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Women as Nontraditional Terrorists

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WOMEN AS NONTRADITIONAL TERRORISTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Terrorist organizations have always been predominantly dominated by male members in numbers of participants, supporters, and leaders. Despite men having the majority of the roles, oftentimes the world witnesses attack executed by female terrorists which deal a substantial amount of damage to the infrastructure and the peaceful civilians surrounding them. Furthermore, the sense of unpredictability and unpreparedness from the counterterrorist forces and the general public adds up to the overall advantage women possess in the field of terrorism over men. Considering these observations, one can argue that women have grown to be far more dangerous and successful in the field of terrorism than men, who still hold the absolute majority in terrorist organizations. This thesis will investigate the phenomenon of women as nontraditional terrorists through answering the question of who deals more damage per terrorist attacks between males and females by looking at four major distinct terrorist organizations and their individual cases of attacks reported in the Global Terrorism Database. The unit of measurement for this study will be the average of death and wounded tolls, while the variables investigated will be individual male/female attacks and mixed-group/male group/female group attack to evaluate the impact of female member's presence in group-attack settings. The goal of this thesis is to raise awareness on female lethality in terrorist organizations to the counterterrorist forces and the general public which is extremely important for domestic and foreign policy/security measures.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Is there a universal image of what an ideal terrorist should look like? Over the years, the beard has become one of the key features in identifying the true face of a terrorist due to the rise of radical Islamic organizations such as Isis, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and many more (Pape, 2006; Farmanfarmaian, 1995). This stereotypical identification feature not only shapes the societal perceptions of the act of terrorism as masculine rather than feminine but also fails to identify other terrorist organizations outside of the Middle East, such as Tamil Tigers, Chechen Rebels, Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and many more (Bloom, 2012). Therefore, terrorism is yet another field considered to be "male-dominated," where females have little to no role in the overall contribution (Zamia, 2007; Bloom 2012). This belief does not only spread its roots through the public but often among policymakers and counterterrorist forces as well (Skaine, 2006). Meanwhile, history has proven that common belief to be false. Many researchers and critics such as Mia Bloom, Rosemarie Skaine, Kim Cragin, and Margaret Gonzalez-Perez in their writings have warned states about the unnoticed threat of female presence in terrorist organizations. The notion of improbability (Bloom, 2012), the lack of female presence in the law enforcement field (Bigio, 2019), a false impression of late-term pregnancy with strapped explosives (Bloom, 2012; Skaine, 2006), are some of the variables that make women ideal assets for terrorism. In fact, it can be argued that women are better assets than men (Bloom, 2012; Bigio, 2019; Gonzalez-Perez, 2009).

The hypothesis proposed in this thesis investigates a nontraditional nature of female terrorists through evaluating their success rate of executing terrorist attacks and comparing it to

men's. The goal of the thesis is to support the argument that women involved with terrorist organizations are offering new and nontraditional ways to excel in this field. The subject of the study will be individual cases of terrorist attacks and associated casualty/wounded headcount dated from 1970 to 2017, available through the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

The importance of researching this aspect of terrorism has a significant meaning in the overall study of counterterrorism. The perception and knowledge of the counterterrorism forces play one of the most prominent roles in this issue (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019; Skaine 2006). If women are performing more successfully than men in delivering the attack, that is not solely because of the perfect execution of the attacker but often because of the lack of actions or limitations that face the defense force caused by an inaccurate knowledge on the subject (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019). Additionally, there are set rules, protocols, and procedures for dealing with terrorist forces, which often time do not account for all the possible threats (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019), especially the ones organized by women due to it being the minority of the cases (Bloom, 2012; Skaine 2006). Studying this matter further, will not only raise the awareness about the active dangers that women possess in terrorist organizations but will also help shape policies and procedures into more inclusive and safe action guides. Lastly, this study is important for the ones who are the most vulnerable and are the biggest targets of terrorist attacks: the people. Knowing the true image which depicts the dangers posed by terrorist forces will aid the public in being more cautious and aware of their surroundings, essentially keeping themselves safe to the extent they can.

As time advances, terrorist organizations are getting more power and the sense of danger that threatens the peace and the sovereignty of nowadays nation-states. Women have always

been involved in terrorist organizations, as regular recruits, as family members, and as leaders as well (Bloom, 2012; Skaine, 2006; Bigio, 2019). Many books are written about the topic of women and terrorism that address the history and the future of women in this radical field (Bloom, 2012; Skaine, 2006; Bigio, 2019; Neuburger, 1996; Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Cragin, 2009), but only a few ask if today, in the 21st century, women have reached the point where their presence in terrorist organizations has a more substantial impact than men. To explore this phenomenon, the thesis reviews multiple scholarly publications on the topic of gender and terrorism-related to the important role of women in terrorism. To analyze the information, the thesis provides an outline with a specific methodology and measures to weigh the success rate among both genders. As for the presentation of results, this thesis aims to change the prototype image of a terrorist to a more inclusive and accurate depiction, where women are a part of the larger picture. These findings would serve as a resource to policymakers, counter-terrorist forces, and the general population, increasing the awareness and the knowledge about the growing threat of female presence in terrorist organizations. Lastly, the conclusion will tie all the different arguments and points together to emphasize the findings of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Terrorism

A vast number of books and articles have been published about the act of terrorism. However, relatively few of those publications mention the topic of female participation and leadership in various terrorist organizations (Bloom, 2012; Skaine, 2006; Bigio, 2019). As necessary, the subject of who is involved in terrorist organizations is, similarly, the topic of why people get involved in such organizations is crucial to understand the bigger picture. Before we start directly talking about female success and role in this field, it is important to showcase what we already know about terrorism in general, through a non-gender specific lens.

As defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, terrorism can be broken down into two separate concepts of its own - international and domestic terrorism (Terrorism, 2016). International terrorism is defined as an act perpetrated by groups or individuals who are motivated by or in relations with foreign terrorist organizations or national actors (Terrorism, 2016). To exemplify the definition, we can reference back to December 2, 2015, attack in California, where a radicalized married couple, inspired by extremist ideologies of foreign terrorist organizations killed 14 and wounded 22 with their organized shooting (Terrorism, 2016). The second type, domestic terrorism, is perpetrated by groups or individuals motivated by or in relations with primarily local movements that support radical ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature. As an example, on June 8, 2014, another married couple, motivated by anti-government views, shot and killed two police officers inside a

restaurant in Las Vegas, with the intent to start a revolution (Terrorism, 2016). Within these two types of terrorism, we can list multiple different strategies that are utilized by terrorist organizations such as attacks with explosives, firearms, or cyber-means. As time advances, additional new ways are introduced that the world has never seen before (Bloom, 2007).

Historical Advancement of Female Terrorism

Some might think that terrorism is a relatively new subject that has emerged in the recent past. That is very far from reality, as the first expression of terrorism shows its roots deep down in history. Factually, the oldest dominant religious groups, such as Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Jews, have been the main perpetrators of terrorist acts (Bloom, 2012; Skaine, 2006). This very phenomenon can be traced back as far as the Old Testament, where Samson destroys the temple of Philistines, which kills everyone, including himself in the temple (Bloom, 2012). From that point, we can trace the Abrahamic Religion worshipers sacrificing themselves and others in the name of god. Since then, we can observe the establishment and the spread of the first terrorist organizations such as Thugs - under Hinduism, Assassins - under Islam, and Zealots - under Judaism, all of which were backed up and motivated by the religious means (Bloom, 2012).

Specifically, female involvement in terrorist activities can be traced back to the mid-20th century, becoming more and more prominent throughout the post-World War II era (Gonzalez-Perez 2009; Bloom, 2007). The "widespread myth" of conflicts being fought solely by men is simply not the real picture On the contrary, in almost all the guerrilla movements, women were as active participants as men were, however, mostly the active participation was limited to support roles (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2007). The support roles covered some essential

positions such as political vanguards, logistical supporters, and even recruiters, encouraging like-minded individuals to join their cause (Cragin, 2009; Bloom 2012; Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). However, what happened on the 21st of May 1985, was a beginning of something new, as this date marked the day when a 16-year-old girl - Sana Khyadali killed two Israeli soldiers by driving a truck into the Defense Force convoy and became the first female suicide-terrorist known to humankind (Skaine, 2006).

Suicide-Terrorism

"My most pressing concern is that the U.S. is completely unprepared for suicide bombings, especially by women" (Skaine, 2006, p. 7). The common stereotype of only men being perpetrators of suicide-terrorism does not only affect the public but government forces as well. Because of this lack of expectancy, it can be argued that female suicide-terrorists pose more threat than male terrorists in the contemporary world (Skaine, 2006; Bloom 2012; Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bigio, 2019). Over the years, suicide-terrorism has been widespread in the areas of the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Chechnya-Russia, and Palestinian-Israeli conflict in which women have had as an essential and contributing role as men (Bloom, 2012). Specifically, for the Middle Eastern case study, in Turkey and Lebanon, most of the female perpetrators appeared to be under the age of 18 or over 24, all of which were motivated by the religious means of manipulation (Skaine, 2006; Bloom 2012). One of the deadliest series of female suicide-terrorist attacks was covered in the Chechen-Russian socio-territorial conflict case, wherein 27 individual cases took more than 1000 lives and severely injured over 3000 civilians

(Skaine, 2006). Exploring all these suicide-terrorism examples alone once again showcases the power and impact that women have within terrorist organizations.

Some might argue that the emergence of suicide-terrorism is dated back to early World War II when the Japanese Kamikaze pilots engaged in suicidal crashes to defeat a much stronger enemy than themselves. But further research into history shows us even earlier evidence of the first suicide-terrorists. The etymological study of this phenomenon takes us to the dawn of the word "assassin," which, according to the derivation of the term, describes a political murderer, originated from the Arabic word 'Hashishiyyin' (Bloom, 2007). Assassins were viewed as ones who use terror and violence as a "weapon of the weak" which shares a connection with the viewpoint of how women are often portrayed with the same word, "weak" in different cultures, which encourages women to claim their "ownership" of these weapons (Bloom, 2007). This view offers a new perspective about the future where women in the developing world will use terror to prove their strength and power (Bloom, 2007), which can be utilized as one of the arguments to the question: why do women engage in suicide-terrorism? Specifically, for the Palestinian women, their involvement with terrorist organizations, which in this case is Islamist militant group Hamas, can be tied to their losses and desire to recover family honor that the opposition has taken away from them (Skaine, 2006; Bloom, 2007). As another example, evaluating suicide-terrorism activities on the island of Sri Lanka, Tamil women have experienced rape and sexual abuse from the Sinhalese military, which encouraged them to join the "birds of paradise" unit of the Black Tigresses to fight against Sinhalese security and military forces (Bloom, 2007).

To look at the overall picture, from 1980 to 2003, only 3% of terrorism cases were tied to suicide-terrorism, even though an absolute minority, these 315 attacks accounted for 48% of total deaths due to terrorism (Pape, 2006). While paying attention to demographical statistics around suicide-terrorism, as previously mentioned, studies show that females are more likely to carry out suicide-terrorist attacks when they are under the age of 18 or over the age of 24, which accounted for over 55% of cases (Pape, 2006). While for males, in over 60% of cases, suicide bombers tend to be between the ages of 18 and 24, which shows a substantial der gap in this regard (Pape, 2006). These statistics expose the vulnerabilities of defense forces in dealing with different gender age groups, which makes the subject crucial to be studied further.

