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An Analysis of the Components of Terrorism

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An Analysis of the Components of Terrorism
By Rhianna Hayes

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Criminal Justice

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College of Liberal Arts

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The Application of General Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory to the Complex Topic of Terrorism

Working Paper One – Capstone

Rhianna Hayes

Defining Terrorism

Terrorism is an instantly recognizable word that provokes a visceral sense of anger, fear, and in some cases, revenge. Everyone has a different interpretation of what the word terrorism means, and that is true for the public, legal, and academic worlds. Many competing definitions of what terrorism is and what it means to be a terrorist exists within the literature. This makes an already complex topic to study even more difficult to analyze and address.

In the academic and legal world, the definition of terrorism is still up for debate. There is no current consensus on how to define terrorism, but most definitions focus on the fact that terrorism involves an act of violence to perpetuate a political agenda. An example of an academic version of the meaning of terrorism states that terrorism is the "premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of their immediate victims" (Enders & Sandler, 2018). Many academic definitions share this sentiment, although they are not exactly the same. Legal definitions are similar to academic definitions, but they have a few key nuanced variations

Similarly, legal definitions are very similar to one another, but they have nuanced variations. This is seen through the fact that every law enforcement agency has a definition of terrorism that is slightly different from one another. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines domestic terrorism as "perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily US-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature" (Terrorism, 2016), and they define international terrorism as "perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)"

(Terrorism, 2016). This definition is slightly different from the United States Army Manual that defines terrorism as the "calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear. It is intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies…[to attain] political, religious, or ideological goals" (A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century, 2007). Another example of a legal definition comes from the United Nations Security Council. In Resolution 1566, the United Nations Security Council defines terrorism as any "criminal act, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror, or compel a government or international organizations to do or to abstain from doing any act which contravened terrorism-related conventions and protocols…of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, or religious nature" (Security Council Acts Unanimously to Adopt Resolution…).

As can be seen by the aforementioned definitions of terrorism listed above, terrorism can be defined in a variety of ways. These definitions largely focus on international terrorism, which is the focus of my Capstone Project as a whole. The common aspect of each definition is the focus on violence perpetrated by individuals in the name of politics, ideology, or religion. For my Capstone Project Papers, when terrorism is discussed it will be referring to a political tactic that involves the use or threat of violence in order to achieve a defined political, social, or religious agenda (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011). This definition is very broad, but for this literature review and the following working papers, it makes the most sense to keep the definition broad so that the same definition is consistent among all papers to minimize confusion on what is being discussed. However, it is important to note that among the academic and legal literature the definitions vary from being even broader to overly specific when explaining terrorism.

Over the course of this Capstone Project, I would also like to note that terrorism is being used to refer to international instances of terrorism perpetrated by largely Islamic terrorist organizations. Given the broad definition that will be utilized, it is important to make this distinction because many other acts perpetrated by individuals or organizations could be classified as terrorism. However, for this project, the word terrorism will apply to groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al Qaeda, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and subsequent terrorist groups that are Islamic.

Introduction

Terrorism is a complex topic to study. There is no consensus on what the word terrorism means, and there is even less consensus on why groups of people go out of their way to use terrorism as a form of political expression. Various analyses and studies have been conducted to attempt to explain this complex topic. Many of these studies have drawn from criminal justice research to apply criminological theories as an explanation for terrorism. The application of criminological theories provides one baseline for people to attempt to understand terrorism. At first glance, it may seem that criminological theories will not be able to explain why terrorist organizations function in the way that they do, but many consider acts of terror to be criminal acts as well. If acts of terror are considered criminal acts than it only makes sense that criminological theories can be used as a way to explain this violent form of political expression. Multiple criminological theories can be used to explain terrorism, but this paper will focus on applying Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (1992) and Derek B. Cornish and Ronald V. Clarke's Rational Choice Theory (1986)

General Strain Theory

In 1992, Robert Agnew developed General Strain Theory to address criticisms leveled against previous versions of strain-based theories. Of these theories, Agnew (1992) was influenced heavily by Robert Merton's theory of Anomie and Strain (1938). He expanded upon Merton's theory to focus explicitly on negative factors, such as negative treatment by others and experiencing negative emotions, and the role that these factors can play in criminal behavior. General Strain Theory posits that experiencing strain, or stress, tends to generate negative emotions including anger, frustration, depression, despair, and anxiety, which are capable of creating pressures for some type of corrective action. Oftentimes this corrective action will take the form of legal coping mechanisms, but in certain cases corrective action takes the form of crime and delinquency (Brezina, 2017).

In 2010, Agnew revised General Strain Theory to include a definition of strain that includes any event or condition that an individual dislikes. Under this broadened definition, three major types of strain were delineated. The first major type of strain that was delineated is the inability of an individual to successfully achieve their goals, also known as goal blockage. Many forms of goal blockage can have a detrimental effect on an individual's emotions, such as experiencing strain in the form of anger and frustration if they are unable to fulfill their goals and aspirations, cannot achieve the expected outcome of their actions, or fail to achieve what they interpret as a fair and just outcome. Goal blockage can also resort to an individual experiencing strain if they are unable to achieve the highly valued goals of respect, masculine status, autonomy, and the desire for excitement (Brezina, 2017). These goals are especially important to younger males who put a great deal of pressure on themselves to appear better than they are, so when they are unable to achieve their idea of who they should be, they experience a great amount

of strain. The second and third major types of strain involve the presence of negatively valued stimuli and/or the absence of positively valued stimuli. When individuals are harassed or bullied by their peers, experience negative relations with their parents or teachers, are presented with undesirable circumstances, or are the victim of crime, they are exposed to negatively valued stimuli that create strain. In contrast, individuals are exposed to strain through the loss of positively valued stimuli, such as exposure to undesirable events and experiences, loss of property, or the death of a loved one (Brezina, 2017). These three major types of strain have the potential to create a situation in which an individual will resort to crime and delinquency to alleviate the emotions that they are experiencing.

In addition to these three categories of major strains, strains can be further specified and identified into strains that are said to be the most relevant predictor of offending behavior. These strains include those that are high in magnitude, seen as unjust, associated with low social control, and can be readily resolved through crime. Strains that are high in magnitude are further specified by their severity, frequency, duration, and the level of importance to the individual experiencing them (Brezina, 2017). Examples of strains that meet these conditions include parental rejection and abuse, excessive discipline, negative experiences in school, being the victim of harassment by peers, criminal victimization, marital problems, persistent unemployment, racial discrimination, homelessness, residence in economically deprived neighborhoods, and the failure to satisfy strong desires for money, excitement, masculinity, and recognition. Research has indicated that many of the strains mentioned above are directly related to criminal activity (Brezina, 2017).

Experiencing strains increase the likelihood of individuals experiencing negative emotions, which in turn increases the risk of engaging in criminal and delinquent behavior. The

negative emotions that are fostered by collective strains, such as anger, resentment, anxiety, depression, and despair are said to generate pressures for corrective action (Brezina, 2017). Corrective action can take place in the form of legal or illegal behavior. Strains create a series of negative emotions that are experienced by an individual. Some individuals may respond to negative emotions in positive ways, by seeking out legal coping mechanisms that will allow them to resolve what they are feeling, while other individuals turn to illegal means. Those who are more likely to resort to illegal, or deviant, coping mechanisms are those who have a lack of coping resources, lack of a conventional support system, few opportunities for conventional coping, ample opportunities for criminal coping, low social control, and a strong predisposition for criminal behavior (Brezina, 2017). Individuals who do not have legitimate ways to cope with the strains they are experiencing are more likely to resort to criminal behavior because it provides them with an outlet to address the source of the strain and potentially alleviate the negative emotions that they are experiencing because of that strain. Negative emotions are experienced in dramatically different ways from one individual to another, so it is hard to predict how each person will respond to the stressors in their lives. However, research has shown that the more closely tied an individual is to the conventional norms of society, the more likely they are to abstain from criminal behavior when they experience negative emotions.

General Strain Theory Applied to Terrorism

Agnew's (2010) General Strain Theory applies to the study of terrorism for a variety of reasons. This theory can help explain why terrorists commit acts of violence to further their political agenda and accomplish their objectives. General Strain Theory states that individuals will resort to criminal behavior when they are under a great deal of strain or stress. Not all

individuals will resort to criminal behavior as a result of the strains they are facing, but for some individuals, criminal behavior is the only option for them to combat what they are dealing with. In regards to terrorism, this theory believes that terrorism is most likely to result when individuals or groups are under a variety of collective strains. Terrorism is most likely to occur when people are experiencing collective strains that are high in magnitude, unjust, and when they are inflicted by significantly more powerful people that are deemed as the "others" (Agnew, 2010). This concept of collective strain readily applies to terrorism and provides a possible explanation as to why terrorists resort to violence.

Agnew (2010) believed that the tenets of General Strain Theory could be used to provide a potential explanation for terrorism. Using aspects of his original theory, Agnew (2010) presents a theory of general strain that can be applied to the topic of terrorism by reviewing, critiquing, and building on current strain-based explanations that have previously been used to attempt to explain why individuals resort to terrorism. He posits that current strain-based explanations of terrorism fail to fully describe the core characteristics of strains that are the most likely to lead to terrorism, why certain types of strains increase the likelihood of terrorism, and why such a small number of individuals who are exposed to strain decide to engage in terrorism (Agnew, 2010). General strain theories of terrorism believe that terrorism is most likely to occur when individuals are experiencing collective strains that are high in magnitude, perceived to be unjust, and that is inflicted by a significantly more powerful "other". When an individual is experiencing these types of collective strains, they are more likely to engage in terrorism because the strains typically increase negative emotions, such as anger and frustration, reduce social control, reduce the ability to cope through conventional means, create an outlet for the social learning of terrorism and contributes to a collective orientation and response that views terrorism as

necessary and normal (Agnew, 2010). In other words, collective strains serve as a uniting force for those who are experiencing them, which creates the perfect atmosphere for the development of terrorism. Like-minded individuals who are all experience high amounts of collective strain are far more likely to resort to terrorism than their counterparts who are not experiencing these strains. Collective strains increase the likelihood of an individual choosing to engage in terrorism, but that does not mean that every individual who experiences these collective strains will resort to terrorism. For example, those who have conventional ties to society are less likely to engage in terrorism, even when they are experiencing collective strains when compared to those who do not have conventional ties to society.

Agnew is not the only scholar who has applied General Strain Theory to terrorism. Nivette, Eisner, and Ribeaud (2017) have also used strain theory as an explanation for why people engage in terrorism. This group of scholars focus on specific examples of collective strains that are high in magnitude, perceived as unjust, and inflicted by more powerful others. Individuals who are exposed to prolonged instances of political violence, in the form of conflict, terrorism, and/or war, are more likely to experience the collective strains that are listed above. Individuals experiencing these types of strains for a prolonged amount of time are more likely to engage in terrorism as a way to combat the negative emotions created by experiencing these strains (Nivette, Eisner, & Ribeaud, 2017).

