

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENTS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GENDER AND TERRORISM: A STUDY ON WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE AND ITS
IMPACT ON WOMEN IN VIOLENT POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

NOELIA ORTIZ-LANDAZABAL
SPRING 2020

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees in Political Science and African Studies
with honors in Political Science and African Studies

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

James A. Piazza
Professor of Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Michael Berkman
Professor of Political Science
Honors Advisor

Kevin Thomas
Professor of African Studies
Honors Advisor

* Electronic approvals are on file.

ABSTRACT

The rise in terrorist attacks conducted by women has led to a heightened interest in why women join these movements. This thesis examines how African insurgencies and terrorist movements in countries where women's socioeconomic status vary are more or less likely to have women as members or combatants. Using quantitative methods, I seek to understand how the waged and salaries status of women affects their involvement in 165 insurgency and terrorist movements across 19 African countries. Taken together, the results suggest that there is no significant correlation between waged and salaried female workers and women's involvement in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. There is also no significant correlation between waged and salaried female workers and women's role in combat in insurgency groups or terrorist movements. However, my results show that there is a correlation between Christianity and women's involvement and role in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. While my dependent variables were not significant, this research is still important as it reveals the underlying factors for the rise of women in insurgency and political movements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	3
Gender Expectations	3
Vulnerability and Recruitment	6
Chapter 3 Theory and Hypothesis.....	9
Chapter 4 Research Design	12
Chapter 5 Results and Discussion.....	16
Chapter 6 Conclusion.....	22
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.....15

Table 2. Women in the Workforce Impact on Women in Violent Political Organizations16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. James Piazza for his immeasurable guidance throughout this process. In September of 2019, I had just been told that it would be impossible for me to finish my thesis on time, graduate early, and start my new job. I felt like there was nothing left for me to do but wait things out another year, but when I met with Dr. Piazza, he was enthusiastic to help me meet this challenge. I am grateful Dr. Piazza believed in me and provided me the support I needed to meet my goals and produce a thesis I'm proud of.

I would also like to thank my honors advisor, Dr. Michael Berkman, for his support over the past few years. I've had the privilege of having Dr. Berkman as a mentor and as a professor. I could not be more thankful to learn from someone who is as passionate about education, and is as dedicated to his students as Dr. Berkman.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family for never questioning my passions and encouraging my curious nature. For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a dancer, but no matter the path I took, my parents would always be there to cheer me on. My dream is to travel the world until I have nowhere else to travel, and then I'll travel the world again. Every opportunity I've had to travel the past three years, I've taken, and my parents have been there to share that excitement with me. While I don't know what the future holds, I hope that they will always be proud parents.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The rise of female terrorism demands a heightened interest for why organizations that capture schoolgirls, murder women and children, and rape women are ironically, but tactically, recruiting women as a crucial component to furthering their cause. This thesis examines how African insurgencies and terrorist movements in countries where women's socioeconomic status vary are more or less likely to have women as members or combatants. Using quantitative methods, I seek to understand how the waged and salaries status of women affects their involvement in 165 insurgency and terrorist movements across 19 African countries.

Women continue to grow as a popular strategic commodity for terrorist groups in many African countries. For example, Boko Haram, among other insurgency groups, has gone as far as abduct women and girls for both political and pragmatic purposes (International Crisis Group, 2017). There is great diversity in development, infrastructure, education, and gender equality across Africa. For example, when comparing women holding waged and salaried jobs in Kenya and Uganda, there is great disparity in development. In 2000, Kenya saw 19.4% of its waged and salaried workers as female, and in 2017, this number grew to 22.7% (World Bank, 2017). In 2000, Uganda saw its female waged and salaried work force as 6.7%, and in 2017, this number grew to 14.7% (World Bank, 2017). While this difference may not seem dramatic, 10% alone is a large difference when comparing women in the wage and salaried workforce. Despite this difference, both Kenya and Uganda experience violent terrorism. Even countries such as Algeria who sees 73.3% of women in the waged and salaried workforce, also houses some of the most

violent groups, such as the National Liberation Front (Thomas, 2015). While one might imagine there to be a relationship between economic opportunities for women and women's involvement in insurgency and terrorist movements, the data suggests there is no direct correlation between economic opportunities for women and their involvement in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. That being said, even a null finding helps us develop and understanding of women's participation in armed insurgencies and terrorist movements in African countries, and as a result, this will allow us to more effectively combat terrorism.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Gender Expectations

