problematic. Not only due to stereotypical representations and discourses surrounding both genders, but, more crucially, due to the fact that the securitisation of politics and democracy, as shaped by the launch of the War on Terror (WoT) by the United States, has led to an exclusionary definition of terrorism, whereby armed oppositional violence in the form of terrorism is in fact demonised, without there being any attempt to understand the underlying causes (Gold-Biss 1994). More specifically, the link between the US-led WoT (or Overseas Contingency Operation, as the Obama administration likes to call it) and the subsequent and symptomatic rise in Islamic fundamentalist extremism, both at home and abroad, and more notably the home-grown version increasingly committed and supported by Western citizens, has been wholly ignored by mainstream Western media.

This one-sided view of history is by no means a new development. For instance, John Pilger's documentary *War on Democracy*, which explores the current and past relationship of the

United States with Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Chile, depicts how successive US intervention, both overt and covert, has led to the collapse of a series of legitimate governments in the region since the 1950s. *War on Democracy* demonstrates the brutal reality of America's notion of "spreading democracy", namely that, in fact, America is actually leading a war on democracy, and that true popular democracy is now more likely to be found in the grassroots movements led by the residents of the *barrios* of Latin America than in the US. Moreover, the film displays how the US, and it is by no means the only country to do so, has expanded its national security concerns abroad with such impunity that it can essentially do as it sees fit under the banner of democracy; nowhere is this more apparent than in the WoT and the ensuing increase in terrorist activity. The 2013 film *Dirty Wars* draws similar conclusions, pointing out the self-fulfilling prophecy that is the WoT by exposing the hidden truth behind America's covert wars overseas – again officially carried out in the name of democracy. Ultimately, it is important to keep this bigger picture and context in mind, as it no doubt informs the way individuals participating in acts of terrorism are portrayed in mainstream Western media.

One of the most recent and ongoing cases of a radicalised white Muslim convert has been that of the "White Widow" aka UK national Samantha Lewthwaite, an alleged member of the Somali radical Islamic militant group Al-Shabaab and wanted terrorist. Reporting on this individual has mainly covered, explicitly and implicitly, the irreconcilability of an extremist woman involved in acts of terrorism. Recognising that women might actually have legitimate reasons for extremism would undermine the predominant discourse about gendered violence (Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 7), as the media and everyday discourse still conceptualise women as victims of violence and local peacekeepers rather than as agents of violence. As Elshtain notes, men are still viewed as the main agents of violence and this is also reflected in the media:

> Certainly when most of us think "terrorist" we do not see "woman". The perpetrators, or the alleged perpetrators, who have flashed across our television screens in recent years are pretty much a youthful male lot. (1987, 179)

Such a gender trap actually makes us blind to the fact that women, like men, are perfectly capable of perpetrating violent acts, in the process shaping the way national and international security measures are implemented (Elshtain 1987; Ruddick 1989; Sjoberg and Gentry 2008). At the same time, such a perspective also presumes that men are natural agents of violence, with a militaristic language often being used to underscore this, thereby not only polarising the genders

from the start but erecting fixed valuations of what it means to be a "real" man or woman (Hooper 2001). This research will therefore attempt to sketch and understand how this gendered process is reflected in the Western media and whether there is, in fact, a proven difference in the ways female and male agents of violence are portrayed as a result.

Since 9/11, the "fear of the other" has wormed its way into the core of another American generation, and the West in general. Resultantly, the fear of a "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149) has been ingrained in Western consciousness, despite, to give an example, right-wing violence having killed more people in the US than Islamic jihadists since 9/11 (Wilkins 2014). This "fear of the other" not only informs the way the West views the East, but engenders false or skewed discourses surrounding non-Western nations and individuals that are, in turn, part and parcel of the hegemonic strategy to legitimise ongoing imperialist projects through the construction of enemy imaginaries (Tuastad 2003). According to Quiney (2007), foreigners have been equated with terrorists since the events of 9/11 and discourses surrounding terrorism and immigration have subsequently become entangled, as fears of the "intimate alien" thrive. Within the War on Terror and home-grown terrorism, the terrorist male is often portrayed as a doppelganger or intimate alien, denoting the fear of the "enemy within", whereby a nation's own citizens target their motherland (Quiney 2007, 328). There is thus great power behind representation. While this very same dialectic is evident in the representation of male and female extremists, especially those subscribing to Islamic fundamentalism, it becomes even more problematic and multidimensional if one considers that women themselves are classified as internal "others" and therefore function as "others" on more than one level given their new-found religious affiliations.

Taking all of these factors into consideration, the analysis of how extremist women and men (specifically those who are white and Western-born) are portrayed in the media is an undertaking demanding a multipronged theoretical and analytical approach, an eye for the interdisciplinary, as well as ties into the IR gender debate at large and considers aspects of international/national security and power in the process. An overview of current media portrayal will be achieved through an initial word frequency analysis of a randomised sample of news items about a male and a female group of selected white converts to Islam who have become radicalised. A simple random sample of 10 articles per individual was produced from the total

final population (288 – men; 182 – women) using the online sampling source Research Randomizer (Urbaniak and Plous 2011) to be certain that each article had an equal chance of being chosen. The simple random sample of 60 articles was selected and analysed for this study. These articles also informed the comparative case study model adopted for this study, which sought to compare and contrast the media portrayals of both male and female Western converts to Islam who have been radicalised. The word frequency analysis in turn guided the choice of themes for the discourse analysis, though a majority were either expanded or created following a close reading of said sampled articles. In line with the comparative case study approach, these themes subsequently functioned to reveal how each group is represented in the media and whether their portrayal differed or was in fact the same, and also touched on and highlighted any national anxieties informing this depiction. These defined themes are as follows and are explained in detail later on: "trauma", "influential relationships", "appearance", and "normality/irreconcilability" as well as two group-specific themes called "motherhood" (women) and "traitorousness" (men).

The findings of this research paper indicate that there is indeed a difference between the portrayal of male and female extremists in the Western media. It is demonstrated that while women extremists are stripped bare of all political agency in the media, the men, though exposed to rhetoric condemning their treachery as well as often depicted as capitulating to mental illness, remain largely intact as agents. This comes down to men being located in the international sphere, while women are fixed within the domestic equivalent. Men occupy the subject position, thus the default category, while women are objects and are portrayed accordingly in the media. What this means for their respective media portrayals is that news items on men will be far less personal and biographical as well as largely non-sensationalist when compared to the versions dealing with women extremists. While the articles on women extremists will often read like celebrity tabloids (even in the more serious broadsheets) and cover topics ranging from paternity and relationships with men to looks; the male extremists under analysis here are reported on in a largely factual and reasonably critical way. Within the discourse on terror and extremism, men are othered, though certainly not to the extent that the women are. That is to say, although they are cast in the role of the enemy (which is an "other"), male extremists retain their agency by virtue of being located on the other side of the so-called battlefield, while women, as "the other of the terrorist Other", are never in possession of agency, "not even the deviant agency accorded

to the gender-neutral figure of the terrorist" (Sage 2013, 76). Though these findings will be shown to be in line with traditionally assigned gender roles and the dialectics contained therein, it is interesting to note the weight of the traitor discourse seen in the articles on men extremists and the way their choice in the matter is highlighted to accentuate their masculinity (rational, dutiful, and loyal) or subsequent lack thereof. In terms of how the representation of these individuals relates to social and national anxieties in their countries of origin, it will become evident throughout the analysis that not only has the domestic fear surrounding the "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149) led to the terrorist (and by extension the white Muslim convert) being equated with the foreigner, but that as a result, terrorism/extremism and immigration have come to be situated within the same framework, where the slippery slopes of counter-terrorism and anti-immigration meld together. This, in turn, results in bolstered anti-immigration clauses as well as the racialisation of those conceivably associated with the "enemy".

Rationale and Aims

The researcher's own interest in this topic comes from a longer-spanning fascination with gender stereotyping in the West, specifically with regards to violence, wherein women are cast as victims and men as perpetrators. What is new about the research undertaken here is its analysis of specifically Western extremists who turn on their own nations. While there have been a number of investigations into extremism, these have, in terms of representation, predominantly focused on non-Western, specifically Muslim individuals (see for instance the women of the Tamil Tigers) who commit such acts and how they are portrayed in the media. While these acts and their perpetrators are of great currency in an era where the WoT and Islamic Fundamentalism's ostensible crusade against Western ideals reigns supreme, this does not mean that all extremists are fundamentalist Muslims or even non-Western. This study therefore specifically aims to shed more light on the representation of Western Muslim converts who become extremists in the Western media. They will be divided into two groups: female and male converts to Islam who become radicalised. These groups will in turn form part of the comparative case study analysis in this research report and inform the analysis and interpretation of the representation of extremist men and women in the Western media, especially relating to

the nationalist and/or social anxieties this reveals, and the larger impact this has on the international arena and its actors. This study is also an attempt to debunk the motivational stereotypes put forward in the media to explain the actions of these extremists, which are rooted in established Western gender paradigms wherein, for instance, women are categorised as naturally non-violent. Due to the comparative nature of this study, it will also be exploring the way extremist men are shown in the media, including the gender implications thereof for men specifically, given that they are taken as the default (they are called "terrorist" instead of "male terrorist", unlike women) and therefore, as Sage (2013, 66) rightly notes, are not acknowledged or analysed with regard to the stereotypes and concepts of masculinity shaping the portrayal of male suicide bombing in particular and male terrorism at large. The male side of the gender debate within the terrorism context has largely been neglected within academia. It should also be noted that rather than finding alternative explanations for why these individuals became radicalised and so speaking for them, as the media has done, this research attempts to question and raise awareness regarding these gender dynamics and expose them as purely artificial categorisation.

Research Questions

1. Does the representation of extremism in the media differ between men and women, and if so, how?
2. What does the portrayal of these extremists in the media reveal about current social anxieties in the West?
    a. How does this tie into current debates surrounding terrorism and immigration?

Chapter 2. Literature Review

When looking at the portrayal of extremist women and men in global politics, it is first necessary to examine the discourse that underpins it. Firstly, there is seen to be a "natural" link between women and peace and the home front, and between men and war and the battlefront as well as the unsound belief that women are inherently or naturally peaceful and passive and should, as a result, participate in the peace process (Charlesworth 2008; Herbert 1994; Mason 2005). Tickner (2001, 59) stresses that equating men with war and women with peace "reinforces gender hierarchies and false dichotomies that contribute to the devaluation of both women and peace", while Mazurana and McKay (1999) argue that depending on an in-built peacefulness in women precludes the adequate recognition of the motivations behind female extremism. Yuval-Davis sees the significance behind this imagery, asserting that not only have men been constructed as warriors and women constructed as naturally linked to peace, but that the images of women warriors

> have either enhanced the constructed unnaturalness of women as fighters, or been made in such a way as to collude with more generalized notions of femininity and masculinity in the society from which the women fighters have come. (1997, 94)

According to Alison (2009, 91), the masculine war and feminine peace dichotomy is predominantly a Western construct. Elshtain agrees, emphasising how peace and war

> help structure Western civil society's view of itself, with protests against war couched in terms that mirror that which they oppose: peace to war; anti-bellicist femininity to bellicose masculinity; harmony to disorder; homogeneity to heteronomy […]. Peace cannot exist without war, and both are problematic notions, obsolete in an era of nuclear weaponry, constantly reduced launch-on-warning time, spy satellites, and national defense as a potential form of civic suicide. (1997, 253)

Moreover, Tickner underlines how the "construction of national identities around the notion of a safe, or civilized, space "inside" depends on the construction of an "outside" whose identity often appears strange or threatening" (2001, 55). According to Campbell (1992, 86), this imagery also translates into foreign policy where the national identity is masculine and the enemy is feminised, and, according to Goldstein (2001, 356) the female gender is in fact used to symbolise

domination. What is more, the fact that women "give" life is seen to preclude them from taking it (Ruddick 1989). A violent woman is therefore in contravention to the stereotype of female powerlessness and peacefulness by becoming someone from whom others should be protected (Keitner 2002, 75; Young 2003; Sjoberg 2006).

Moreover, Sjoberg and Gentry (2008, 7) highlight that acknowledging that women might actually possess legitimate motivations to commit violence would destabilise the prevailing discourse about women's roles, their relationship to violence, and the way we view women and international politics at large. When interpreting the actions of women on a domestic as well as global level, it is thus crucial to understand that women are indeed capable of perpetrating violence, as this not only allows us to see that "women are not monolithic in their outlook as a group and are not bearers of certain essential qualities such as kindness and compassion" (Goldblatt and Meintjes 1998, 45), but that they are political actors in their own right.