These collective strains can fuel feelings of anger, frustration, anxiety, and depression, among other negative emotions, which can drive individuals to do whatever they deem necessary to alleviate these stressors, and in some cases, this leads to terrorism. In this way, collective strains can be viewed as a direct cause, or motivation, for engagement in terrorist organizations and activities. In order to display the impact that negative emotions caused by collective strains

can have on individuals, Kayaoglu (2008) conducted a case study of Turkish Hezbollah members. This case study serves to show how General Strain Theory can be applied to terrorist organization members to see if the cumulative effects of strains on the violent behaviors exhibited by terrorists could be identified. The Kayaoglu (2008) used quantitative methods in the form of bivariate and multivariate analysis, and qualitative methods were used to mediate the effect of negative emotions as well. The result of this case study shows that Turkish Hezbollah members are more likely to engage in violent acts of terrorism when they have experienced higher levels of strain when compared to individuals who have experienced lower levels of strain (Kayaoglu, 2008). This case study provides important support for the application of General Strain Theory to terrorism, by showing that experiencing higher levels of collective strain are more likely to result in violent behavior and participation in terrorist activities.

Although applying General Strain Theory to terrorism appears to make a great deal of sense, some scholars are critical of this approach. Jalata (2010) is one such scholar who is very critical of strain-based explanations of terrorism. His main criticism is that the theory does not adequately address the complexities of terrorism and the terrorists themselves. Existing strain-based approaches put too much of an emphasis on the strains themselves, without addressing the reasons that terrorism is committed (Jalata, 2010). Building on that criticism, he and other scholars believe that collective strains are multifaceted in their nature and their effectiveness and that many general strain theorists apply the concept of strain too simply by saying that strain causes terrorism, but they do not consider what that means or what it can look like. For example, in his approach to applying General Strain Theory to terrorism, Jalata (2010) provides detailed examples of collective grievances that can lead to terrorism, including oppressive and exploitative policies of state elites, the refusal to address longstanding grievances peacefully and

fairly, the development of extreme ideologies, and the emotions of the aggrieved populations. Furthermore, these strains can be broken down into other strains that involve national, religious, or cultural oppression, economic exploitation, political repression, human rights violations, attacks on life and liberty, state terrorism, and other forms of social injustice (Jalata, 2010). Analyzing collective strains in this context is important to understanding terrorism because these strains are the factors that are most likely to increase the potential for terrorism.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is typically used as an economic theory to explain the costs and benefits of a particular action; however, criminologists, such as Derek B. Cornish and Richard V. Clarke (1986) also use the theory to explain why an individual is likely to choose criminal, over noncriminal, behavior. The main premise of Rational Choice Theory assumes that individuals are rational and that self-interested human beings will be affected by the consequences of their actions. This assumption implies that criminal behavior is not different from noncriminal behavior because the individual consciously and intentionally chooses to partake in criminal or noncriminal activity. When individuals decide to engage in criminal activity, it is because they have decided that this behavior will have more benefits and fewer costs than law-abiding behavior (Rational Choice Theory). Rational Choice Theory is all about an individual's choice to do something. Individuals will commit a crime because they chose to do it, not because an outside force is compelling them to resort to deviancy. The logic behind the theory is that an offender will rationally choose to commit a crime because it is in their best interest, and they will assess their action based on the assumption that it will satisfy their needs on a higher level than noncriminal behavior.

Many theories of criminality rely on the premise that legal behavior is determined by biological, psychological, or environmental factors that compel an individual to commit a crime. However, Rational Choice Theory argues the opposite. Rational Choice Theory argues that people voluntarily and willfully choose to commit criminal acts and that all forms of crime result from an individual consciously making the choice to engage in criminal activity. Before making this decision, the individual will weigh the costs and benefits of their participation in criminal behavior, while also weighing the costs and benefits of alternative legal behavior, to decide on what is in their best interest (Rational Choice Theory). When an individual concludes that the crime will be more rewarding than costly, when compared to alternative actions, they will choose to engage in crime because they believe it is in their best interest to do so.

Although this theory assumes that individuals will rationally weigh the costs and benefits associated with their actions, it does not presume that people will always be perfectly rational in their decision-making process (Rational Choice Theory). No one is always going to make a rational decision when deciding on a course of action. Individuals will sometimes take shortcuts in collecting information on the best course of action, they may base their decision on misinformation, or they may simply weigh each factor incorrectly. Despite these shortcomings of rationality, an individual's decision process is still based on them rationally deciding what is in their best interest, given the information that they possess. Every individual is different, which is important to consider because it means that everyone will weigh the costs and benefits of a particular action based on their understanding of what is beneficial or costly to them. In other words, the analysis of costs and benefits is subjective and varies from person to person. What one individual deems rational, another might view as irrational.

Rational Choice Theory assumes that an individual decides to engage in criminal or noncriminal behavior, they go through a decision making process in which they weigh all of the perceived costs and benefits of their actions. Some of the perceived costs associated with engaging in various types of criminal behavior include the certainty of formal sanctions, the severity of formal sanctions, informal certainty of punishment, informal severity of punishment, and the experience of negative emotions such as shame or guilt (Rational Choice Theory). The benefits of crime are fewer. The benefits include how much pleasure or happiness can be derived from their actions if it will increase their levels of self-esteem, and if they will gain the approval, respect, and notoriety for their peers (Rational Choice Theory). As previously mentioned the costs and benefits of criminal behavior will have different valuations based on the individual's perceptions, so each individual will likely attribute different value to the costs and benefits mentioned above.

Rational Choice Theory would indicate that individual offenders are rational enough to calculate the costs and benefits of both criminal behavior and conventional behavior. Individuals will generally choose the behavior that provides them with greater rewards at the least costs. They will rationally think through all of the perceived costs and benefits associated with their actions before they decide to commit a crime, or abstain from criminal behavior. The behavior that will grant the individual with the best outcome, typically in the shortest amount of time, is normally what will be chosen.

Rational Choice Theory Applied to Terrorism

Cornish and Clarke's (1986) Rational Choice Theory is also applicable to the study of terrorism. Rational Choice Theory posits that human beings are capable of reasoning and

weighing the costs and benefits of their actions to make a rational choice of whether or not that action is a good idea. This can readily be applied to the study of terrorism because so many people believe that terrorists are irrational human beings that are simply incapable of rational thought. However, Rational Choice Theory applies to commonly cited reasons for terrorism to show that terrorists are, for the most part, rational individuals. This is shown through an analysis of the fact that the vast majority of terrorists are not willing to risk their lives for their cause, which is why so few of them engage in tactics, such as suicide bombings. The news frequently discusses suicide bombings, which would suggest that they occur often, but in reality, that is not the case. There is no disputing the fact that terrorists are dedicated to their cause, but the vast majority of them will refuse to make significant voluntary sacrifices to their cause, such as participating in suicide tactics (Caplan, 2006). Terrorists will weigh the costs and benefits to conclude that they want to live, and they do not want to sacrifice everything for the cause.

Since Rational Choice Theory emphasizes the weighing of costs and benefits, it has been a theory adopted by economists and criminologists alike to explain many aspects of human behavior. In recent years, scholars such as Bray (2009) and Caplan (2006) have begun to adapt the theory of rational choice to apply to the study of terrorism and counterterrorism. Bray (2009) believes that using a strictly economic interpretation of terrorism can be essential to policymakers in drafting counterterrorism policies because the theory can help policymakers visualize and understand what types of decisions that terrorists will make based on the costs and benefits that a terrorist is typically presented with (Bray, 2009). He also emphasized that although terrorists may appear to be irrational actors, they are rational human beings. They are rational human beings because, under Rational Choice Theory, the assumption is that individuals will behave in ways that attempt to maximize their well being per the constraints of their present

conditions while minimizing the costs of their actions (Bray, 2009). This assumption about human behavior is not only helpful in understanding terrorism itself, but also in helping policymakers draft policies, given that it allows them to assume that individuals will act in a predictable manner that is consistent with their preferences to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Caplan (2006) also emphasizes this fundamental point that Rational Choice Theory shows that terrorists are actionably rational actors who simply engage in activities that appear as irrational to outsiders. Building on the assumption of Rational Choice Theory, Caplan (2006) focused on three different senses of rationality that include a terrorist's unresponsiveness to incentives, deviation from self-interest, and failure of rational expectations. Much of the terrorism literature suggests that terrorists are irrational, but based on these three senses of rationality, Caplan (2006) believes that terrorists are rational, based on how they approach the circumstances of their life. An example of terrorists being rational is the fact that they rationally respond to incentives.

They will often sit on the sidelines if costs of participation are high, but once these costs decrease and they could accomplish their goals with little to no risk to themselves, they would actively engage in terrorist activity (Caplan, 2006). Terrorists will not assume high risks for their own sake since they are still human beings and the will to live wins out over the will to injure themselves or die for the cause. Of course, this is disproven by suicide bombers, but suicide bombers only make up a small proportion of terrorist activities. Terrorists will only engage in risky and dangerous tactics when they are the most effective option to accomplish their agenda. The motivations behind violent acts of terrorism are so hard for those outside of the organization to understand, but that does not mean that terrorists are irrational in their choices. They weigh

their actions and decisions on the path that will lead them to the best outcome, indicating that they are rational actors engaging in a rational thought process.

Besides showing that terrorists are rational actors, Rational Choice Theory can readily be applied to counterterrorism strategies. By assuming that terrorists are rational actors who will weigh the costs and benefits of their actions, developing counterterrorism strategies that will raise the costs of engaging in unwanted behavior has the potential to decrease the likelihood of an attack. Raising the costs of engaging in terrorism through increasing the potential for punishment is believed to reduce the overall benefit or utility of terrorism, and therefore reduce the likelihood of a violent attack. Furthermore, raising the expected utility of abstaining from terrorism in the first place is also believed to be an effective strategy to counter the threat of terrorism (Dugan & Chenoweth, 2012). Relying on the logic of Rational Choice Theory by developing counterterrorism policies by raising the costs of terrorism by increasing the likelihood of punishment, and rewarding individuals who could decide to engage in terrorism for abstaining from terror could effectively decrease the amount of terroristic activity present in a community. Keeping the considerations of the Rational Choice Theory in mind when trying to understand terrorism and develop counterterrorism policies would be very beneficial because although we may not see a decision to engage in terrorism as rational, terrorists are still making rational decisions given their own experiences.

Limitations

Currently, there are few theoretical answers in terrorism literature that explains what leads some terrorists to act violently while others do not engage in any type of violent terrorist activities. Although General Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory provide a good basis for

an explanation of terrorism these theories have theoretical and empirical limitations. For example, both theories have mixed empirical support in their effects on criminal behavior. Various aspects of General Strain Theory have been empirically tested, and although many of these tests have supported the assumptions of the theory, more tests will need to be conducted to truly provide evidence for the assumptions of General Strain Theory and their influence on criminal behavior, especially in regards to terrorism (Kayaoglu, 2008). The same is true for Rational Choice Theory. Since Rational Choice Theory is not only a criminological theory but an economic theory as well, many aspects that can directly be applied to criminal behavior need to be explored in further detail. Many analyses of Rational Choice Theory have strictly focused on the economic aspects of the theory instead of on the behavioral aspects that can explain an individual's choice to engage in criminal behavior. There is also the fact that criminological theories that believe individuals are rational actors do not take into consideration the issue of individual preferences that can be aggregated into a group decision, how information flows within the group, or how individual group members come to a consensus about their behavior (Enders & Su, 2007).