Plenty of research tells us that certain gendered roles and societal expectations make women valuable assets for terrorist organizations. Women are highly sexualized, seen as oppressed and vulnerable, have the ability to bear children, and are subject to their appearance when talked about in the media. Collectively, these gendered expectations attract terrorist organizations to recruit women. However, if given economic opportunities and financial autonomy, would this make women less attractive to terrorist organizations? Is it possible that women would be less susceptible to join a terrorist organization if they had economic opportunities at home?

Aside from economic incentives presented to women as a recruitment tactic, there are also other reasons why women are recruited by terrorist organizations. Spencer (2016) provides several examples on how women, as sexualized figures, are deemed “attractive” to terrorist organizations. She found that most terrorist organizations recruit women (or girls) between the ages of 14-18 years of age. O’Rourke (2009) additionally found that terrorist organizations often recruit women in their 20s. Despite this slight inconsistency in these two scholars’ findings, the average age recruited is still very young. These organizations often subject these young women to horrible abuse and early childbearing. Berko & Erez (2007) furthers this argument, claiming this hyper-sexualization means that women in societies where they are restricted in their ability to leave home are perceived as advantageous to terrorist organizations. The restrictions on a

woman's ability to leave the home freely are made by a woman's husband or male guardian for "her safety". As a result, women interact closely and frequently with one another in religious places of worship, schools, hospitals and other public locations. A woman's access to these spaces without raising suspicion proves valuable to terrorist organizations. Additionally, as highly sexualized figures, O'Rourke (2009) describes infertility, divorce, and rape as factors that make women valuable recruits since they are seen as "outcasts" to society. Women who are infertile, divorced, or have been victims of rape are searching for a place in society—a space that terrorist organizations can offer.

Another gendered expectation that makes a woman a tactical recruit is her ability to bear children. Spencer (2016) and Cunningham (2003) detail how pregnancy allows female suicide bombers to exclude non-threatening perceptions and remain undetected as terrorists. Spencer (2016) even adds that a woman's ability to bear children allows terrorist organizations to raise the next generation of militants, dedicated to and raised with the values of the organization. As a result, a woman's perceived vulnerability during pregnancy allows her to gain intelligence and access to public places while evading detection. Terrorist organizations utilize these strategies, which prove incredibly valuable in planning and executing attacks.

In addition, gender norms in society means women have access to large, vulnerable populations, which makes female terrorist attacks far more lethal than that of men. To this point, O'Rourke (2009) compares the lethality of attacks by gender across different terrorist organizations that employ women. On average, women have 158% greater casualties per individual attack by group (p. 687). She concludes, "female suicide attacks are more likely to inflict casualties and are more lethal at both the individual and team levels" (p.689). Ironically,

social prejudices about the roles of women impacts their ability to generate less suspicion, conceal explosives through faked pregnancies, and enjoy more relaxed security measures, which allows her to be all-the-more lethal.

From the perspective of the news, following an attack, young female terrorists are subject to be perceived by viewers as “victims” of terrorist organizations, which creates a greater shock value among viewers. Knop (2007) explains that women are expected to be kind, sweet, and “not murderers.” Such expectations means women are not seen as “the leader”, “the boss”, or “the terrorist.” The media then shocks the public with these lethal attacks—a form of positive publicity for terrorist organizations—aided by the narrative of the “oppressed woman.” The shock value comes from the juxtaposition between a woman’s weak gender role and her successful execution of a highly lethal attack. Chenoweth (2013) explains that countries with high degrees of press freedom become favorable targets for terrorist organizations seeking greater publicity. Media companies capitalize on violent reporting, thus providing free publicity to terrorist groups. Brigitte (2005) also contributed important research on how gendered expectations influence an audience’s perception of female terrorist suicide bombing attacks. Despite the fact that a woman just murdered people, often times, the media still feels the need to comment on her appearance, outfit, or even form a love story as a means of explaining her motives.

