Community and Gender in Counter-Terrorism Policy: Challenges and Opportunities for Transferability Across the Evolving Threat Landscape

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Abstract

This article examines the transferability of two decades of counter-terrorism policy structures which are focused on Islamist extremism. It illustrates how these policies are challenged by the emergence and resurgence of different threat profiles on the security horizon, especially focusing on right-wing extremism. Prevention has become a prominent part of the counter-terrorism strategy, with much of this programming focused on engaging "at risk" communities to reduce grievances which might encourage participation in violent extremism. This article assesses, through a review of literature and policy as well as contextual comparative analysis, whether "at risk" communities for other forms of extremism can be identified by the same simplistic categorisation processes which are often employed with the Islamist inspired threat. Identifying the challenges of community-based programming highlights the importance of gender roles within communities and the radicalisation narrative, thus emphasising the essential nature of a gender lens for effective counter-terrorism policy.

Introduction

Current counter-terrorism (CT) policy in much of the world, both at the national and international levels, has largely been built on the two-decade legacy of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This perspective has focused policy almost exclusively on the threat of Islamist extremism. However, the threat landscape is constantly evolving. It is becoming more widely recognised that while there is still a threat from the likes of ISIS, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and affiliates, they are certainly not the only threat and perhaps not even the most considerable one at this point in time.[1] The threat from the extreme right-wing (XRW) has been increasing steadily, spurred on in the current climate of conspiracy and mistrust exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and government measures taken in its wake.[2] Therefore, this article seeks to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities for CT policy transferability. This requires acknowledging the shortcomings presented by a single-minded policy focus on Islamist extremism and taking lessons-learned in some areas, such as community and gender, to adapt policy going forward making it more widely applicable to an ever-evolving threat landscape.

Over the last decade, prevention strategies have evolved as a key pillar of CT policy and have largely taken the shape of preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programming.[3] This type of programming, due to the focus on Islamist extremism, has been focused on developing resilience in various types of communities determined "at risk" to violent extremism (VE).[4] In identifying the challenges of transferability of CT policy, this article looks at how the concept of community and its profiling for the purposes of P/CVE programming is challenged by the varying nature of community within different threat profiles. It also focuses on how the concept of identifying "at risk" communities is closely intertwined with common assumptions around gender.[5] The importance of applying a gender lens to P/CVE programming and wider CT policy has been increasingly recognised over the past few years.[6] Therefore, this article focuses on identifying where lessons learned in research and practice can be transferred across terrorism threats or reimagined where not effective – in order to prevent the same mistakes being made during adaptation of CT policy to new threats.

The body of the article is organised into six sections, with the next section addressing the methodology and the following section explaining key concepts. While often considered to be at opposite ends of a spectrum, the key concepts section highlights how there are similarities as well as differences between the Islamist and XRW threats. The third section then provides an overview of the common pillar formation of CT frameworks. After that, a three-tiered approach is used to breakdown the challenging, intertwined issue of efficacy and transferability. The first tier briefly highlights some examples of challenges to the various pillars. The second tier focuses on the prevention pillar. It illustrates some of the challenges made apparent over the last decade around interpretation of community and how these could be made even more complicated with the disparate nature of "community" often associated with the XRW. This leads to the third tier, which emphasises

1 United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTED), "Member States Concerned by the Growing and Increasingly Transnational Threat of Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism," CTED, 2020. Available at: https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CTED_Trends_Alert_Extreme_Right-Wing_Terrorism.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

2 Claudia Wallner and Jessica White, "The Far-Right and Coronavirus: Extreme Voices Amplified by the Global Crisis," The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Commentary, 30 April 2020. Available at: https://rusi.org/commentary/far-right-and-coronavirus-extreme-voices-amplified-global-crisis, accessed 27 August 2020.

3 E.g. EU Council, "Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism," EU Council, 2014. Available at: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9956-2014-INIT/en/pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

4 RUSI, "The Prevention Project," (London: RUSI, 2020). Available at: https://rusi.org/project/prevent, accessed 27 August 2020.

5 Jessica White, "Gender in Countering Violent Extremism Program Design, Implementation and Evaluation: Beyond Instrumentalism," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism (September 2020), pp. 1-24.

6 Eleanor Gordon and Jacqui True, "Gender Stereotyped or Gender Responsive? Hidden Threats and Missed Opportunities to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism in Indonesia and Bangladesh," The RUSI Journal, Vol. 164, No. 4 (September 2019), pp. 74-91; Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), "Addendum to the GCTF Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism, with a Focus on Mainstreaming Gender," GCTF, 2020. Available at: https://www.thegctf.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=jA1tbXKhobE%3D&portalid=1, accessed 27 August 2020.

the importance of considering gender in how community is constructed and how prevention programming is applied. These sections highlight some of the challenges to CT policy and the ways in which they are intensified when considering if and how current CT policy is transferrable to the evolving threat landscape. They also seek to illustrate lessons learned from past programming and where it could benefit adaptation of policy.