Tamil Tigers

Sri Lanka has been one of the epicenters of terrorist activities around the world (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012; Pape, 2006). The reason for this is the ethnic clash between the majority of the population, 74% of the community Sinhalese, and the absolute minority of the population, 13% representing Tamil, accumulating less than 3.2 million Tamils around the island (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). The conflict started in 1983 when predominantly Hindu group - Tigers of Tamil Eelam began its efforts to establish a separate independent territory of Eelam, which caused a great disparity among the Tamil-Sinhalese community (Bloom, 2007; Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). However, terrorist activities did not take place until four years after the conflict started in 1987 (Pape, 2006; Bloom, 2012). Since then, Tamil Tigers have executed 76 suicide-terrorist attacks, with over 143 participants in those missions (Pape, 2006), and killing over 70,000 Sri Lankans and 18,000 LTTE terrorists (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom,

2012). With these statistics, Tamil Tigers outranked any other terrorist organization by the number of suicide-terrorist attacks orchestrated in this period of 14 years (Pape, 2006).

In this particular terrorist organization, starting from the early 1990s, women held an essential role not only in participating in terrorist activities but operating from the executive leadership roles as well (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). By 1994, three women were a part of LTTE's highest assembly, the 12-member Central Committee, which planned and led operations of Tamil Tigers (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). The main explanation for this phenomenon was the oppressive imperial rule under the Sinhalese governance, which left Tamil women no other option but to participate in the domestic terrorist organization and fight against the unfair leadership (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). From 1992 to 2001, the female membership in Tamil Tigers grew from 3,000 to over 5,000, which accumulated to about 1/3 of the overall members (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). The stories of terrorist women, Black Tigresses, were spread among the Tamil society as heroic actions, inspiring many youths to join the fight against the Sinhalese majority (Bloom, 2007; Pape, 2006).

Hamas

Even though the status being highly disputed in international society, Hamas is another terrorist organization that spread its roots in the Middle East. The foundation of Hamas militant organization is based on the idea of liberating Palestine under the Sunni-Islamic faith, by using the principles of 'Jihad' translated as 'the holy war' (Bloom, 2007; Skaine, 2006). Since founded in 1987, Hamas has carried out several deadly suicide attack campaigns against Israel, one of

which ended up with the assassination of the leader of Hamas, all in response to Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Bloom, 2007). In 1993, an agreement was signed in the Oslo Accords, requiring Israel to withdraw their troops from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which was found as a plausible solution to stop the war, however, that was not the case as the conflict continued even after Israel's withdrawal (Pape, 2006; Bloom, 2007). Over the years, Hamas has observed and improved their success rates of suicide-terrorism, which eventually became their most common method of attack (Bloom, 2007).

Female participation in Hamas terrorist missions was prohibited until 2003, which marks the year when prohibitions were revised by the organizational leadership, after which the membership was open to women as well (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). It took only a year until the first female suicide-terrorist attack was organized by Hamas in 2004 (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009). Since then, tens of female suicide-terrorist attacks have been recorded, for which Hamas claimed their full responsibility (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom 2007; Pape, 2006). The only restriction that female volunteers faced in Hamas terrorist group was being part of the leadership, which was solely restricted to male members only (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009).

<u>Chechen Black Widows</u>

After exploring two of the Asian-regional based terrorist organizations, we move on to the European-regional based terrorist organizations, starting with Chechen Black Widows. This Islamic group evolved around the south-western part of Russia, bordering the Republic of Georgia from the north of the Caucasus. The primary motivation for Chechen Black Widows is

revenge for their killed family members, often their husbands, and the goal of independence for Chechnya (Pape, 2006; Bloom 2012). The first Chechen separatist war took place in 1994 when Russia started aerial bombardment of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, and since then, these tensions have not fallen, which makes the combat still in a dynamic nature (Pape, 2006; Bloom, 2012). To show the scale of the conflict, only in the first war alone, approximately 100,000 Chechens were killed, twice as much injured, and half-a-million displaced (Bloom, 2012). The first participants of the war were predominantly men, who were fighting in the name of their family and homeland, however, as the time advanced, widowed wives of killed Chechen rebels decided to part take in the ongoing fight (Pape, 2006; Bloom, 2012).

Chechen female terrorists called themselves "Chechen Black Widows" or "brides of Allah" and mostly used suicide-terrorism strategies to deliver their message (Pape, 2006; Bloom, 2012). The overall fatalities caused by Chechen Black Widows reach close to a thousand, and the number of injured counts several thousands of civilians (Pape, 2006; Bloom 2012). Some of the large-scale terrorist missions executed by Chechen Black Widows include the Dubrovka Moscow Theater Hostage Crisis where about 50 female terrorists held over 850 hostages (Bloom, 2012) and the Belsan School Massacre where two Chechen female terrorists killed 335 civilians, among which more than half of them were children (Bloom, 2012). Because of this deadly force, the Russian Government officials have made several statements, arguing that female terrorists are the most dangerous type of terrorists, which are posing a threat to their national security (Pape, 2006).

<u>Provisional Irish Republican Army</u>

Traveling to the Western edge of Europe, we come across the Provisional Irish Republican Army, also known as PIRA or IRA, which is an internationally acknowledged terrorist organization. PIRA is a relatively older organization than all the other cases discussed in the paper. The organization was founded in 1916 with the intention to end British rule over the territory of Ireland (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). The reason why PIRA is considered international is that its activities did not only take place within Ireland but also within the borders of Northern Ireland, with the aim of uniting Northern Ireland with Ireland (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom 2012). Even though the foundation coincides with the time frame of World War I, much of their terrorist activities started long after World War II, from the 1970s and continued till 2005, which marks the year when the final ceasefire agreement was signed (Bloom, 2012).

Female involvement in PIRA can be labeled as somewhat similar to the other three cases discussed earlier in the paper. At the beginning of the foundation, women limited their involvement with PIRA by only reserving peripheral support roles (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom 2012). However, as time advanced, female participation became more and more proactive, where eventually, females became perpetrators of the organizational terrorist activities (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). The main reason for active female participation in the case of PIRA differs from the other cases, as it served a separate purpose other than the goal of the terrorist organization itself. Women who were involved with PIRA had a shared goal of equality among genders, which was making their commitment to the organization even stronger (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). Feminism and equal rights movements were becoming more and more active in Ireland, which was encouraging Irish women to fight in order to deliver

their separate message (Gonzalez-Perez, 2009; Bloom, 2012). "Everyone tells me I'm a feminist. All I know is that I'm just as good as others and that especially means men" (Bloom, 2012, p. 85).

Women in Leadership of Terrorist Organizations

Beyond the success women have shown as perpetrators of terrorist acts, they have also become actively involved in the leadership roles within different terrorist organizations. Recruiting is one of the leadership positions that females have a substantial presence (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Bloom, 2012). To explore this phenomenon, we must look at different aspects of recruiting, which include female members as propagandists, facilitators, and historical conscience, all of which offer a unique way of recruitment efforts (Cragin & Daly, 2009). Women as facilitators often use their skills of coercion or persuasion to lure a target they are in a close relationship with (Cragin & Daly, 2009). For example, females in this role can target their brothers, sisters, husbands, or even close friends and use their relationship to lure those individuals into their terrorist organization (Cragin & Daly, 2009). This specific example was reported by the United Nations in Belgium, where Syrian immigrants were uncovered to be recruiting for the Jihadist terrorist organizations, in exchange for thousands of dollars being sent to their families and friends back in Syria (Press, 2020). Women as propagandists, on the other hand, do not necessarily focus on one audience of close relatives but target a more massive scale public and push persuasive messages encouraging joining their terrorist organizations on people who are the most vulnerable to it (Cragin & Daly, 2009). For instance, this can be done with media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media, which can spark

inspiration in many by convincing them to join their terrorist forces (Cragin & Daly, 2009).

Lastly, women as historical conscience, serve as storytellers and historians who use stories of

previous successful terrorist leaders, to influence future generations from a very young age into

terrorist organizations (Cragin & Daly, 2009). The best example for this specific type would be

the instance of Tamil Tigers and Black Tigress, both of which were glorified in writings, which

was a strategy directly targeting the future youth for them to get inspired by those actions and

join the fight (Bloom, 2012).

In the specific case of recruiting, we have observed gender differences while evaluating

performances which outlined some of the advantages that women possess in the recruitment field

over men. Firstly, female recruiters often cause potential male recruits to feel a sense of

guiltiness for remaining in sidelines and not helping in the efforts (Cragin & Daly, 2009), "if

women are willing to assume risk, it is wrong culturally in many societies for men to remain

safe" (Cragin & Daly, 2009). The research also shows an interesting pattern relationship between

the advancement of technology and female success in recruitment efforts. It can be suggested

that since the advancement of technology has allowed terrorist organizations to engage in

recruitment efforts from home. Furthermore, technological development has embraced

specifically women to become more involved in recruitment positions within terrorist

organizations such as Hamas, PIRA, or Al-Qaeda through the use of different social media and

local-masked websites. (Cragin & Daly, 2009).

Reasons Behind Women Involvement in Terrorist Organizations

Looking at terrorism in a non-gender-specific lens, different critics give us diverse opinions and explanations on this subject. Pape (2006), instead of multiple explanations and motives, offers one specific rationale and goal of terrorism - to protect their homeland from foreign invasive military forces. This explanation can be applied to almost all terrorist organizations, Tamil Tigers against Sinhalese to protect Tamil Land, Hamas against Israel to protect Palestinian land, Chechen Rebels against the Russian Government to protect Chechnyan land, and PIRA against Britain to preserve Irish land. After thorough research of cases involving examples from the 20th-century terrorism archives, another explanation that Neuburger (1996) provides is that "collective memory of injustice suffered" is the main factor responsible for most terrorism cases world-wide. This explanation, differently from the previous one, gives a broader but more applicable description, which includes not only the main but also the sub-motives of terrorist organizations, such as PIRA, for which equality and previously experienced "injustice" was a significant factor.

With a gender-specific lens, only a few explain motivations of why women decide to join terrorist organizations. Bloom (2012) introduces her perspective with the concept of four Rs: Revenge, Redemption, Relationship, and Respect, which account for most, if not all, cases of the female involvement in such groups. The first R - Revenge includes the death of a close family member, often a husband, which inspires women to continue the mission their loved one has started (Bloom, 2012). As we study the specific case of Chechen Black Widows, we notice how revenge is essentially the main motivation for its female members, to gain retribution for their killed husbands and close family members (Bloom, 2012). The second R - Redemption is one of

the most commonly used methods of recruiters to shame victims for their past sins and force them into redeeming themselves by executing the "will of God" (Bloom, 2012). The case of Iraqi recruiter Samira Ahmed Jassim, also known as "Mother of the Believers" is a classic example of the second R-redemption (Siemaszko, 2009). Jassim was not only organized over 80 individual rape incidents, but followed up with the victims, persuading them that becoming a suicide bomber was the only way they could redeem themselves, through which she recruited tens of women (Siemaszko, 2009). The third R - Relationship constitutes getting involved in terrorist organizations because of a known insurgent already within the group, which is often the case for daughters and sisters of terrorists (Bloom, 2012). Once again, through the case study of Chechen Rebels, we see an excellent example of the Third R- Relationship coming into play, as most of the Chechen Black Widow members were either wives, daughters, or sisters of men affiliated with the terrorist organization (Bloom, 2012). The final R - Respect shows commitment and dedication to the society, which has often glorified such actions and made terrorists appear as heroes in front of the community (Bloom, 2012). An example of the fourth R- Respect can be observed through looking into the case of Tamil Tigress recruitment efforts, where one of the most common ways of recruiting new female members was through glorifying some of the previous female martyrs and depicting them as heroes of the community (Bloom, 2012).