While women are absent from the battlefront, war is very relevant to a discussion on masculinities, not only as an example of how international politics defines men's identities, where military service is advertised as "the fullest expression of masculinity" (Hooper 2001, 81), but also in terms of the language that is used to gender the world into protector/protected, outside/inside, international/domestic, battlefront/home front, and so on. Hooper (2001) asserts that international relations produce multiple masculinities, rather than a single fixed masculinity, thus theorising a back-and-forth between a "hegemonic masculinity" (associated with elite, Western male power) and other subordinated, feminised masculinities (stereotypically associated with poor, non-western, or gay men, and/or men of colour). If one considers the different models of masculinity[1], the bourgeois rationalist model, which encompasses, most of all, what it means to be a modern man, helps us understand the lack of emotion and possibly agency-eroding sentiments these men are portrayed as possessing within the media. Seidler (1987) for instance

[1] These include:
(1) the heroic warrior-citizen model, where the notion of manliness is linked to the conquest of women;
(2) the patriarchal model, where men dominate the conceptual scheme and women are wholly absent; and
(3) the bourgeois rationalist model, which idealises "competitive individualism, reason, and self-control or self-denial, combining respectability as breadwinner and head of household with calculative rationality in public life" (Hooper 2001, 98).

argues that emotion and desire are seen as threatening elements within rationalism, where these feminine characteristics are even seen to bring masculine identity into doubt. Only acting with reason and duty serve to strengthen the identity of men and any emotions or desires are accordingly transferred to "feminine" Others like women, gays, Jews, and blacks (Seidler 1987, 86-90). Hooper (2001, 115) also notes how "IR is a primary site for the production of masculinities, while at the same time obscuring this process, by eliminating personal life and questions of identity from its scope of analysis". This is affirmed by Tickner's analysis of the language used by US security experts, as she notes how this "rational, disembodied language precludes discussion of the death and destruction of war, issues that can be spoken of only in emotional terms stereotypically associated with women" (2001, 53). Lastly, as Sage (2013, 66) rightly notes, it is crucial to acknowledge and analyse the stereotypes and concepts of masculinity shaping the portrayal of male suicide bombing (as well as male extremism at large), which is currently not the case in academia or the media.

Conversely, West (2004-2005, 1) demonstrates how the motivations of women located in the androcentric groupings of warriors or terrorists are interpreted on a personal level and as a result of victimisation, rather than in terms of politics, ideology, and agency, while Sage (2013, 67) enquires why, when women do use personal or emotional language to elaborate on their actions, this is seen detract from their political agency in the first place. Sjoberg and Gentry (2008, 6), on the other hand, note the sexual language used to describe women's violence – they term this the "whore" narrative – which consists of two strands: (1) women's sexual obsession, and (2) women's sexual dysfunction. In both cases, these women are not viewed as real or natural women – their actions go against traditional gender mores. The root causes of female violence are thus viewed as being an unhealthily strong sexual drive or sexual deviance and dependence, thereby undermining the women's agency by reducing them to their sexuality and obscuring their true motives (Morgan 1989; Sjoberg and Gentry 2008).

Looking at media representations of female terrorists in 1970s Germany, Bielby (2006, 2-3) for instance reveals how the German media imposed a "hysterically feminine" mask on these women to make them seem less threatening to traditional notions of gender and the nation's body politic, while Rosenfeld (2010, 352-354) highlights how the West German government ascribed the actions by these women to an "excess of women's liberation" and

negated their political agency by crediting their motivations to engage in terrorism to the influence of (mainly male) lovers and friends. Moreover, Rosenfeld (2010, 354) ascribes this portrayal down to a larger sense of social anxiety about the rapidly changing gender roles and therefore a strategy to discourage such change. Ultimately, "[u]nderstanding women through their bodies means they are persistently located within the immediate contexts they inhabit" (Sage 2013, 74) and so can never truly escape the domestic arena and the absence of agency this entails. At the same time, it should also be noted that since 9/11, new frames informing journalistic practices have emerged in Western media (Zelizer and Allan 2002). More specifically, there exists a renewed emphasis on conflict as well as what has been termed a "terrorist attack frame", wherein conflict and treachery are assumed rather than assessed and thoroughly researched, and where reporting becomes "a prose of solidarity rather than a prose of information" (Zelizer and Allan 2002, 41), as patriotism supersedes professionalism. Acknowledging the existence of such framing is vital to understanding the multilayered portrayals of terrorist individuals in the media.

Sage (2013, 60), looking at studies on female suicide bombers, offers further insight into this dilemma, arguing that since women are traditionally identified as wife and/or mother (rather than being viewed as individuals), many believe that something truly extraordinary must have happened for these women to have become terrorists. According to Sage (2013), academics and the media typically put this down to the manifestation of a "personal" experience. An example of this is Bloom (2007, 95), who notes that the motivations of women vary from avenging a personal loss, saving the family name, fleeing a life of sheltered dreariness and achieving fame, to equalising the patriarchal societies in which these women find themselves. While Bloom (2007, 95) does agree that women terrorists thwart the theory that women are the more peaceful gender, there is still the problem that her analysis and view still situate women within traditional gender roles as well as assumes the female terrorist is and has to be different to its male counterpart, the so-called default category. Other scholars advise that the motivations of these women should not be read within a vacuum; rather, Alison (2009, 219) emphasises the existence of a "relational autonomy", where choice is dependent upon context – a largely underexplored terrain within the media, which has a tendency to generalise and stereotype according to gender. If the male terrorist remains the "ideal gender-neutral yardstick against which to gauge female terrorism" (Sage 2013, 61), then using the term "women suicide

bombers" equates to talking about female actions in conformity with patriarchal ideologies of femininity. Consequently, the female terrorist is disavowed of agency from the very beginning, as she is "the other of the terrorist Other, and as such, she can have no agency of her own, not even the deviant agency accorded to the gender-neutral figure of the terrorist" (Sage 2013, 76).

As demonstrated with the example of 1970s German media portrayal of female terrorists, representation also involves major national elements. English politician and scholar, Enoch Powell, defined the nation as "two males defending the women and children in a specific territory" (Yuval-Davis 2004, 170). While this provides a quintessential summary of the dialectic between gender and nation, in a less direct fashion, it highlights the predetermined, almost primeval artifice of such a way of doing things. Moreover, Persaud (2002, 80) notes that national identity may be defined as a personal belonging to the dominant group, where difference is therefore essential to national identity and language is seen to play a deciding role in setting up and defining these differences and thus legitimises intolerances:

> Those who do not look or behave like the dominant population are viewed as trespasser who must be kept out, or sent back. If they stay on, their presence is circulated as an ongoing threat that must be contained in the name of national-civilizational security (Persaud 2002, 80).

However, since these approaches fail to account for individuals who do not remain loyal to their own countries (such as home-grown terrorists and the extremists discussed in this paper), they also fail to pre-empt ways of combating these movements. This is highlighted by the current dilemma faced by Western nations as their citizens choose to cross over to the "other side", with many joining ISIS as foreign fighters (Hanrahan 2014).

The false notion of Western secular democracy or the "secularisation myth" (Greely 1972), which has more recently experienced a revival, especially in the face of increased religious radicalisation, also warrants discussion here. While inaugural speeches by presidents and the rhetoric of other public speakers in the US have religious accents and derive legitimacy therefrom, Britain's "Rushdie Affair"[2], which raised the question of the status of non-European

[2] Also known as the Satanic Verses, this was the impassioned and often violent reaction of Muslims to Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Many Muslims accused the author of being blasphemous and a non-

religious and cultural minorities in a secular hegemony, illustrated how the "otherness" of Muslims was in fact what constituted the radical difference that made the underlying Christian face of British secular hegemony and Islam incompatible (Biswas 2004). Moreover, this category of secularism has since then been utilised to identify, judge, and create the Third World as "a space of unmodern religiosity" (Biswas 2004).

The study of gender is therefore also closely linked to postcolonialism, in that "the racialized hierarchy of Europe and its others was often also a gender hierarchy in which Asian, Africans, and indigenous Americans were feminized in contrast to a masculinized European identity" (Chowdry and Nair 2004, 19) and even the construction of nation and national identity are underpinned by race and gender (Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000; Peterson 1992; Yuval-Davis 1993). Rattansi (1997, 482) further indicates how women, children and the working class actually functioned as internal others in the formation of Western modernity, in so doing underlining the imbrication of identities between coloniser and colonised by emphasising how Western society is built upon there being an "other" that it can define itself in relation to (Rattansi 1997, 482).

Moore-Gilbert notes that these IR scholars' arguments stem from the work of postcolonial scholars Said, Mohanty and Spivak, among others, who emphasised the "relationship between Western representation and knowledge on the one hand, and Western material and political power on the other" (1997, 34) as well as how race, class and gender constructions reinforced this. Power over the generation of knowledge is thus intrinsically linked to power and is therefore political (Said 1997, 160). The dichotomous representations of West and East, self and "other", which essentialise identity and difference (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 39), are hence central to the maintenance of Western hegemony.

When looking at the imbricated roles played by gender and race in domestic and international politics, it is also important to acknowledge the role played by the nation and the discourses surrounding it. Women's admission into the public domain and the political consequences for the nation has been a topic of discussion in more recent research on

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believer, and in 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa commanding Muslims to kill Rushdie (oxfordislamicstudies.com 2015).

nationalism. Many scholars have focused on charting the multifaceted connections between women and the nation (Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989; Yuval-Davis 1997; Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999), while others have analysed how women serve to legitimise the nation's political projects in specific social and historical contexts (Kandiyoti 1996; Chatterjee 1994). Gender roles and social norms are therefore pliable and accordingly transformed for political purposes, especially during times of intensified nationalism, war, and/or conflict, when social national anxieties are at an all-time high (Dowler 1998; Jacoby 1999; Enloe, 2000; Goldstein, 2001; Kaufman and Williams, 2004; Mazurana et al. 2005).

What is more, scholars have highlighted how male-centric nationalisms or nationalist ideologies "construct and functionalize women through discourses of appropriate femininity [and masculinity]" to construct nations and/or nationalisms (Peterson and Runyan 1998, 8); how nationalist discourses utilise "images and practices of sexuality [as] the malleable means of reproducing homogeneous and bounded [nations]" (Dwyer 2000, 27); and how nationalist ideologies place the sexuality of women in an "us versus them" scenario to project "dangerous sexuality … emanating from either "enemies" within, or the "other" nation's men" (Einhorn 2006, 202; Mayer 2000). Einhorn (2006, 202) has observed that sexuality and nationalist discourses are linked for the validation of a "moral imperative requiring women both to "represent" the nation through moral virtue and social norms, and to reproduce the national/ethnic groups in biological and cultural terms". Such a gendered nationalist process, or what Einhorn (2006, 202) refers to as the "politics of national reproduction", also suggests that "nationalist ideologies rely on constructions of masculinity and femininity to "naturalize" power struggles over who gets to define what the nation stands for" (Einhorn 2006, 199). The idea of a Western-born, white woman extremist is therefore one which fundamentally disturbs such constructions of gender.

In terms of Western male violence as well as its justification, the figure of the "Angry White Male" exposes the masculinities at play within the context of the nation. When white men commit acts of violence, they are typically seen to do so as a result of mental illness, access to guns, video games, etc., anything but their gender or race (Kimmel 2013). However, the author of *America's Angry White Men* (2013) notes the absence of gender within this explanation, arguing that what unites cases of white male violence is a sentiment of "aggrieved entitlement".

More specifically, after growing up with the belief that the US was "their" country (due to being born white and male), they felt entitled to a good job that would allow them to support a family as well as earn respect at home from admiring wives and dutiful children. Yet, not only did competition for jobs become increasingly fierce; this generation of men had to increasingly compete with an assortment of "others" (women, immigrants, gays, and black people), who also began claiming a piece of the proverbial pie (Kimmel 2013). As today's "Angry White Men" mourn the world they have lost, some organise politically to restore "their" country; as others descend into madness or lash out violently at a multitude of scapegoats in a bid to not only to reclaim what they feel entitled to socially or economically, but also to restore their sense of manhood (Kimmel 2013). Extrapolated to the international level, the "Angry White Male" can be seen both in the torrent of anti-immigration policies across Western nations as well as the "us versus them" mentality that colours the discourse on the War on Terror (WoT).

