

Question 4: Are female terrorists ‘different’ from male terrorists?

Women have long been involved in political violence and terrorism. Yet, discussions on specific differences in how women and men partake in terrorism have never subsided. To critically engage with this question, this lecture takes a gender lens and analyses why women join terrorist organisations and what their roles have been historically and in the contemporary landscape.

Discussion questions

1. Do women join terrorist organization for different reasons than men?
2. Are there specific tactical and strategical advantages for terrorist groups that recruit females?
3. How ‘gender’ affects woman role in terrorism worldwide?

Essential readings

Bloom, Mia. 2011. “Bombshells: Women and Terror.” *Gender Issues* 28 (1/2): 1–21.
Lahoud, Nelly. 2017. “Can Women Be Soldiers of the Islamic State?” *Survival* 59 (1): 61–78.

Further readings

Alakoc, Burcu Pinar. 2018. “Femme Fatale: The Lethality of Female Suicide Bombers.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, September, 1–19.
Del Villar, Erika Lorenzana. 2019. “Women in Modern Terrorism: From Liberation to Global Jihad in the Islamic State.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 31 (2): 410–16.
Gan, Ruth, Loo Seng Neo, Jeffery Chin, and Majeed Khader. 2019. “Change Is the Only Constant: The Evolving Role of Women in the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).” *Women & Criminal Justice*, May, 1–17.
Martini, Alice. 2018. “Making Women Terrorists into ‘Jihadi Brides’: An Analysis of Media Narratives on Women Joining ISIS.” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11 (3): 458–77.
Sjoberg, Laura, and Caron Gentry. 2016. “It’s complicated: Looking Closely at Women in Violent Extremism.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 17 (2): 23–30.
Sixta, Christine. 2008. “The Illusive Third Wave: Are Female Terrorists the New ‘New Women’ in Developing Societies?” *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 29 (2): 261–88.
Spencer, A.N. 2016. “The Hidden Face of Terrorism: An Analysis of the Women in Islamic State.” *Journal of Strategic Security* 9 (3): 74–98.
Von Knop, Katharina. 2007. “The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Women.” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30 (5): 397–414.
Weinberg, Leonard, and William Eubank. 2011. “Women’s Involvement in Terrorism.” *Gender Issues* 28 (1): 22–49.

Non-peer reviewed resources

- Alexander, Audrey. 2016. "Cruel Intentions: Female Jihadists in America." Program on Extremism, George Washington University.
<https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/downloads/Female%20Jihadists%20in%20America.pdf>.
- Chrisafis, Angelique, Kate Connolly, and Angela Giuffrida. 2019. "From Le Pen to Alice Weidel: How the European Far-Right Set Its Sights on Women." *The Guardian*, January 29, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jan/29/from-le-pen-to-alice-weidel-how-the-european-far-right-set-its-sights-on-women>.
- Darby, Seyward. 2018. "The Secret Weapons of the Far Right." *Topic Magazine*, November 2018. <https://www.topic.com/the-secret-weapons-of-the-far-right>.
- "Everywoman - Women and terrorism – Part One," *Aljazeera English*, 11 April 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up1yxJv8IkI&t=0s&index=24&list=PLpaIbbnmwJfGBwiHLDFNmVF3rPyUI8wM4>.
- "Everywoman - Women and terrorism – Part Two," *Aljazeera English*, 11 April 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up1yxJv8IkI&t=0s&index=24&list=PLpaIbbnmwJfGBwiHLDFNmVF3rPyUI8wM4>.
- Gordon, Glenda. 2018. "American Women of the Far Right." *New York Review of Books*, December 13, 2018. <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/12/13/american-women-of-the-far-right/>.
- "The other women's movement: The attraction of the far right," *France 24 English*, 14 April 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioMhwfltTas>.
- "Why are women joining the 'alt-right'?" *PBS NewsHour*, 19 August 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnhnjsJ3zFg>.
- "Women of Terror," *BBC*, 9 September 2015. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b063zx13>.