Correspondingly, Cloud (2004) blames the photographic medium’s inability to tell the complete story of women in underdeveloped societies. He analyses the photograph of a woman wearing a blue veil that “allows the viewer to peer into the one eye that peeps from under the bright yellow head covering. The photograph conveys a sense of desperation to learn [education]

despite the constraints of an oppressive culture” (p. 293). This is not to say some women in these societies are not oppressed; however, Cloud (2004) finds that Western depictions of burqas and hijabs paint an oppressive culture that is often over exaggerated and feeds into our foreign societies’ false understanding of other regions of the world. This distorted worldview amplifies the gender norms tagged onto female terrorists that terrorist organizations then use to their advantage for media to gain more coverage. Through and through research has shown that women are capable of murder.

Vulnerability and Recruitment

It’s possible that women would be less likely to seek economic opportunities from terrorist organizations, if given more economic opportunities were available to women in their respective countries. Gender roles oftentimes drive a woman’s vulnerability to be recruited by and to then recruit for terrorists, as a means of serving as a strategic tool for these organizations. O’Rourke (2009) points out that gender plays a unique role in the recruitment of female terrorists. She lists the following motives that incentivize women to join terrorist organizations: vengeance, lack equality and opportunity, and a combination of infertility, divorce, or rape. According to Piazza (2007), terrorism is motivated, in part by ethno-religious diversity which can may overpower economic opportunities present for men and women in any given country. O’Rourke (2009) explains that terrorist organizations generally adapt the recruitment to the attacker, depending on what the woman is looking for in the organization. Knop (2007) adds that even more significant to female recruitment are the strict social, cultural, and religious rules that

govern the lives of women in certain societies. Men and women hold a certain degree of “honor” which is immeasurable, but can be lost in the event of rape, misbehavior, or other breaches of social, cultural, or religious rules and norms. While men have the ability to regain their honor through good deeds, women and their families are shamed from society. As a result, these marginalized women are particularly vulnerable to terrorist organizations who can offer them a new life. Moreover, O’Rourke (2009) describes infertility as another motivating factor that draws marginalized women to terrorism. Due to the fact that women in certain societies are valued based on their ability to reproduce, a woman’s inability to do can lead to her being outcast from society. O’Rourke (2009) claims that “Acting as a human bomb is an understood and [an] accepted offering for a woman who will never be a mother” (p. 712). She continues by explaining that divorce and rape are also instances where a woman’s desire to re-embrace these cultural norms, serve as a form of motivation to perpetrate a suicide attack. A terrorist organization becomes an outlet that facilitates this desire. Thus, certain gender roles set by society through religion, consequently incentivize women to join or serve as valuable recruits for terrorist organizations.

Women become vulnerable recruits when the livelihood of their families is at stake- specifically the livelihood of their children. Hudson (1999) explains that women are attracted by promises to make a better life for themselves and their children (p. 58). A better life, as marketed by terrorist organizations, for many means having economic opportunities, and the resources to feed and sustain a family. Men and women in dire financial troubles will take refuge to financial opportunities. What is unique about women is that they are the primary care takers of

children in most countries; subsequently, gender works in favor of terrorist organizations in the sense that they have leverage over the weaknesses and societal responsibilities of women.

Finally, Spencer (2016) observes that while female terrorists serve as mothers, wives and child bearers, as is expected of their gender, terrorist organizations give women additional roles or activities including: recruiters, patrol officers, heads of command, doctors, and combatants. In fact, a woman's "freedom" to fulfill these additional roles and responsibilities can feel liberating and potentially empowering. Holding such additional responsibilities may not be possible in ordinary society, so terrorist organizations become an opportunity for women—and that is exactly how these organizations market themselves. While there is merit to economic opportunities for women, many women are recruited for the utility of their gender. Strong gender norms are enforced by religion which are amplified by terrorist organizations. This means that regardless of a country's economic prosperity, women, like men, will join terrorist organizations based on their strong beliefs, either religious or political.