Methodology

This article comprises a review of the primary issues around transferability of CT policy. It also provides a qualitative comparative analysis of representative samples of the work that has been done on community and gender in the often siloed research areas looking at Islamist versus XRW terrorism and the CT policy and P/CVE programming associated with them. Charles Ragin developed the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) case study research design as a critical realist approach to in-depth examination and comparison of examples.[7] This allows for what Clifford Geertz termed "thick description" to be developed.[8] This approach is very useful in policy research as it allows policy makers and practitioners to "to transfer understanding of complex social processes in context from one locale of social action to another."[9] Often in the fields of research on P/CVE, and especially on gender mainstreaming in this context, there is very little data. This requires that an interpretive approach is taken to this nascent area of research in order to glean what lessons have been learned and

apply them to other contexts and policy arenas where possible.[10] In this article, the adopted critical realist perspective accepts the realist assertion that community and biological sex are objectively real. However, they are constructed by sociocultural norms and expectations into subjective interpretations of community and gender roles. Therefore, this article uses an interpretivist-based theoretical approach to identify how community and gender roles are socially constructed and how that impacts people's path to extremism.[11]

A feminist constructivist theoretical perspective is employed for the analysis in this article, which is part of the wider family of interpretivist approaches.[12] This perspective accepts that the author's own understanding of insecurity and inequality shapes the analysis of this article.[13] While the interpretivist approach acknowledges subjectivity, this does not mean that rigor and testability are not valid in this approach, just that they are approached differently.[14] The interpretivist theoretical approach to case study design allows for in-depth examination and generation of new knowledge.[15] The feminist perspective included in the theoretical approach acknowledges the importance of using a gender lens and of gender equality.[16] The two cases used for comparison in this article are not singular examples but rather two contexts, constituted of representative examples of the bodies of literature written on community and gender in Islamist and XRW extremism. Due to the relative nascency of research in these areas and the little amount of data available, the examples given were chosen through an interpretive process of

7 Charles C. Ragin, The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies, Revised 1st ed. (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 2014).

8 Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Yvonna S. Lincoln and Norman K. Denzin,eds., Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief (AltaMira Press, 2003) pp. 143-168.

9 David Byrne, Wendy Olsen and Sandra Duggan, "Causality and Interpretation in Qualitative Policy-Related Research," in David Byrne and Charles Ragin, eds., The SAGE Handbook of Case-Based Methods, (London; London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), p. 511.

10 Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True, Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science, 2nd ed. (New York: Red Globe Press, 2010).

11 Roy Bhaskar, A Realist Theory of Science (Leeds: Leeds Books, 1975); Tony Lawson et al., Critical Realism (GB: Routledge Ltd, 1998); Margaret Archer et al., Critical Realism: Essential Readings (Routledge, 2013).

12 Maja Zehfuss, Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," International Security, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1995), pp. 71-81.

13 Cerwyn Moore, "Reading the Hermeneutics of Violence: The Literary Turn and Chechnya," Global Society, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June 2006), pp. 179-198.

14 Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow, Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011).

15 Cerwyn Moore and Chris Farrands, International Relations Theory and Philosophy: Interpretive Dialogues (Routledge, 2010).

16 Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True, Feminist Methodologies for International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

looking for the data in centres of expertise or from key researchers on these issues.

Key Concepts

Terrorism is a highly political and contested term because "deciding whether a particular act of violence constitutes an 'act of terrorism' relies on judgments about the context, circumstances and intent of the violence, rather than any objective characteristic inherent to it."[17] Terrorism is often accepted as an act of violence used by non-state actors to incite terror in a general audience in order to achieve a political goal.[18] Bruce Hoffman describes terrorism as "designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little'.[19] While the definition of terrorism varies, it does in most contexts hold legal weight. Extremism, on the other hand, is a nebulous term which does not necessarily refer to violence or the contravening of any laws, so is more ambiguous and does not hold legal weight.

The 9/11 attacks in the United States (US) in 2001 and subsequent GWOT elicited a global focus on the threat of Islamist terrorism over the last two decades. This has encouraged international agreements and CT frameworks to be established around the threat of foreign terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. Due to the perceived difference in this threat than, for example, the significant role of left-wing terrorism in the 20th century, the language of CT policy has shifted to include extremism and the process of radicalisation. This path to violent extremism can signify a deviation from the expectation of terrorism being carried out for the purpose of a political gain. However, like terrorism and extremism, radicalisation is also a contested term. It can

be understood as non-linear and fluid social and psychological process of becoming incrementally more committed to extremist ideologies – not necessarily leading to participation in violence.[20]

Radicalisation can be "blamed on many things, including exposure to ideology, victimization, alienation, socialization, social networks, the internet, deficiencies in family bonds, trauma, relative social and economic deprivation, and 'cultures of violence'."[21] It has been associated, through some CT policy framing, with the process of foreign terrorist organisations encouraging violent extremism within a domestic population, or "home-grown" terrorism.[22] As they are not concrete or legal terms, the concepts of radicalisation and extremism can be used in a politically-driven manner. The political nature of their application is highlighted in the XRW context, as these are often expressions of varying levels of extremism from within the majority population and perspective, and are, therefore, more politically sensitive to   frame negatively.