"Killing, by itself, is something inhumane… But it's war – to be killed or to kill is justified" (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011, p.126). These are the words of famous female Palestinian activist and often identified as terrorist, Leila Khaled who provides her own explanation on why women of her community get involved with terrorist activities (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011). "Leila the Savage Warrior" rejects all the notions associated with gender identity and states that the

reason is something beyond women being women and men being men (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011). For her it is all about the national identity - "When I speak at an international conference… I represent Palestinians, not women" (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011, p. 120) – because for her it was not about "surviving as female" but about "surviving as a Palestinian" (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011). Additionally, Khaled argues that armed struggle is not an individual choice, but a path taken collectively by group of people because of their struggle, which for her is the occupied land affecting both male and female members of the community equally (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011). "I may be killed while defending myself or my children and family… I am ready for it… I am ready always to die for my people" (Sjorberg & Gentry, 2011, p. 127).

Psychological Analysis of Women and Violence

Female involvement in terrorist organizations has been scaled and evaluated not only through the lenses of counterterrorist/security studies, but also through pure psychological analysis. The answer that we get to by exploring the psychological side of this phenomenon is that it depends on the individual case itself. Specifically, for the case study of German female terrorists, the study has shown that women in Germany are more emancipated and liberated than females in other European states (Hudson, 1999). Another explanation for this specific case study was the correlation between the rise of female involvement in terrorism and national guilt complex, which refers to the thinking that if women, specifically mothers, had a voice during Hitler's leadership, most of the atrocities would have never taken place (Hudson, 1999). The research also shows that women get inspired by one another's "heroic" actions (Hudson, 1999). Looking at the case of Leila Khaled, one of the leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestine, she hijacked a passenger plane operated by Trans World Airlines (Hudson, 1999). She

blew up the aircraft only after evacuating all the boarding passengers on the flight (Hudson,

1999). As psychologists argue, she inspired hundreds of other women around the world, who not

only admired her pictures displayed in newspapers and magazines but decided to follow the same

path of martyrdom (Hudson, 1999).

Psychological research also shows us some of the critical advantages that women pose

over men, which are divided into four themes: penitence, practicality/ coolness, dedication/ inner

strength ruthlessness, and single-mindedness (Hudson, 1999; Neuburger & Valentini, 1996). To

evaluate the degree of penitence, the research looked at some of the post-action emotions, such

as regret and the lack of commitment to the role after the completion of the mission (Neuburger

& Valentini, 1996). When measuring the degree of penitence between male and female ex-

terrorists, out of 613 men, 161 admitted their regret and shame which accumulates to about 20%

of the population; while in women, only 22 out of 150, which reaches approximately 13% of the

group (Neuburger & Valentini, 1996). "A woman, trading on the impression of being a mother,

nonviolent, fragile, even victim like, can more easily pass scrutiny by security forces…"

(Hudson, 1999). The study has shown that women tend to maintain their "coolness" even under

heavy pressure, and even under those circumstances, their inferior practicality makes terrorist

missions a step smarter and deadlier (Hudson, 1999). "They [women] have better nerves than

men, and they can be both passive and active at the same time" (Hudson, 1999). This trait not

only gives females additional inner strength but depicts their strong dedication towards the cause

they are serving under (Hudson, 1999). "[T]o achieve the goal, to go straight ahead without any

interruptions, any faltering. This attitude is not possible with men" (Hudson, 1999).

Psychologists claim that females have a better focus and determination on the goal they are fighting for, which essentially makes them the perfect weapon for the radical-ideologically based terrorist forces (Hudson, 1999)

Another explanation of psychological motivations for joining terrorist organizations follows the example of Ulrike Meinhof, who was one of the co-founders of the far-left terrorist organization - Red Army Faction, also known as the Baader-Meinhof group. Baader-Meinhof is not only known for the terrorist acts killing hundreds of German citizens, but also for a psychological phenomenon Baader Meinhof Effect (Pietrangelo, 2019). The effect is based on a frequency of bias and our exposure to it, in other words, how we start seeing the reality - X more frequently after our consciousness discovers X for the first time (Pietrangelo, 2019). That was the case for Ulrike Meinhof after surrounding herself with communist mentors and being exposed to far-left ideology for the first time, which led to her membership in the Communist Party of Germany and eventually to co-founding a terrorist organization. This complex is still very prevalent in the contemporary world and is manipulated to recruit the ones who have little to no knowledge of recruiting terrorist organization or their ideology.

While gathering all these individual cases, we come across several common characteristics that aid in explaining the phenomenon of female involvement in terrorist organizations. Firstly, all these different cases portray that women are more idealistic than men (Hudson, 1999). Secondly, they are more likely to respond to a devastating event occurring in their life, such as the death of a close family member than men (Hudson, 1999). Thirdly, psychological studies have shown that men and women have different intentions while joining terrorist organizations (Hudson, 1999; Bloom, 2012). While males look for "power and glory,"

19

females are more interested in making a stance and a statement on behalf of the people whose needs are not being met (Hudson, 1999). Fourthly, companionship is another motivating factor, which is driven by "craved love, comradeship, and emotional support" of their families and organizational leadership (Hudson, 1999). Lastly, the advancement of feminism has been one of the most impacting ideologies affecting female involvement in terrorist organizations (Hudson, 1999; Bloom, 2012). In areas such as the Middle East, South-East Asia, Latin America, Western Europe, women have taken actions against the government or the community for their repressive stands towards them, leading them to take up a gun or in radical situations, strap explosives around their waist (Hudson, 1999).

<div align="center">Unique Physical and Technological Advantages</div>

Other than mental and psychological capabilities, history has also shown the physical and technological advantages that women possess in the terrorism field. "In a weekend of heightened bombing activity, with nine bombings and shootings all over the province that very day… Siobhan's ruse – pretending to be an expectant mother – might enable her to successfully carry out her mission without anyone ever suspecting her real identity" (Bloom, 2012, p.69). At first, the fake pregnancy method was used by terrorist organizations (originally by PIRA) to smuggle explosives in restricted areas. No one could foresee this very technique evolving into an actual suicide-attack strategy, until Sri Lankan female, Thenmuli Rajaratnam, managed to detonate a bomb while killing herself and former Indian Prime Minister Rajv Gandhi (Bloom, 2012). Another physical advantage and a major detail about radicalized women who execute suicide-terrorist acts is the fact that almost all of them disguise themselves in Western-style clothing,

blending in the surrounding population while creating a harmless image of an expecting mother (Bloom, 2012). That is why commonly spread stereotypes of what a terrorist should look like are very dangerous as they shift our perceptions far from reality.

Further research conducted by intelligence agencies also shows an interesting pattern relationship between the advancement of technology and female success in recruitment efforts (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Bloom, 2012). Researchers suggest that since the advancement of technology has allowed terrorist organizations to engage in recruitment efforts from home, arguably, the technological development has embraced women to become more involved in recruiting, fundraising, and organizing efforts of terrorist organizations (Cragin & Daly, 2009). Al-Qaida is one of the terrorist organizations which utilizes their female members to serve as critical outreaches for the organization and recruit other like-minded individuals into the movement (Cragin & Daly, 2009). One of the examples of this phenomenon was an online magazine *Al-Khansaa* established in 2004 by Al-Qaeda's female delegation known as Arabian Peninsula Women's Informational Bureau, which served to promote organizational recruitment efforts in the area (Cragin & Daly, 2009).

<div align="center">Counterterrorism Weak Spots</div>

Council on Foreign Relations published a discussion paper - *Women and Terrorism: Hidden Threats, Forgotten Partners,* which talks about the growing threat of female involvement in terrorism due to the lack of representation of women in the law enforcement field. The publication goes over one of the most vulnerable countries such as India - where women make

up 8% of the law enforcement, Bangladesh - where women make up 7% of the law enforcement and Pakistan - where women make up less than 2% of the law enforcement field (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019). In all three of these countries, each recorded terrorist attack executed by women has had close to perfect succession rate, which makes the situation of the United States alarming, having less than 18% of the female representation in the law enforcement field (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019). The United Nations Security Council - Counter-Terrorism Committee also provides an executive report, which evaluates female participation in the terrorism field, through statistical research. As the report argues. "In recent years, women's support for and participation in ISIL's activities have generated growing attention" (CTED, 2019, p. 4). The report also talks about the ISIL's efforts and success in recruiting women has increased over the years due to "women's radicalization to political violence" (CTED, 2019, p. 16). Women's presence in terrorism is often referred to as - "big blind spot" of counterterrorist operations (Bigio & Turkington, 2019). Specifically, for the U.S. policy, critics argue that the U.S. policymakers have underestimated female involvement in terrorist organizations, which has severely affected the overall efforts to combat radicalization, especially in foreign locations (Bigio & Turkington, 2019). For example, a threat that is often overlooked and underestimated is the armed rebel group attacks, where women have been participants in more than 60% of the cases (Bigio & Turkington, 2019). Even though women terrorist attacks have not been active in the United States, outside the U.S. specifically in Iraq, U.S. troops have been attacked by more than 40 women suicide bombers, killing over hundreds of men, women, and children, effecting thousands of more (Bloom, 2007).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

What are the main determinants of success, or how can one measure it? The unit which will guide the thesis to evaluate success will be the average of wounded and death tolls calculated per individual and/or group attack perpetrated by male and female terrorists. The proposed hypothesis states that women have exceled in terrorism field to a new, nontraditional performance level; therefore, to support the premise, the results need to show that females have relatively higher wounded and death toll rates than males.

To answer the research question, the thesis will be using only quantitative data throughout the investigative analysis. The quantitative analysis will include the differences between terrorist acts perpetrated by men and women in terms of the number of casualties, the number of wounded. The online materials will be gathered from the Global Terrorism Database, also known as START (Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism) Database provided by the University of Maryland- which collects and stores a wide range of statistical data on terrorist attacks across the world. The study will focus on four specific terrorist organizations, Hamas, Tamil Tigers, Provisional Irish Republican Army, and Chechen Rebels, all of which have measurable statistical evidence available specifically for female attacks. Outside of individual terrorist infiltrations, cases involving a group gender-mixed terrorist attacks will also be included in the thesis to help define female contributions to the team's overall success. In addition, since the research is focusing on female involvement in terrorist activities, which can be dated back to

the 1970s, the thesis will cover the time frame from 1970 to 2017, which is the most recent year for which the data is available on the Global Terrorism Database.