Chapter 3

Theory and Hypothesis

As it has been observed, terrorist movements, while shocking to many, want and need female recruits. Women are attractive recruits because of the ‘roles’ they play in society and the nature that women are greatly sexualized (O’Rourke, 2009). Consequently, many of the tactics used to recruit women include economic incentives (Hudson, 1999). For this reason, I found it valuable to understand the relationship between the role of women in the waged and salaried workforce and the prevalence of women or lack their of in insurgencies and terrorist movements.

H1: African insurgencies and terrorist movements in countries where women’s socioeconomic status is high are less likely to have women as members or women in combat.

H2: African insurgencies and terrorist movements in countries where women’s socioeconomic status is lower are more likely to have women as members or women in combat.

These hypotheses suggest that economic opportunity and autonomy are correlated. My hypothesis also suggests that economic opportunity and autonomy is straightened by gender equality or inequality. I test these hypotheses by analyzing 165 insurgency and terrorist groups across 19 African countries, and comparing the percentage of women in the waged and salaried workforce from 2000 to 2017 with women’s involvement in insurgency and terrorist movements, as well as their participation in active combat. I further balance my analysis with several control variables: GDP growth, literacy rates of women 15+, religion (Christianity and Islam), percent of female population, and region (North, East, West).

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a metric scholars, organizations, and countries recognize (for the most part) to assess development. Several categories that are measured into the

HDI include health, gender, education, and gross national income (GNI), among other measurements (Human Development Reports). The World Bank, other international organizations, and most scholars agree that gender equality is a core theme in development (World Bank). To that point, these groups, for the most part, also agree that there is no significant relationship between poverty and development, rather terrorism seems to be motivated by other factors such as ethno-religious diversity, increased state repression, and the structure of party politics (Piazza, 2007). For women, however, a motive for joining a terrorist organization can be financial. Women are vulnerable to terrorist recruitment due to the lack of equal opportunities available in their respective societies (O'Rourke, 2009). USA Today published an article detailing various social media recruitment methods used by terrorist organizations to lure women into joining terrorist organizations (USAToday, 2019). In this investigation, many of the women were promised jobs, when in reality the women would serve as housekeepers and sexual partners. As a result, this thesis examined whether or not women who have economic opportunities would be less likely to need or seek out dangerous financial opportunities.

Finally, in countries where women have a higher socioeconomic status, it is likely that a more stable government and legal system is present to protect gender equality and basic rights. Additionally, it has been studied that including women in the police and security forces will increase security and equality for women (Barnes, 2018). This means that in places where rule of law is strongly enforced at a local and national level, terrorist movements will find it difficult to develop and thus recruit women for their efforts. Overall, if women are empowered at work and

in the household, they will feel less compelled to seek that empowerment elsewhere—through means like joining a terrorist group.

Chapter 4

Research Design

To test my hypothesis, I examined Jakana Thomas and Kanisha D. Bond's database on women's involvement in 166 violent political organizations (i.e. insurgency and terrorist groups) across 19 African countries from 1950 to 2011 (2015). The following countries were quantified in this data set: Algeria, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. This data not only measures women's involvement in violent political organizations (1) or not (0), it also helps us understand women's role in combat (1) or non-combat roles (0). Additionally, Thomas and Bond's data measures the different behaviors of these insurgency and terrorist groups as to whether or not they are fundamentalist, susectionary, and have positive gender ideology (2015). To understand if women's socioeconomic status affected her involvement or role in combat in insurgency or terrorist groups, I've cross referenced Thomas and Bond's data with the World Bank's statistics on the women's involvement in the waged and salaried workforce.

To create my own data set, I used Thomas and Bond's data on women's involvement and role in combat from 1995 to the present as my dependent variables. I then used the World Bank's statistics on women's involvement in the waged and salaried workforce from 2000 to 2017 as my independent variable (2019). Statistics on women in the waged and salaried workforce is recorded as a percentage. The higher the percentage, the more women are present in the waged and salaried workforce in a respective country.

