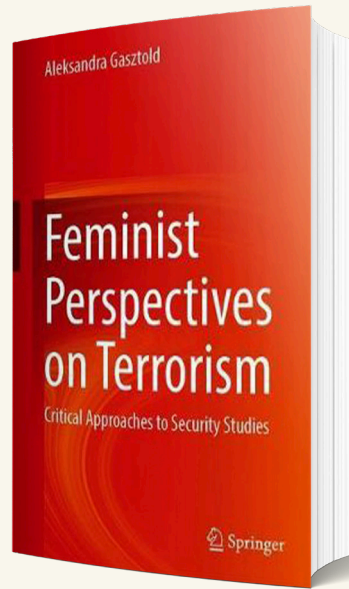




التحالف الإسلامي العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

BOOK REVIEW 19



FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO SECURITY STUDIES

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Book Review

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Book Review

**FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO SECURITY STUDIES**

Among the bedrock priorities of research to well understand the underlying reality and draw definitive conclusions that display the specificity of feminist terrorism are analyzing terrorism based on the assumptions of the feminist movement theory, and clarifying the relationship existing between the feminist movement and the security challenges of counterterrorism. *Feminist Perspectives on Terrorism: Critical Approaches to Security Studies* discusses and addresses terrorism as a manifestation of extremist political violence carried out by individuals, groups, and governments for centuries aimed at achieving political or ideological agendas; it is thus intentionally perpetrated to instill intense fear and hold sway on society. In this context, Dr. Aleksandra Gasztold seeks to examine the fact that women are involved in terrorism in theory and practice, including the size of their direct contribution to terrorist operations, and the detailed nature of such participation in our time. The said book falls into six chapters, featuring an introduction and a conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism per se has attracted the attention of myriad researchers in politics and sociology before a new era was ushered following the 9/11 Attacks, 2001. Research studies conducted on terrorism were not limited to political science; rather, research in security, law, psychology, culture and ideology also made a body of literature. Given the escalation of terrorism coupled with new challenges, including the involvement of women in all contemporary terrorist activities, an increasingly urgent need to redefine the traditional concept of a masculine terrorist is now more pressing than ever.

Masculinity in terrorism studies changes its reality, and the increase in feminist activity in terrorist organizations make it imperative to add feminism to research reflections. The sources of terrorism in human nature should be further discovered. Researchers often ignore the means of recruitment and motivation used by terrorist organizations. If terrorism is a career path, will the same growth factors characteristic of both men and women?

The answer to the foregoing question lies in conducting quantitative and qualitative research studies on active and former members of terrorist organizations. However, long training and indoctrination process may distort the interpretation of individual's motivations towards violence, hence the justification or rationalization of individual's choices may distort the image. The main premise states that researching terrorism in accordance with feminist theory broadens the scope of analysis, and proves that the emergence, structure, action and consequences of terrorism are made up of sociocultural and biological factors.

The feminist approach helps to well analyze the motives and methods of terrorist activity, and reveals the specific nature of such type of terrorism, which is a defining feature of gender studies that address the differences and similarities between men and women resulting from social life, and assumes that the social status, roles and capabilities of women are relative, the determinants of which hinge on the conditions, positions and roles with which men are tasked.

The analysis of the research problem is not limited to feminist theory, and the feminist approach to international relations. Rather, it draws on the achievements of various social sciences, especially political science, international relations, security studies, sociology and law.