For the method of analysis, I will be utilizing IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Statistics v25. The data will be manually entered from the START database to the SPSS file. Based on the data collected, there will be eight columns created on the SPSS file: year, gender(s), organization name, total killed, total wounded, place of the attack, whether it was a group attack or not, and gender distribution within the group. Rows will be organized by the year, from the oldest dating back from the 1970s, to the newest recorded in 2017. After the data will be entered in the SPSS file, the research will use two different types of analysis: comparison bar charts and pie charts to compare male and female death and wounded tolls.

One of the biggest strengths of this study is the fact that multiple critics have thoroughly studied the topic of gender and terrorism, therefore, a substantive amount of useful resources are available to support the thesis. Another strong side is the wide range of data and statistics available within the START Database, which provides massive data to analyze. However, there are limitations such as redacted details from the specific cases that were not released to the public and are kept classified, which would explain a lot of the unsolved variables. Additionally, some of the individual cases which took place either over 30 years ago or were very localized have a limited amount of data available on the database, which would be another limitation of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

<u>Hamas</u>

Out of four focus terrorist organizations, the Global Terrorism Database had the most information and a substantive amount of individual cases available on the Hamas terrorist group. While there are thousands of attacks recorded and affiliated to the Hamas terrorist group in the Global Terrorism Database, only a few hundred of them are traceable. Cases are available from 1975 to the very recent 2018; however, as we dive deeper into the older attacks, less and less information is provided in its case study.

To make the results more presentable, they are divided into two separate bar charts. The first chart is displaying differences in the death/wounded tolls per average individual male versus individual female attacks, while the second chart is showing a similar comparison between all-male and mixed-gender group attacks. While looking at the graph, we also see the third category of "non-identifiable," which refers to attacks with mortars, rockets, missiles, pre-planted explosive devices, etc. All of which are not necessarily tied to a specific gender, but the whole organization responsible for the attack. Additionally, some of the cases which did not provide any of the gender matching information are also accounted for in the Non-Identifiable bars. While compiling the statistics together and constructing the bar chart, the results showed the following:
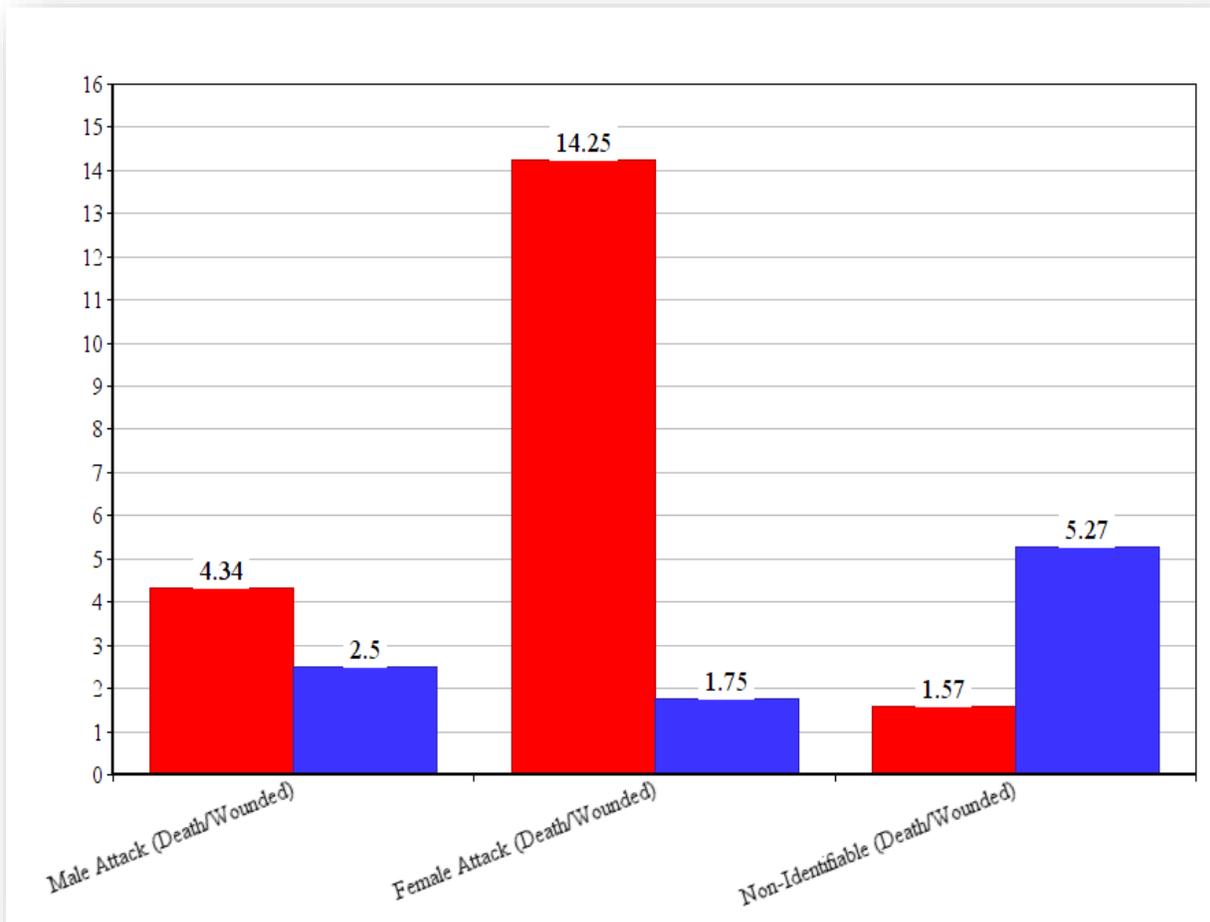
Figure 1 Hamas Gender Differences in Attack Average Death/Wounded Tolls

On display we see the red bars accounting for the death toll, and blue bars accounting for the number of wounded. The chart covers 194 individual cases, 138 individual male attacks, 17 individual female attacks, and 39 non-identifiable attacks. Looking at the individual attack cases, we see that females (14.25) have over three times more kill rate averagely per attack than males

(4.34). While considering the number of wounded, we see that males (2.5) tend to have a higher rate than females (1.75), which can be linked to several reasons, such as gender differences in terrorist attack methods. While going through the statistics, most of the female attacks were perpetrated with the use of detonating/explosive devices, while in male attacks, the leading method was the firearm attack. On the right side, observing the Non-Identifiable attack bars, we see a relatively lower kill rate (1.57) compared to gender-assigned cases, while the number of wounded (5.27) is more than twice as much higher than males' (2.5) or females' (1.75) attacks. Considering the results for this specific terrorist organization, in individual cases, we can observe and pinpoint a comparative advantage of females executing terrorist missions with a much higher lethal ramification.

Now transitioning to the comparison of death/wounded toll averages for male-dominated group attacks and mixed-gender group attacks, the results tend to follow the previous individual-based findings.
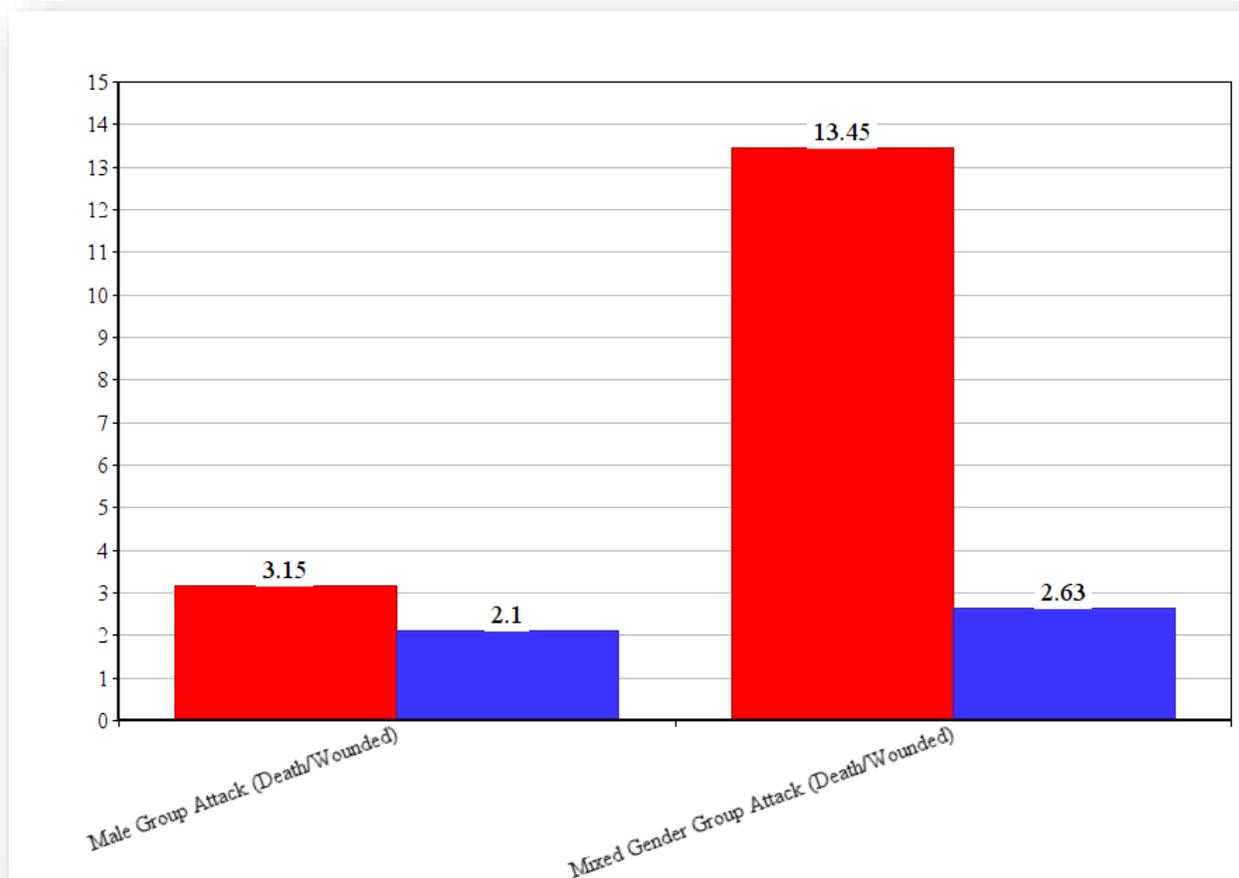
Figure 2 Hamas Gender Differences in Group Attack Average Death/Wounded Tolls

The chart covers 62 group attack cases, 43 male-dominated groups, and 19 female-dominated groups. Referencing the average male-dominated group attack death toll, we come across an interesting phenomenon where the rate (3.15) is lower than the individual male attack rate (4.34). It can be assumed that specifically for the Hamas terrorist group, the individualistic approach tends to bring a higher success rate than a group effort. Since there was no attack recorded on behalf of Hamas terrorist group where the perpetrator group was dominantly female,

we can instead evaluate the impact of having females represented in the group while delivering

an attack. As the bar chart shows, groups including female terrorists (13.45) tend to perform

approximately four times more successful than groups including only males (3.15).

Overall, with the example of the Hamas terrorist group, we can already observe how

lethal the attacks perpetrated by female terrorists can be compared to male terrorists. In addition,

the presence of female perpetrators during the group attack can increase the overall death toll by

about four times more. Even though the number of wounded during female terrorist attacks tends

to fall below the average of male terrorist attacks, it can be argued that this phenomenon again

underlines the success rate of female terrorists, as they tend to execute with a higher rate and

keep the number of survivors to the minimum.