Another limitation of applying these two theories to the study of terrorism is that neither theory takes into consideration the role of outside factors in influencing an individual's decision to engage in crime, such as delinquent peers. These theories take into consideration internal and external factors that affect the likelihood of an individual engaging in terroristic activity, but they do not discuss the role that like-minded peer groups play in fostering conditions for terrorism to take place. It simply discusses that when an individual is experiencing strain that the appeal of delinquent peer groups increases, but it does not go into detail on the key role that likeminded, delinquent peer groups can play in increasing the likelihood of an individual resorting to violent

extremism to alleviate the stress they are experiencing. Using these two theories to explain terrorism would be stronger if they considered more elements that are influential in creating an environment that is conducive for terrorism to take place.

Other Theories that can Apply to Terrorism

In addition to General Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory, other theories have been posited to explain the complex phenomenon of terrorism. However, these theories have not been as rigorously applied to the topic of terrorism as the two focal points of this paper, but they are still worth mentioning. Donald Black (2004) applied the theory of social control to terrorism. He argued that terrorism is a form of "unilateral self-help by organized civilians who covertly inflict mass violence on other civilians" (Black, 2004, p. 10) and that terrorism itself is a distinctive form of social control. He believes that terrorism is a form of social control because it defines and responds to deviant behavior. Terrorism acts as a form of self-help by providing individuals with a method to handle their grievances. He relates the violence employed by terrorists to lesser forms of criminal activity, such as assaults and homicides, which are equally as violent as terrorism itself and which similarly resist or punish someone's conduct for being morally wrong (Black, 2004).

The main premise of Black's (2004) theory of terrorism as social control seems to be that terrorism itself is a form of social control in that it provides terrorists with a way to control the civilian population in their home country to get them to do what they want and further their political and religious agenda. Terrorists define their enemies as deviants who need to be stopped by employing their idea of justice, which in their eyes is terrorism. The theory of social control kind of relates to Rational Choice Theory in that terrorists is choosing to engage in terrorism

because they think it is the most beneficial course of action for themselves and their organization. Social control theory provides a unique way to look at the concept of terrorism and should be explored further, but at this time not many scholars have taken a social control approach to terrorism.

Conclusion

Policymakers, the media, and the public are constantly looking for an explanation for terrorism. Applying criminological theories, such as General Strain Theory and Rational Choice Theory, provides a potential explanation for the causes and motivations behind an individual's decision to engage in terrorism. Using criminological theory as a basis for explaining terrorism is a good starting point for understanding this complex topic, but more research, testing, and evaluations of the merits of this approach must be conducted.

Social Media: Friend or Foe to National Security?

Working Paper Two – Capstone

Rhianna Hayes

Introduction

The age of the Internet has brought about many amazing things. It has bridged the gap between nations by allowing us to form interconnected communities with people from all over the world, it has allowed us access to an abundance of knowledge at the click of a button, and it has allowed us to share our opinions with like-minded individuals from different countries across various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. Although the Internet has opened the door to create a more friendly and connected community, it has also opened the door for more nefarious actions through the powerful influence of social media.

The Power of Social Media

Social media has had a profound impact on our daily lives. Most people throughout the world, and especially in the United States, consume vast amounts of information from various media outlets each day. These media outlets have the potential to be very powerful because they influence the way information is presented to the public. The topics that are most often covered and sensationalized by the media are the topics of war and terrorism. Throughout history, these topics have been emphasized in the media, but since 9/11 there has been a rise in media coverage on the topic of terrorism, along with the United States' self-declared War on Terror. With improvements in technology over the years, media coverage of terrorism has become even more sensationalized through the increased coverage of events in the form of gruesome images and video clips of the devastating effects that war and terror have on a variety of populations throughout the world (Tulloch & Blood, 2012). These images have greatly impacted our perception of war and terrorism. Our perceptions of war and terrorism are further influenced by the media's constant overage on these topics. This constant coverage creates a sense of perpetual

war, which increases fear and concerns over terrorism among the public. When images of war and terrorism are always in the media, the public believes that war and acts of terrorism are constantly occurring, even if that is not necessarily true.

The media has the power to shape public opinion on certain topics, but they are also capable of promoting fear and anxiety throughout the general public. In today's society, the majority of people consume their news through television, the Internet, and social media. When a terrorist attack has occurred, it can be immediately broadcasted on live TV, live-streamed on Facebook or Instagram, and shared across various other sources throughout the Internet. This dissemination of the attack benefits the media because they will be able to turn a profit from the number of views they receive, but it also benefits the terrorist organizations themselves who were behind the attack because it gets their agenda out to a larger audience.

A symbiotic relationship exists between the media and terrorist organizations because both groups benefit from media coverage. The world needs to be informed of terrorist activities, but media sources and the public should be informed of the fact that constant coverage of the attacks benefits the terrorist organizations as well. Terrorist organizations are benefitted by media exposure because one of their main objectives is to publicize their political agenda and explain their rationale for resorting to acts of violence (Marin, 2009). The media is the perfect tool for them to use to accomplish this goal, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, is one such organization that takes advantage of social media platforms for darker purposes that are a direct threat to national security.

ISIS and the Internet

ISIS is an infamous terrorist organization that poses a major threat to international

security. ISIS is known for its brutal terror tactics and targeting of innocent civilians. In recent years, these terrorists have expanded their combatant ranks thereby commanding the attention of governments, media, and the general public. ISIS remains spotlighted through social media, which allows them to spread propaganda, recruit new members, and spread fear as it seeks to establish an entirely new Islamic Caliphate under Sharia law (Clarke, 2004).

ISIS has mastered using social media platforms to their advantage. They are the most technologically savvy terrorist organization, partially because they are the "first terrorist group whose members have grown up on the Internet", giving them the skills to be proficient at using technology to communicate and organize with one another, while also allowing them to use social media to spread fear, radicalize, and recruit the general public throughout the world (Corera, 2015, p. 379). The Internet has connected people all over the world with one another, and although this has been beneficial for societies all around the world, this interconnectedness has also been detrimental. Globalization in the age of the Internet may have been intended for good, but it is now being used for evil since it acts as "command central" for terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, to communicate, plot, recruit, address sympathizers and enemies, and to claim responsibility for terrorist acts committed by their members (Becker, 2005). ISIS has the skills, and social media provides forums through which its evil intentions are having disastrous impacts throughout the world.

As previously mentioned, ISIS is one of the most technologically capable terrorist organizations in existence. In fact, ISIS is so technologically skilled that some counterterrorism experts have referred to the Internet as a "terrorist university," in which ISIS members can learn new techniques and skills to improve upon their recruitment strategies, dissemination of propaganda, and notoriety (Goodman, 2015, p. 29). ISIS is no longer only a brutal fighting force,

but a media conglomerate as well that is capable of releasing thirty-eight new media items per day through the use of social media websites and apps. These media items include full-length documentaries, photo essays, audio clips, and pamphlets, in languages ranging from Russia to Bengali to English (Koerner, 2017). This content is used to recruit new members and spread propaganda by convincing prospective recruits that ISIS is a stable empire that is inexorably growing, and therefore they should enlist in their fight against the Western World. So far, their digital recruitment efforts have motivated more than 30,000 individuals to leave everything they've ever known and journey thousands of miles to join ISIS in the countries they occupy (Koerner, 2017) What makes ISIS' social media campaign even stronger and more threatening is the fact that they capitalize on an influx of foreign recruits by releasing propaganda videos that feature foreign fighters who speak Western languages, and who encourage more Westerners to join the cause and wage violent jihad against infidels or take part in the Islamic caliphate in some other way. Another tactic employed by ISIS is to use women to lure recruits by having them post on Twitter, Tumblr, and other social media platforms about how amazing their lives are and how they are fighting for a just cause in the name of Islam (Engel, 2015). They are master manipulators of the Internet and their target audience.

ISIS has been able to recruit many individuals through their extensive media campaign that paints their organization in a positive light and consistently gains them notoriety among like-minded terrorist organizations. This is done over various social media platforms, including Tweets and Facebook posts promoting good works and charitable donations that members have participated in, and YouTube videos that show members working to improve the appearance of their communities, and handing out ice cream to children (Larzelere, 2015). The purpose of these posts and videos is to show that ISIS is helping local communities in the Middle East and trying

to improve the way of life for their people. However, not all of the videos show them as friendly, helpful, individuals. Videos also depict graphic beheadings and ISIS members making their victims dig their own graves (Larzelere, 2015).

One of the more problematic aspects of ISIS recruitment strategies is their targeting of disaffected youth all over the world. Through practices that have become known as "Jihadi Cool", ISIS has begun to specifically target younger generations by promoting how "cool" and powerful you can become by becoming a member of ISIS. ISIS members will pose in their military-style uniforms, with their flag and weapons in the background, attempting to look as strong as possible, to target disaffected millennial's who are unhappy with their place in society. These images and videos attempt to display the idea that "one is never too young to be a warrior for God" ("'Jihadi Cool': How ISIS Switched Its Recruitment…"). ISIS has become very effective at targeting disaffected youth because their propaganda tactics are very persuasive.

Besides claiming that one is never too young to become a warrior for God, they also have media that claims that ISIS is their brother in Islam, and if they join them in their cause, that they will have a family and a support system that will love and provide for them ("Jihadi Cool": How ISIS Switched Its Recruitment…"). By promoting the idea of family and a support system, ISIS has gained many young recruits who have not found their place in the world and who are looking for any way to fit in and create a family of their own. Ultimately, the aim of propaganda strategies used by ISIS for recruitment is to win the hearts and minds of their target audience, while maintaining the appeal of the organization for youth (Awan, 2017). They claim that they want to provide individuals with a family, and an outlet for their religious frustration at non-Muslims and this can be a very powerful motivating force for youth who feel as if they don't belong. The fact that ISIS is so adept at using social media makes its recruitment of young,

idealistic, disaffected, youth even more powerful since so many people under the age of thirty are glued to their phones or laptops.

ISIS poses a three-dimensional threat to the world. They are no longer only a threat on the ground, but also a threat through our screens. They have mastered the use of technology to their advantage, and the detriment of society as a whole. In the hands of ISIS, social media and the Internet have most certainly become a foe to national security. Addressing this foe is extremely difficult because the Internet is such a complex battlefield. ISIS has millions of websites that they can spread information on, and plenty of encrypted apps that they communicate through without being discovered by government agencies. Government agencies are constantly monitoring the Web for terroristic content, but they cannot keep up with the never-ending flow of propaganda that ISIS produces. This means that more effective technology needs to be developed to aid government agencies in stopping the proliferation of ISIS propaganda throughout the world.

Counterterrorism Efforts and Social Media

ISIS has capitalized on the idea that "radicalization occurs not in mosques, but rather online, in secret", which makes combating the threat of terrorism in cyberspace even more difficult" (Blaker, 2015, p. 4). Combatting terrorism in the online world is incredibly difficult, but governments have worked to develop effective counterterrorism strategies to mitigate the threat online. However, these policies have met with varying degrees of success. One of the more widely used online counterterrorism effort is for government agencies to limit what information is available to the public by examining the content on various websites, and then censoring, or taking down the website, if it is promoting terroristic content. At first glance, this appears to be

an easy and simple solution to the terrorist threat online. However, the United States government has been hopelessly outgunned in its battle against ISIS propaganda online, due to the sheer volume of propaganda that is spread throughout the Internet on a daily basis (Patrikarakos, 2017).