With regards to the interplay between the Western and Muslim world, it is also crucial to consider the discourse surrounding the veil, which often functions to reinforce the image of the "liberated First World" woman as opposed to the "oppressed Third World woman". The discourse originates in colonial times, when the veil became a powerful signifier not only for the social meaning of gender, but for nationalism and culture (Ahmed 1992; Dwyer 2010, 8). That is, by focusing on the veil as a symbol of Islamic backwardness and primitivism, the West effectively defined the terms of subsequent debates about women and the veil so that it became charged with issues of culture and nationalism and locked into an opposition between "Western" and "indigenous" or "authentic" beliefs (Dwyer 2010, 8). As Ahmed argues:

> in the discourse of women and the veil another discourse is inscribed, the discourse of colonial domination, the struggle against it and the class divisions around that struggle. (1992, 130)

While this discursive framework has also been carried over into the postcolonial period, it is important to consider a broader context of modernisation, globalisation and social change within which new understandings of gender and nation are being produced (Dwyer 2010, 8). Within this context, veils are seen to have become the emblems through which difference is constructed in discourses of integration, while at the same time concealing more mundane Western varieties of

domestic gender oppressions (Mohanty et al. 1991). At the same time, Dwyer highlights the historical dynamism of the veil, which is often used to signify complex personal, religio-political class or local affiliations. More specifically, Dwyer (2010, 8) uses the example of German Turkish women to illustrate this point, arguing that their wearing of the veil can be understood as a symbolic resistance to both the secular Turkish government and their isolation within German society as a result of failed integration efforts. Bilge (2010, 9), on the other hand, dismissing the above as the "submission or resistance thesis", offers an alternative interpretation of the veil, championing an intersectional and poststructuralist perspective by questioning our incessant need to see veiled women as agents, instead of simply accepting their decision to wear the veil as a matter of supernatural causality. Regardless of which interpretation, social and cultural markers are overtly used by the media in the discussion of said extremist individuals so as to signal difference and deviation.

As has been illustrated, gender, postcolonialism and nation are closely intertwined concepts. When investigating the representation of extremist women and men within a Western context, a multiple approach consisting of feminist and postcolonial contributions to the field of IR as well as those surrounding nationhood will be most beneficial. Nevertheless, there are a number of questions that remain unanswered within and by this body of literature. In the case of Western women who convert to Islam and become extremist, such as Samantha Lewthwaite aka the White Widow, what is the Western reaction to such an unpatriotic act? Are these women othered, and if so, is it to more of an extent than their 'oriental' counterparts, given that they are committing the twofold crime of both shattering traditional feminine gender roles and becoming "backward" by converting to a religion perceived as both unmodern and primitive by the West. The Abu Ghraib prison scandal also deserves more attention in terms of postcolonial and gender theory, especially with regards to the discourse surrounding the domination of Arab men by white Western *women* and how this plays into the East/West dialectic.

Moreover, what does this reveal about Western and Eastern valuations of women, given that while fundamentalist Christians and Muslims form a dominant alliance in opposing women's reproductive and sexual freedoms, each persists in using the other's "treatment of women" to substantiate both its difference and superiority. In terms of nationalism, there is also the question of what happens when other identities, such as religion, are stronger unifiers than nationalism as well as when the extremist is no longer readily identifiable by virtue of their

appearance or background. In addition, the existing terminology and definitions are also in need of review, as women extremists increasingly challenge the notion that extremists and terrorists are men by default. This crisis of identities, especially in face of an increasing number of Western women converting to Islam, needs to be researched more extensively, also within the context of home-grown terrorism, as outlined earlier.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Overview

This study will be following a qualitative research design, comprising the comparative case study model and discourse analysis. Furthermore, this research will be explanatory, as it will focus on analysing the representation of white female and male extremists (see Profiles section) in Western media and how this impacts upon their political agency as well as delineate and assess the factors that play a role in it. Given that other areas within IR do not spend as much time on the power of representation, nor the often gendered tenet of it and how this figures within international politics at large, I will be situating this research within the IR gender debate. There is great power in representation, a notion that has been extensively analysed by IR feminist scholars (Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1989, 1993; Tickner 1992; Sjoberg and Gentry 2008). Analysing who is behind this power and in turn utilises it will therefore be an additional subject of this research. The comparative case study model will in turn comprise an analysis of the differences and similarities in the representation of both female and male extremists (specifically white, Western converts to Islam who become radicalised). This chapter will first discuss the word frequency analysis, wherein the initial themes and reasoning behind the study originate, then move onto a detailed rendering of the themes used in the discourse analysis and then an explanation of why discourse analysis was chosen and how it was implemented. This is followed by an illustration of the data sources, collection, and analysis used in this study. Lastly, there is a discussion of the limitations of the methodology presented in this study.

Word Frequency Analysis

The study will focus on the characteristics generally associated with white female and male extremists in the Western media – these will have been informed, to an extent, by a prior word frequency analysis and word cloud illustration in R Studio (a free software programming language and software environment for statistical computing and graphics). The word frequency analysis not only allows for the determination of which terms occur most frequently in the sampled articles, but lets the researcher narrow it down to those terms that correlate with the discussion surrounding the radicalisation of Western converts to Islam. For instance, the terms

"convert", "female", "woman", "first", "man", "Muslim", "radicalized", "white", and "woman" are used to focus the word frequencies for the female group. This not only supports the hypothesis that race, gender, and religion are imbricated within the discourse on this specific brand of Western terrorism, but means that the later discourse analysis should focus on themes relating to "womanhood", "uniqueness", "influence" and "race", or derivations thereof. The word frequencies thus serve as the initial inspiration for the later, more established themes for the discourse analysis. With regards to the comparative case study approach used for this study, the word frequencies only differ in terms of the gender aspect, that is, they focus on terms like "man" and "male" instead of "woman" or "female".

This section will thus reflect initial analyses of word frequencies, how the themes were determined or inspired as well as provide an overview of content within the selected articles. In order to provide an initial and general overview of how male and female extremists are depicted in the media, the researcher generated *word cloud* and *word frequency* functions in R, as illustrated below.

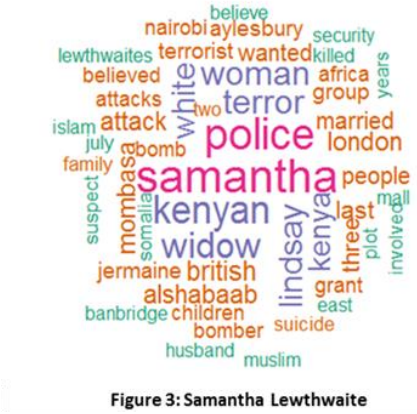


Figure 3: Samantha Lewthwaite



Figure 4: Colleen LaRose



Figure 5: Muriel Degauque

For the female extremist group, major observations include the primacy of their gender, nationality (both in terms of their own and that of the countries affected by their activity), relationships to men as well as the uniqueness of these women as female extremists. This is also supported by a word frequency analysis of terms linked to the above-mentioned themes, which was conducted to see which terms carried the most weight. These are undoubtedly "woman", "Muslim", and "white", though the latter is not as pronounced in articles on Muriel Degauque. These findings indicate not only the media interest in the white female extremist as a novelty, but also its irreconcilability within the public eye. Interestingly, "radicalised" yields no such numbers, possibly pointing toward a reluctance to accept home-grown terrorism as part of the domestic sphere.

								Samantha Lewthwaite
	Terms							
Docs	convert	female	first	man	muslim	radicalised	white	woman
SL.txt	26	22	27	40	60	5	150	160

								Collen LaRose
	Terms							
Docs	convert	female	first	man	muslim	radicalised	white	woman
CL.txt	21	7	16	38	70	3	28	150

								Muriel Degauque
	Terms							
Docs	convert	female	first	man	muslim	radicalised	white	woman
MD.txt	9	11	31	14	30	0	1	30

Word frequencies for Women

The male extremist group exhibits showed similar trends, though their *word clouds* do not contain references to gender as such. The word frequency analysis of common and pertinent terms occurring in the articles revealed that "first", "man", and "Muslim" are widely used, again indicative of the unique status accorded to specifically Western-born Muslim converts who become extremists. As with the woman group, gender is important, though the use of "man" also refers to these individuals' ties with other men and how this contributes to their radicalisation.

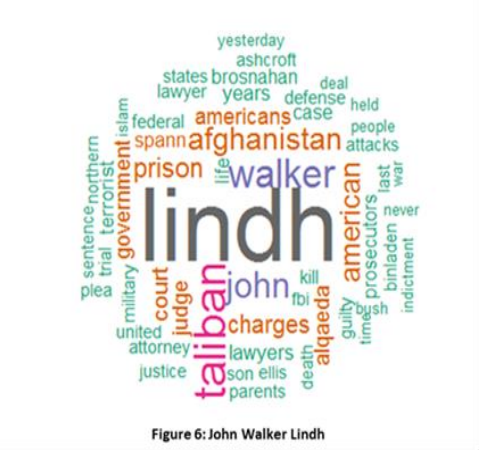


Figure 6: John Walker Lindh

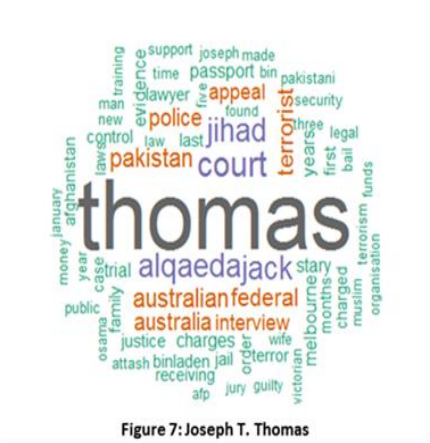


Figure 7: Joseph T. Thomas

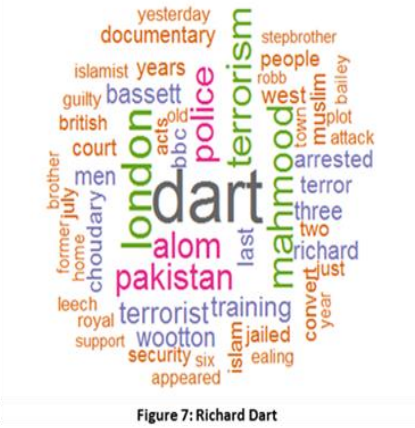


Figure 7: Richard Dart

Again, "radicalised" does not really feature, except in the case of Richard Dart. This could be attributed to the fact that the phenomenon was as yet quite new when John Walker Lindh and Joseph T. Thomas were appearing in the media. The importance of race within this context is again underlined through the frequent use of "white". Though "white" is not

						John Walker Lindh	
	Terms						
Docs	convert	first	male	man	muslim	radicalised	white
JL.txt	22	80	1	54	41	0	37

						Joseph T. Thomas	
	Terms						
Docs	convert	first	male	man	muslim	radicalised	white
JT.txt	31	80	0	57	54	0	9

						Richard Dart	
	Terms						
Docs	convert	first	male	man	muslim	radicalised	white
RD.txt	44	5	2	22	47	9	20

Word Frequencies for Men

traditionally associated with the term Muslim or jihadist, this relatively new phenomenon has

forced many to re-evaluate their notions surrounding race, specifically on what it means to be "white" and "non-white", where the former denotes the default and the latter the "other".

Themes

Once the smaller pool of articles is determined for the discourse analysis, the articles are read in great detail in order to check whether the initial indications surrounding possible themes had been correct. Themes are thus created or expanded, where applicable. The themes are: "trauma", "influential relationships", "appearance", and "normality/irreconcilability" as well as two group-specific themes called "motherhood" (women) and "traitorousness" (men). They are outlined in detail below:

Trauma

As a theme, trauma, which refers to a deeply distressing or disturbing experience, encompasses both past events in an individual's life that are seen to have impacted them negatively or made them more vulnerable to outside influence, as well as mental instabilities. Indicators thereof could include drug and substance abuse, a difficult childhood, being a social outcast or strained relationships with family and other significant persons.

Normality and Irreconcilability

This theme specifically deals with the increasingly widespread phenomenon of white, Western-born converts to Islam becoming extremists, often in the service of major terrorist organisations, and the inability of the popular Western psyche to comprehend this development or the explicit act of betrayal by these individuals against their own culture and people. In the media, specifically with regards to news articles, this is expressed in two ways: (1) the normality of the individual in question is emphasised, that is, before converting to Islam and becoming radicalised, they led an average and unsuspecting life, and (2) family members and acquaintances express their shock at the apparent change in the individual concerned, seemingly unable to reconcile these almost opposite versions of people they thought they knew.

Influential Relationships

With regards to women extremists, this theme refers to intimate relationships with the men in their lives, who are specifically seen as having made major contributions to their respective conversion to Islam and resultant acts of terrorism. This is especially relevant given the agency it takes away from these women by blaming their radicalisation and actions on the influence of a Muslim man. In terms of the male group of extremists, this theme takes on a slightly different form, instead referring to influential, comradely relationships these individuals have with other Muslim men, often radicalised Imams or like-minded individuals. Again, when such references are made, it paints a picture of these vulnerable Western men having been brainwashed by their Muslim counterparts, which, as with the female group, takes away their agency in the matter. At the same time, the absence of such relationships will indicate that men have the status of rational individuals making their own choices and are in turn seen as free from outside or undue influence. A further facet of this theme is brotherhood, including dual meanings within the contexts of family and the battlefront. This sub-theme not only creates an "us versus them" climate, but is intrinsically linked to theme of traitorousness to be discussed further on.