There are so many factors that can impact women in the wage and salaried workforce; therefore, I found it important to control for certain variables to contextualize this information. First, to hold constant for economic growth, I used economic development as a measure through GDP per capita data found on the World Bank's website (2019). The higher or lower the GDP per capita, the more likely or unlikely a country would be to employ more men and women in the waged and salaried workforce. Second, I used the change in the literacy rate of women ages 15+ from 1996 to 2017 to hold constant education across the various African countries (UNESCO, 2019). Data on literacy rates is likely one of the most accurate and myriad measures of education we have; therefore, this is an important control variable. The World Bank measures the literacy rate for women ages 15+ as a percentage. Generally, literacy rates don't change drastically in a span of twenty years; therefore, I took the average literacy rate of each country between 1996 and 2017 to use as a single data point for each country, in my regression. Third, I measured the World Bank's data on the percentage of women, per country to hold constant population (2019). This control variable was to ensure that a country with higher or lower rates of women in the waged and salaried workforce wouldn't be due to the female population representing a significantly greater or smaller percentage of the population. Fourth, I used The Association of Religion Data Archives to control for religion (2019). I coded (1) where Christianity represented the largest religion in the country, in other words known as a majority, and (0) where all other religions were a majority. It is key to mention that countries that weren't majority Christian, were majority Islam, with the exception of Eritrea; however, both majority Islam countries and Eritrea were coded as (0). Since it's difficult to control for culture, I utilized our existing data on religion to serve as a control variable on culture.

Finally, and most importantly, given the diversity among African countries, it was vital to control for the following three regions: North, East, and West. A map from Maps of World was used as a reference (2019). Since I did not have enough data for South African countries, I decided not to include it as a control variable. Given the breadth of data across all of the 19 countries I studied, I didn't want countries that were outliers in the data to throw off the results for an entire continent. Because there are many geographic, cultural, and ethnic differences among African countries, a specific region could have significant results, but if the two other regions didn't have significant results, the regression could appear insignificant. When running my regressions, I did not include religion when I controlled for region as to not overlap the data since religion in African is often synonymous with a given region. The following description table lists all my variables and presents the mean, standard deviation, and min and max for each of those variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Women in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	160	.456	.499	0	1
Women in combat roles in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	151	.298	.458	0	1
Change of women in the workforce 2000-2017	164	4.190	3.527	-5	13.1
GDP Growth	163	1243.946	1045.172	-549.8409	3698.634
Change of Literacy Rate of women ages 15+, 1995-2017	164	-.135	.364	-2.41	1.015
Majority Christian Country	165	.521	.501	0	1
% Female Population	164	50.137	.454	48.52	51.848
North	165	.290	.455	0	1
East	165	.206	.405	0	1
West	165	.224	.418	0	1

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

Table 2. Women in the Workforce Impact on Women in Violent Political Organizations

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Y:	Women in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	Women in combat in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	Women in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	Women in combat in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	Women in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements	Women in combat in rebel, insurgent, and terrorist movements
Change Women Workforce	-.001(.058)	-.038 (.071)	-.098(.089)	-.041(.085)	-.035(.077)	.085(.112)
GDP Growth			.000(.000)	-.000(.000)	-.000(.000)	.000(.000)
Change Literacy Rate of women 15+			.746(.842)	-.012(.954)	1.141(.840)	-.533(1.017)
Majority Christian Country			1.415(.541)* *	1.163(.541)*		
% Female Population			-.022(.743)	.045(.905)	1.05(.771)	.642(.878)
North					1.061(.986)	-.265(1.153)
East					-.093(.680)	1.398(.775)
West					.083(.643)	1.482(.761)
Obs.	110	102	110	102	110	102
Log Ratio	0.00	0.29	9.92	8.27	3.32	8.95
Pseudo R ²	0.000	.002	0.065	0.069	0.021	.074

Negative Binomial Estimations

* = $p \leq .05$ ** = $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .000$

Standard errors in parentheses, clustered on the country

As evidenced in Table 2, across 19 African countries and 165 insurgency and terrorist groups, there is no significant correlation between waged and salaried female workers and women's involvement in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. Second, the results find that across 19 African countries, there is no significant correlation between waged and salaried female workers and women's role in combat in insurgency groups or terrorist movements. The following control variables were also not significant: GDP per capita, literacy rates of women 15+, percent of the female population. When controlling for region, North, East, and West were also not significant.