Tamil Tigers

Moving on to the second terrorist organization of research- Tamil Tigers, in which's case

due to the conflict being localized and underreported, we have a scarcer amount of data that has

been entered in the database. Due to this barrier, the only tangible information is embedded only

within large scale attacks, which marginally decreases the sample size, and significantly

increases the number of casualties estimated per average attack. Despite the obstacle, the results

given do not drift away from the general pattern observed in the last example of the Hamas

terrorist organization.

Attacks of Tamil Tigers terrorist group included in the results date from one of the

earliest mass attacks of 1984 till the most recent 2009 mass murder case, encompassing over a

dozen individual cases. For this specific case study, the database only provided the number of killed civilians per attack, because of which the wounded toll is not provided in the statistics. While evaluating gathered results, two graphs could be formed, similarly to the previous case study, capturing the comparison between male versus female individual attack average casualty rate per attack and male-dominant group versus mixed-gender attack average casualty rate per mass murder infiltration.
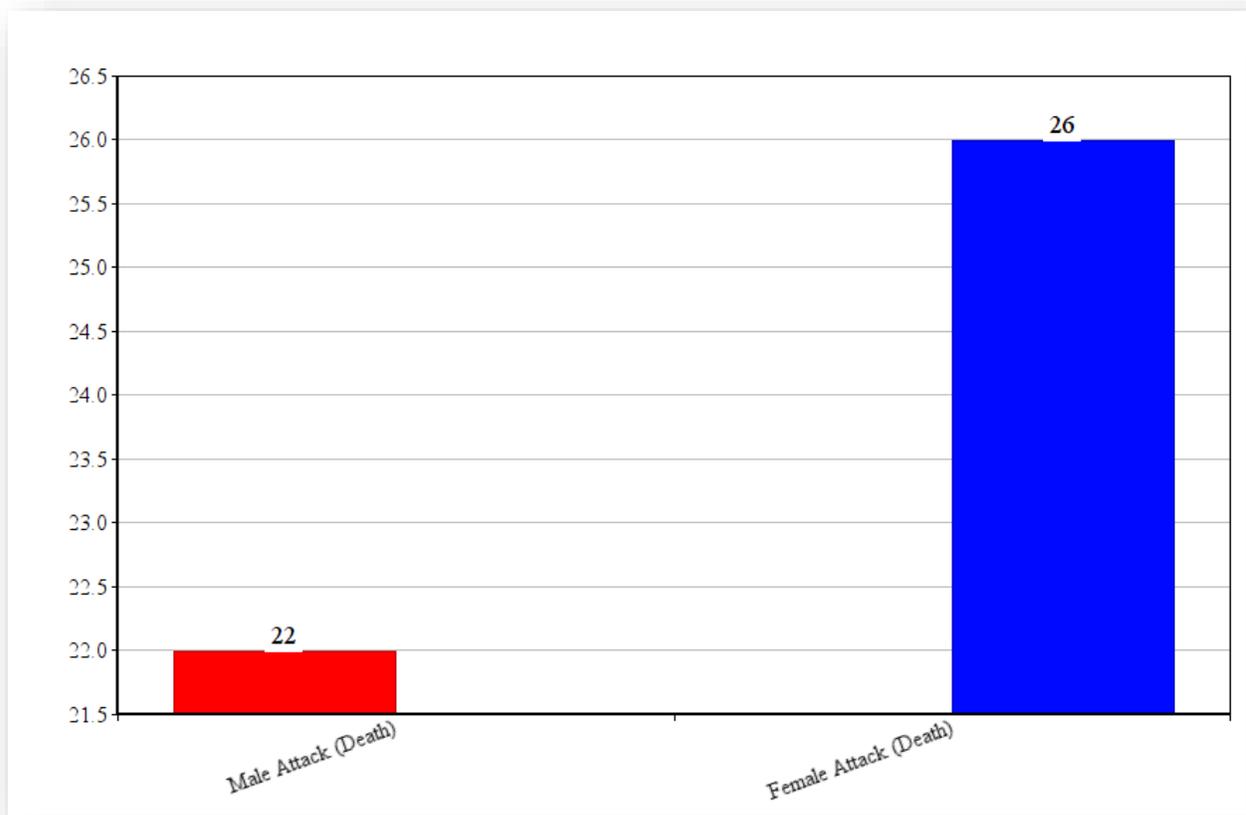

Figure 3 Tamil Tiger Gender Differences in Mass Murder Average Death Tolls

In this graph, we can observe the difference between individual male and female attack impacts by looking at their per mass murder attack average casualty rate. The chart covers 48 individual attack cases, 31 individual male attacks, and 17 individual female attacks. While an individual male attack average casualty rate (22) does stand on a devastating level, compared to the individual female attack average casualty rate (26) gives us a 15% increase in numbers and emphasizes the danger females possess in terrorist attacks. A common tendency that could be noticed in nature and the type of attacks is that individual male infiltrators tend to use weapons such as firearms, while female perpetrators tend to use the suicide bombing method, which has excelled the number of death tolls to a new level of the extreme.

Now transitioning to the comparison of death toll averages for male-dominated group attacks versus mixed-gender group attacks, the results once again show a similar weight of the distribution.
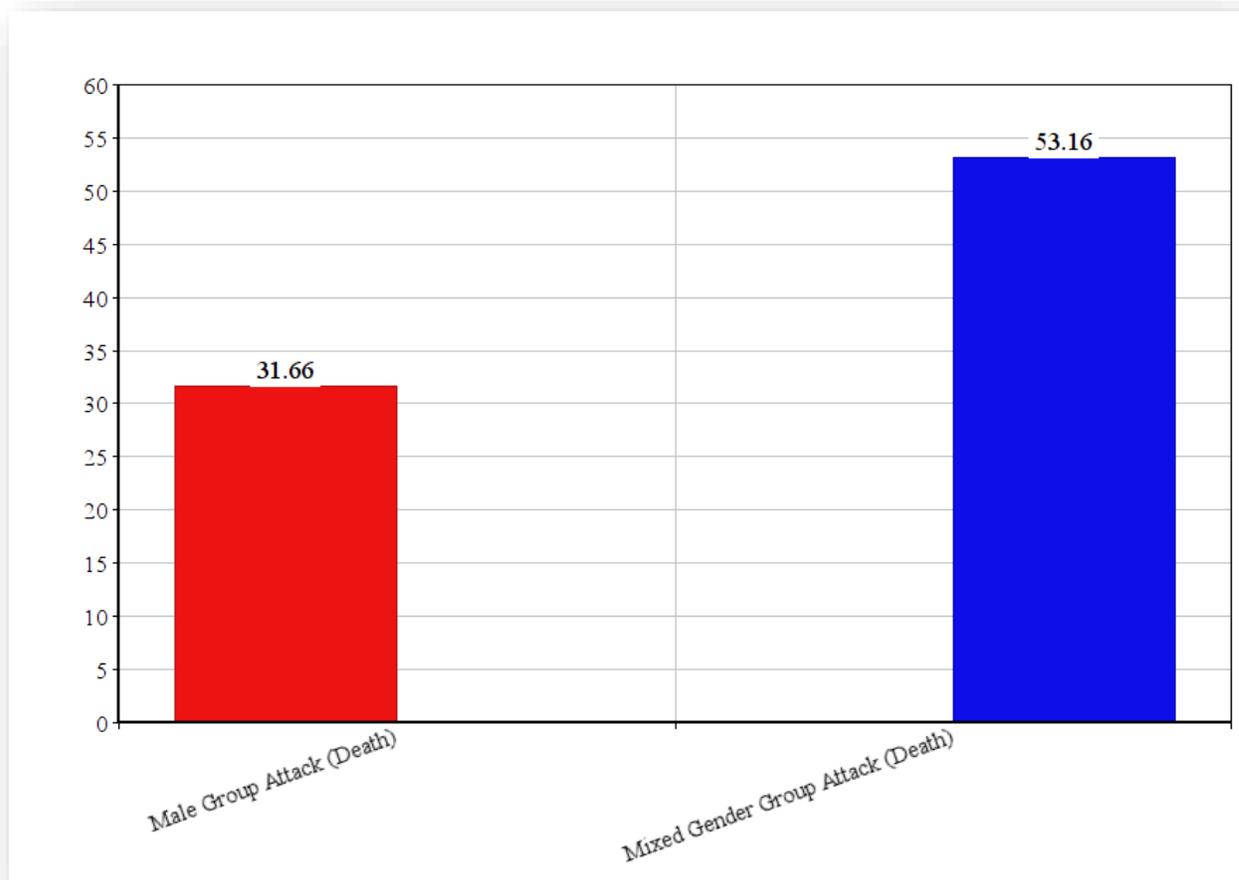
Figure 4 Tamil Tigers Gender Differences in Group Mass Murder Average Death Tolls

The chart includes 59 group-attack cases, 37 male-dominated group attacks, and 22 mixed-gender group attacks. Now transitioning to the group terrorist attacks, the marginal difference increases further, displaying a 41% difference between these two variables. While groups that are male-dominated kill on average, 32 people per recognizes mass murder attack, groups that have some portion of female representation in it tend almost to double the numbers

of death toll (53.16). In the end, we end up concluding the example of Tamil Tigers with many similar results, where females show higher success in terrorist attacks than males.

Provisional Irish Republican Army

Transitioning to the third case study of Provisional Irish Republican Army (aka, IRA/PIRA), we observe much lower rates of death and wounded tolls. Another phenomenon noticeable during the research was the prevailing uncertainty within the Global Terrorism Database, whether those specific attacks reported could arguably be counted as a terrorist attack or not. All the attacks were organized and executed by the Irish Republican Army, which has been admitted to the list of terrorist organizations, leading all of these incidents to appear in the GTD database. Another pattern observed while looking at individual reports was the attack method, distinguishable from all the other case studies. While in all other terrorist organizations covered in this thesis, males were dominantly using rifles and females were mostly utilizing detonating/explosive devices, in the case of PIRA, males tend to use more of a melee attack strategies by using knives and their bare fists while females were mostly associated with pistols, rifles, and flammable liquids.