Appearance

Appearance serves a multifaceted thematical function. For instance, with regards to women extremists, it can either be used to accentuate their femininity and thus Western looks or, through descriptions of them wearing a veil or other Muslim garb, speak to the West's fear of the "other" penetrating their domestic, private sphere, of which woman is the ultimate symbol. Similarly, with male extremists, this theme refers to descriptions of the converts' long or bushy beard and the robes Muslim men traditionally wear, serving to underline the extent of their radicalisation while at the same time distancing them from the viewer, that is, making them an "other" in the popular imagination, thus also making it easier to regard them as the enemy. Interestingly, while both men and women extremists are described in terms of their Muslim appearance, the women, by being linked to the women's rights discourse surrounding Muslim women, remain victims, while the men are situated within the enemy dialectic. Both, however, are othered.

Motherhood

Motherhood is one of two themes that apply only to one of the groups; in this case it is women extremists. While this theme only explicitly applies to Samantha Lewthwaite, it nevertheless warrants its own section given its importance in understanding the portrayal of women extremists in the media. Furthermore, the absence of children in the case of LaRose and Degauque does not mean this theme does not apply. For instance, Degauque's mother features prominently in all articles on the Belgian suicide bomber, so in this case, motherhood could be applied to Degauque's mother and possibly her failure, given the circumstances. With LaRose, there is an absence of a mother. The theme will therefore also explore the concepts of deviancy (and by extension "rogue mothers") and how motherhood is linked to the nation at large. Though the term "rogue mothers" is not used in abundance, it does appear in articles specifically dealing with mothers who are in prison as well as abusive mothers, as part of an effort to understand their deviation (City Press 2009). "Rogue" is a term used to denote anything that is a deviation from the norm. If a rogue state is a nation threatens world peace through its deviant behaviour, for instance by seeking WMD (weapons of mass destruction), sponsoring terrorist activities, leading an authoritarian regime or committing human rights abuses, then the term "rogue mother" can be seen to indicate a mother that disregards all criteria traditionally accorded to that title (Minnerop 2002). If one considers the link between motherhood and nation, and if rogue states are said to sponsor terrorism, then rogue mothers could, figuratively speaking and on a discursive level, be said to produce terrorists.

Traitorousness

This theme is only truly evident in the articles on male extremists and refers to both their betrayal to their respective nations and people. Given that men are seen to act within the public and international sphere, their actions are also interpreted on this level – in stark contrast to women extremists, who remain bound to the domestic sphere. Converting to Islam and committing or conspiring to commit acts of terrorism or assisting the enemy is thus viewed not only in terms of individual actions, but as part of a greater offence against the nation and its values, thereby equating the actions of these individuals with treason. If one considers that two

of these individuals served abroad as soldiers, the ultimate expression of patriotism, this dialectic comes all the more to the fore.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was chosen over content analysis due to the fact that this method does not rely on word frequencies for the overall analysis (a process which is only feasible if there are large numbers of the chosen source material, which is not the case here) and because it allows for a more detailed initial interpretation and subsequent analysis of the text. Moreover, by following the discourse analysis approach, implied meanings (or language "beyond the sentence") as well as connections between different phrases and articles are more obvious and do not become lost through a content analysis coding process (De Ayala 2004). This qualitative method also facilitates the determination of the political dimensions behind certain representations as well as the actors gaining or losing power as a result (Mohanty 1991; Spivak 1994; Said 1997).

The actual discourse analysis process involves delving into each article, focusing on any and all terms, phrases and imagery associated with the outlined themes. For instance, phrases and sentences will be coded to the theme motherhood if there are references to a female individual's children or role as a mother, for example "mother-of-three Samantha Lewthwaite, is on the run accused of spearheading a Muslim extremist group's jihad" (24/09/2013, Belfast Telegraph), or coded to the theme "normality" if there is a reference to how normal an individual was before becoming radicalised, for example "She came from an average family in an industrial Belgian town. She used to sell baguettes in a bakery, and worked as a waitress in a café" (2/12/2005, Ottawa Citizen). Thereafter, the findings for the individuals in the female and male group are consolidated. The findings could then be extrapolated into the actual analysis. Given the relationship between discourse and power, the analysis mainly centres on how each group of extremists is represented in and by the media, investigates whether this is indeed a true depiction of the reality, how this impacts upon their agency as political actors and who in turn gains power from portraying them in such a manner. Furthermore, the discourse analysis will concentrate on

revealing any social or national anxieties hidden behind these representations, as it is hypothesised that these portrayals do in fact go above and beyond the individual.

Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis

Given that this study seeks to investigate how the media portrays extremists, the main sources for the discourse analysis will be newspaper articles. The LexisNexis database was used to retrieve the newspaper articles used for this study. Data was collected for the period of 4 December 2001 to 23 October 2014. This time period was chosen because the first case of a white, western radicalised Muslim entered the media on 5 December 2001, shortly after the events of 9/11, and thus marks a valid starting point for this research. The end date, 23 October 2014, was selected in order to allow for new content due to the currency of these individuals in the media as well as facilitate the timelines of all six individuals to be analysed within this paper.

Sampled Newspapers	
Women	**Men**
Belfast Telegraph	Daily Star
Daily Mail (London)	Guardian.com
Daily Mirror	Herald Sun (Australia)
Daily Record and Sunday Mail	Hobart Mercury (Australia)
Guardian.com	Manchester Evening News
Irishmirror.ie.	Men
Nanaimo Daily News (British Columbia)	Morning Herald (Australia)
South Wales Echo	St. Petersburg Times (Florida)
The Augusta Chronicle (Georgia).	St.Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)
The Australian	The Age (Melbourne, Australia)
The Calgary Herald (Alberta)	The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
The Courier Mail (Queensland, Australia)	The Australian
The Daily Telegraph (Australia)	The Australian (Australia)
The Daily Telegraph (London)	The Daily Telegraph (London)
The Economic Times	The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)
The Guardian (London)	The Globe and Mail (Canada)
The Huddersfield Daily Examiner	The New York Post
The Independent (London)	The New York Times

The Observer (England)	The Sun (England)
The Philadelphia Daily News	The Times
The Sun (England)	The West Australian (Perth)
The Sunday Times (London)	The Western Mail
The Times (London)	Toronto Star
The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)	Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)
Weekend Australian	

The units of analysis for the discourse analysis are phrases and sentences within each article. Each article is examined in terms of the delineated themes, which include: "influential relationships", "trauma", "normality/irreconcilability", and "appearance". The women group also has an added theme, namely "motherhood", while the men were also analysed in terms of "traitorousness", as these two additional themes were found to be mutually exclusive. These themes were defined after a detailed reading of the articles on white Western converts to Islam who become radicalised, which was initially informed by a detailed word frequency analysis via the *tm* and *wordcloud* packages in R, explained in greater detail in the previous section. By means of LexisNexis, the researcher used the following search items: "Samantha Lewthwaite" / "White Widow", "Colleen LaRose" / "Jihad Jane", "Muriel Degauque", "John Walker Lindh" / "American Taliban", "Joseph T. Thomas" / "Jihad Jack", and "Richard Dart". These search items were chosen after searching various terms and seeing which yielded the most relevant results relating to the objectives of this study. The researcher examined major English-speaking Western newspapers for these mentions between the specified dates.

After searching the above-outlined terms, the LexisNexis database found a combined population of 835 articles. This population of articles was split according to male/female. The articles were also cleaned of anything not related to the main body of the text and duplicates were removed from the sample, i.e. the same article appearing in different newspapers, so as to facilitate the accuracy of the word frequency analysis. Only articles between 250 and 1000 words were included. This prevents the inclusion of content that is too short to warrant analysis as well as content that is too long or analytical and thus complicates the determination of themes by going above and beyond the purpose of a news item article. It should also be noted that only those articles dealing explicitly with these individuals and their respective motivations were

included in the text population, after which any in comment or editorial form were also removed, so that only news items remained, making for a more "objective" pool of content to work with.

Next, a simple random sample of 10 articles per individual was generated from the revised total population (288 – men; 182 – women) using the online sampling source Research Randomizer (Urbaniak and Plous 2011) in order to be certain that each article had an equal chance of being chosen. The simple random sample of 60 articles was chosen and analysed for the discourse analysis. These articles also informed the comparative case study model adopted for this study, which sought to compare and contrast the media portrayals of both male and female Western converts to Islam who have been radicalised. The word frequency analysis in turn guided the choice of themes for the discourse analysis, which then served to reveal how each group is represented in the media and whether their portrayal differed or was in fact the same, and also touched on any national anxieties informing this depiction.

The discourse analysis as such serves to examine the articles in terms of the various themes outlined earlier and was carried out through a process of coding references to a certain theme and consolidating these at the end. For instance, sentences were coded to the theme motherhood if there were references to a female individual's children or role as a mother (e.g. "mother-of-three Samantha Lewthwaite, is on the run accused of spearheading a Muslim extremist group's jihad" (24/09/2013, Belfast Telegraph). Moreover, only Western, English-speaking newspapers were used as sources for the articles. This is because the majority of content on these individuals is written in English, given that all but one (Muriel Degauque) are from English-speaking countries (US, UK, Australia). In addition, the focus is on *Western* Muslim converts who become radicalised. Western newspapers are thus the best source for defining the discourse surrounding these individuals.

Limitations

Newspapers were the only form of media used for this study. Future research might include other forms of media such as radio, magazines, television, news transcripts, or online news sources in order to widen the pool of available sources. The LexisNexis database also limits the study because not all newspapers are accessible. Despite this, it is important to note that nearly 2.5 billion documents are available through the database, and approximately 15

million new documents are added each week (Neuendorf 2002, 219) and that "[a]ll databases are 'full text searchable,' meaning that the user may specify any word or string of characters, and due to the unique organising patterns of the system, all documents containing that string will be located almost instantly" (Neuendorf 2002, 219).

In addition, the set of individuals that converted to Islam and became radicalised could also have been mentioned using a different term and different newspapers around the world might call them by a different name. Another limitation was that only English language newspapers were analysed in this study. Adding non-Western sources would have improved the accuracy of the data and analysis by way of a comparison, however, given that most of the reliable ones are not in English and the ones that are do not cover Western Muslim extremists to the extent that it would be useful for the analysis, I have decided to leave them out. It should also be noted that non-Western media will have different notions surrounding gender and would thus warrant their own study. Lastly, the discourse analysis does not include an analysis of images and their placement within articles. This is as a result of using the LexisNexis database, which does not include images in archived texts. While this may be perceived as damaging to research that specifically looks at the portrayal of certain individuals, most articles recycle the same set of pictures (and there are only one or two available for each individual), so this is not a major obstacle; what is being written and said about these individuals remains the ultimate unit of analysis.

Chapter 4. Data Analysis

Background

Profiles

These profiles are based on Google-generated Wikipedia profiles.

Photograph sources: Samantha Lewthwaite (Mirror); Collen LaRose (mugshot photo June 26, 1997 in San Angelo, Texas.); Muriel Degauque (Virginie Lefour/AFP/Getty Images); John Walker Lindh (Reuters); Joseph T. Thomas ("The Convert" documentary, Four Corners); Richard Dart (youtube.com).



Samantha Lewthwaite

Samantha Louise Lewthwaite, also known as Sherafiyah Lewthwaite or the White Widow, is a British woman who is one of the Western world's most wanted terrorism suspects. She is the widow of 7/7 London terrorist bomber Germaine Lindsay.

Born: December 5, 1983 (age 30), Banbridge, United Kingdom

Spouse: Hassan Maalim Ibrahim (m. 2014), Germaine Lindsay (m. 2002–2005)

Parents: Elizabeth Christine Lewthwaite, Andrew Lewthwaite



Collen LaRose

Colleen Renee LaRose, also known as Jihad Jane and Fatima LaRose, is an American citizen, who was convicted and sentenced to ten years for terrorism-related crimes, including conspiracy to commit murder and providing material support to terrorists.

Born: June 5, 1963 (age 51), Michigan, United States

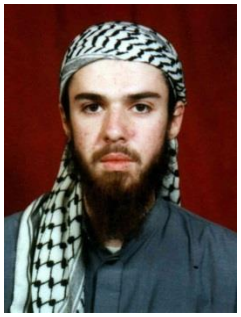


Muriel Degauque

Muriel Degauque was a Belgian woman from Charleroi and a convert to Islam. La Dernière Heure, a Belgian newspaper, claimed on 1 December 2005 that she was a suicide bomber in Iraq.

Born: July 19, 1967, Charleroi, Belgium

Died: November 9, 2005



John Walker Lindh

John Phillip Walker Lindh is an American citizen, who was captured as an enemy combatant during the United States' 2001 invasion of Afghanistan in November 2001. He was captured and detained at Qala-i-Jangi fortress, which was used as a prison.

Born: February 9, 1981 (age 33), Washington, D.C., United States

Education: Redwood High School, Iman University



Joseph T. Thomas

Joseph "Jihad Jack" Terrence Thomas is an Australian citizen whose conviction for receiving funds from Al-Qaeda was overturned on appeal.