The growing online presence and support for ISIS have further overwhelmed the law enforcement agency's abilities to effectively monitor extremist activities online. This has forced government agencies to only focus on online activities that they perceive are the most severe security cases (Speckhard, Shajkovci, & Yala). This is a very subjective approach to counterterrorism which becomes problematic because it leaves room for many cases that were initially perceived as minor to potentially blow up into a major threat, and if the agencies had more manpower they would have been able to prevent it. Governments have no generally known capability to actively monitor massive amounts of Web content sufficiently (Kaplan, 2009). In other words, they have methods to monitor massive amounts of data from the Internet, but these methods are not unclassified, and so are not public knowledge.

Thanks to the government files leaked by Edward Snowden in 2013, we know that the National Security Agency (NSA) was conducting mass surveillance on the American public to look for terrorist threats. This suggests that the NSA is capable of actively monitoring massive amounts of content to search for clues of impending terrorism, but despite their capabilities, it is now illegal for government agencies to collect data on the entire American population for spying purposes. In their spying operations, the NSA actively violated the Fourth Amendment, Title III, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA), and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The Fourth Amendment guarantees that America's privacy may not be invaded without a warrant based on probable cause, and Title III, ECPA, and FISA are the only laws that

authorize any exceptions to the ban on the authorization of electronic eavesdropping by the government "NSA Spying on Americans is Illegal").

The NSA spying operations were not authorized by any of these Amendments or laws, making their actions illegal, and the information obtained through these operations inadmissible for indictment purposes. The secret collection of information from everyone in the population raised many ethical concerns because of the illegality of the violation of American's right to privacy. The NSA's attempt to combat terrorism through data mining is only one solution that ultimately failed to stop the threat posed by terrorism. Many solutions have been proposed and implemented, but attempts to stop the spread of terroristic viewpoints online have failed so far. By exploring other methods that could potentially be more effective in solving this problem, we might be able to lessen the effect that ISIS has on social media platforms.

Innovation and Advancement in Cyberterrorism Strategies

Counterterrorism officials have been completely stumped by the sophisticated propaganda machine that ISIS has become in developing their global communication strategy for recruitment and the dissemination of information about their cause (Sanchez, 2015). This has created the need for counterterrorism officials to develop more innovative approaches in addition to the current counterterrorism strategies. So far these new approaches have met with varying degrees of success, however, these approaches are worth mentioning and exploring further.

One innovative approach to counterterrorism strategies is based on the fact that ISIS' use of social media poses a borderless, technological threeat, which requires the criminal justice system to have at least a basic knowledge in the language of science and technology. Since this threat is borderless and takes place all over the world through the interconnectedness of the

Internet, it only makes sense that online counterterrorism efforts should be handled through an international response (Goodman, 2015). Social media platforms are considered to be transnational by nature, so one innovative solution that has been proposed to combat the threat of ISIS online is to develop a global response to cyberterrorism. This could be done through the United Nations, or another international body, working to agree upon a series of strict guidelines that would determine what material is prohibited across social media platforms (Patrikarakos, 2017). If the international community united to develop guidelines on what is appropriate to post online, that would lessen the burden on each nation that is monitoring, deleting, censoring, and blocking terroristic content. If the United States wasn't solely responsible for monitoring the content on social media, and other nations joined them or increased their own efforts, in the battle against extremist media online, the levels of ISIS propaganda would most likely decrease. However, as of the time of writing this, no such international effort has been explored or implemented in the fight against ISIS in cyberspace. It remains a theoretical possibility.

Although the idea of an international collaboration to prevent cyberterrorism has failed to gain momentum as a policy, other creative solutions have been proposed. One such solution is to create phony terrorist websites. These websites can be used to spread disinformation ranging from instructions for building a bomb that will explode prematurely, to false intelligence about the location of United States forces in Iraq, which would lead terrorist fighters into a trap (Kaplan, 2009). If a terrorist, or potential terrorist, come across these websites, it is assumed that they will follow the instructions that the government created. Even if they do not follow these instructions, the fact that fake terrorist websites are popping up online will fill up the searches for legitimate websites, and make it harder for terrorists to discover the legitimate terrorist websites.

Following the same logic of inundating the Internet with non-terrorist websites, some

officials have proposed that Western nations take a page from the terrorist book and foster their own forms of crowdsourced messages online. This can be done through a Western focus on broadcasting refugee stories that are told in their own words and their native language, which would undermine the narrative that is so crucial to the identity of ISIS (Koerner, 2017). These counter messages would serve a dual purpose. They would serve their intended purpose of undermining the rhetoric of ISSI, but they would also show that not all practitioners of Islam are terrorists and that in many cases, innocent civilians have to fight for their lives against terrorist regimes like ISIS. However, simply producing more counter propaganda and counter-narratives will not solve the ISIS problem.

Government and Social Media Approaches to Cyberterrorism

Although the previously mentioned actions taken by the NSA were illegal, most law enforcement and government agencies keep circling back to the idea of data mining and monitoring mass amounts of information as the most effective solution to countering ISIS propaganda online. No method has appeared to be the most successful at countering online terrorism, but it appears that data mining and monitoring might be the most effective solution that has been thoroughly explored and implemented. That being said, if this is, in fact, the most effective method, it must be implemented on a smaller scale and through legal channels. For this to work legally, social media websites will have to do a better job of self-censoring inappropriate content that is posted to their websites, instead of relying on the government to do all of the work for them. They must take the initiative into their own hands, while also cooperating with government agencies whenever necessary.

One of the most proactive social media websites in regards to stopping the ISIS

propaganda has been Twitter. They have actively worked to take down official ISIS profiles, but they have done little to stop the large influx of tweets containing ISIS support and propaganda (Larzelere, 2015). This is a step in the right direction, but social media websites need to pursue more effective methods to accomplish even more. It is a losing battle to shut down every single Twitter, Facebook, or other social media account because more will continue to pop up and the problem won't be solved, but shutting down accounts is a step that needs to be taken. Some officials have proposed that there needs to be an overhaul in the user guidelines and policies of social media websites to make it nearly impossible for groups to spread hate and terror across online platforms (Larzelere, 2015). These guidelines need to be changed sooner rather than later, and this change would affect the average user as well, which is why some people are concerned about implementing this type of change. Any policy that would affect the general public is likely to spark outrage over policy concerns, which would make it hard for such a policy to effectively do its job.

In addition to specific guidelines being implemented by social media outlets themselves, many policymakers have begun to advocate for the government to draft clear legislation on what is impermissible on social media platforms. To enforce this implementation, individuals would be fined heavily and face public censure if they refuse to comply (Patrikarakos, 2017). Creating and implementing legislation like this has the potential to make strides in decreasing the Islamic State's use of social media online, but it will be difficult to implement the fines and public censure if there are not enough people to monitor the massive amount of social media accounts. If there are not enough resources to enable enough people to monitor social media sites, then there will not be enough people who are capable of fining those who violate the legislation. The groundwork has been laid for effective policy, but the finer details need to be ironed out a bit

more before the policy has any hope of being successful.

Conclusion

The age of the Internet has brought about unprecedented threats to national security. It has been a useful tool in connecting the international community, but it has also allowed for the dissemination of hateful and threatening content throughout the world. It has created an online space in which tech-savvy terrorist organizations, like ISIS, can spread their messages and recruit more people to join their cause, and because of the complex nature of the Internet, these messages are difficult to eradicate. Cyberterrorism policies have been created and implemented to mitigate the harmful effects of terrorist organizations, but these policies have met with varying degrees of success. Until more effective strategies are developed and implemented, social media and the Internet will continue to be a foe to national security around the world when it is employed by terrorist organizations, such as ISIS.

The Role of Perception in the Terrorism and Counterterrorism Narrative

Working Paper Three – Capstone

Rhianna Hayes

Introduction

Terrorism and counterterrorism are topics that have many layers, which makes conducting an analysis very difficult. One of the layers of terrorism and counterterrorism is the role that perception plays in how we view these topics. Perceptions are powerful because they shape how we view our lives, and this extends to how we view policies that affect our lives as well. Thus, it is likely that perceptions play a powerful role in how we create and implement policies to deal with the major threat posed by terrorism. It is important to analyze the role of perceptions in counterterrorism strategies because perceptions of terrorism influence the wider narrative on terrorism itself, and this has a profound impact on counterterrorism policies that are created and implemented within the United States and abroad.

Terrorism has been a threat to national and international security throughout history, but it was not associated with any one group of people until approximately the 1980s. In the 1980s, Muslim groups began to be associated with the word terrorist, and by the middle of the 1990s, "racialized stereotypes that held that all terrorists just be Middle Easterners because so pervasive" that when the attack on the Federal Building in Oklahoma City took place "…many professional analysts, investigators, and journalists immediately assumed that the attacks were carried out by 'Arabs'" (Love, 2009, p. 411). This association between terrorism and Middle Easterners only grew stronger after the events that took place on September 11, 2001.

The emphasis by politicians on the dangers of terrorism in the post 9/11 years has also led the public to perceive the risk of terrorism in different ways over time. The fact that terrorism is frequently highlighted in the news has also led to an increased belief in terrorism as a threat by the public, which can have direct policy implications. The media plays a major role in framing public discourse about a variety of topics and when it comes to Islam and terrorism, it is no

different. When terrorism is concerned, the media coverage of events will typically be dominated

by messages of fear, anger, and revenge, which directly affects how the public view the

perpetrators of an attack, and the attack itself (Ogan, Willnat, Pennington, & Bashir, 2013).

Portraying coverage of events in this way will lead the public to believe that Islam is a severe

threat to national, and international security. This creates a heightened sense of risk for being

attacked by a terrorist organization, which in turn triggers support for more punitive

counterterrorism strategies (Liu, Mumpower, Portney & Vedlitz, 2019).

      People view terrorism in a variety of different ways, based on their personal experiences,

the information they are exposed to, and the type of media they consume. All of these factors can

change how policymakers view the problem of terrorism when creating policy and how the

public reacts to the implementation of counterterrorism policies. It is important to examine the

role that the perception of terrorism plays in influencing counterterrorism policy creation and

implementation because we must be aware of what influences these types of policies.

Perceptions are biases, and if policies are being created and implemented based on internalized

biases about a specific group of people or a specific topic, it can lead to problematic policies that

are detrimental not only to the affected groups but to society as a whole.

Perceptions and Terrorism

      Perceptions play a huge role in the field of criminal justice. This is because perceptions

influence how a topic is viewed and defined by law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and the

public. Everyone has their own perception that is based on their own internal biases and

preconceived notions about their opinion on a certain topic. Perceptions of terrorism and

counterterrorism policies are no different. Even if these individuals do not have a strong opinion

on terrorism, most individuals will have some kind of idea of what a terrorist looks like and acts like, and on many occasions, the people most commonly associated with terrorism are Muslims and Middle Easterners. Many people do not realize, that as with many crimes, terrorists can look and act like anyone. However, because of these preconceived notions of who a terrorist is, we can observe how these notions influence how terrorism is viewed, and how counterterrorism strategies are created. Preconceived notions about terrorism are very problematic and are often based on racist biases and stereotypes. This is shown through the fact that when many people hear the word terrorism, their next thought most likely jumps to the word "Muslim", "Middle Eastern", or "Islam".