The challenge of defining these basic concepts of terrorism and extremism is made more complicated by the umbrella categories that are often used to account for a variety of different ideologies. For example: the term Salafi-Jihadi terrorism encompasses a wide range of Islamist extremisms based on variances of Islamic theology.[23] The XRW also encompasses a wide range of ideologies, including ultra-nationalism, xenophobia, white supremacy, neo-Nazism, extreme Christian fundamentalism, and others. There is an additional challenge in the definition of this threat, as XRW is only one of many terms used, often interchangeably, including extreme far-right, radical right, and others.[24] This lack of coherency can leave confusion discursively

17 Richard Jackson et al., Terrorism: A Critical Introduction, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 35.

18 Walter Laqueur, A History of Terrorism, 5th ed. (London: Transaction Publishers, 2001).

19 Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, Revised and Expanded ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006), p. 41.

20 Mark Sedgwick, "The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion," Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 22, No. 4 (September 2010), pp. 479-494.

21 Katherine E. Brown, "Gender and Counter-Radicalization: Women and Emerging Counter-Terror Measures," in Margaret L Satterthwaite and Jayne Huckerby, eds., Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), p. 37.

22 Charlotte Heath-Kelly, "Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the 'Radicalisation' Discourse and the UK PREVENT Strategy," The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2013), pp. 394-415.

23 Sasha Jesperson et al., "Islamist Violent Extremism: A New Form of Conflict or Business as Usual?" Stability: International Journal of Security and Development, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2017).

24 Archie Henderson, "Faces" of the Radical Right," Centre for the Analysis of the Radical Right (CARR), 2020. Available at: http://www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2020/08/14/faces-of-the-radical-right/, accessed 27 August 2020.

between the mainstream far-right and the XRW. Left-wing extremism is another umbrella category which is part of the evolving threat landscape and is potentially on the rise again, especially with growing social movements and concern over climate change. It encompasses a wide range of anti- capitalist, imperialist and colonialist ideology, often including radical environmentalism and support of animal rights.[25] These umbrella categories are often used to lump together the wide range of threats which CT policy must address.

While Islamist and right-wing extremism are often considered opposite ends of a spectrum or potentially encouraging each other in a cycle of reciprocal radicalisation, they in fact share some similarities. For example, as is shown above both can include elements of religiously motivated terrorism. Also, they both exist at the far-right conservative end of the political spectrum, often implementing very fundamentalist concepts of social structure and identity politics.[26] These similarities and differences are explored further in this article when looking at their constructs of community and gender. While some lessons can be learned from the way that gender has been researched and applied across these two threats, the applicability and effectiveness of transferring commonly used approaches to prevention can be called into question, especially with the differences in the way that these extremist communities are formed and identified. In order to further this examination, an understanding of the common   pillar approach to CT frameworks must be established first.

Overview of CT Frameworks

At the intergovernmental level, the United Nations (UN) has developed a CT strategic approach and makes recommendations to Member States. There are four pillars which are the foundation of the UN Global Strategy:

- Addressing the Conditions Conducive to the Spread of Terrorism

- Preventing and Combatting Terrorism

- Building States' Capacity and Strengthening the Role of the United Nations

- Ensuring Human Rights and the Rule of Law[27]

These pillars have guided the biennial review of the strategy and have informed the updates and improvements which have been made since its original 2006 adoption, including keeping it attuned to the CT priorities of Member States.[28]

An example of CT strategy at the supranational level is the European Union (EU). They originally designed their CT strategy in 2005 with the following four pillars:

- Respond: to prepare for and minimise the consequences of a successful terrorist attack.

- Protect: to protect citizens and infrastructure and reduce vulnerability to an attack.

- Pursue: to pursue terrorists, bring them to justice, and build local capacity to do so.

- Prevent: to prevent people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors which can lead to radicalisation and aid recruitment.[29]

25 Seth Jones, Catrina Doxsee and Nicholas Harrington, "The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States," Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2020. Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states, accessed 27 August 2020.
26 Tahir Abbas, "Ethnicity and Politics in Contextualising Far Right and Islamist Extremism," Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2017), pp. 54-61.
27 UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), "UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy," UNOCT, 2018. Available at: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy, accessed 27 August 2020.
28 There have been six completed reviews of the strategy since 2006 - in: 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 – the 2020 review was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
29 EU Council, "The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy," EU Council, 2005. Available at: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204, accessed 27 August 2020.