The bar chart provided in the thesis accounts for cases dating from 1975 to the most recent - 2018 reported incidents. Due to the inconsistency of the GTD database in reporting the number of wounded and the number of infiltrators for the case study of PIRA, there is only one chart provided showing the difference between male and female average kills per attack.
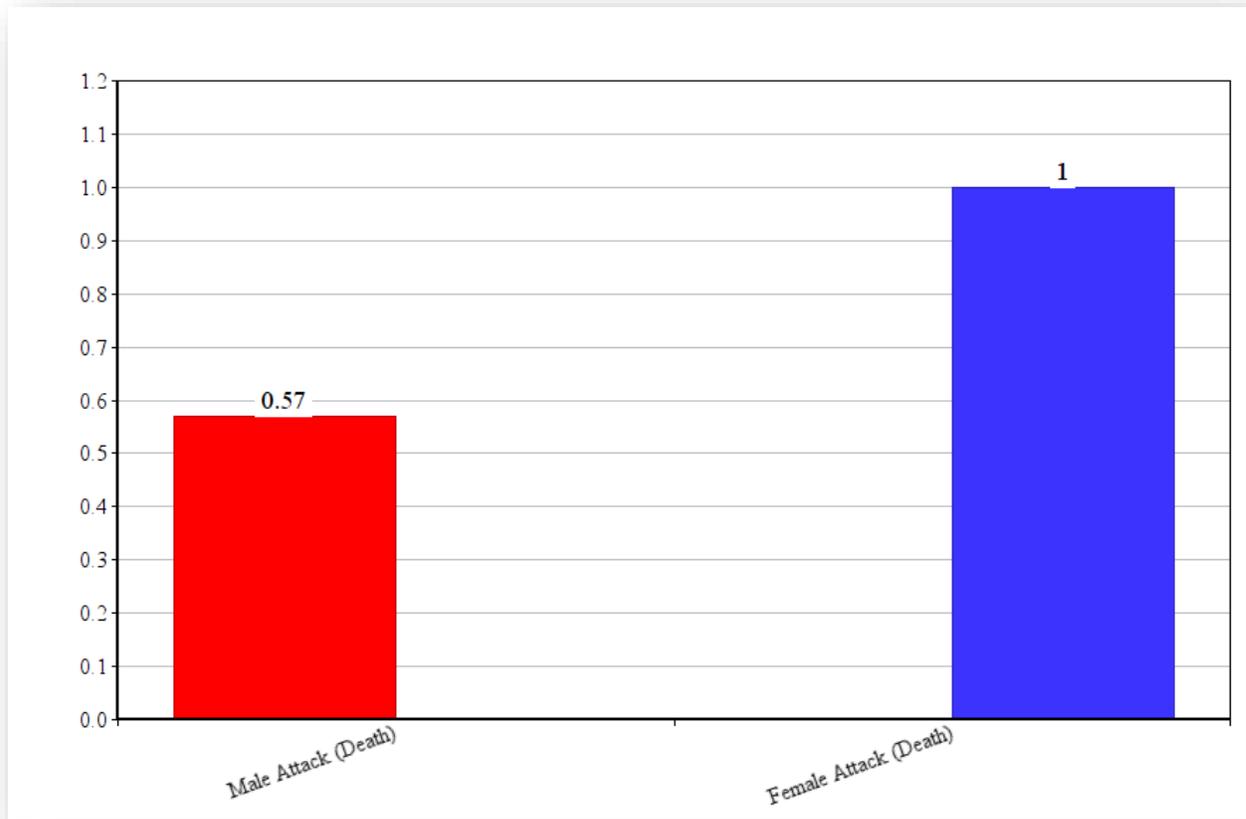
Figure 5 IRA Gender Differences in Attack Average Death Tolls

The chart covers 68 individual attack cases, 56 individual male attacks, and 12 individual female attacks. With this bar chart, we can notice a significant drop in the number of casualties, which makes us question the purpose of the attacks. Where the attacks aiming for casualties or just delivering a political/social message? Regardless, the results still give us the same picture where individual female attacks (1.0) tend to be executed with a higher casualty rate than individual male attacks (0.57). The difference in rates is almost double, which can be explained

through the number of cases associated with each gender and the attack strategies generally utilized by males and females.

<div align="center">Chechen Rebels</div>

In the last organizational case study, the thesis will be looking at the Eastern European terrorist organizations based in South-Western Russia: Chechen Rebels. Similarly, to the instance of Tamil Tigers terrorist organization, Chechen Rebels' activity is very localized and underreported. Due to these circumstances, the only reported and available data can be collected on large scale terrorist attacks, often classified as mass murder cases. It is worth noting that the numbers of casualty and wounded associated with each research variable tends to be much higher than any other case studied in this thesis. Because of the extreme nature of the numbers, outliers are not excluded from the overall calculation.

Bar charts provided below accounts for events dating from the oldest, 1999, to the most recent, 2010 attacks. Two separate charts, one displaying differences between male-operated and female-operated terrorist attack casualty/wounded toll rates per event, and the male and female group-operated terrorist attack casualty/wounded toll rates per event. The mixed-gender group attack variable, in this case, was substituted with female exclusive group attack variables, for which the reason is the absence of mass murder cases where group attacks involved more than one gender.
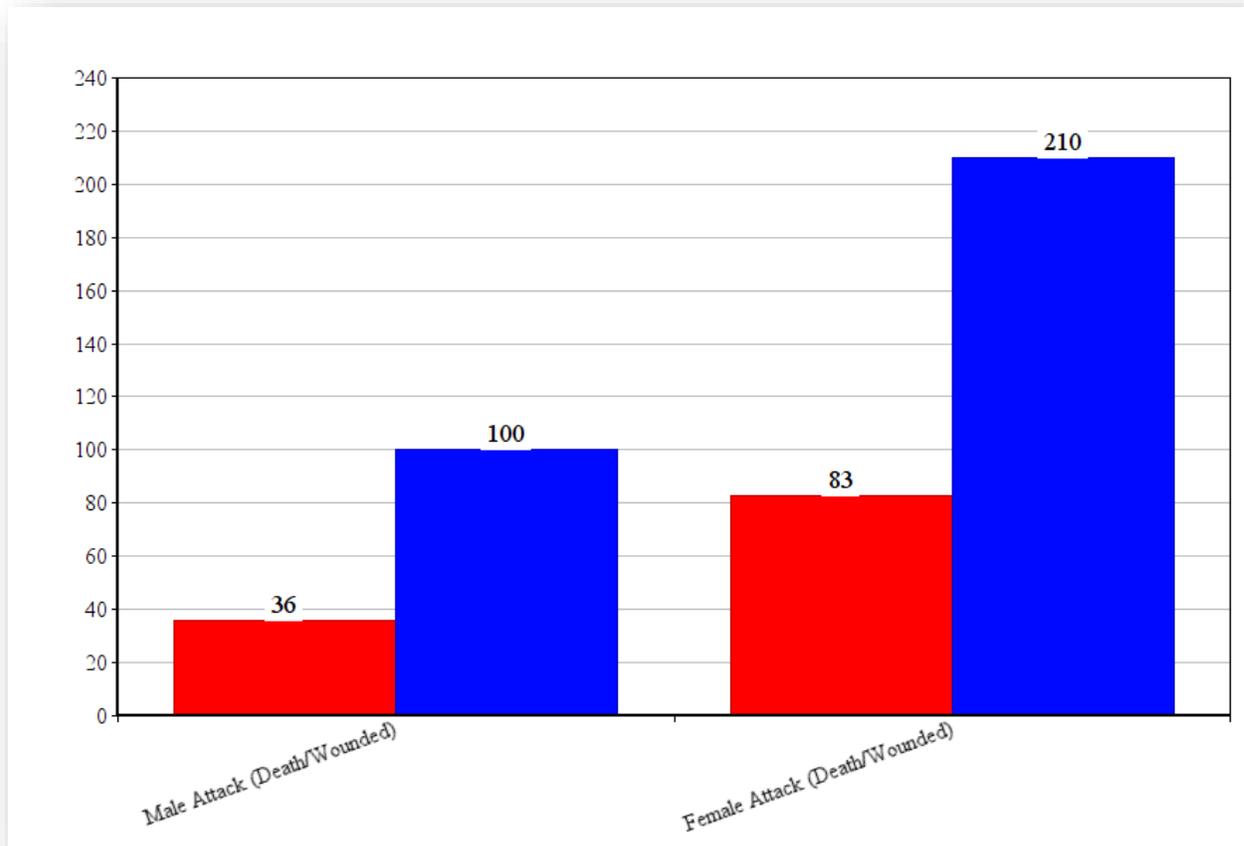
Figure 6 Chechen Rebels Gender Differences in Mass Murder Average Death/Wounded Tolls

On the chart displayed above, red tabs account for the number of deaths reported and blue tabs account for the number of wounded associated with each variable. The chart covers 37 individual attack cases, 28 individual male attacks, and nine individual female attacks. The pattern between male and female individual performances tend to match with all the previous case studies covered in this thesis. In this particular case, we can observe that the number of deaths and the number of wounded on average after individual female attacks are over twice as

much higher than individual male attacks, which once again underlines the superiority and advantages that women possess in terrorist organizations.

Now changing to the examination of death averages for male-exclusive group attacks versus female exclusive group attacks, the outcomes tend to follow a similar and a comparable load of the dissemination.
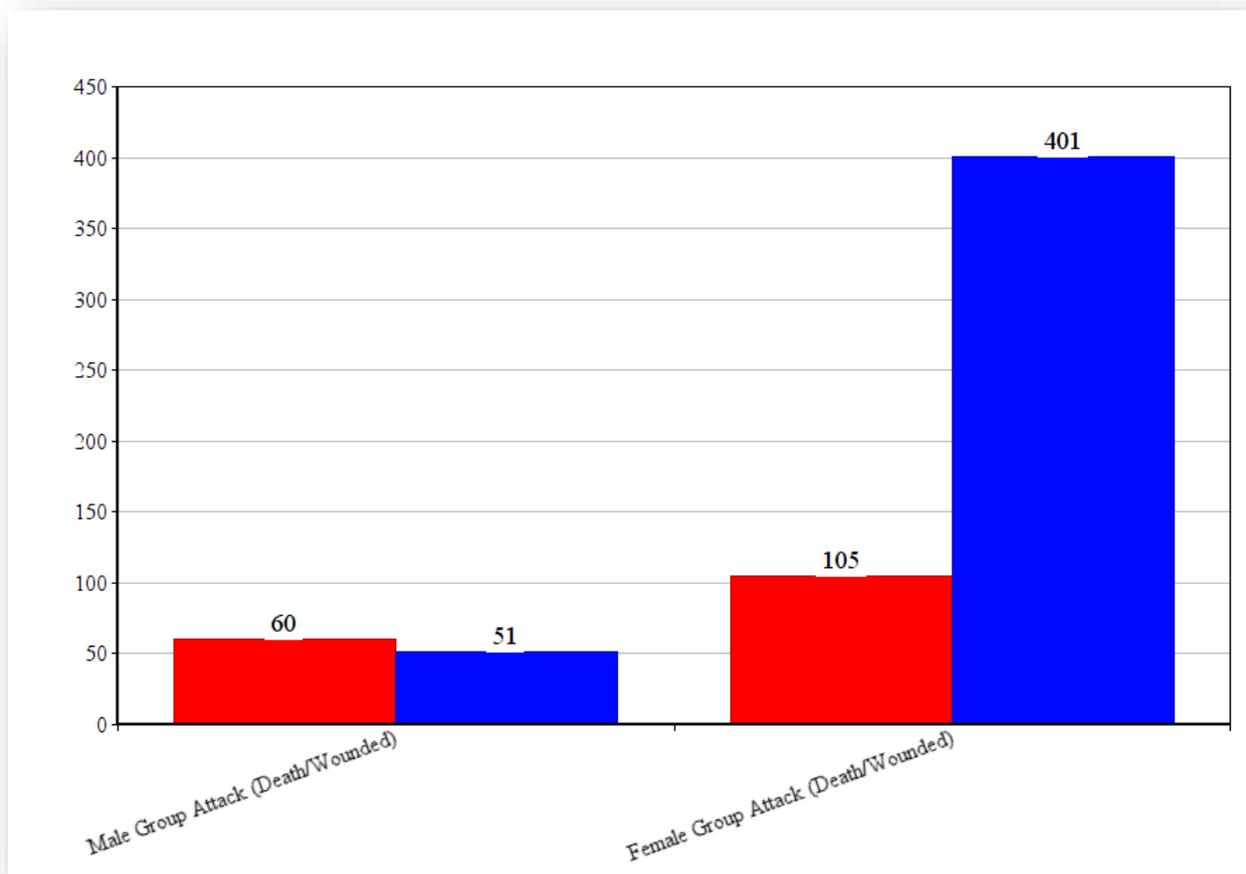

Figure 7 Chechen Rebels Gender Differences in Group Mass Murder Average Death/Wounded Tolls

The chart includes 44 group attack cases, 31 male group attacks, and 13 female group

attacks. On a group level of analysis, the rate difference between the number of deaths can be

tied to the previous results where females had twice as many casualties as males. However,

looking at the number of wounded, female group attacks (401) have, on average, eight times

higher number of wounded than male group attacks (51). One of the reasons explaining this

pattern would be the nature of female and male attacks. While male group and individual attacks

are carried out by use of rifle firearms, female individual and group attack majority of the time

are orchestrated with the use of explosives and detonating devices, which are intended to cause

devastating damages.