Islamophobia

Many individuals hold widely prejudicial opinions against Muslims and Middle Easterners because of the horrific event that took place on September 11th, 2001. This association between terrorism and Islam has led to the development of what is known as "Islamophobia". Like terrorism itself, the term Islamophobia has many different meanings, but they all share a commonality in their definitions. This commonality is the fact that all definitions emphasize that Islamophobia is discrimination targeted against Muslim, or Muslim looking, individuals. Considine (2017) states that Islamophobia is the "radicalization of American Muslims [that] generates local and palpable experiences of exclusion and abuse for both Muslims and non-Muslims", and he later goes on to say that "it is merely the figment of a paranoid or politically motivated imagination, or constructed out of a desire to perpetuate a siege mentality and sense of victimhood against Muslims" (Considine, 2017, p. 1). Similarly, Love (2009) emphasizes that Islamophobia is "the most common term used to refer to bigotry,

discrimination, policies, and practices directed towards Islam and a radicalized group of people that includes Muslims (Love, 2009, p. 402).

Other scholars have taken a more political approach in defining Islamophobia. Fahmy (2005) discusses Islamophobia in the context of McCarthyism. She describes Islamophobia as a cultural and political discourse "that is far more reaching and socially destructive than the McCarthyism of the 1950's" (Fahmy, 2015, p. 1). McCarthyism provides a helpful metaphor for the consequences of Islamophobia because each form of discrimination has detrimentally affected a specific group of people throughout different parts of history. McCarthyism and Islamophobia both lead to the exclusion of a certain group of people from the perceived nation and the perceived national identity. This exclusion is often perpetuated and facilitated by the dominant groups in society to keep the targeted group subservient. This exclusion of the target group is facilitated through the culture of surveillance that exists within the United States and has only increased in the wake of 9/11 (Fahmy, 2015). Yazdiha (2014) provides another political definition of Islamophobia. She describes Islamophobia as a "strategic movement led by a small, tightly networked group of misinformation experts that institutionalizes fear and suspicion of Islam through bills and ballot initiatives" (Yazdiha, 2014, p. 267). These definitions of Islamophobia are the most commonly discussed in the literature and were worth mentioning. They all vary to a certain degree, but what they have in common is the emphasis on discrimination against Muslims and Muslim looking individuals.

Islamophobia Promoted through the Media

Media and news sources play a powerful role in framing and promoting Islamophobia within the United States and abroad. This is because coverage of incidents involving or

concerning Muslims or Muslim countries is almost always negative. When covering a story, the media has the power to choose how they are going to present the information. When stories concern Muslim individuals, media outlets tend to resort to stereotypical interpretations. Many analyses have been conducted on the influence that the media has played in the portrayal of Muslims, and how that influences public perception, which in turn influences public policy. One such analysis was conducted by Ogan, et al. (2013) to examine how the media frames the public discourse on Muslims and Islam throughout Europe and the United States. In their study, they found that media exposure to Muslim-related issues has an impact on attitudes toward Muslims and Islam in general, especially when that exposure is negative. These authors also found that negative attitudes toward Muslims and Islam are most strongly associated with political conservatism and that Republicans are far more likely to be exposed to conservative media surrounding Muslims and Islam (Ogan, et al., 2013). The findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature examining media exposure and pre-existing beliefs.

Another important aspect of the study conducted by Ogan et al (2013) is the fact that the results emphasized the idea behind confirmation bias. Confirmation bias exists when someone has a preconceived notion, and they look to media that hold their same beliefs to confirm that their belief is right or accurate. When it comes to Islamophobia and the media, Islamophobic content is consistently promoted by more conservative news sources, such as Fox News, and republicans and conservatives will readily turn to this news source to reinforce their existing attitudes towards Muslims. This essentially creates a never-ending cycle of promoting and confirming Islamophobic attitudes in the media and among the public. Besides news sources, it is also important to look at how social media and entertainment representations of Islam are key factors that contribute to the increase of Islamophobia throughout the country. For example, the

fact that in many forms of entertainment, Arabs and Muslims are consistently used as heinous villains, which shows how the public perceptions of Arabs and Muslims can be shaped and skewed by what they are seeing (Considine, 2017). This is yet another example of confirmation bias, since many Americans already view these groups as villains, making them villains in popular media and entertainment only reinforces this idea.

Policy Implications

The development of specialized discrimination in the form of Islamophobia has far-reaching policy implications, especially in the United States. The United States has a racially charged history, and to this day, we are still dealing with racist ideologies in our civilian and political lives. Where terrorism is concerned, Islamophobia acts as the anti-Muslim tool to stimulate cultural discomfort into politically actionable resources of fear and power. Islamophobia is capable of doing this because of the political climate that exists within the United States. Islamophobia is an ideology that strongly resonates with what has been referred to as a "growing cultural vocabulary, and underlying racist principles that are widely accepted as distinctly and uniquely American" (Yazdiha, 2014, p. 270). This vocabulary and underlying racist principles have only increased within recent years under the Trump Administration. Reviewing polls from 2017 has shown that a vast majority of non-Muslims in the United States have become increasingly hostile towards Muslims and Middle Easterners. This increase in hostility has directly paralleled the developing Islamophobic discourse that is readily employed by politicians and media outlets (Considine, 2017). The fact that politicians and media outlets are so eager to employ anti-Muslim rhetoric has major policy implications for counterterrorism strategies.

This rhetoric employed by Islamophobia has led to the creation of counterterrorism

policies that reinforce stereotypes of Muslim individuals and that specifically target this group of

people. After 9/11, people began to see terrorism through an Islamophobic, anti-Muslim, lens.

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center were perpetrated by Muslim individuals, people

began to associate Muslims with terrorism. This is because, for many individuals, the attacks of

9/11 were the first exposure they had to terrorism, meaning that all other incidents would be

shaped by their perception of the first attack that they experienced. This way of thinking led

directly to policies like the Patriot Act being created and implemented. These policies were all

created with security and protection for American citizens in mind, but they didn't consider how

they would affect Muslim Americans and Muslim looking Americans. No one stopped to

consider how their perception of terrorism was influencing their perceptions of individuals who

had nothing to do with terrorism, but simply looked like or practiced the same religion as the

perpetrators of the attacks of 9/11.

When it comes to framing the topic of terrorism, politicians and the media have immense

power and will use that power to convince people to see their point of view. The words these

groups use matter. As Deborah Stone (2002) notes, "…words, as we know, are loaded. The mere

act of naming something places it in a class and suggests that it is like some things and unlike

others" (Stone, 2002, p. 314). With terrorism, once you name a certain group of people as

terrorists, they become the other. They are no longer like us and are perceived as evil, despicable

people who are capable of committing heinous acts. This may be true of terrorists themselves,

but it is not true of the larger group of people who have become associated with the term

terrorist, but the fact that politicians and the media consistently associate terrorists with Muslim

or Muslim looking people has resulted in them becoming synonymous with terrorist. These terms

have negative connotations and serve to further put a target on people's backs, which leads to policies that directly impact the targeted group.

Existing Counterterrorism Policies and the Role of Perception

One of the most widely known counterterrorism policies is the 2001 Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, more commonly referred to as the Patriot Act. The Patriot Act was enacted by Congress to arm law enforcement with new tools to detect and prevent terrorism, after the events of 9/11. This act was created to address the security concerns of the American public after 9/11, but it was also an act that was created and implemented through an Islamophobic lens. The Patriot Act aimed to improve counterterrorism efforts in the United States by allowing law enforcement personnel to utilize higher forms of surveillance in terrorism investigations, facilitating information sharing and cooperation among various government agencies to more effectively coordinate their national security efforts, updating the law to reflect new technologies and new threats by granting law enforcement agencies greater legal assistance, and increasing the penalties for individuals who commit terrorism-related crimes ("The USA Patriot Act: Preserving Life and Liberty").

The Patriot Act was initiated in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and that is clear through the language of the act itself which promoted the Islamophobic sentiment that immediately occurred in the days after the attacks. It was an act created out of fear and the desire for revenge on those who attacked the United States on its own soil. On the surface, the Patriot Act appeared to be a good decision because widely increasing the powers afforded to law enforcement agencies in matters concerning terrorism was designed to equip them with better

tools to prevent future attacks. It was viewed as the most effective way to allow the United States to better protect its citizens and their country, but in actuality, the act stripped many Americans of their given rights. This can most clearly be seen through racial profiling. Racial profiling, as defined by the ACLU, occurs when "law enforcement and private security target people of color for humiliating and often frightening detentions, interrogations, and searches without evidence of criminal activity and based on perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion" ("Racial Profiling"). The practice of racial profiling is not unique to the post-9/11 years, but with the enactment of the Patriot Act and associated legislation racial profiling that specifically targeted Muslim or Muslim looking individuals greatly increased. The Patriot Act gave the United States new powers to categorize Muslims and Muslim appearing Americans as a threat to national security, which contributed to social segregation and differential access to resources, while also designating them as a unique security threat to American citizens and national interests (Considine, 2017). Through the powers designated to them in the Patriot Act, law enforcement agencies effectively delegated Muslim Americans, and Muslim looking Americans, to the role of second class citizenship. This group of people became subject to their freedoms and their safety being taken away from them. The Patriot Act is only one example of how public perception of Muslims resulted in punitive policies that negatively impacted this group of people.

Negative perceptions of terrorism and the individuals most commonly associated with terrorism has influenced other public policies as well. For example, we have observed a dramatic shift in policy related to terrorism with the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States in 2016. Under the Obama Administration, counterterrorism efforts revolved around the core values of the US, security partnerships, assuring the use of appropriate anti-terrorism tools, and creating a culture of resilience within America ("Citizens' Perceptions of Terrorism

Risks…"). President Obama was greatly concerned with having counterterrorism strategies that helped protect all Americans by observing and protecting their human rights. Obama was also concerned with evaluating how effective counterterrorism strategies were, and worked towards improving existing strategies and developing new strategies to keep the United States from terrorist threats ("Citizens' Perceptions of Terrorism Risks…"). When Donald Trump became President, the focus on protecting human rights and using appropriate tools for counterterrorism strategies went away.

President Trump released his administration's versions of a counterterrorism strategy in October of 2018. This strategy outlined four objectives included defeating global terrorist networks and their affiliates, using all available US power to inhibit the ability of terrorists to mobilize their fighters, finance operations, travel, communicate, and recruit new members, protect critical infrastructure and educate the public on how to prepare and respond to attacks, and to defeat radical Islamic terrorists by further expanding the number of tools available to law enforcement agencies to fight terrorism ("Citizens' Perceptions of Terrorism Risks…"). As with the Patriot Act, these four objectives look great on paper, but in practice, they become incredibly problematic. When expanding the powers of law enforcement agencies by using rhetoric such as "all available US power", it seems to suggest that America is willing to do anything necessary to stop the threat of terrorism. However, using any means necessary often goes too far. In terms of terrorism policy, employing any means necessary has often led to enhanced interrogation, racial profiling, and victimization of Muslim and Muslim looking Americans. Using this rhetoric also leads the public to think that they are under constant threat and that if punitive tactics are not employed, then they will not be safe (Considine, 2017). This perception directly leads to the

public supporting punitive policies because they think that they will be the safest with the use of such policies that are targeting specific groups of people associated with the threat of terrorism.