Chapter One

Gasztold explains the importance of the sources published in English, German, French, Russian and Polish that were the main references; given the differences in the development of research centers that address feminism and terrorism in the West, access to a variety of different resources well helped in conducting in-depth analyses of the core content of the topics brought under discussion. Among the publications in German are the highly commendable works of Jürgen Habermas and Myers Ferdinand. The author relied on French sources written by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray. Among the obstacles were the loss of in-depth analyses of feminist issues among Polish scholars in political and security sciences, perhaps due to the underestimation of post-positivist theories and the prevailing resistance to gender and feminism in public debate.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, "The Theoretical Framework for Feminism", Gasztold discusses the general principles of feminist theory, which she considers part of the post-positivist approach. Gasztold well explains the essence of feminist theory and the network of concepts, waves of development of feminist thought, theoretical trends and divisions in feminist epistemology, explaining the development of feminist and gender studies. She also clarifies that the fact that feminism was born outside the academic world does not mean that political science cannot be derived from it as a social movement; it is political in nature, which qualifies it to be a subject of political research. The analytical feminist approach has such a great value in political science, especially in the ease with which a gender perspective is incorporated into the study of specific phenomena, as well as its critical approach to the institution of the state.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, "Feminism and the Question of Security," the author explains the feminist interpretation of the various phenomena appropriate for security studies, and seeks to prove that the presentation of security issues in political science is still dominated by the so-called masculine deviation, which sees the history of political violence as his not hers. She sheds light on this issue with reference to armed conflicts and the re-sexualization of violence, as women are excluded and their role degrade. In criticizing this approach, the author advocates the use of "gender lenses" and a feminist perspective to broaden our knowledge.

Chapter Three aims to demonstrate that gender specificity in the analysis of the problem can contribute to the development of studies related to security and political violence, and to increase the resilience of the state. The feminist approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the motives and ways in which women are politically active, thus demonstrating the specificity of security-related behavior.

The gender-based consideration in security research does not apply to women only. Given the negligence of the importance in traditional

research, the main challenge for researchers is to bridge the existing gap and make their analyses more objective. Objectivity in knowledge may remain elusively far-fetched as gender also affects the researcher and may change his or her epistemological view.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four, "Feminism and Terrorism" is concerned with a broad analysis of terrorism according to feminist theory. The author discusses terrorism as a form of political violence, and indicates the need to use feminist terminology and concepts in analyzing this phenomenon. The author also believes that it is possible to view terrorism from the point of view of political violence or criminal activity, highlighting the achievements of criminology and psychoanalysis to confirm the issue of repetition of incomplete and discriminatory views that stigmatize guilty women of being perverse, whimsy, deviant or abnormal, and proposes to eliminate masculinity from the method used in the study of terrorism in accordance with feminist theories.

The author concludes that women will be forced to resort to violence, if contemporary terrorism is not a perverse form of masculine existence in the world. Such an approach can only be another manifestation of the "masculine view" that denies women their rational justification for engaging in political violence. Terrorism is not limited to the present. Groups and individuals have engaged in radical political violence for centuries. The author analyzes the assumptions of feminist theory in the study of terrorism, bringing to focus the idea of terrorism, terrorist organizations and the challenges of researching into terrorism. This approach is also based on the case studies of gender and feminism in political science and other fields.

Counterterrorism and Gender Factor

It is evidently clear that the media is more attracted to terrorist acts by women than those carried out by men, which has prompted terrorist organizations to expand their network by involving women. Counterterrorism strategies tend to ignore the importance of the gender factor, and are concerned

with the threats that terrorists pose to men. Since counterterrorism seeks to limit terrorist activity, terrorism and counterterrorism are generally linked to masculinity. Hence, the difference between the genders is very clear in the presence of patriarchy and the absence of matriarchy. However, this picture is deceptive simply because terrorist organizations are increasingly using women fighters, supporters and sympathizers, while ignoring this, whether in national security strategies or international counterterrorism campaigns. It is difficult to conclude without ambiguity whether the counterterrorism strategy that distinguishes between terrorist activities for women and men has a positive impact on the success of countries and international organizations in their counterterrorism efforts.

Characteristics of Terrorism

After listing various definitions of terrorism, the author believes it is possible to consider terrorism as a type of fundamentalist political violence perpetrated by groups and individuals according to the following:

- A. It is committed with premeditation.
- B. Is used to oppose the community in which the attack occurred.
- C. It aims to influence a wider community of direct victims of violence, or threaten to use it to instill and sow fear.
- D. It aims to influence the political decision-makers to force them to engage in political behavior, or to abstain from it.