While the data shows there is no significant correlation between my dependent and independent variable, one of the control variables proved to be significant. Across 19 African countries and 165 insurgency and terrorist groups, majority Christian countries are very significant in women's involvement in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. Additionally, majority Christian countries are significant for women holding combat roles in insurgency groups and terrorist movements. As a result, this means that predominantly Christian countries will see more women in violent political organizations. Next, predominantly Christian countries will see more women in combat roles, but this control variable is not as significantly as the general involvement of women in violent political organizations.

Furthermore, since religion in Africa is often regionally based, it is surprising to see West Africa wasn't significant when religion was removed as a control variable. While West Africa, as a majority Christian country wasn't statistically significant, the data shows that it was close to being significant. This means that with more data in that region, the results may appear differently.

It is our general understanding that women who are empowered are less likely to be manipulated to join violent political organizations. While my hypothesis suggested women who are financially autonomous are less likely to join insurgency groups and terrorist organizations, as seen in Table 2, the data tells us otherwise. There are several reasons to explain this null finding including but not limited to the data, development, political instability, and religion. Lastly, it's important to revisit what a null finding is. A null finding doesn't mean there isn't a relationship between the independent and dependent variables, it means we don't know what the relationship is at the moment.

One of the most obvious explanations for this null finding is the data. There is already little research and data on women in violent political organizations. Because there is such little information on women in such organizations, it is possible that Jakana Thomas and Kanisha Bond's database has certain inaccuracies or gaps (2015). These inaccuracies may not represent the full scope of women's involvement and role in terrorism.

The gender gap, on average, is significantly lower in African countries compared to European countries where terrorism is also prevalent. It is possible that we haven't seen enough of a change in women's rights in the 19 African countries from Jakana Thomas and Kanisha Bond's dataset for it to appear significant. Additionally, since women in the waged and salaried workforce in Africa is not high and distinct enough from one country to another, with slight data inaccuracies, the results may not appear significant, even if the relationship is significant. But, we cannot know that for sure. To reiterate, a null finding doesn't mean there isn't a relationship, but that a relationship hasn't been found yet. If this research design were to be replicated ten or twenty years from now, we may find that there is a significant relationship between women in the waged and salaried workforce and their involvement and role in terrorism. Moreover,

political instability is a prevalent issue in many African countries that was not controlled for in this regression. The instability of many African governments and their inability to provide sufficient rule of law, regardless of the percentage of women in the waged and salaried workforce, heavily impacts security. Countries with a weak judicial system and security foster an environment for terrorism to grow. This is not to support or denounce the beliefs of any given group, but rather to say that if any such group were to kill anyone, the chances that a weak judicial system would prosecute murder is less likely than in a strong judicial system.

African countries also face a geographical barrier that makes securing vast dessert regions challenging. The lack of rule of law and security in many African countries allows for insurgency and terrorist movements to grow to levels where formal means of recruitment don't need to be used, rather the abduction and recruitment of women is used to further their agenda. In the case where a higher percentage of women in the waged and salaried workforce were to exist, formal recurring methods may not work because workingwomen are in ways empowered and financially independent. However, in a country where political instability and lack of security prevails, insurgency groups and terrorist organizations don't need to go through formal recruiting methods, abduction without consequence will do the job. This reality wouldn't be reflected in the data and lead to a null finding.

Several strategies African countries can use to fight security issues are by recruiting more women into law-enforcement institutions and leadership roles within law-enforcement. Research shows that recruiting more women into security and law-enforcement institutions will allow for women to have more decision-making power (Peters, 2014). This means that women in law-enforcement will understand where women move and how they are approached by terrorist organizations will be able to make decisions about the security of women. Women who are in

security and law-enforcement are also more likely to be approached and trusted by women who may feel uncomfortable reporting something to a male officer (2014). Ideally, this would lead more women to report abuse and suspicious activity. Nevertheless, political instability makes it challenging for such security changes to be made. As a result, weak judicial systems with little regard to rule of law prevail, allowing terrorist organizations to strengthen.

It is possible that no matter the level of gender-equity, if a state has ethno-religious diversity, continued state repression—specifically, party politics—states will continue to nurture an environment suited for terrorism (Piazza, 2007). This means that even if women are in the waged and salaried workforce and hold financial autonomy, they can still be driven to join groups that are politically violent. Women are no different from men in having strong religious or political beliefs.