Gathering of All Data

All these cases showcase the same pattern of relations between these two gender

variables, despite it being associated with an individual attack or a group attack. To finalize the

findings, the last few charts and graphs will display the overall gender differences in both

categories of individual and group attacks, which accounts for all these four case findings
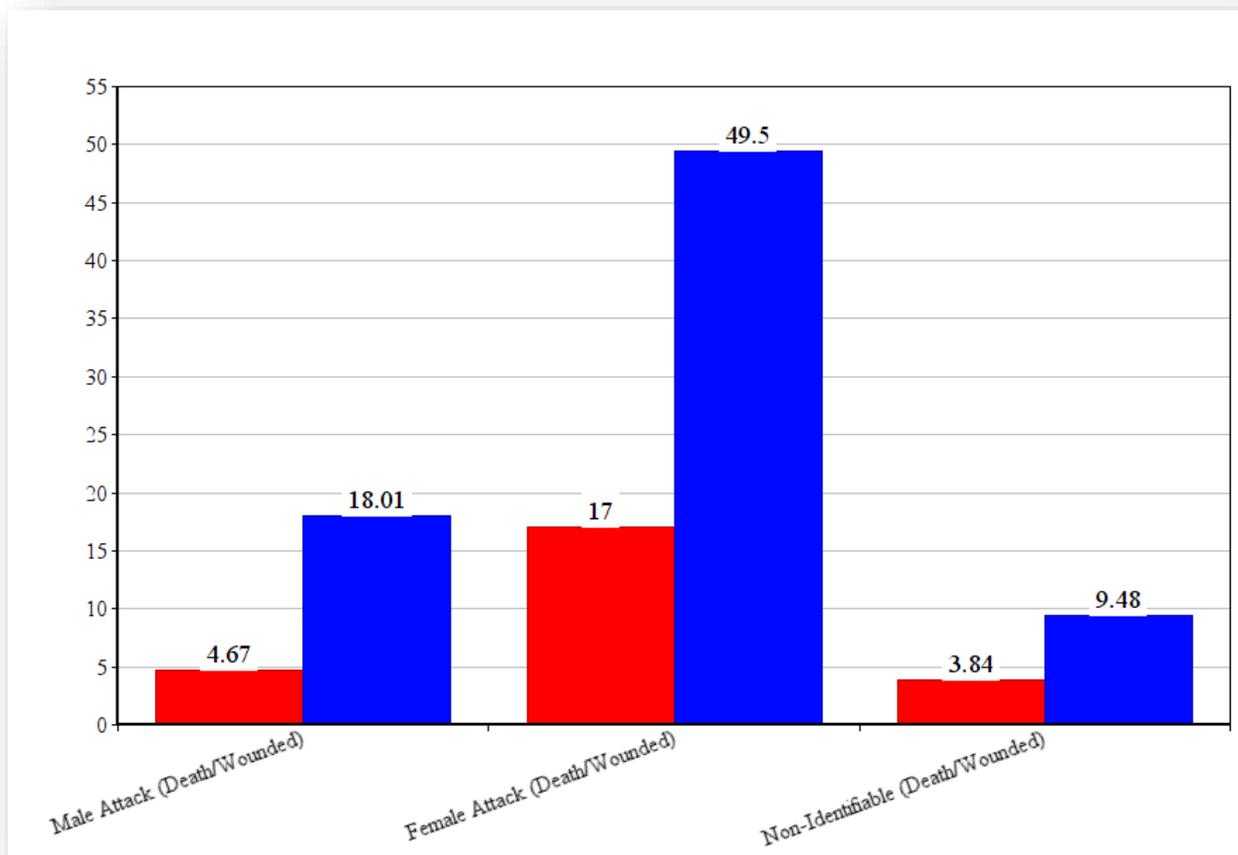
altogether.

Figure 8 Overall Gender Differences in Attack Average Death/Wounded Tolls

The bar chart includes 347 individual attack cases, 253 individual male attacks, 55 individual female attacks, and 39 non-identifiable attacks. The average individual male-attack death toll (4.67) compared to the average individual female-attack death toll (17.0) is approximately four times less. While looking at the wounded tolls, individual female attacks have almost three times higher rate of injuring people in the place of the attack.

Now transitioning to the overall group attack statistics for these four specific terrorist organizations, a very similar relationship between male and female groups is observed in the following bar chart.
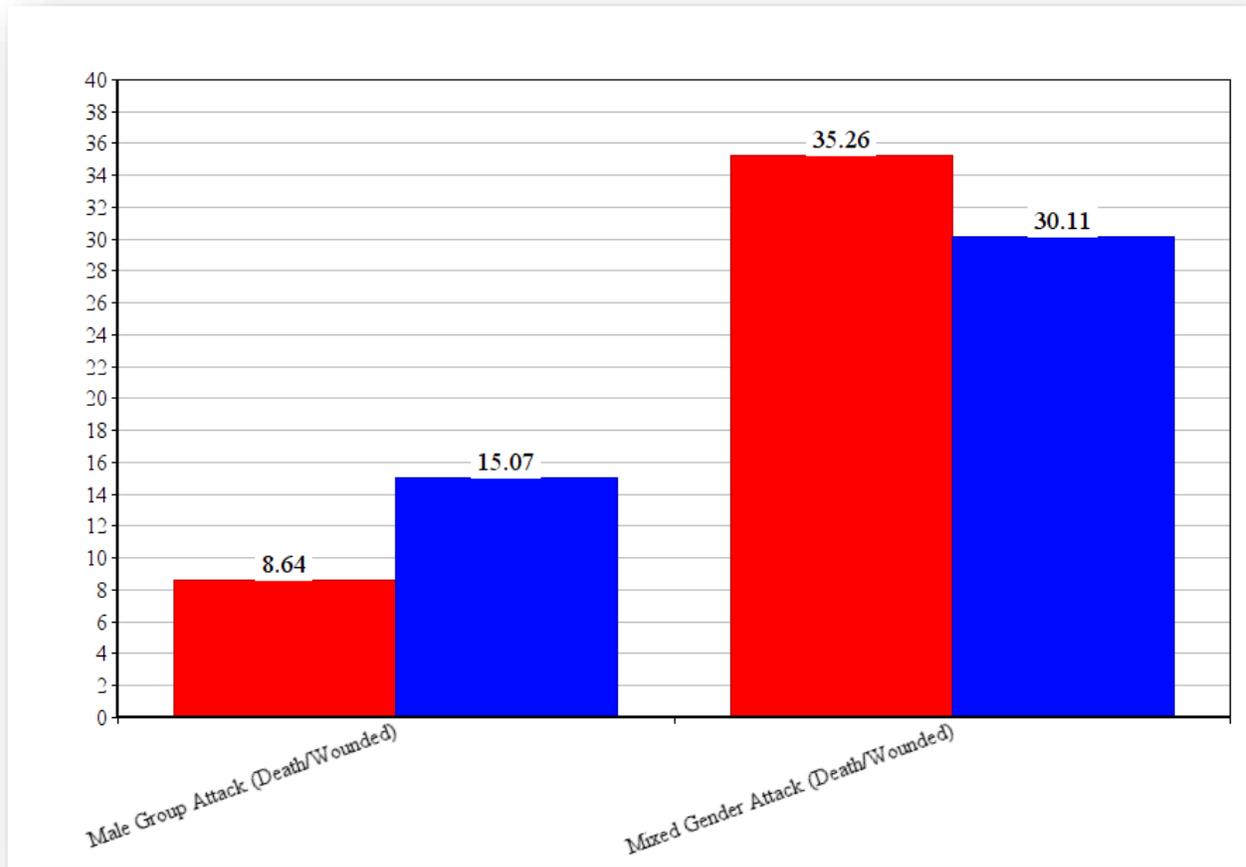

Figure 9 Overall Gender Differences in Group Attack Average Death/Wounded Tolls

The chart includes 165 group attack cases, 111 male-group attacks, and 54 mixed-gender group attacks. Comparing the death tolls, the male group-attack has had 8.64 casualties on average per event, while looking at the cases where group-attacks had at least one female represented withing the number rises to 35.26, which is approximately four times higher, similarly to the previous chart comparison. Even though the number of wounded is surprisingly lower in the case of group-attacks compared to individual-attacks, the same pattern of females having approximately twice as high numbers as males once again supports the proposed hypothesis.