As for the specialists in terrorism, despite the difference in the definition of terrorism, they have approved the following inherent characteristics:

1. One type (separating terrorism from other acts of political violence).
2. Objectivity (not without moral judgments).
3. Means of action (do not contain all types of violence used by contemporary terrorist organizations).
4. Object (concerned with the terrorism of non-state actors).

As for the traditional division of trends, taking into account the main motive of organizing activity, it marks the following groups:

- Revolutionary anarchist.
- National separatist.
- Rightist.
- Religious.
- Terrorist groups with one cause.
- Gender, which is an important component of research related to terrorism.

Understanding the motivations that lead women to participate in this type of extremist violence facilitates their understanding of their transformation into terrorists. In the public discussion of feminist terrorism, women are frequently portrayed as vulnerable and defeated. In this regard, the author quotes Talbot: "The average portrayal of terrorist women is based on the idea that they:

- Are extremist women,
- Do not join terrorism unless they are in a relationship with a terrorist man,
- Only support missions in terrorist organizations,
- Mentally incompetent,
- Are not somehow female."

Is Terrorism Gender-Oriented?

It is useless to seek an answer to this question simply because it has an explicit error in wording. Terrorism is considered a means to achieve political, social or ideological goals using violence, and it is undeniable that men use such a method for such purposes. Despite the increase in women's activity in terrorist acts, experts tend to adopt masculine terrorism as a model when comparing male and female members of terrorist organizations.

The author remarks that the involvement of men and women in terrorist groups is due to personal and political reasons, and it is very difficult to prove the efforts made to adopt gender-based equality in objective scholarly research. This may require detailed quantitative research, but accessing the data is sometimes difficult. It is invalid to think that the environment of political violence is hostile to women's membership, as the increase in women's involvement in terrorism is glaringly noticeable, and their roles in terrorist organizations are subject to

continuous diversification, as these organizations see the use of women in operations as great opportunities simply because of their usefulness in sabotage and spreading terror, and the propaganda provided by the media.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five, "The Specificity of Feminist Terrorism" is related to women's extremism and their involvement in terrorism. This problem has become one of the biggest challenges to counterterrorism systems. The bias towards terrorism has become a steady choice in the lifestyle of women and men alike. The author highlights the reasons that lead women to participate in terrorist organizations and women's activity observed in national liberation, separatist groups and religious groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Al Qaeda, and others. Like men, women have different roles in terrorist organizations, and their position is linked to their place in the group hierarchy.

The author presents a feminist approach to the analysis of extremism leading to terrorism. She discussed the assumptions of women's fascination with brutal extremism, and the motives for their involvement. Such a feminist view enables the analysis of the complex reference that affects women's decisions and their lives in general, and in areas exposed to armed conflict in particular. A critical view of the political reality of women and the perception of their involvement in brutal extremism is also provided, taking into account capacity, recruitment, indoctrination in their psychological, social, economic and political context.

Other scholars who study the motives of women's involvement in terrorism highlight personal motives, such as the experience of bereavement, childlessness or spinsterhood, but personal factors (such as motives, subjective and individual goals) may be illogical, incoherent, and meaningless, such as compulsive behavior, emotional immaturity, identity disorders and internally disturbed personality. Therefore, consideration should be given to the rationality of the very goal of the terrorist organization or movement.

Curricula for Terrorism Study

The author believes that four approaches can be used in the study of terrorism: the multi-cause approach, the political-structural approach, the organizational approach and the psychological approach. The first is the broadest, and includes a wide range of psychological, social, economic and political factors. The second affirms the direct impact of the environment on political events at the national and international levels. The third considers terrorism a carefully designed strategy to achieve political ends when other means of political struggle are exhausted. The fourth approach draws on the individual motivations of people at risk of extremism.