Born: 1973, Australia



Richard Dart

Richard Dart, known as Salahuddin, is a British citizen, who was jailed for six years in April 2014 with two co-conspirators Jahangir Alom and Imran Mahmood for planning acts of terrorism.

Spouse: Ayan Hadi

Definitions

Before beginning the study, it is also important to define the terms that will be used throughout and what is meant when they are used in this specific context, especially with regards to "terrorist" and "extremist". The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) definition of terrorism notes that an instance of violence must

> appear intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping (FBI 2014).

The White House (2011, 2) in turn defines violent extremists as "individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals— have promoted messages of divisiveness and justified the killing of innocents". While the media almost exclusively uses the term terrorist, this study will be employing the more specific term "extremist". Extremism, which refers to an ideology (particularly in politics or religion) considered to be far outside the mainstream attitudes of a society or to violate common moral standards, can take many forms, including political, religious and economic. I have therefore chosen to refer to these individuals as extremists, given that not all have been proven to have committed an act of violence in accordance with the above-stated definition of terrorism, but they do hold extremist views either way. Within this context, radicalisation thus refers to the process of becoming an extremist. What is more, within this context, converts to Islam refers to nationals of Western countries who have converted to the Muslim faith.

Context

The historical and social contexts informing the sampled newspaper articles span several significant events and countries, and should not be discounted in their impact on portrayal. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the resulting WoT to eliminate international terrorism forced states to re-examine their foreign policy goals as the US presented them with the ultimatum of "[e]ither you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (Bush 2001). The United Kingdom (UK) chose to partner with the US in the WoT, evinced by its support for

and involvement in the War in Afghanistan and later Iraq invasion, and the numerous other operations part of the US WoT strategy (Milne 2013). Then, in 2005, the 7/7 London bombings, carried out by home-grown terrorists on British soil, changed the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK forever (Hussain and Bagguley 2012, 715-716). The WoT has certainly left its mark on society, with the UK experiencing increased islamophobia and hate crimes, such as the killing of British Army soldier, Lee Rigby, in Woolwich in May 2014 by two fanatical young British Muslims, along with unease about the increased stream of jihadists between Britain and Syria, and the often severely anti-immigrant sentiments of prominent British politicians (Erlanger 2014).

Furthermore, there is a growing number of Britons (an estimated 5 200 annually), most notably women, converting to Islam, though similar trends have been observed in other European countries as well as the US (Mistiaen 2013; The Economist 2013). According to Reddy (2009), there is no single, straightforward reason, but rather a range of religious, emotional and cultural motivations behind this trend: (1) finding meaning and spirituality as well as belonging to an established community; (2) having the strength to engage with a society regarded as sullied by materialism and moral relativism; (3) Islam's decisiveness on a series of religious and socio-cultural issues gives those who have strayed from the straight and narrow a focus and an anchor; and lastly, (4) Islam's focus on modesty "liberates" women from the widespread fashion-related consumerism that objectifies women as well as sexualises young girls (The Economist 2013; Reddy 2009). While these explanations do not escape gender stereotyping, these efforts to shed more light on why white, Western nationals would convert to an ostensibly "backward" religion speak to a larger concern around eroding nationhood and national values as well as Western countries' own participation in the WoT. Added to this are fears that Western converts are more vulnerable to extremist strains of Islam, especially given their desire to become integrated into these communities and their resulting willingness to prove this. (The Economist 2013) Lastly, the UK's own counter-terrorism strategy is being increasingly criticised for failing to "provide its counter-terror effort with the democratic standing and legitimacy that it too often lacks" (The Guardian 2014).

More recently, Australia has become the target of terrorist attacks by jihad-motivated individuals. The Sydney Hostage Crisis (December 2014) resulted in the deaths of two hostages

as well as the attacker, after the latter, a self-proclaimed Muslim sheikh named Man Haron Monis, took 17 people hostage inside a chocolate café in Sydney. This event had been preceded by ever-tighter terrorism legislation by the Australian government amidst rising numbers of Australians fighting alongside extremists abroad. In June 2014 alone, an estimated 150 Australians were reported to be fighting on the side of extremist groups in Iraq and Syria, making it the largest per-capita contributor of foreign fighters (Bourke 2014). The country has even gone so far as banning its citizens from travelling to the Syrian province of Raqqa, an IS (Islamic State) stronghold and its parliament completed approval of a security law that creates a new offence of "advocating terrorism" (BBC 2014). Moreover, Australia joined the US-led military coalition fighting ISIS (Islamic State of Syria and al-Sham) in October 2014. As fears surrounding the return of radicalized fighters from Syria to carry out attacks at home mount and Western countries in general face a surge in domestic terrorism, the discourses surrounding extremist individuals in the media should be read with these contexts in mind, as they will both inform, guide, and distort their portrayal.

Women Extremists

Normality and Irreconcilability

As previously stated, this theme encompasses two elements: the emphasis on the normality of an individual prior to conversion and/or radicalisation and the irreconcilability of their current extremist status given this background. Regarding the first aspect, articles on women extremists are littered with phrases like "girl-next-door", "she was absolutely normal as a kid", "regular workaday housewife", "young, ordinary, girl". While this phrasing does denote their normality prior to conversion, it also takes on a very sexist and traditionalist dimension with the use of words epitomising what it means to be a normal, acceptable "good" woman (housewife, girl-next-door etc.). At the same time, these expressions of ordinariness are coupled with references to locations denoting quotidian or traditional roles. In the case of Muriel Degauque, her employment as a baker's assistant is used to emphasise her working class origins (her father was a factory worker and her mother a hospital secretary) in Brussels' former industrial district Charleroi. Charleroi is but one of many districts in Belgium with

predominantly immigrant neighbourhoods; but it also speaks to a wider European trend of the (lacking) integration of immigrant communities and the consequences thereof (Davis 2015). Davis (2015) goes into the specifics of this trend, noting that French-born Said and Chérif Kouachi (responsible for the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris) represent "a new déclassé transnational demographic of "state-less" youth". Neither Algerian, nor accepted by traditional French society, the Kouachis did not have strong emotional ties to any specific nation-state and were thus ideal recruits for a terrorist organisation (Davis 2015).

At the same time, references to Degauque's childhood home ("grew up in a brick home at 33 Rue de l'Europe – a quiet street near a coal tip"; "with immaculately tended front lawns and elaborate net curtains") not only emphasise her normality, but underline, in terms of the "nature versus nurture debate", that she should have continued to lead a "normal" life given this environment. Though often dismissed by scientists as too simplistic, the nature versus nurture debate, where genetic predetermination faces off against how and in which environment someone grows up and lives in, will often make an appearance in contexts discussing the age-old question of "what went wrong?", especially in popular media (Gutiérrez 2014). This is especially true of crime shows dealing with murderers and serial killers, where producers attempt to trace the point of origin for such heinous acts. However, scientists have recently argued that while it might be tempting to talk about a group's "culture" as if it were a force somehow external to the biological individual or independent of evolution, culture is in fact a biological phenomenon, namely, it is a set of skills and practices allowing members of one generation to learn and change, and to pass the results of this learning on to the next generation (Gutiérrez 2014). That being said, it is interesting to note how the media will often stoop to primeval explanations for the actions of certain individuals in order to make them seem less human and thus deserving of the audience's disdain and other nations' military interventions.

It is similar for Samantha Lewthwaite, who is often described as "the daughter of a former soldier". Not only was Lewthwaite's father a British soldier, the archetypal symbol of nationhood, he also fought against the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland. Though the articles state this information as part of their attempt to trace Lewthwaite's past, it actually functions to make her deviance even more glaring, given that her own father fought against

terrorism in his day. For Collen LaRose, this method takes a different form, with her suburbian lifestyle being highlighted through phrases like:

> The woman living in a Philadelphia suburb fit the stereotypical profile of a "Main Street" American: Neighbours would see Colleen LaRose shopping, and stopped to say hello; at least one woman sent her kids to a Halloween party a couple of years ago that LaRose threw for neighbourhood children.

This anecdote is both a hallmark of American suburbia as well as depicts the idealised version of the American middle-class citizen. In addition, "Main Street" is another name for U.S. Route 66, which was one of the original highways within the U.S. Highway System, and again serves to emphasise LaRose's averageness through her proximity to this traditional fixture in American life. The fact that these are educated women (at least to the extent that they attended high school, a fact that is often highlighted) is also underscored, giving the impression that this should also have prevented them from following their respective paths to extremism. According to Aristotle, "[p]overty is the parent of revolution and crime." However, these days, a lack of education is said to be a major root cause of crime (Lochner and Moretti 2003). Thus, the fact that the level of education of these women is a talking point within the media helps to underscore the irreconcilability of the Western woman terrorist, given that within popular imagination, it is disadvantaged, uneducated people who turn to committing such acts. This is despite the fact that there exists no link between poverty and terrorism, or to broader development indicators such as the Human Development Index (HDI), life expectancy, years of education, and gross domestic product (GDP) growth (Allison 2014).

The next facet of this theme, dealing with irreconcilability, becomes apparent through phrasing like: "from baker's assistant to Baghdad bomber" (Degauque), "neighbours, along with her former boyfriend, expressed shock […] after U.S. prosecutors said LaRose […] faces terrorism charges", and "Lewthwaite's grandmother, 85-year-old Ellen Allen, was rushed to hospital […] after collapsing from the stress of her granddaughter's notoriety". Words like "shocked", "stunned", and "had not expected" further support this element of the theme, the purpose of which is ultimately to accent the irreconcilability of the notion of a female terrorist, but also, more recently, that of the radicalised, female Muslim convert.

The idea of a "double life" is an additional trend found in articles on Lewthwaite and LaRose ("an insight into the double life of the world's most wanted woman"; "oblivious to any

alleged double life"), while it is more or less implied with Degauque. What is interesting about this term is that it explains, at least in the minds of the general audience, the jump from "normal girl" to fully-fledged terrorist by demonstrating that that these women were never in fact ordinary, but always hiding more severe versions of themselves beneath the surface, much like a spy would. In her analysis of female spies in popular fiction, White (2007, 1-2) notes how spies are "wired to a distinctly twentieth-century anxiety regarding personal and national identity" and although "the fictional spy is often characterised as male, the covert aspect of espionage links it to an attribute pejoratively ascribed to femininity – it is based on deception". If this perspective is taken within the context of the apparent double life led by female extremists, it becomes all the more evident how these individuals are seen as not just a threat to the nation, but as an intimate threat to personal identity by deceiving those around them into thinking they are normal, law-abiding citizens (not to mention mothers, wives, and sisters), when they are in actual fact extremists. This theme on its own thus already demonstrates the extent to which women who are extremists are talked about only in terms of their gender and not their actions.

Trauma

The next major theme with regards to articles on women extremists is that of trauma, more specifically past events in these individuals' lives that are seen to have contributed to their conversion and subsequent path to extremism. Many of the articles on Lewthwaite parade her parents' divorce as what prompted her to seek out the Muslim community in her area, attributing her nascent interest in and eventual conversion to Islam, and by extension extremism, to past trauma. That is, her conversion is not seen as a choice made by a rational individual, but one made by someone coloured by the context of a broken home. The same discourse, though more explicit, may be observed with LaRose, who was allegedly raped and sexually abused by her biological father at a very young age, a fact that is used to provide insight into what happened during her childhood that "left her so vulnerable to emotional exploitation". Though an abusive childhood no doubt marks a person for life, by situating her terrorist activities in the context of her past, it functions to both excuse her actions as well as deprive her of agency within the matter. In Degauque's case, she is said to have had a difficult upbringing, having been "a runaway who dabbled in drugs". By describing her as a teenager, a time that is many decades back (at the time of her suicide bombing, she was 38), audiences will immediately connect her

troublesome and rebellious teenage years with her turn to extremism. Again, she is not seen to have made an independent choice to become a suicide bomber, but instead is depicted as a girl marked by trauma, which set her on the extremist path in the first place.