The Push for Unbiased Counterterrorism Policies

In recent years, there has been a shift from these more punitive and racist counterterrorism policies to a more community-based approach that relies on aspects of procedural justice and positive community engagement. The United Kingdom and Australia have spearheaded community counterterrorism efforts, but the United States has been beginning to adopt more community-based counterterrorism approaches as well. This shift is occurring for a variety of reasons, but the main reason is the fact that governments all around the world have begun to realize that despite adopting increasingly invasive and controversial counterterrorism policies in the post-9/11 era, they have been unable to legislate or police their way out of the security threat posed by Islamic extremism to this day (Spalek & Weeks, 2016). In other words, Western governments have begun to realize that engaging Muslim communities might be a more effective way to combat the threat of terrorism than by using punitive and oppressive tactics that are based on fear and revenge.

The development of community-based approaches to counterterrorism is a step in the right direction, however, it is going to take a lot of work and require politicians, law enforcement agencies, and the general public to change their perceptions of terrorism. The largest obstacle in the way of community-based approaches will come from the fact that Muslim communities are viewed as "suspect communities". In 1993, the term suspect community was first used to describe how the Northern Irish population was rendered as a suspect through the design and operation of counterterrorism legislation that was enacted in Ireland during the Northern Irish

conflict. Since the early 1990s, this term has been adopted to describe the contemporary situation and experience of Muslim communities in the wake of 9/11. Scholars have also agreed that a "suspect community is not simply one that is targeted but is also one that is imagined (socially constructed by members of the non-suspect groups) through the broader discourse surrounding the War on Terror" (Chereny & Murphy, 2016, p. 481). In order to effectively engage Muslim communities to participate in counterterrorism efforts, viewing these communities as suspects need to be overcome. One way that this can be overcome is by building partnerships with Muslim communities. Engagement with these communities will allow the police to be able to improve relations with Muslim community members who can then help them in the "repudiation of terrorist propaganda and extremism, pass on terror-related information to police, and help in the identification of violent extremists" (Cherney & Murphy, 2016, p. 481). However, this will be easier said than done because the police will need to ensure they are striking a balance between engaging with the Muslim community and using the Muslim community as a means to their own counterterrorism ends.

Conclusion

Perceptions of terrorism and the groups most commonly associated with terrorism have immense power to influence the creation and implementation of counterterrorism policies. It is clear that there is an issue with many existing counterterrorism policies and security measures, and these issues must be remedied. Existing counterterrorism policies are punitive and tend to target Muslim and Muslim looking Americans. It is important going forward that counterterrorism policies are created and implemented that do not feed into these perceptions of Muslims automatically meaning terrorism. Individuals in all walks of life will need to realize that

all Muslims are not terrorists and that the vast majority of Muslims denounce terrorism as much as non-Muslims do. This is a paradigm shift that is going to take a lot of effort and cooperation among politicians, law enforcement agencies, the media, and the general public to change the narrative around terrorism and to make community-oriented counterterrorism policies a reality. Counterterrorism policies need not be based on racial biases and preconceived notions of what it means to be a terrorist, which is often detrimental towards Muslim and Muslim looking individuals. It is so important to create and implement counterterrorism strategies that are not based on an Islamophobic ideology because any group of people, no matter their ethnicity or their religion, could become the victim of an attack and all groups of people have a right to be protected.

An Analysis of Gender and Terrorism

Working Paper Four – Capstone

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Introduction

Terrorism can be defined in many different ways, but for the purposes of this paper, terrorism refers to the "premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of their immediate victims" (Avdan & Webb, 2018). Terrorism is an act that is primarily associated with men who use violent acts to enhance a particular political agenda and spread a particular ideology throughout the world. In the discussion of terrorism, women are often an afterthought. Women are not typically considered in the discussion of terrorism because many people, whether they are policymakers, the media, or the general public, believe that it is unfathomable for a woman to want to engage in terrorism. It is true that men make up the majority of terrorist organizations, but that does not dismiss the fact that women are among the ranks of terrorist organizations as well. Depending on the organization, women have more opportunities to be involved in the front lines of the fight with the men, while in other groups they remain behind the scenes in support roles (Agara, 2015). Nevertheless, women have played an important role in terrorist activities throughout history.

Women have, and continue to be, an essential part of terrorist organizations. Their roles may have changed and evolved over the years, but in some capacity women have always played a part. This is why it is so important to examine the roles that women play in terrorist organizations. In terrorist organizations, women have played an active role through support roles and other non-lethal terrorism tactics, but they have also been on the front lines of a terrorist attack as well, engaging in violent fighting and suicide missions alongside men. To be a terrorist, an individual does not only have to engage in violent acts of terrorism. Simply by supporting the terrorist organization, one can be considered as a terrorist (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011).

In terrorist organizations, women make up the vast majority of support positions. These positions may not be as overtly terroristic as more violent tactics employed by terrorist organizations, but without these support roles, the terrorist organization would not be able to function. Support roles, such as obtaining information, helping with finances, and spreading propaganda are all vital aspects of terrorism that help the terrorist organizations facilitate their political agenda and achieve their objectives (Avdan & Webb, 2010). Without these vital roles, often fulfilled by women, the terrorist organizations would not be as successful.

The literature on female involvement in terrorism is relatively lacking, and what does exist tends to focus on women being manipulated, abused, and used by the men in their lives. Much of female terrorism literature tends to look at female engagement in terrorism through their connection to males, instead of viewing women as their own person capable of making the decision to engage in terrorism for their own reasons. Scholars will typically link women's participation in terrorism to something bad that has happened to them in their past, such as abuse, rape, drug use, loss of loved ones, and pressure from their brothers, boyfriends, or husbands, to engage in terrorism (Agara, 2015). This is the most common theme and explanation for female involvement in terrorism that is found in the existing literature, but some scholars have explored other factors that draw women into terrorist organizations as well. For example, some scholars note that females engage in terrorism as a way to reclaim themselves in the eyes of society. When scholars discuss this reclamation, they are implying that women who engage in terrorism can reclaim their lives from abuse, hardship, their lower-level position in society by creating a way for them to move up the levels of the existing hierarchy and obtain more power for themselves (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). That being said, some literature reviews have explored other factors that draw women into terrorist organizations.

The first half of this literature review will examine the existing literature on gender and terrorism. The intent of examining the existing literature is to provide an understanding of the reasons that women choose to engage in terrorism, and if female engagement differs from male engagement. This section will provide background information for the second half of the paper. Through an analysis of data produced by Moskalenko and McCauley (2009), the second half of this paper will focus on answering this question: Are there gender differences behind the motivation for joining and participating in terrorist organizations? My hypothesis is that there are not gender differences between male and female motivation for joining and participating in a terrorist organization.

Overview of the Existing Literature

Terrorism literature, no matter the specific focus, has a tendency to concentrate solely on male engagement in terrorism and will typically ignore or diminish the role that women play in terrorism. However, over the course of the last decade, there has been an increasing interest by scholars regarding the involvement of women in terrorism. This interest includes how female terrorists are portrayed in the media, their role in terrorism itself, and their role in counterterrorism efforts. Agara (2015) is one scholar who focuses specifically on the involvement of women in terrorism and terrorist organizations through the lens of media and policymakers. In examining female engagement in terrorism in this way, Agara argues that the media and policymakers have made women's involvement in terrorism appear to be a recent phenomenon, when in reality, women have played an active role in some way, shape, or form for hundreds of years. Through viewing female engagement in terrorism as a new phenomenon, and also through a gendered lens, terrorist organizations are given an edge to cause more damage in a

terrorist incident because few expect that a woman is capable of causing mass amounts of violence and destruction (Agara, 2015). Viewing women as incapable of causing mass amounts of violence stems from societal stereotypes and media coverage that emphasizes the role of women as innocent, loving caretakers.

Existing terrorism that discusses female involvement explores the role that women play in counterterrorism. The counterterrorism literature that focuses on women largely analyzes the United Nations and their efforts to increase female involvement in counterterrorism efforts. In 2013, the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, an organization within the United Nations, wrote a policy brief that highlights the importance of understanding the various terrorist capacities in which women engage, and the need for women to play an active part in counterterrorism efforts (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). Scholars who emphasize the necessity of women engaging in counterterrorism do so because they argue that the world is shifting from a more reactive counterterrorism approach, to a more preventative counterterrorism approach. This shift calls for a more comprehensive approach to addressing the new challenges of terrorism, and one of these challenges is the gender component of terrorism. Developing a more comprehensive approach to counterterrorism efforts would include a multi-stakeholder approach that actively includes women in counterterrorism efforts, but also incorporates a gender dimension overall into the United Nations and national counterterrorism efforts (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). Adding a female perspective to terrorism would better equip the international community to understand why, how, and when women decide to engage in terrorism, and develop new strategies to counteract their involvement.

Another approach to female involvement in counterterrorism efforts focuses on the role of masculinity. A unique approach evident in the literature was a study conducted by Barnes,

Brown, and Osterman (2012). These authors conducted a study to examine how masculine honor ideology within the United States could potentially influence citizens' response to terrorism. This study was the first of its kind to look at the effects of masculinity and honor on terrorism. Essentially, this study found evidence that the militant response to terrorism, which is the current counterterrorism policy approach, is rooted in the culture of the United States and stems from the emphasis on honor and the importance of masculinity in our society (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2012). This is an important consideration to keep in mind when examining how the United States views terrorism and counterterrorism efforts. This reliance on masculinity and honor can serve as one explanation for why women's involvement in terrorism and counterterrorism remains a foreign concept.

Besides focusing on how the media portrays female's roles and involvement in terrorism and women's role in counterterrorism, some scholars focus on the limitations of the literature itself. Corcoran-Nantes (2011) critiques the images and understanding of female terrorism that is most commonly presented in the literature. Corcoran-Nantes (2011) is one of many who cite limitations in the literature. Her specific focus is on examining the common themes that are present in a gendered approach to terrorism, such as the literature that defines female engagement in political violence as victims of male seduction, biological determinism, and psychological issues. Corcoran-Nantes (2011) advocates, and is urging other scholars to do so, as well, for the academic community to approach female engagement in terrorism through a lens that prioritizes an understanding of women as individuals, citizens, and political actors, instead of their connection to men and trauma that they may or may not have experienced (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011).

A key component of the literature concerning women in terrorism also emphasizes

gender differences in fear of terrorism itself. It is thought by some in the literature that men and women are afraid of different things, and when they are afraid of the same things, they may respond to that fear in different ways. Nellis (2009) conducted an analysis to observe these differences. Nellis (2009) analyzed data collected from a telephone survey of 532 inhabitants from New York, and Washington, DC on the topic of reactions to terrorism-related information to assess women's fear of crime and their risk of victimization by examining differences in fear of terrorism and their reaction to terrorism compared to men. The result of this study showed that women reported greater amounts of fear of terrorism, and that they were far more likely to seek information on how to prepare for terrorist attacks when compared to men. Nellis (2009) found this difference to be statistically significant, and the results appear to suggest that there are key differences in how males and females approach the topic of terrorism. The results of this study are very interesting because Nellis (2009) found that there were statistically significant differences between men and women in their reactions to terrorism, whereas most of the literature suggests that there are no differences between men and women in regards to topics relating to terrorism. When differences are present in the literature, differences are very minor or are not statistically significant, but this article provides some support that statistically significant differences appear to be correlated with gender.