Economic factors are important in extremism. With the rapid deterioration of people's livelihoods, a so-called negative association arises. The likelihood of an increase in terrorist attacks goes up. The risk of grinding and abject poverty is not a decisive factor, but along with economic differences such as discrimination in the labor market, it creates favorable conditions conducive for extremism. In the case of poverty and social exclusion, individuals choose extremism as a "rational way out" of the situation. They often get what they previously lacked in organization.

The traditional functions and tasks of women in contexts of political violence, such as rebellions, coups, revolutions, civil wars and armed conflicts, they are often the implementation of logistical operations. Today, member women of most far right organizations are specialized in tasks related to recruitment, propaganda and media campaigns, as well as participating in protests and sabotage, political pressure in general, military activities and political leadership.

Peter J. Phillips, based on US police statistics of 2012, which concluded that 8,514 murders occurred, that men commit brutal crimes significantly more often than women do, as only 11% of the murders are committed by women. The aggressive behavior of men was sometimes explained by hormonal factors and a high level of testosterone. This approach provided a brief and clear explanation of why men

dominate terrorism, but the more complex problem is the controversial statements that women's non-involvement in terrorism has to do with the need to preserve masculine domination! Excluding women from active armed struggle is a way to return to "normal order," especially if religious organizations are observed.

In a similar vein, another subject-matter researcher remarks that religious groups cherish the model of the heroic human warrior that restores balance to the troubled world. The increase in the number of female terrorists recruited and trained does not support that view. The recruitment officer undertakes direct communication to recruit new members into the organization, in addition to spreading propaganda online, and performs the function of a "reference community conscience" that seeks to preserve the intensity of violence by preserving its memory.

Involvement in armed struggle in accordance with the tactics and means of guerrilla warfare is another defining feature of the organization. The first job of the Operations Commander should be to define the nature of the battle plan and method and to implement the organization's policy. Women have an important function as a political vanguard that has to do with determining the organization's vision for development and ideological plan. The involvement of women in terrorist groups weakens the image of the group; ISIS using such a method in recent years to attract new women using the internet is a case in point.

The involvement of women in political and security violence has become a contemporary global phenomenon, and the impact of women's involvement on supporting groups that resort to political violence, carrying out terrorist attacks, and participating in countering threats is no longer a secret. Hence, the gender factor cannot be ignored in today's counterterrorism strategies, especially in recent years in which the military training of women fighters in terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS has increased. Despite this, men and women involved in political violence are unequally viewed. Women are associated more with defensive methods linked to altruism and suffering, as if violence had a different effect on

women. When women participate in a terrorist attack, psychological, political or economic factors are often referred to.

Chapter Six

Chapter Six, "Feminist Approaches to Counterterrorism," discusses extremism and feminist terrorism as a challenge to counterterrorism policies, highlighting issues of de-radicalization, broad counterterrorism policies, and providing examples of women-oriented programs. The main objective is to prove that gender specificity at the level of counterterrorism may contribute to the development of studies of political violence, and to the growth of the capabilities of security institutions in detection and defence. Including women in prevention programs is key to improving the tools used to learn about vulnerability and fascination with extremist beliefs and ideologies.

The methods to prevent extremism and political violence can be divided into two groups: negative and positive. The negative methods include repressive measures, such as closing organizations that incite violence, monitoring the places of residence of suspects, exclusion from a certain region, tracking the use of money, prohibiting access to some means of transportation and some public professions and jobs, imposing compulsory education, and censoring the media and the press. These measures may also include people who resort to violence, incitement to hatred, conscription, fundraising, or travel to areas of armed conflict for military training. Some of these activities are crimes under the domestic laws of many countries, while others fall under the provisions of the international conventions of the United Nations and various regional organizations.

The positive methods include amnesty, reconciliation, dialogue, rehabilitation, integration, individual counter-extremism programs, meetings, workshops, training courses on civil rights and freedoms, job creation, social and health assistance, training for groups at risk, and inclusion activities such as football matches and awareness campaigns.