As seen in Table 2, majority Christian countries will see women in violent political organizations, and in combat roles. As mentioned in the literature review, women can access religious gathering spaces without arousing suspicion. Therefore, it is to no surprise that religion is a significant control variable for women's involvement in terrorism. This significance also proves how powerful religion can be in shaping an individual's beliefs. Contrary to the media's portrayal, insurgency groups and terrorist organizations in majority Christian countries are more likely to recruit female members, than Islamic groups. It's possible that Christianity is more liberal in its practice of gender equality, which means terrorist groups will be more open to female membership as a strategic tool. Men and women in these groups may be seen more of as equals than other major religions. Appropriately, no matter the percentage of women in the waged and salaried workforce, women in majority Christian African countries are more likely to

be perceived as an equal, which may lead to higher levels of female recruitment. This conclusion is drawn from a basic understanding of religious doctrines.

Finally, a null finding does not mean that states should not invest in women's education and equitable opportunities. It's important to understand that women are capable of violence. Additionally, women, like men, have beliefs, and women are not immune from supporting or participating in a terrorist organization, especially if a state has ethno-religious diversity and continued state repression.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

My conclusions do not unilaterally suggest gender inequality doesn't exist and women haven't been abducted or forced beyond their will to participate in terrorism. Correspondingly, we cannot solely assume that women join terrorist groups through manipulation, but that, in some cases, women's participation is voluntary or even strongly desired. If women are joining insurgency groups and terrorist movements out of their own volition or through force, it means both men and women are equally affected by the repressive state. As a result, the state should invest in economic opportunities for men and women and seek to increase security such as policing where men and women are represented in law-enforcement. This will not only keep communities safe and make it difficult for insurgency and terrorist groups to build momentum, but it will also create trust between women and law-enforcement, as women can be vulnerable to terrorist recruitment, and are often victims of violence and rape with or without terrorism (UN Women).

My research found the most significant control variable for women's involvement in terrorism was Christianity. In European countries, which are predominantly Christian, terrorism also occurs but to a much lesser extent than in African countries that are predominantly Christian. In addition, African countries that are majority Christian, were more likely to have more women as members of their terrorist organizations. Future research might examine the role government's play in legitimizing rule of law and how this in turn impacts women's empowerment, socio-economic status, and involvement in terrorism.

Future research might also attempt to employ qualitative research methods from former female terrorists to understand their experience when joining a terrorist organization. The overwhelming majority of literature examining female terrorism derives from large datasets housed within educational institutions. Practitioners struggle to gain access to former terrorists, or those who were recruited or co-opted into terrorist organizations. By creating an emphasis on these narrative accounts in the literature examining women's terrorism, practitioners can test their theories and better understand the actual experiences of those women, and their subjective view of the impact their gender had on their terrorist activities. Finally, only 19 African countries were quantified in this thesis. Results may change when a wider array of data is measured. To conclude, it's important to understand that a null finding doesn't mean there isn't a relationship between women in the waged and salaried workforce and terrorism, it means we don't know what the relationship is at the moment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anat Berko & Edna Erez (2007) Gender, Palestinian Women, and Terrorism: Women's Liberation or Oppression?, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30:6, 493-519, DOI: 10.1080/10576100701329550.
- Association of Religion Data, National Profiles. (2019). Retrieved November 2019, from <http://www.thearda.com/internationaldata/index.asp>
- Bloom, M., & Matfess, H. (2016). Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram's Terror. *PRISM*, 6(1), 104-121. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26470435>.
- Brigitte L. Nacos (2005) The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28:5, 435-451, DOI: 10.1080/10576100500180352.
- Chenoweth, E. (2013). Terrorism and Democracy. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16(1), 355-378. doi:10.1146/annurev-polisci-032211-221825.
- Cloud, D. L. (2004). "To veil the threat of terror": Afghan women and the (clash of civilizations) in the imagery of the U.S. war on terrorism. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 90(3), 285-306. doi:10.1080/0033563042000270726.
- Cunningham, K. J. (2003). Cross-Regional Trends in Female Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 26(3), 171-195. doi:10.1080/10576100390211419
- Daily Trust, 6 July 2013, 'Nigeria: women as Boko Haram's new face' via <http://allafrica.com/stories/201307081607>.