Within this theme, it also becomes clear that the media is dabbling in pseudo-psychology. Lewthwaite is almost always described in relation to her father the British soldier (the Irish mother is hardly mentioned), while Degauque's mother's statements about her daughter paint the picture of a long-running mother-daughter conflict ("When I got out of the hospital, I asked her if she remembered she had a mother. She said she did not have time for that") and La Rose's abusive past with her father. All are versions of a deviant parent-child relationship and tie into the nature versus nurture debate, by being used to explain how these women deviated so much from their assigned roles within society and subsequently became terrorists. Moreover, it also places the blame for their misdeeds at the parents' feet. Nadler (2012), who has researched blame as a social process by focusing on the effect of a prior criminal record on a verdict, noted the conflict that exists between the process of legal blame and the psychology of moral blame. More specifically, her research indicates that

> emotional reactions are not only a product of the act and the outcome, but also a product of inferences about the general virtuousness of the person who performed the act that caused the harm. Reading about "bad Nathan" made participants feel angry, disgusted, and full of contempt; these emotions then led to blaming and punishing "bad Nathan" more severely than "good Nathan." The legal blame process is limited to considerations of mental state, conduct, and result; the psychological blame process includes those considerations but seems to involve much more, including the emotions of the perceiver and the moral character of the actor. (Nadler 2012, 28)

Extrapolated to the portrayal of extremists in the media, this perspective sheds much light on how the so-called "blame game" plays out. When faced with a lacking explanation as to why a seemingly "average" person with no prior record of extremist tendencies wold turn terrorist, the press will turn to these individuals' past, dredging up an array of facts that will have the readership condemning the target. Moreover, when morality subsumes factuality, it creates an environment wherein the less "virtuous" someone is depicted (Degauque's runaway past is referred to more often than the fact that she was an adult above the age of thirty), the more sense it makes for someone like that to have become radicalised as well as more deserving of the audience's derision.

Furthermore, the focus on biographical and personal information, which cannot be found to the same extent in articles dealing with male extremists, can also be said to take away these women's agency. Whaley (2009, 124), in her telling of the activities of female agents of the Special Operations Executive during WWII, notes how anything written about these female agents focused on biographical accounts, almost completely disregarding the crucial role they played in the French resistance. Similarly, Yuval-Davis (2004) highlights how movies such as *GI Jane* and *Private Benjamin*, both of which feature women protagonists in conflict zones, describe these women's position and activities within the military in completely personal terms. Due to consistently being located within the private, domestic sphere, even those women acting on an international level are thus never truly portrayed as such, let alone granted the ownership of their own choices and actions.

Influential Relationships

Sjoberg and Gentry (2008, 16), on the topic of the relationships between men and women in Islamic societies, highlight that Western portrayals of Islamic women "essentialise [them] as subservient to and driven by Islamic men". Moreover, white women converts to Islam who become radicalised are disassociated from their original nation and/or religion – Sjoberg and Gentry (2008, 16) give the example of Myrium Goris, a Belgian suicide bomber, who, instead of being "a Belgian woman who kills herself (and others) over the inability to serve a man; it is an Islamic woman who does so". The influence that men, specifically relationships with men, have had on these individuals' radicalisation is therefore another major element in eroding the agency of these women vis à vis acts of terrorism. Lewthwaite's various relationships with (exclusively terrorist) men are a major talking point in articles about her. Emphasis is also placed on the apparent gap between her initial conversion as a teenager and later radicalisation, the latter of which is often put down to the men in her life, more specifically starting with her marriage to fellow Briton and convert, 7/7 London bomber Germaine Lindsay. Her relationships to the various men, all of whom are known terrorists (a fact that is always emphasised) seem to function as a vehicle for explaining Lewthwaite's own involvement in terrorism, where each of her alleged relationships represents a further step in her path toward extremism. This is further highlighted through phrases describing Lewthwaite as a suspected

terrorist being placed directly adjacent to her relationship to a male terrorist, some even pointing out that her radicalisation was a direct result of the relationship.

This trend is more explicit in the case of Degauque, who is said to have been "brainwashed" by her husband (he is accorded blame for having turned her into a radical Muslim in the first place). There exists no term quite like "brainwashing" that so readily discounts its subjects of all agency. Popular opinion would have one believe that this process can completely alter a person's opinions, while they are powerless to stop the conversion (Lokere 2009). The term originates from the Chinese word "xi nao" (wash brain, in reference to the Mao regimes hard-handed methods) and became widely used in the context of 1970s cultism and religious movements in the US (Lokere 2009). In the end, it should however be noted that although a modicum of propaganda and persuasion does hold sway, the individual makes the decision to convert (or not), and so using such a term again only functions to undermine the perpetrator's actions. Additionally, it should be noted that because men occupy the default category (as explained earlier), the women *must* have come to be extremists as a result of ties to the former.

In line with the nationalist discourse surrounding women, Lewthwaite and Degauque did not themselves choose this path, but were forced down it by sinister interlopers, unable to defend themselves against it. This is supported by the many references to the nationalities of these men, which are all foreign and from traditionally Muslim countries.[3] Interestingly enough, the references to the women having grown up or lived in the conformist working and middle class also serve to underline the corruptive influence of the men in their lives, who turned nice, white girls into a terrorists. By portraying the female extremist as a victim, she is again stripped of agency. In addition, if read within this context, these men can also be seen as metaphors for

[3] Degauque:"Muriel converted to Islam when she married a man of north African origin"; "her husband, a Belgian of Moroccan origin, was killed by US security forces in Iraq"; "Muriel met and married a man of Turkish origin whose parents were part of the large influx to the local mines in the 1960s";

LaRose: "She also agreed to one jihadist's request to marry him to enable him to get inside Europe"; "During her visit she was in regular contact with the 49-year-old Algerian, who was the prime suspect of seven arrested by Gardai on Tuesday morning";

Lewthwaite: "He claims he arranged for her to speak to Fahmi Jamal Salim, a Kenyan, and six weeks later she left Britain with her two children to marry him"; "She was also believed to be married to former Kenyan naval officer turned terrorist Abdi Wahid"

the "fear of the other" and by extension Islam, as it is seen to spread in the West and radicalise home-grown populations. Given that these references are also situated within the immigration discourse ("[Lewthwaite] resided in the Mayfair area of Johannesburg, which is home to large Indian and African Muslim populations, with numerous mosques"; "Muriel and her husband lived in a small two-room flat in Saint-Gilles, one of the poorest and most racially mixed areas of Brussels"), it implicitly makes extremism by Western Muslim converts an immigration problem (international), instead of a social one (domestic).

More generally, many different types of media deal with the concept of the "enemy within". Movies, such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978) or *The Enemy* (2013), as well as TV series, like *Homeland* (2011–), and even books, take for example Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, though but a sampling of what is actually out there, all have as their premise an invasion or taking over of the original or citizen by an outside, unknown or foreign force. *Homeland* also demonstrates the idea that the US and its enemies have a symbiotic relationship, as US policy also helps create new terrorist recruits, such as Sergeant Nicholas Brody, who is converted to the terrorists' cause after witnessing the death of a Muslim boy by a US drone attack (Rosenberg 2014). However, this term is ultimately rooted in the fear of the "other", or more precisely, the "internal other" and has experienced different embodiments throughout popular culture. More recently, it has undergone a revival. Anxieties surrounding an "enemy within" have come all the more to the fore as tougher stances on immigration make themselves felt in a volley of Western countries amid increased fears surrounding the spread of domestic terrorism. The effects of this can be seen not only with governments, which are witnessing an increase in far-right politicians, but also citizens, who increasingly make it known that they feel disadvantaged and threatened by the regular influx of immigrants from non-Western countries (more often than not in anti-Muslim guise, such as the January 2015 protests against "Islamisation" throughout Germany (BBC 2015)). The recent events in France, where Islamist gunmen raided the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's Paris office and killed 12 people, have highlighted this fear of the "enemy" even more, as people and more importantly governments ask how one is meant to identify such extremists when they conduct themselves as normal citizens beforehand (Chrisafis 2015).

Many articles referring to the averageness of Collen LaRose make exactly this point by calling her a "soccer mom". The phrase "soccer mom" generally refers to a married, middle-class woman who lives in the suburbs and has children of school age (Carroll and Fox 2006, 93-94) and derives from the literal, specific description of a mother who transports and watches her children play soccer and began to be widely used after American politicians began viewing them as a valuable swing-vote group (Peskowitz 2005, 24-25). The soccer mom is portrayed in the media as busy or overworked and driving a minivan or SUV as well as putting the interests of her family, and most importantly her children, before her own (Carroll and Fox 2006, 93-94; Peskowitz 2005, 24-25). Calling LaRose a "soccer mom" (this despite not being married and having no children of her own) again functions to contrast her apparent normality with the irreconcilability of her actions, but above-all highlights the new threat these individuals pose to the state and its citizens, as they are virtually undetectable.

Appearance

Appearance plays a major role in the portrayal of women extremists in the Western media. It is used on a two-dimensional level: (1) the description of "Western" looks is used as a contrast to the "other", while (2) symbolically-speaking, descriptions relating to the veil, which these women started wearing post-conversion, serve to show how these individuals have been captured by the "enemy". In the case of the former, LaRose's appearance is not only used to display her "Americanness", but is also tied to the idea that women extremists lead a "double life", as many articles note the following: "[b]londe and green-eyed, she would have easily slipped under scrutiny that typically focuses on non-whites"; "blonde-haired, blue-eyed self-described "Jihad Jane" who is charged with using her American looks to help Islamic terrorists plot". Women themselves are therefore seen as a threat to national security, underscored by how the media charges her looks, and not LaRose herself, with terrorism. This again also undermines her agency, as it is popular knowledge that the only reason women are "allowed" in terrorist organisations is due to their ability to act without arousing suspicion. While this is true to some extent, it should not take away from her decision to act in such a capacity by making it just about appearance.

This also echoes what de Beauvoir (2011, 723) argues regarding the object status women occupy within patriarchal society, given that a woman's concern with her appearance

may be linked back to her status as the "object and prey" (De Beauvoir 2011, 723) of the male species. According to de Beauvoir, woman must consistently present herself as sexually desirable in order to receive some form of legitimation, as "being-for-men is one the essential factors of her concrete condition" (De Beauvoir 2011, 156). Rattansi (1997, 482) actually indicates how women, children and the working class functioned as *internal others* in the formation of Western modernity, emphasising how Western society is built upon the existence of an "other" that it can define itself in relation to. Within this context, women extremists are thus linked to patriarchal power. More specifically, by showing LaRose in terms of how she looks, and thus as a harmless figure instead of a radicalised Muslim, she loses both power and agency in her endeavours.

Race also figures prominently within this theme. On the one hand, race, specifically the whiteness of these Western converts (sometimes just implied), functions to create a striking image of how perceivably out of place they are in this context: "an AK-47-wielding pale-skinned woman with long hair"; "Muriel's friendly, pretty, face was smiling from the front of a Belgian national paper. ""Here is the Belgian kamikaze, killed in Iraq," proclaimed the headline". On the other hand, race, within this context, is also something to be concealed: "[Lewthwaite] wears black socks and gloves and hijab to cover her white skin so spies won't see"; "[Degauque] wore a burka all the time. I never saw her face, only her eyes". This also ties into the Western discourse surrounding the veil, where the Muslim garment functions to reinforce the image of the "liberated First World" woman as opposed to the "oppressed Third World woman". This is especially true with regards to the question of why any woman would *choose* to wear one, as the veil is popularly thought to symbolise, at least in the eyes of the West, oppression ("When she first converted, she wore a simple veil but, with her last husband, she wore a [head-to-toe] chador"). Moreover, the way the veil is discussed regarding these white Muslim converts, their religious and ideological conversion is not given much weight; rather, it is discussed as a mere practicality – the veil covers up their white skin and Western features and thus makes them less noticeable. As is the case in the other themes, radicalised women converts to Islam have their agency removed wherever possible. They are neither seen as willingly or spiritually converting to Islam, nor could their wearing the veil be for these exact reasons, because Western women should *know better*. The "heavy eyeliner, shock of blond hair and black burqa" are therefore a

mere farce in the eyes of the Western media and the latter never misses a chance to point out just how readily these women don and get rid of their identities as it suits them.[4]

Motherhood

This theme specifically concerns Samantha Lewthwaite's role as a mother and the more general concept of motherhood. Upon reading the articles, it can be observed how Lewthwaite's children are always mentioned in connection with her involvement in terrorism, more specifically, references to the children will be in the same sentence as deliberations surrounding the Lewthwaite's current location, with emphasis on her being a "fugitive", "on the run" and "disappearing" with the children; the terrorists who father these children; and the latter's supposed jihadist upbringing. To explore this further, the concept of motherhood must first be discussed in more detail. Not only is motherhood what feminist scholars describe as the unfeasible and gendered expectations of what it is to be a "good mother" (Crittenden 2001; Douglas and Michaels 2005; Hays 1996; Lareau 2003; Ridgeway and Correll 2004), pronatalist orthodoxies actually spread the notion that a woman's worth and societal value are linked to motherhood (Ulrich and Weatherall 2000), with Roberts (1995) highlighting how mothering is especially important among the Western middle and upper class.

This discourse surrounding Western motherhood is also clearly evident in the stories about Lewthwaite, where her role as a mother is elevated to the same level, if not higher, than her alleged terrorist activities. A "real" woman makes sacrifices for her children, putting herself second to their welfare (much like the soccer mom figure); yet Lewthwaite uproots her children, goes on the run with them through Africa, exposing them to strange men and unknown countries, all in the name of jihad. She is therefore seen to disrupt the traditional notion of motherhood, what it means *to be a mother*, and is depicted accordingly. Though Lewthwaite's children, thus her ability to "give" life, should, according to the traditional women and peace discourse,

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[4] "LaRose, appearing in a Philadelphia courtroom, looked nothing like the pictures of her previously released. Gone was the heavy eyeliner, shock of blond hair and black burqa.