Women in Terrorism

"Behind every act of terrorism lies a protagonist or perpetrator who is unmistakably male" (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011, p.1). Even though the last decade has seen a noticeable increase in the study of female terrorism, the sentiment behind this quote shows how gender is not commonly discussed in the major works on the study of terrorism. Typically, terrorism is only

discussed through a male-dominated lens, and when female terrorism is discussed, it is heavily gendered and seemingly different and apart from all other forms of terrorism in which men participate (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011). This has led some scholars to assert that women's association with terrorism requires a different kind of analysis to get at the root causes and motivations for joining and participating in such an organization. Sjoberg (2009) is one such scholar that demands that female engagement in terrorism be approached through a feminist lens. Sjoberg (2009) argues that women are underrepresented in the study of terrorism because so few scholars look at the reasons for women's engagement in terrorism, and the consequences of women's actions in terrorism. Even when terrorism is explored in a female context, it frequently characterizes female participants in terrorism as women terrorists, rather than terrorists who happen to be women (Sjoberg, 2009). This point tries to highlight the fact that female terrorists are seen through very gendered terms, instead of being seen as terrorists in their own right.

It is assumed that terrorist organizations are predominantly comprised of male individuals, which is true, but this does not mean that women are nonexistent among their ranks. The majority of the current literature on terrorist organizations diminishes the role that women have played throughout history and the role that they continue to play today, in these organizations. The roles women have played in terrorist organizations are viewed as ugly, violent, and untraditional for their sex, but women assist in keeping the terrorist organization alive. Women provide vital support for the organization through intelligence gathering, medical care, food preparation, and support, which are seen as behind the scenes roles (Baker, 2017). However, women have also been involved on the front lines in violent acts of terrorism as well.

Since the 1990s, and increasingly throughout the 2000s, women have been involved with Islamist and Jihadi terrorist organizations. These are Islamic organizations that get their

inspiration from a fundamental interpretation of the Quran. In these organizations, women remain prevalent in behind the scenes roles, such as support personnel, logistics personnel, and kinetic resources, but they have also become attackers, kidnappers, hijackers, and martyrs on the frontlines of terrorism (Agara, 2015). The most common form of violent terrorism that females engage in is suicide terrorism. It is one of the most violent forms of a terrorist attack, and women are often utilized because of their ability to go undetected. Women are often viewed as pure, innocent, and nonviolent by societal standards, and these stereotypes play into the advantage of terrorist organizations. No one wants to violate a woman's personal space by stopping, searching, and interrogating her, which allows female terrorists to get close to their target without issue (Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005). Despite the advantages that women brought to the table by being able to go undetected at higher rates than male terrorists, initially terrorist organizations were reluctant to utilize female suicide attackers. Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and other Islamic terrorist organizations were adamant that women should not participate in violent demonstrations. These organizations believed that women should remain at home and perform the traditional and well-established roles as wives and mothers while wearing traditional Islamic clothing and rarely appearing in public unaccompanied by their husbands, uncles, or sons. In 2002, this sentiment changed when Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, gave his "Army of the Roses" speech, which called on women to join their husbands, uncles, and sons in the struggle against Islam (Agara, 2015). This changed the role of women in terrorist organizations from that moment on.

That same afternoon that Yasser Arafat was calling for women to do their part for their organizations by taking up arms against their enemies, a Palestinian woman named Wafa Idris made history as becoming the first female suicide bomber in the Palestinian setting. Idris was not

the first female suicide bomber in history, but she is arguably one of the more famous female attackers in the Islamic sphere of terrorism. This is because her suicide mission invoked a visceral reaction from the public who were shocked and unwilling to admit that a female could be a suicide attacker. The public was unable to grasp why a woman would want to partake in a suicide mission and because of this, the media made every effort to dismiss Idris as mentally ill or hopeless (Lindemann, 2015). Another notable woman in terrorism who put female engagement in terrorism on the map was Leila Khaled. Khaled is the first known female hijacker, who participated in a classic high profile airline-hijacking mission (Harmon & Holmes, 2017). Khaled's attack took place in 1969 when she hijacked the Trans World Airlines Flight 840. It was believed that the Israeli ambassador to the United States was on board, but it was later revealed that he was not. No one was injured during the hijacking, but Khaled and her hijacking team blew up the nose section of the aircraft carrier once passengers disembarked (Simkovitz, 2017). Women like Wafa Idris and Leila Khaled show the world that male terrorists are not the only terrorists to fear. Women are equally capable of committing acts of terror in the name of what they believe in.

When the incidents perpetrated by Wafa Idris and Leila Khaled were covered by the media, they stated that these women were anomalies, ill, or manipulated into resorting to terrorism by the men in their lives. This storyline became a common explanation for female suicide bombers, hijackers, and female terrorists in general because the public was unable to comprehend the idea that women would partake in martyrdom missions like men. Society did not expect that women would engage in violence on this scale. The media attempted to clarify this incomprehensible act by explaining female terrorism in the context of their mental, emotional, or even genital deficiencies (Oliverio & Lauderdale, 2005). The media also portrayed female

terrists as biologically, psychologically, and sexually different from terrorist men, but also different from non-terrorist women (Corcoran-Nantes, 2011). Coverage of this type is designed to keep women in gendered and stereotypical roles of being nurturers and the weaker sex.

Currently, a knowledge gap exists for many policymakers concerning the motivations for committing violent extremist acts and how gender may play a role. This knowledge gap stems from the fact that women may play the role of supporter or participate in terrorist groups for reasons outside of their gender. Many people believe that women engage in terrorism for distinctly different reasons than men, but studies show that this is not necessarily the case. Studies suggest that many of the factors that drive men to become terrorists drive women in the same way. These factors include grievances about sociopolitical conditions, grief about the death of a loved one, perceived humiliation on a physical, psychological, or political level, commitment to religious or ideological beliefs, economic benefits, and/or the desire to effect societal change (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). However, there is still a belief that women engage in terrorism for different reasons than men because of their differences in personality and values. Whether or not there are fundamental differences between male and female involvement in terrorism, it is important to analyze the role that women play in both preventing and engaging in terrorism. To obtain a better understanding of terrorism and how to combat it, the gender element must be explored.

Women in Counterterrorism

Women not only engage in terrorism, but they also engage in counterterrorism. Terrorism itself is male-dominated, and the same is true for counterterrorism efforts in many countries. In recent years, there has been a push by the international community to increase the involvement

of women in counterterrorism efforts. This effort is being led by the United Nations. The call for an increase in female involvement in counterterrorism is happening for a variety of reasons. The main reason is that little attention has been paid to integrating a gender dimension in the efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism. In 2010, the United Nations adopted Security Council Resolution 1325 and established the United Nations Women to promote gender equality and empowerment through providing a multilateral platform for highlighting issues relating to armed conflict, insecurity, and inequality and their effect on women (Fink, Barakat, & Shetret, 2013). These resolutions and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security focus on how women are typically viewed as preventers, without considering why, how, and when women may also play the role of supporter or perpetrator in terrorism, or as security personnel in counterterrorism efforts.

From participants to preventers, women play an essential role in both sides of the terrorism spectrum. Since women are often viewed as the weaker sex, this presents many challenges for them to be taken seriously. In the context of counterterrorism, women constantly have to fight for legitimacy to be seen as competent leaders. In matters of national security, women tend to be less preferred in leadership roles than men. This is because female politicians are viewed as stereotypically more compassionate and trustworthy, are better equipped to handle children's and women's issues, and are typically more liberal and democratic, whereas males are viewed as stronger, more assertive, leaders who are more competent at handling matters of national security (Holman, Merolla, & Zeichmeister, 2016). This means that women have a harder time making their voices heard in counterterrorism matters. This is very detrimental to counterterrorism efforts because women have the potential to bring their unique perspectives to counterterrorism efforts. If women's voices and perspectives were heard on a larger scale, it is

possible that counterterrorism policies could be created with a gender component in mind that would allow policymakers to obtain a better understanding of female motives for engagement in terrorism, which in turn would allow for policymakers to create and adopt policies to decrease female engagement in terrorism.

Data Analysis

In order to observe whether or not there are gender differences in the motivation for joining and participating in terrorist organizations, data from Clark McCauley's (2011) "Predictors of Activism and Radicalism: Past Activism, Past Radicalism, and Grievance Against the Government" will be utilized. McCauley (2011) focused on testing the relationship between grievance, activism, and radicalism, among 429 participants from throughout the United States. These participants were gathered and randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions. The first group was given questions about their intention to engage in activism and radicalism in the past and the future, followed by questions regarding grievances against the United States government. The second group was given the questions about grievances against the US government first, followed by the activism and radicalism questions. These questions were designed to determine the effect that past behavior may have on future behavior to engage in activism and/or radicalism. This study included variables on demographics, future/past activism, grievances with the United States government, and attitudes towards law enforcement within the United States.

Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) utilized the aforementioned dataset to examine how the increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in support of intergroup conflict affect political mobilization. They built upon previous research to introduce the Activism and

Radicalism Intention Scales, which are used to asses an individual's readiness to participate in legal and non-violent political action. They also used the Radicalism Intention Scale to assess the readiness of an individual to participate in illegal or violent political actions. They used these two scales as an analysis tool to conduct three separate studies to measure political mobilization. The study of most importance for this paper is Study 3. In this study, Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) applied a two-component structure of the activism and radicalism intention scales that were used in the first two studies, but in this study, they use a sample that is representative of the adult population within the United States. For this particular study, they determined that American respondents are not usually suspicious of social scientists or researchers, so they added questions about participants' past experiences with activism and/or radicalism. For this paper, I will be referencing this study and analyzing this data set to see whether gender plays a significant role in the decision to engage in activism or radicalism. I will be taking into account the differences in male and female responses to the questions designed by the original author.

Methods

Utilizing Clark McCauley's (2011) "Predictors of Activism and Radicalism: Past Activism, Past Radicalism, and Grievance Against the Government" national data set (N-429), a series of independent sample t-tests and a cross tabs analysis were conducted to observe differences between male and female responses to the questionnaire developed by McCauley (2011). The questions asked in this survey were on a Likert scale ranging from very unlikely, unlikely, likely, and very likely. For this analysis, the scale was kept the same. This analysis will be conducted using SPSS (2017), a statistical programming software. A total of 18 questions will be examined. Each question is related to a participant's willingness to engage in activism or

radicalism on behalf of the political group that they support. Some of the questions ask if participants have had negative experiences with the United States government. These questions are asked to see if the participants have any grievances towards the United States government, and to observe if these grievances could influence a participant's decision to engage in activism or radicalism.

Results

The authors of the original data set asked male and female participants a series of eighteen questions. For this literature review, a t-test and a chi square test were conducted on each of the eighteen questions to see if there are any statistically significant differences between male and female engagement in activism and/or radicalism, which can then be applied to terrorism. The original authors who used this data observed that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female participants' responses to the questions, but it is important to note that there were observed differences in the raw data. Despite these differences, the data supports the hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female motivations for joining and participating in a terrorist organization.

Table One below reports the results from the t-tests that were conducted. As can be seen in the table, Questions 8, 12, and 14 report distinguishable means for male and female responses. Table Two featured below reports the results from the chi square test that was conducted with the data. The chi square test results are interesting because they show that four of the eighteen questions display statistically significant differences between male and female respondents, while the t-test comparisons only report that there are three questions that report statistically significant differences. Both the t-tests and chi square tests show that Questions 8, 12, and 14 are

statistically significant, but the chi square test also shows that Question 5 reports that there are statistically significant differences in the participant's answers. Table Three provides the results by question, male mean score, female mean score, and the differences in the means for each question. Of the eighteen questions asked of participants, males had a higher mean score in eight questions, and females had a higher mean score in eight questions. In three of the eighteen questions, the means were statistically significant, but in the other fifteen questions, the means were not statistically significant. Question 8, Question 12, and Question 14 produced statistically significant results. It is important to note that in all of the tables, the questions have been abbreviated. A list of the full eighteen questions in their unabbreviated form can be found in Appendix A.