Nine interrelated factors can be identified related to the image of a female terrorist in our time:

1. Increasing the global involvement of women in terrorism, with a greater diversity of their contributions and roles to terrorist organizations and groups.

2. Weakness of security institutions in addressing this reality, especially in Western countries.
3. Lack of objective strategies, plans and analyses of the environment for women; it is assumed that women are not working as “lone wolves”.
4. The belief that paramilitary organizations, including terrorist organizations, are hostile to women.
5. Perception of women as hostages to an organization or group under coercion or kidnapping and not a rational choice.
6. The impact of gender stereotypes on the image of women in the media, whether they are involved in a legal political conflict, or in extremist political violence.
7. Decreased suspicion of women. This makes terrorist organizations more dependent on women in their attacks.
8. Learning about the methods of terrorist attacks by women, especially suicide attacks.
9. Gradual mobilization of women via the internet and various media, websites, forums, chat rooms, magazines and TV channels.

Today, real security cannot be built without the participation of women, as their impact is profound in local communities, and mothers undoubtedly are the best to instill the values of peace and set a good example for their children simply because of their kindness, compassion and selflessness.

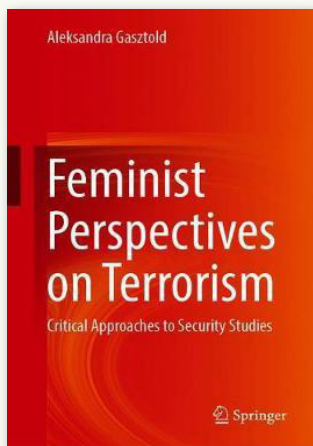
Encouraging women to become influential people in local communities will make them an early warning bell, as the first signs of extremism are not entirely clear, and symptoms and behaviors that only mothers feel may appear, such as isolation from family and friends, increased controversy and speaking as if someone is reading a written message, or hesitation and confusion, or the inability to discuss views, a sudden lack of respect for others, irritability and anger, feeling persecuted, and ensuring confidentiality in private affairs, especially with regard to the internet use.

The official roles of governments in counterterrorism include combat, response, prevention and forecast. However, there is no successful model for counterterrorism, and the western endeavors have been marred by human rights violations, such as

at Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and the “black sites” in Central Europe. In general, there are great doubts as to whether it is possible to reconcile the principles of a democratic state under the rule of law and preventing and combating organized crimes.

Conclusion

Turning a blind eye to the gender factor in counterterrorism policy can contribute to increasing women's involvement in terrorist activities. Indifference to the involvement of women and their roles in terrorist organizations, and turning a deaf ear to their position by claiming that most terrorist organizations are not ready to receive women in military actions, will give female terrorists more opportunities to successfully accomplish their missions. The risk of religious terrorism is high, especially in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI). The problem of extremism in this region is linked to the lack of economic growth, cultural erosion, and American actions in the region, and in Europe as well, especially Western Europe. The threat of terrorism became a real problem due to the phenomenon of foreign fighters and the activity of anti-immigrant neo-Nazi groups. The far right in Europe is an internal phenomenon, despite the cooperation of these groups with organizations of similar ideological orientation around the world. Women participate in carrying out and preventing terrorist activities at the same time; yet, research on terrorism and counterterrorism policies remains masculine in nature. The influence of gender in the specific conditions of political struggle can be decisive to better understand the relationship between power and dismantling its masculinity. The framing of terrorism has to do with the political aspect, such as the concepts of power and associated systems, as well as the gender system. This is the reason for the necessity of conducting scientific research that takes into account the visions of the feminist movement, and the experience of gender along with structural organization and mechanisms inside and outside terrorism should be further investigated. The book is a seminal invitation to encourage practitioners and researchers to use the gender lens in shaping counter-extremism and counterterrorism policies.



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