Instead, the tiny 46-year-old Pennsburg woman wore a dark green prison uniform and her hair braided in cornrows." (The Augusta Chronicle (Georgia) 2010)

preclude her from taking it, the popular imaginary makes sense of such a transgression of the stereotype by making her seem a lesser, flawed woman.

Within the context of nationhood women are viewed as a "most valued possession", primary transmitters of culture, ideology and values, agents of reproduction for the society, actively 'participating' in the national economy and social process, and simultaneously as "members of the community's most vulnerable to defilement and exploitation by oppressive alien rulers, and lastly most susceptible to assimilation and cooption by insidious outsiders" (Enloe 1989, 54). Motherhood is thus intrinsically linked to nationhood. In the case of Lewthwaite, not only is she shown to be an unfit mother, and by extension also less of a woman, she is also seen as betraying her status within the nation by not passing her original nation's mores onto her children (instead she raises them to be future jihadists), through having been co-opted by terrorists as well as by exiting her place within the safe and feminine domestic sphere, the home front, for the masculine international domain (Hooper 2001). Emphasising her role as a mother (or lack thereof) and nationality therefore does not simply serve to relate facts about her person, but in reality diminishes her as a woman and as a political agent within the popular imagination.

This is all the more emphasised by those phrases deliberating the paternity of her children. Some articles actually read like celebrity tabloids or soap operas, resonant of the TV show *Paternity Court* (an American show in which a presiding judge rules on paternity cases using DNA results), and focus solely on the identity of her third child's unknown father or revealing that Abdi Wahid is in fact the father of the youngest child, and not Habib Ghani, as had been claimed previously. The purpose behind such emphasis functions to both solidify her involvement in terrorism as a result of her relationships to these men through a corporeal manifestation of this link, namely a child, and to further diminish her as a woman by connecting her suspected violent actions to sexual deviancy. Sjoberg and Gentry (2008, 6) call this the "whore narrative", which consists of two strands: (1) women's sexual obsession, and (2) women's sexual dysfunction. In both cases, violent women are not viewed as "real" or "natural" women – their actions go against traditional gender values. The root causes of female violence are thus viewed as being an unhealthily strong sexual drive or sexual deviance and dependence. This may also be seen to be the case here, where Lewthwaite's relationships to various men are

described in a manner suggesting that she is quite active sexually, evinced by children fathered by different men. By reducing Lewthwaite to her sexuality and obscuring her true motives, her agency is undermined (Morgan 1989; Sjoberg and Gentry 2008).

Men Extremists

Normality and Irreconcilability

This theme differs significantly with regards to the male extremist group. While there are still similar references to a middle-class upbringing and occupation ("Lindh, a 20-year-old from a middle-class family in upscale Marin County, Calif."; "Mr Dart, 29, the son of Dorset teachers" and "former police community support office"; "Melbourne cab driver and chef with alleged ties to al-Qaida"), underlining that there was in fact a change that occurred in these individuals upon conversion, it is not questioned to the extent that it is with women extremists. Though Dart's radicalisation is narrated with words like "shocked" ("When I saw Rich in the dock and compare him to the boy who I grew up with and looked up to, I'm lost"), it is again not done to the extent that one begins to question his status as a known terrorist (as is the case with the female group). In fact, the articles on male extremists are generally quite sparse on this type of rhetoric. Rather, they display quite factual and non-sensationalist language when asserting their claims: "path from a teenage convert to Islam in San Francisco's suburbs to a foot soldier in Afghanistan"; "Melbourne cab driver and chef with alleged ties to al-Qaida". As noted earlier, the masculine security and military context is coloured with "rational, disembodied language [that] precludes discussion of the death and destruction of war, issues that can be spoken of only in emotional terms stereotypically associated with women" (Tickner 2001, 53), and the language in the articles on male extremists undoubtedly reflects this. This is also in line with what Hooper (2001, 115) argues regarding the production of masculinities in IR, namely that men's personal lives and questions of identity are removed from analyses altogether, which is completely the opposite for women extremists, as demonstrated earlier.

Moreover, in the case of Thomas, his marriage and family man status is actually seen to contribute to his normality: "the married father of two"; "Thomas' family, including his wife Maryati and five-month-old son Gabriel, visited him at the assessment prison"; "He later dived

through a gap in the dock to embrace his crying wife and family". While these descriptions may seem trivial, there is a sense normality and acceptance about this phrasing not found in the articles on women extremists. This becomes more evident if one considers how the media (consciously or unconsciously) paints the picture of a young "family man" figure led astray by the temptations of "the enemy", instead of say, a rogue mother or runaway teen, who is guilty from the very beginning. Moreover, the fact that Thomas' wife is an Indonesian Muslim is not in any way used against him, as is the case with the women extremists' relationships with Muslim men. This more than likely has to do with the fact that Muslim women as such are not seen as dangerous within the popular imaginary (unlike the "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149) who, as mentioned earlier, is male) or capable of influencing or brainwashing a man to the extent that he becomes unaccountable for his own actions (only the reverse can be true). The men are therefore not subjected to such an extensive analysis of why they converted in the first place and went on to become radicalised; rather, their actions (and the consequences thereof) are taken at face value.

Trauma

This theme is two-pronged in the case of male extremists. On the one hand, the men are portrayed as rational individuals that strayed off the beaten path, while on the other, they are subsumed into rhetoric of madness. With regards to the former, according to Hooper (2001, 98), there exist varying degrees of masculinity, including (1) the heroic warrior-citizen model, where the notion of manliness is linked to the conquest of women; (2) the patriarchal model, where men dominate the conceptual scheme and women are wholly absent; and (3) the bourgeois rationalist model, which idealises "competitive individualism, reason, and self-control or self-denial, combining respectability as breadwinner and head of household with calculative rationality in public life" (Hooper 2001, 98). While indicative of the patriarchal binds that guide male behaviour and thus the portrayal of masculinities (as well as the glaring absence of women therein), these models leave no room for expeditions into a man's deeper personal life, emotions, or past. Whereas women extremists are shown to have been exposed to major traumas in their past, which in large part contributed to their later conversion and radicalisation, the individuals in the male extremist group are often shown as "misguided youths", who strayed into extremism. While misguided implies a deviation, it is not rendered to the extent that we the audience are

made to think these are somehow damaged men. The absence of further investigation into these men's emotional backgrounds is therefore also telling.

Chopra et al. (2000), in their analysis of South Asian men, explores the street as a space in which the son asserts his own masculinity, noting that

> [t]he street is an open-ended space, exterior to both home and field, free of supervisory authority, where boys are said to indulge in 'shaitani' or devilry. This makes the street a highly gendered space, closed to women, making it a world that is only partially known, oscillating between being veiled and visible (Chopra et al. 2000, 1608).

Though this analysis is specific to this geographic location, its main elements may be extrapolated to anywhere in the world. For instance, the "boys will be boys" rhetoric carries with it a similar set of assumptions, namely that deviant behaviour – to an extent – is actually normal and expected of young men as part of a rite of passage to manhood. A "misguided youth" is therefore not seen as a direct contributor to or indicator of these individuals' radicalisation and thus also does not deny them their agency. Moreover, as men roam the street, which is located "outside" and thus symbolises the international sphere, they are, as valid and recognised political agents, responsible for their actions, though at the same time not held to the same degree of moralising and interrogation as the women acting outside the domestic sphere. The fact that fewer questions are asked when it comes to male extremists may also reside in the fact that they occupy, within the context of terrorism and extremism, the so-called default category, whereas as women, by virtue of belonging to the female gender, are exceptions and must therefore be explained away.

Yet there is a fine line between these sub-topics, as madness, especially in combination with traitor rhetoric, will often dominate in the explanations of these individuals' motivations. Lindh is one of the first of many to embody the concept of the "American Taliban Fighter", namely a white, middle class young American man who chooses to convert to Islam and then turns into a Taliban fighter. Though this phenomenon has only recently gained momentum with the evolution of ISIS – and has of course expanded beyond the US – it has perplexed security forces, the media and its audience from the very beginning and continues to do so. This has in turn led to numerous explanations for something as inexplicable as the "American Taliban" (or its equivalent). For instance, the articles on Thomas contain established accusations of mental instability, with references to him having suffered an "emotional and mental collapse" at the time of his imprisonment. This is also line with what Kimmel (2013) says about violent men, namely

that in the popular imagination, they are typically seen as motivated by anything except their race or gender, and this is also the case here, where madness comes into play. In Lindh's case, signs of mental instability (perhaps even symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder – commonly associated with soldiers within the WoT discourse) are not as obvious, though articles do make mention of his lack of emotion ("with his hands folded in his lap, revealing no expression"), dishevelled and savage appearance ("unkempt hair and a wild beard") as well as the fact that he needed to be restrained (generally associated with mental patients). Dart is subjected to the same treatment, as he is described as training "with fellow trainee bomb nuts" (where nuts is synonymous with madman). Interestingly, with the men, "lesser" reasons like the divorce of parents, past experiences or influences do not play as great a role as they do with women extremists; rather, for the actions of these men to be explained, they must be portrayed as having abandoned masculinity (that is, the associated characteristics of rationality, agency, and duty). Nevertheless, despite losing reason and masculinity through the allegation of mental illness, the male extremists are subsequently located within the enemy camp (note that the enemy is usually feminised), and thus, despite being othered, still retain agency. This cannot be said to be true for women extremists, as they are "the other of the terrorist Other" (Sage 2013, 76).

Influential Relationships

While articles dealing with female extremists make many references to their relationships with Muslim men – in order to discount their agency – male extremists are not subjected to such punitive and judgemental critique. While it is mentioned that Richard Dart was heavily influenced, even brainwashed, by a radicalised Muslim cleric ("Dart, who converted to Islam after being radicalised by British Islamist Anjem Choudary"), and this does tie into the break with masculinity discussed earlier (in this case, brainwashing may be seen as similar to mental instability, given that it disavows choice from the male individual and thus breaks masculine ties), as well as the fact that Joseph T. Thomas is described as having begun his path to extremism after converting and marrying a Muslim ("He had been in Pakistan since 2001 after converting to Islam and marrying a Muslim. He had allegedly been training with al-Qaida"), the majority of sampled articles do not blame their radicalisation on these relationships. What all these male individuals have in common is the apparent fact that they went overseas to receive training in terror camps: "[Thomas was] held by Pakistani authorities for five months after

training with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan"; "He ended up at an al-Qaida camp which bin Laden visited three times"; "[Lindh] trained at an Al Qaeda camp and once met Osama Bin Laden"; "[Dart] turned on his own country after being trained at terror camps in Pakistan". This serves to underline that they acted out of free will and based on their own convictions, thus in full possession of their own agency in conducting the terrorist activities of which they stand accused. As discussed earlier, men are portrayed as rational and dutiful individuals, where choice is standard and only madness can truly be said to dent their agency, though this is ultimately not the case, as shown above.

An additional facet within this theme is the more abstract notion of brotherhood. While the term can refer to both the relationship between brothers and an association or community of people linked by a common interest, religion, or trade, it is interesting to note how in flux this concept is within the context of white, male converts to Islam who become radicalised. On the one hand, "brotherhood" denotes close, familial relationships between men (typically also used in war rhetoric to promote battalion cohesion, for example "brothers in arms"), yet the religious overtones of this term (brotherhood can also refer to an association or community of people linked by a common interest, religion, or trade, notably the Muslim Brotherhood) also speak to the male solidarity within the Islam faith itself. Not only does "brotherhood" create an "us versus them" environment, but it distorts the relationships between men within the context of the war on terrorism. In the sampled media articles, it becomes clear that these male individuals are either situated on the "brothers in arms" side (the West) of the dialectic or with the "Muslim brotherhood" variant (the enemy/terrorist) – there is no in between. The most blatant example of this is how Richard Dart and his step brother are portrayed as diametrically opposed within news items, to the extent that Dart is seen to embody the enemy and terrorist, while his brother remains a good and dutiful man, loyal to his country ("Robb Leech on his sibling Richard Dart's transformation from middleclass boy to jailed Islamic extremist").