- Hudson, R. A. (1999). *The sociology and psychology of terrorism: Who becomes a terrorist and why?*. Library of Congress Washington Dc Federal Research Div.
- Jakana L. Thomas and Kanisha D. Bond. 2015. "Women in Violent Political Organizations." *American Political Science Review*. 109 (3):488-506.
- Knop, K. V. (2007). The Female Jihad: Al Qaedas Women. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*,30(5), 397-414. doi:10.1080/10576100701258585.
- Lavina, R. (2015). Women in terrorism: How the rise of female terrorists impacts international law. *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 30(2), 241-263.
- Lindsey A. O'Rourke (2009) What's Special about Female Suicide Terrorism?, *Security Studies*,18:4, 681-718, DOI: 10.1080/096364109.
- Maps of World, West Africa Map, Map of West Africa, West African Countries. (2011). Retrieved November 2019, from <https://www.mapsofworld.com/africa/regions/western-africa-map.html>
- Sencer, Amanda. (2016). The Hidden Face of Terrorism: An Analysis of the Women in Islamic State. *Journal of Strategic Security*. 9. 74-98. DOI:10.5038/1944-0472.9.3.1549.
- UNESCO UIS. (2019). Retrieved November 2019, from http://uis.unesco.org/en/home#tabs-0-uis_home_top_menus-3
- Why Boko Haram uses female suicide-bombers. (2017, October 23). Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2017/10/23/why-boko-haram-uses-female-suicide-bombers>.
- World Bank, (2019). Retrieved November 2019, from <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/home>.

World Bank, GDP per capita (current US\$). (2019). Retrieved November 2019, from

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

World Bank, Population female. (2019). Retrieved November 2019, from

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.IN>.

Zenn, J., & Pearson, E. (2014). Women, Gender and the evolving tactics of Boko Haram.

Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations, 5(1). DOI:

<http://doi.org/10.15664/jtr.828>.

ACADEMIC VITA

NOELIA ORTIZ-LANDEZABAL

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University | The Schreyer Honors College *Aug 2017– May 2020*
The College of Liberal Arts | The Paterno Fellows Honors Liberal Arts Program
African Studies Student Marshal
Political Science (B.A.), African Studies (B.A.), Women's Studies (Minor)
Fluency: French Dual Citizenship (Native/Fluent), Spanish (Native/Fluent)

WORK EXPERIENCE

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) *May 2019 – Aug 2019*
Development Outreach and Communications (DOC) Intern
Think Tank and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) *May 2018 – Aug 2018*
Project Leader, Data and Research Coordinator
UNESCO Youth-as-Researchers Program *Oct 2017 – May 2018*
Team Co-Leader, Undergraduate Researcher

LEADERSHIP

Schreyer For Women *Sept 2017 – Apr 2020*
Administrative Chair, Service Director, Days for Girls Liaison
Days for Girls PSU *Jan 2019 – Jan 2020*
Founder, President
Leadership Jumpstart Honors Course *Aug 2018 – Dec 2019*
Teaching Assistant, Former Student

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bassila, Benin Language Program *May 2018*
Language Researcher
SEGA All-Girls School and Hekima Place (Tanzania and Kenya) *May 2019*
Cultural, Educational, and International Development Exchange

HONORS AND AWARDS

Pi Sigma Alpha - Political Science Honors Society at Penn State *Member*
Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Award
College of the Liberal Arts - Dickerson Family Fund Award- Tanzania & Kenya
Political Science Department - John D. Martz Memorial Fund
Political Science Department - Kim Anderson Memorial Scholarship
African Studies Department Academic Scholarship Award
Student Engagement Network Language Research in Benin Grant
Student Engagement Network Tanzania Study Abroad Grant
Student Engagement Network Days for Girls Club Grant
Penn State Behrend Gender Conference *Speaker*

SKILLS

Skills: Microsoft Office, communication, creativity, data analysis, leadership, multi-tasking, organization, problem-solving, public speaking, research, social media, teamwork