Another interesting statistic that is worth noting while making the comparison is the pie chart distribution of the attack targets individual to each gender. Graph 1.10 and Graph 1.11 manage to capture an approximate image of what place does each gender target the most, which might help in explaining the casualty/wounded number differences.
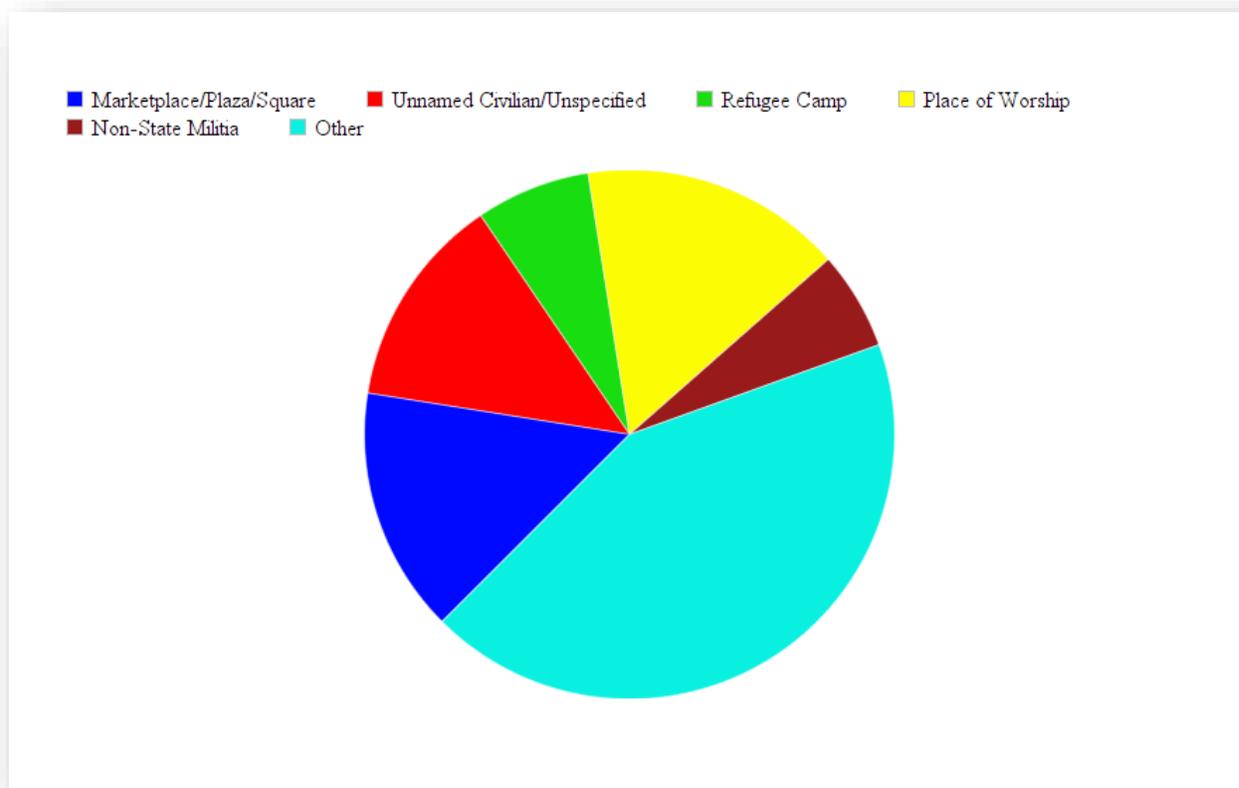
Figure 10 Male Terrorist Attack Targets

In the pie chart above 364 individual and group, male-dominant attack cases were reported in which, 15.4% (56) of cases targeted a marketplace/plaza/square, 14.3% (52) of cases targeted a civilian/unspecified, 6.6% (24) of cases targeted a refugee camp, 16.8% (61) of cases targeted a place of worship, 5.5% (20) of cases targeted a non-state militia and the rest 41.5% (151) targeted other, less popular locations. Though over 2/5th of the pie charts remain in the 'Other' category, we do see five most dominant targets. Places of worship, Marketplaces/Plazas/Squares, and Unnamed Civilian targets tend to represent the largest share of

male attack targets, while Non-State Militia and Refugee Camps receive comparatively less traction than the top three.

Looking at Graph 1.11 for Female Terrorist Attack Targets, even though the top 5 targets present on the previous graph do not change, the distribution of those five variables moderately shifts to the following:
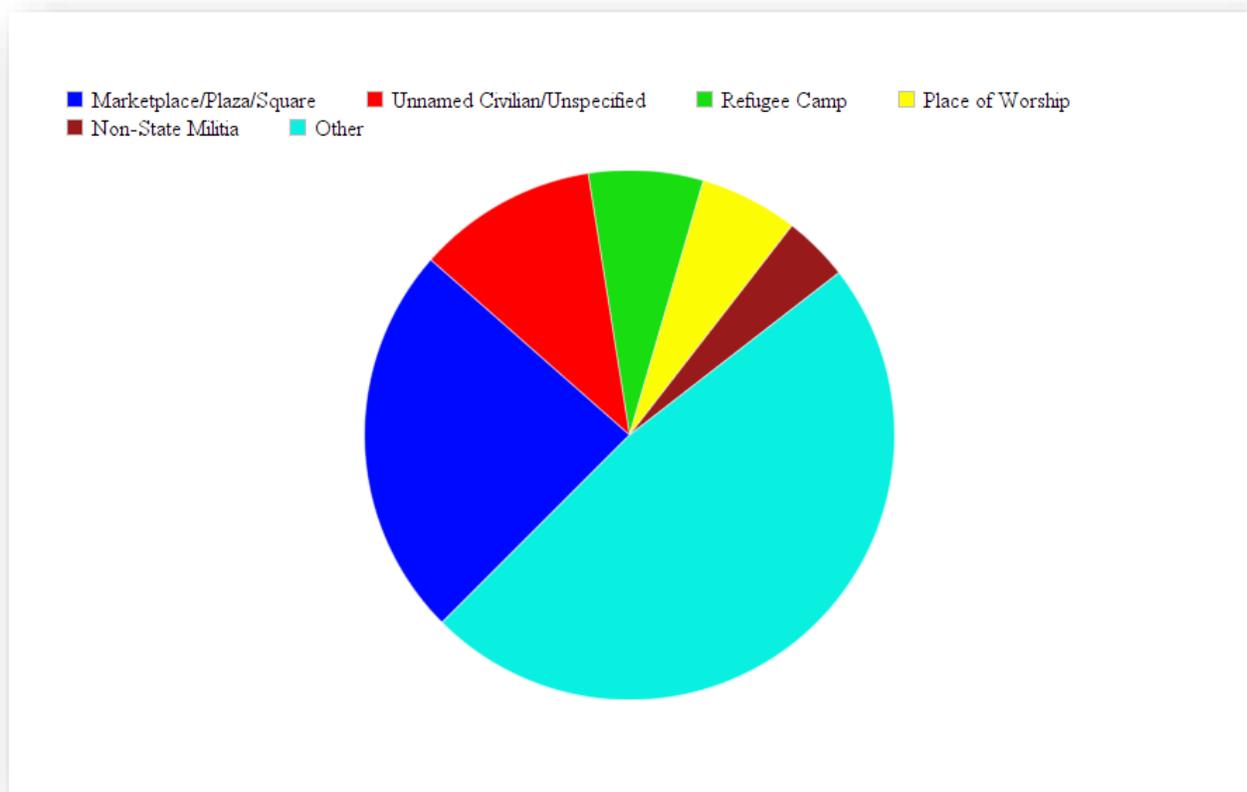

Figure 11 Female Terrorist Attack Targets

In the pie chart above 109 individual female and mixed-gender group attack cases were reported in which, 23.9% (26) of cases targeted a marketplace/plaza/square, 10.0% (11) of cases targeted a civilian/unspecified, 7.3% (8) of cases targeted a refugee camp, 6.4% (7) of cases targeted a place of worship, 4.6% (5) of cases targeted a non-state militia and the rest 47.7% (52) targeted other, less popular locations. From the previous top three targets observed in Graph 1.10, we notice that the Places of Worship as a target significantly decreases, while the Marketplaces/Plazas/Squares variable increases and spreads itself to about 1/4th of the total distribution. Whether the target of the attack impacts the casualty and wounded rate differences in female versus male terrorist attack comparison, is yet to be researched and determined, which could be an idea of a separate thesis to advance further studies of this subject.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Importance of Results

At the beginning of the thesis, I asked a question: "[i]s there a universal image of what an ideal terrorist should look like?" Which after some detailed research can be confidently answered, no. An ideal terrorist can be anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, age, or gender. However, that was not the primary intended finding of this thesis, but instead the answer to the dilemma of whether women execute terrorist attacks with greater physical damage than men. The graphs and numbers displayed in the fourth chapter of *Results and Findings* strongly supported one side of the argument that women tend to execute terrorist missions with a higher casualty and wounded rate than men. Additionally, the research extended to the study of terrorist group-attacks and the impact of female presence within those groups, which has proven to increase the fatal ramifications following the event significantly. As this thesis concludes itself, one might ask why or how are these results relevant to the study of gender or global terrorism?

These results prove their importance in three different areas, the study of gender and violence, public vulnerabilities, and weak spots of counterterrorist forces. For the study of gender and violence, as necessary it is to answer the question of why women join terrorist forces, the question of why terrorist forces focus on recruiting female members is equally important. After observing the results found in this thesis, one explanation of women proving their superior advantage in dealing more damage can contribute towards addressing and answering the question. For the area of public vulnerabilities, expectancy and awareness play a significant role while talking about terrorist attacks. As discussed prior, people rarely expect females to be the

perpetrators of terrorist acts, especially ones appearing in Western outfits, which in addition to making them more vulnerable, often makes the attack itself twice and three times as much deadlier. Lastly, the counterterrorist forces' the knowledge and awareness of gender differences in the terrorism field are crucial, which might require alternative techniques and approaches while responding to the attack. As proven by the thesis, if females do execute terrorist missions with a higher success rate, this phenomenon not only articulates female advantages but additionally exposes counterterrorist forces' disadvantages and weak spots as well.

Future Outlook and Possible Changes in the Pattern

Despite the existing large gap between gender performances in terrorist attacks, through future outlook, the results might shift further in various directions. Currently, most of the terrorist organizations either utilize full human-led attack methods or hybrid methods of half-human and half technological capabilities. As time advances, external factors such as technological innovation and modernization tend to show its new capabilities, which will not only aid the counterterrorism and defense forces but terrorist forces in their advantage as well. As observed in this thesis, technological advancement has given terrorists a new platform to recruit and coordinate activities with minimal to none face-to-face interactions, which has increased overall women involvement in such organizations. But what will happen if we reach a new cutting-edge point of technological modernization? Will the gap become even longer, or would it equalize the numbers? With past experiences, the first scenario is more likely to occur, as it has happened already once in history; in which case, female terrorism will become more dangerous and uncontrollable.

There is an alternative outlook; perhaps this technological advancement will not necessarily benefit women, or men, but contribute to the rise of genderless/non-identifiable attack variable. In this case, the gender performance gap between males and females will not only minimize but will create a new gap between human and technological or cyber-terrorist attack statistics. Even though there will always be some form of human supervision and planning associated, for the purposes of research, tracking specific people (genders) associated with full technological/cyber-attack would be impossible, which would lead the path of this study to a dead end.

Future Research Directions

To expand upon and continue researching this phenomenon in the future, several related factors need to be investigated and studied further. For future research directions, it would be crucial to not only evaluate the raw numbers given by the database associated with each of the genders but also look into the specific methods of attack associated with each case to understand the overall picture in a better way. For more precision, the differences should be calculated not only per respective terrorist organization but also per type of attack for the purposes of not mixing handgun, explosive, melee, and other sorts of attacks with one another. By following these directions, we might not only discover a more accurate gap size but also contribute to the study of comparative advantage each gender holds in relation to the specific type of attack. Furthermore, in addition to the "attack type" variable, age is another vital factor worth exploring and considering. Though female terrorist acts are an absolute minority of reported cases in the

Global Terrorism Database, other minorities worth exploring are underage and elderly groups, which might provide us with an existing gap in relation to each gender, yet to be discovered.

As time goes by, enemies of the state, terrorist organizations are constantly changing. While some eventually cease to exist, yet new ones emerge on a regular basis, bringing new strategies of threats to the national security of the world's many different sovereign states. I acknowledge that these four terrorist organizations are not the only terrorist organizations and do not represent all of the cases in the world. However, they do manage to capture the overall image of how far terrorists have come and what is their most contemporary, true face; and if there is one lesson, this study was aiming to embrace is that the true face of an ideal terrorist does not necessarily have a beard or is a male, in fact, the most lethal ones mostly turn out to be female instead.

Figure 12 PIRA Terrorist Woman with AR-18 Assault Rifle (1970s)

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