Appearance

The articles make the following references to the appearance of white male Muslim extremists: "He was in a long, white robe and had a big bushy bear" (Dart); "unkempt hair and a wild beard" and "[h]is dark hair was clipped short and his face clean-shaven, a sharp contrast to

photographs taken when he was captured last November in Afghanistan. Those showed him with shoulder-length hair and a beard" (Lindh). The West's fear of the "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149) has thus manifested itself in outward appearance, through markers such as the beard and the *thobe* (white robes traditionally donned by Muslim men). The Taliban, which governed Afghanistan until it was exiled in 2001, and Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia, are part of a small minority in the Muslim world who demand total observance and threaten punishments for non-compliance, including the wearing of the beard (BBC 2010). Within this context, references to such markers are therefore almost always used to denote fundamentalist Islam, especially radicalised and "backward" versions. However, it should be noted that many Muslim men simply wear a traditional beard in emulation of the Prophet Muhammad, who, according to *hadith* – or sayings – stipulated "cut the moustaches short and leave the beard", and are therefore by no means radicalised or even extremists if they have this type of beard (BBC 2010). Conversely, the "modern Muslim man" had no need for a long beard in 1960s and 1970s Turkey, Egypt, and Jordan, where a shaved beard had become a sign of modernity (BBC 2010).

If interpreted within the ongoing debates surrounding the beard in US prisons, it becomes evident how embedded the fear of the "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" is as well as its link to fear surrounding national security. The US Supreme Court most recently heard concerns on whether prison officials may prohibit Muslim inmates from growing the beards stipulated by their faiths (Liptak 2014). The presiding Magistrate Judge highlighted the ludicrousness of prison beard bans, which officials absurdly said were in place to prevent the concealment of contraband (Liptak 2014). While the beard ban case officially attempts to guarantee religious freedoms, it does seem to have more to do with not letting the "enemy within" get too many freedoms, especially considering that the applicant, in this particular case, is a white Muslim convert. While the beard and other markers of the Muslim man, who in turn is portrayed in terms of "dangerous, angry masculinities" (Qureshi and Zeitlyn 2012, 111) in the media, are used as a form of shock tactic to highlight the conversion to Islam and accentuate the resulting difference, they do not invite a sensationalist diatribe on women's rights and female oppression, as is the case with the veil and radicalised female converts to Islam. This is because even when cast in the role of the enemy, men do not have their agency disavowed.

Traitorousness

According to Campbell (1992), during the Cold War, a major US foreign policy goal was the construction and maintenance of US identity, which translated into a so-called "society of security" (Campbell 1992, 166) wherein a vigorous loyalty/security programme attempted to define Americans by excluding the Communist other, both externally and internally. The same can be applied to today's WoT context. In the aftermath of 9/11, cultural and civil space has become increasingly militarised, exemplified by articles on male extremists. The most pervasive theme by far is that of the traitor and treachery, and examples abound: "Walker consciously betrayed his country"; "He chose to embrace fanatics and his allegiance to those terrorists never faltered"; "Thomas […] travelled to Afghanistan [...] to train with the Taliban to fight in the civil war"; "British-born Dart expressed hatred for his homeland last year in a BBC documentary". In addition, action verbs ("chose to embrace", "travelled to train") and adjectives ("consciously") function to underline the these men's ownership of their actions as well as their traitorousness therein. Moreover, the language used here is feminised, especially through the use of the word "embrace", which not only means to accept willingly, but showing affection. Within the context of the war on terrorism, the utilisation of such wording thus echoes Hooper's (2001) multiple masculinities, where there is back-and-forth between a "hegemonic masculinity" (connected to elite, Western male power) and other subordinated, feminised masculinities (stereotypically associated with poor, non-western, or gay men, and/or men of colour).

Though only one of these men was in fact a soldier, it is interesting to note that the majority of articles on this group read like deserter reports. In the same fashion that the women are analysed from a psychological standpoint, the men are symbolically placed before a military court and accused of treason (which is not seen to be the case for the women, who have committed similar acts). This is by no means surprising, given that "the notion of a safe, or civilized, space "inside" depends on the construction of an "outside" whose identity often appears strange or threatening" (Tickner 2001, 55), the former of which is defended against the latter on the battlefront (the international sphere) by men. If male extremist converts are viewed within a context of war (the traditional "us versus them" setup), changing allegiances, even by changing religion, would thus be equated with treason within the popular imaginary. This also

relates to the larger debates surrounding the Occident and the Orient, where the latter is always in an inferior position.

Said (as listed in Samiei 2010, 1147) outlines four Western doctrines regarding Islam:

1. The absolute and systematic difference between the West – which is rational, developed, humane, superior – and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior.
2. Abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a classical Oriental civilisation, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities.
3. The Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalised and systematic vocabulary for describing it from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically "objective".
4. The Orient is at bottom something either to be feared, or to be controlled by pacification, research and development, or occupation.

Consequently, by locating male extremists within this debate, the Western media is in fact othering them and, to some extent, making them lesser political agents. By converting to Islam and subsequently becoming fundamentalist extremists, these male individuals are classified as the "enemy" – they have changed allegiances, giving up their "protector" role within the nation and are subsequently subsumed into the enemy imaginary. Women, on the other hand, are never situated within this dialectic; rather, as the so-called "impossible terrorist" (Sage 2013), they are seen as transgressing social and gender norms if they attempt to act outside the domestic sphere/home front they are traditionally relegated to.

Due to the war connotation, "brotherhood" becomes intrinsically linked to the nation and therefore speaks volumes within the framework of radicalised converts. For instance, Lindh is described as "conspiring to kill his countrymen", a sentence that reads like a report on espionage as the nouns function on a nationalistic and patriotic level. Due to the intimate link between brotherhood, war, family, and nation, Lindh is essentially accused of fratricide, which carries with it much deeper, emotional reactions than simply saying he was planning to kill people. Conversely, Dart is portrayed as already being part of the other team, as he is described residing "with fellow trainee bomb nuts", at once locating him with the enemy.

In terms the traitor rhetoric, this is accentuated, for the most part, through animal symbolism, most notably that of vermin (Steuter and Wills 2010, 156-157). Steuter and Wills (2010, 152) hone in on the way the media implements key metaphors to dehumanise the enemy,

specifically through portraying them as animals, vermin, or a fast-spreading disease. According to the authors, such dehumanizing media representations have historically foreshadowed abuse, oppression, and even genocide (Steuter and Wills 2010, 152). Lindh, for example, is referred to as a rat ["The Rat pleaded guilty only to aiding the Taliban and carrying weapons"] and as having "snivelled" while in court (this means to complain in a whining or tearful way, though it is mostly used in a contemptible fashion and as a way of accentuating weakness). On one level, a snivelling rat paints the picture of a pathetic, disloyal man undeserving of our respect, while on the other, in terms of animal symbolism, vermin (of which the rat is the main example) are characterized by their sheer numbers as well as the fact that they can infiltrate unnoticeably, which makes them a considerable threat (Steuter and Wills 2010, 158).

According to Qureshi and Zeitlyn "discursive positioning of Muslims as a "security threat" or "enemy within", in government policies and the media, has cast young Muslim men in particular as criminalized anti-citizens" (2012, 110). It should be noted that this is true only of Muslim men, who are accorded the status of "dangerous", representing not only a threat to the immediate community, but the international arena at large. Within this rhetoric, the West is viewed as a "mass of potential victims". These discourses also feature in the sampled articles on male extremists. For instance, it is described how Richard Dart, "[t]he 29-year-old "enemy within", a former BBC security guard, turned on his own country after being trained at terror camps in Pakistan". Interestingly, white male converts, including those presented in this study, also suffer a certain degree of racialisation. Because Islam has come to be synonymous with terrorism, patriarchy, misogyny, and anti-American attitudes, those identified as Muslim are treated as threats to American cultural values and national security (Selod 2015, 77). This, for instance, explains the deeply emotional language used especially with male converts, who have not only discarded their motherland's religion, but have chosen to attack its people. Moreover, they are racialized and de-Americanized as a result, that is, deprived of the privileges traditionally extended to citizens (such as being viewed as a valued member of society) (Selod 2015, 77). More specifically, white converts to Islam are placed into updated racial categories, such as "not-quite-white", or even "non-white", due to the continuing identification of Islam as a "non-white" religion (Moosavi 2015, 41). Despite this, it must be underlined how this does not in fact disavow their agency, as even in the role of the racial, religious and ideological "other", let alone the enemy, they are recognised as such.

Chapter 5. Findings and Conclusion

This research paper has shown that there is indeed a difference between the portrayal of male and female extremists in the Western media. More specifically, it has been demonstrated that while women extremists are stripped bare of all political agency in the media, the men, though exposed to rhetoric condemning their treachery as well as often depicted as succumbing to mental illness, remain largely unscathed as agents. This comes down to men being located in the international sphere, while women are fixed within the domestic. Men occupy the subject position, thus the default category, while women are objects and are rendered accordingly. What this means for their respective media portrayals is that news items on men will be far less personal and biographical as well as largely non-sensationalist when compared to the versions on women extremists. Whereas the articles on women extremists will often read like celebrity tabloids (even in the more serious broadsheets) and cover topics ranging from paternity and relationships with men to looks; the male extremists under analysis here are largely reported on in a an objective, and reasonably critical way. Within the discourse on terror and extremism, men are othered, though certainly not to the extent that these women are. That is to say, although they are cast in the role of the enemy (which is an "other"), male extremists nevertheless retain their agency by virtue of being located on the other side of the so-called battlefield, while women, as "the other of the terrorist Other", are never in possession of agency, "not even the deviant agency accorded to the gender-neutral figure of the terrorist" (Sage 2013, 76). Though these findings are consistent with traditionally assigned gender roles and the dialectics contained therein, it is interesting to note the weight of the traitor discourse seen in the articles on men extremists and the way their choice in the matter is overly emphasised to accentuate their masculinity (rational, dutiful, and loyal) or lack thereof. In terms of how the representation of these individuals relates to social and national anxieties in their countries of origin, it has become clear that not only has the domestic fear surrounding the "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149) led to the terrorist (and by extension the white Muslim convert) being equated with the foreigner, but that as a result, terrorism/extremism and immigration have come to be situated within the same framework, where the slippery slopes of counter-terrorism and anti-immigration meld together. This, in turn, results in bolstered anti-immigration clauses as well as the racialisation of those conceivably associated with the "enemy".

The implications of these findings are manifold. Firstly, they highlight just how deep-rooted traditional gender roles and ideologies are, and more importantly, force us to question our own notions of women and men, feminine and masculine, as well as how these are reflected in counter-terrorism policies and the international arena more generally (Sage 2013, 67). As Sage notes "it is within emerging discourses, like those around terrorism which seemingly have nothing to do with gender and sexuate identities, that understandings of normative identities are being exported, absorbed, and encoded at a global level" (2013, 79). Secondly, the ongoing War on Terror, including the fear of a "homogenous Islamist terrorist enemy" (Samiei 2010, 1149), is called into question. On a practical level, the fact that of all former terrorist groups since the 1960s, only 7 percent were eliminated by military crackdowns and an additional 10 percent disappeared when they achieved their goals (making their struggle redundant), thereby showing the seeming redundancy of the current anti-terror measures (Allison 2014). On a discursive level, Spivak notes that a "response not only supposes and produces a constructed subject of response, it also constructs its object" (1994, 82). Counter-terrorism may hence be seen to produce and reiterate stereotypes of both the terrorized subject and the terrorist object, in turn creating a self-sustaining loop that has no other alternative but further violence (Sage 2013, 48). Thirdly, and from a more subjective viewpoint, white, radicalised converts are an irregular form of terrorist that underlines all that is wrong with the WoT. More specifically, when a nation's own population turns on the national security objectives by literally and figuratively crossing over to the "other/'s side", one most surely question the reality of the ongoing War on Terror's justification as well as impact on the rest of the world. The growing pre-eminence conferred to terror control (present and future) means that Western nations are ever more more willing to trespass on otherwise sacrosanct rights in the pursuit of a supposed "greater good", namely security (Bigo and Guittet 2011, 483). Perhaps the warped portrayal s of these extremist individuals is actually an indication of our own distorted sense of the War on Terror, which has infiltrated not just the international arena but our own personal lives since its inception.

Although this research has discussed the reasons for and implications of varying representations of male and female extremists at length, as well as hopefully offered some much-needed insight into this field, certain areas go beyond the confines of this study and so require further research. For instance, a closer reading of the effect of the War on Terror (WoT) on the citizens and detractors of those countries advocating and participating in the current counter-

terrorism strategies would go a long way toward further investigating the reasons why certain Western converts to Islam become radicalised, in so doing going beyond the often simplistic explanations provided in the media and outlined in this study. Additionally, the fine line between counter-terrorism and anti-immigration, namely the crossover between the international and domestic spheres within the context of home-grown terrorism also warrants further analysis, especially given its impact on those seeking livelihoods in new countries and those left behind in countries battered by counter-insurgency measures. The War on Terror has left its mark on all of us in some shape or form, and it will continue to penetrate every facet of this world until we realise that

> [e]ven though some in our government may claim that civil liberties must be compromised in order to protect the public, we must be wary of what we are giving up in the name of fighting terrorism. – Lucille Roybal-Allard

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Appendix

Richard Dart

"'My brother's a terrorist'; Robb Leech on his sibling Richard Dart's transformation from middleclass boy to jailed Islamic extremist." The Sun (England). April 26, 2014.

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