In Table One below, questions 8, 12, and 14 show distinguishable means for male and female responses based on the results of the independent t-test. These three questions show that there are statistically significant differences associated with the gender of the respondent. There were statistically significant differences between men and women when asked if they would retaliate against an opposing group ($p = .017$), organize a political event ($p = .016$), and if they would engage in a political activity with the possibility of confrontation ($p = .026$).

Table Two below shows that there are statistically significant differences between male and female respondents, based on the results of the chi square test, in 4 of the 18 questions. Similarly to Table One, Table Two reports statistically significant differences between males and females responses in questions 8, 12, and 14, but the chi square test also reports statistically significant differences for question 5 as well. Statistically significant differences between men and women were observed when they were asked if they would continue supporting your organization even if they break the law ($p = .037$), if they would retaliate against an opposing

group (p = .014), organize a political event (p = .016), and if they would engage in a political

activity with the possibility of confrontation (p = .026).

Table One: T-Test Comparisons for Gender (N=429), *p≤.05

Question	Male Mean Score (n=223)	Male Standard Deviation	Female Mean Score (n=206)	Female Standard Deviation	Sig.
Q1: Join an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?	2.51	.964	2.46	.881	p=.556
Q2: Donate money?)	2.56	.923	2.62	.918	p=.497
Q3: Volunteer your time?	2.44	.913	2.48	.879	p= .675
Q4: Travel ten miles to join a public rally, demonstration, or protest?	2.30	.985	2.27	.908	p= .690
Q5: Continue supporting your organization even if they break the law?	1.99	.977	1.84	.820	p= .084
Q6: Participate in a protest if it might get violent?	1.79	.873	1.74	.744	p= .554
Q7: Attack police for beating members of your group?	1.62	.868	1.54	.723	p= .271
Q8: Retaliate against an opposing group?	1.63	.834	1.46	.659	p=.017*
Q9: Attend a talk?	1.53	.500	1.60	.492	p= .170
Q10: Invite a friend to an event?	1.53	.450	1.77	.424	p= .263
Q11: Distribute information?	1.70	.460	1.74	.442	p= .398
Q12: Organize a political event?	1.89	.316	1.95	.215	p=.016*
Q13: Engage in a political activity with the possibility of confrontation? (P= .201)	1.93	.251	1.96	.195	p=.201
Q14: Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest?	1.95	.208	1.99	.098	p=.026*
Q15: Has the US government wronged you?	1.64	.843	1.55	.823	p= .259
Q16: Has the US government wronged a group you belong too?	1.74	.830	1.86	.865	p= .165

| Q17: Would you cooperate with the FBI? | 1.90 | .826 | 1.88 | .863 | p= .822 |
| Q18: Would you work for a law enforcement agency? | 2.41 | 1.302 | 2.66 | 1.293 | p= .051 |

Table Two: Chi Square Test Results (N= 429)
Male n = 223 and Female n = 206

Question	Value	Degrees of Freedom	Asymptotic Significance
Q1: Join an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?	3.82	3	.284
Q2: Donate money?	1.083	3	.781
Q3: Volunteer your time?	.701	3	.873
Q4: Travel ten miles to join a public rally, demonstration, or protest?	5.695	3	.127
Q5: Continue supporting your organization even if they break the law? *	8.464	3	.037*
Q6: Participate in a protest if it might get violent?	7.002	3	.072
Q7: Attack police for beating members of your group?	5.490	3	.139
Q8: Retaliate against an opposing group? *	10.640	3	.014*
Q9: Attend a talk?	1.887	1	.169
Q10: Invite a friend to an event?	1.260	1	.262
Q11: Distribute information?	.719	1	.396
Q12: Organize a political event? *	5.774	1	.016*
Q13: Engage in a political activity with the possibility of confrontation?	1.645	1	.200
Q14: Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest? *	4.931	1	.026*
Q15: Has the US government wronged you?	2.283	2	.319
Q16: Has the US government wronged a group you belong too?	2.160	2	.340
Q17: Would you cooperate with the FBI?	2.027	3	.567
Q18: Would you work for a law enforcement agency?	4.540	3	.209

*p≤.05

Table Three: Mean Scores by Gender (N=429)				
Question	**Male Mean Score (n=223)**	**Female Mean Score (n=206)**	**Mean Difference**	**Percentage Difference**
Q1: Join an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?	2.51	2.46	.053	2.00%
Q2: Donate money?	2.56	2.62	-.060	2.29%
Q3: Volunteer your time?	2.44	2.48	-.036	1.45%
Q4: Travel ten miles to join a public rally, demonstration, or protest?	2.30	2.27	.037	1.61%
Q5: Continue supporting your organization even if they break the law?	1.99	1.84	1.51	7.59%
Q6: Participate in a protest if it might get violent?	1.79	1.74	.047	2.63%
Q7: Attack police for beating members of your group?	1.62	1.54	.086	5.31%
Q8: Retaliate against an opposing group?	1.63	1.46	.174	10.67%
Q9: Attend a talk?	1.53	1.60	-.066	4.13%
Q10: Invite a friend to an event?	1.53	1.77	-.048	2.71%
Q11: Distribute information?	1.70	1.74	-.037	2.13%
Q12: Organize a political event?	1.89	1.95	-.064	3.28%
Q13: Engage in a political activity with the possibility of confrontation?	1.93	1.96	-.028	1.43%
Q14: Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest?	1.95	1.99	-.036	1.81%
Q15: Has the US government wronged you?	1.64	1.55	.091	5.55%
Q16: Has the US government wronged a group you belong too?	1.74	1.86	-.115	6.18%
Q17: Would you cooperate with the FBI?	1.90	1.88	.018	0.95%
Q18: Would you work for a law enforcement agency?	2.41	2.66	-.246	9.25%

Discussion

Even though there were observed gender differences in how males and females responded to the eighteen questions that they were asked, these differences were not statistically significant in the majority of cases. However, as the results of the t-tests show, there were 3 instances of statistical significance and as the chi square tests show, there were 4 cases of statistical significance. These results show that the hypothesis that there are no gender differences between male and female motivation for joining and participating in a terrorist organization is mildly supported. As the 3 to 4 instances of statistically significant results in this sample, the differences between males and females in their motivation for joining and participating in a terrorist organization is probably very weak.

Even though there are only a few instances of statistically significant results, the differences observed in male and female respondents answers are important to consider. These differences are especially important because when females had a greater mean score than males, it was often on questions that are more stereotypically associated with females. The questions in which female participants responded with a higher mean score than male participants are often important to consider because these questions were more often related to non-violent support roles that a female may engage in while participating in a terrorist organization. For example, female mean scores were higher for questions that involved volunteering their time, donating money, attending a talk, inviting a friend to group events, and organizing events for their organization. These roles are often viewed as things that women would enjoy more than men, so it was interesting to see these stereotypical associations play out in the data. Support roles within

terrorist organizations are predominantly made up of female terrorists, so it is interesting that

women are seemingly more drawn to these types of roles, even though their responses were not

statistically significant for the majority of the questions, but were statistically significant for

Questions 12 and 14. These results can be seen more clearly in Table Four below. The scores

highlighted in yellow in this table signify that female respondents have a higher mean score than

male respondents.

Table Four: Gender Mean Scores (N=429)

Question	Male Mean Score (n=223)	Female Mean Score (n=206)
Q1: Join an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?	2.51	2.46
Q2: Donate money?	2.56	2.62
Q3: Volunteer your time?	2.44	2.48
Q4: Travel ten miles to join a public rally, demonstration, or protest?	2.30	2.27
Q5: Continue supporting your organization even if they break the law?	1.99	1.84
Q6: Participate in a protest if it might get violent?	1.79	1.74
Q7: Attack police for beating members of your group?	1.62	1.54
Q8: Retaliate against an opposing group?	1.63	1.46
Q9: Attend a talk?	1.53	1.60
Q10: Invite a friend to an event?	1.53	1.77
Q11: Distribute information?	1.70	1.74
Q12: Organize a political event?	1.89	1.95
Q13: Engage in a political activity with the possibility of confrontation?	1.93	1.96
Q14: Engage in an illegal act as part of a political protest?	1.95	1.99
Q15: Has the US government wronged you?	1.64	1.55
Q16: Has the US government wronged a group you belong too?	1.74	1.86
Q17: Would you cooperate with the FBI?	1.90	1.88
Q18: Would you work for a law enforcement agency?	2.41	2.66

Conclusion

Many aspects of terrorism have been actively explored since the terrorist attacks of 9/11. One area that has received less of a focus in the literature is the role that gender plays in terrorist organizations. It is assumed that terrorist organizations are male dominated because females would have no real interest in being a part of a terrorist organization. However, that is not the case. Terrorist organizations are in fact male dominated, but female involvement in terrorism has steadily been increasing. Women engage in terrorism by filling vital support roles that keep the terrorist organization up and running, but they can also be on the front line with their male counterparts, engaging in acts of violence. Ignoring female involvement in terrorism is detrimental for the larger study of terrorism, and the creation and implementation of counterterrorism strategies. This detriment is exacerbated by the fact that many people still believe that female terrorists are an aberration, and that they engage in terrorism for fundamentally different reasons than their male counterparts. However, as the literature and this data analysis shows, women engage in terrorism for many of the same reasons that men do. There is no strong statistically significant support that shows that there are differences between males and females decision to engage in terrorism.

Appendix A: Questionnaire Questions Asked by Moskalenko and McCauley (2009) in their Original Data Collection and Analysis

Q1: Join an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?
Q2: Donate money to an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?
Q3: Volunteer your time working (write petitions, distribute flyers, recruit people, etc.) for an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights?
Q4: Travel ten miles to join a public rally, demonstration, or protest in support of your group?
Q5: Continue supporting an organization that fights for your group's political and legal rights even if the organization sometimes breaks the law?
Q6: Participate in a protest against oppression of your group if you thought the protest might turn violent?
Q7: Attack police or security forces if you saw them beating members of your group?
Q8: Retaliate against members of a group if some of that group attacked your group, even if you could not be sure you were retaliating against the guilty parties?
Q9: Attended a talk on a particular group's social or political concerns?
Q10: Invited a friend or relative to attend a meeting of a political organization or event?
Q11: Distributed information representing a particular political or social group's cause?
Q12: Organized a political event (e.g. talk, discussion group, march)?
Q13: Engaged in a political activity in which you suspected there would be a confrontation with the police, or possible arrest?
Q14: Engaged in an illegal act as part of a political protest?
Q15: Has the United States government done anything that hurt you personally or someone you know?
Q16: Has the United States government done anything that hurt a group or a cause that you care about?
Q17: If the FBI came to ask you for information about a neighbor or coworker, would you answer their questions?
Q18: Which would you personally rather work for? (Not asked, refused, the FBI, the State Police in your state, the local police force where you live, or I would never work for any kind of law enforcement agency)

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