Additionally, many national level CT strategies share this pillar design, often including similar pillars or purposes.[30] One representative example is the United Kingdom (UK) CONTEST CT strategy, which includes the following four pillars:

- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism

- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks

- Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack

- Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack[31]

This CONTEST strategy was first introduced in 2003 and at the time the PREVENT pillar played a relatively minor role. However, as the threat of "home-grown" terrorism increased so did the emphasis on this strategy.[32] The UK's PREVENT programming is now often looked to as the first and most wide-ranging domestic P/CVE platform.[33]

P/CVE, a common form of programming under the prevention pillar, has been developed in recognition that hard CT measures alone, such as military intervention or legal prosecution, are not enough to counter the threat and can sometimes even exacerbate it.[34] P/CVE is another definitionally challenging subject, but has gained traction as a concept over the last decade. It is often defined, especially in the Western context, according to a public health three-tier model:

- First tier: addresses underlying social conditions which might act as drivers of extremism, such as unemployment, poor governance, inequality, human rights violations, etc.

- Second tier: focuses on identifying and engaging with "at risk" populations in order to advert their path to radicalisation

- Third tier: focuses on the deradicalisation and reintegration of individuals who have already chosen to participate in VE[35]

There have been a lot of challenges to use of this model, with some argument to split these three tiers into separate types of programming. PVE programming would be the first tier, bridging the gap to development and other types of programming which are already addressing these wider social ills without linking them to security goals.[36] CVE programming would focus on identifying "at risk" populations and trying to address the individual drivers that draw them in to VE.[37] Disengagement, De-radicalisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programming would remain focused on the third tier of neutralising the threat from those who have already chosen to participate in VE.[38] However, for the purposes of this article

30 E.g. US Executive Branch, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the USA," (Washington DC: The White House, 2018). Available at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020; Australia New Zealand CT Committee, "National Counter-Terrorism Plan," Australia New Zealand CT Committee, 2017. Available at: https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/WhatAustraliaisdoing/Pages/Australia-New-Zealand-Counter-Terrorism-Committee.aspx, accessed 27 August 2020; UK Home Office, "UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)," UK Home Office, 2018. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest, accessed 27 August 2020.

31 UK Home Office, "UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)," 2018.

32 The CONTEST strategy has been reviewed and updated four times since 2003 - in: 2006, 2009, 2011, and 2018.

33 RUSI, "The Prevention Project," 2020.

34 Naureen Chowdhury-Fink, "The Blue Flag in Grey Zones: Exploring the Relationship between Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)," in UN Field Operations, in United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, "UN DDR in an Era of Violent Extremism: Is it Fit for Purpose?" (Tokyo: United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, 2015), pp. 62-79. Available at: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/un_ddr_in_an_era_of_violent_extremism.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

35 Jonathan Challgren et al., "Countering Violent Extremism: Applying the Public Health Model," Georgetown Security Studies Review, (October 2016). Available at: https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NSCITF-Report-on-Countering-Violent-Extremism.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

36 William Stephens, Stijn Sieckelinck and Hans Boutellier, "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism (January 2019), pp. 1-16.

37 James Khalil and Martine Zeuthen, "Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction: A Guide to Programme Design and Evaluation," RUSI, June 2016. Available at: https://rusi.org/publication/whitehall-reports/countering-violent-extremism-and-risk-reduction-guide-programme-design, accessed 27 August 2020.

38 John Horgan, "Deradicalization Or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation," Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 24, No. 2 (February 2008), pp. 291-298.; Tore Bjørgo and John G. Horgan, Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement (Routledge, 2008).

the prevention pillar of CT policy is referred to as P/CVE and encompasses all three tiers.[39] There is some variance among approaches to P/CVE programming, especially regarding how cooperative it needs to be. However, the EU, for example, requires a coalition between governments, communities, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private sector actors. This coalition approach allows the scope to implement P/CVE programmes jointly on local, regional, national, and international levels.[40]

Over the last few years there has been an increasing focus on the need to include women more equally in CT policy and programming as well as the wider process of security. The first formal international agreement on this issue came with the formation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda laid out by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000. This UNSCR focused on the need to not only include women more equally in the process of security but also encouraged CT policy to take into account the varying impact of conflict on women.[41] There have been nine additional UNSCRs passed since 1325 relating to the WPS agenda, most recently 2493 in 2019.[42] This high-level political commitment to the inclusion of women has unfortunately

not always filtered down to meaningful on-the-ground implementation.[43] Where there have been strategies developed to work on achieving more equal inclusion of women in CT policy and practice, these strategies are often referred to as gender-mainstreaming. However, gender-mainstreaming has a controversial reception among feminist scholars, as it is often equated with the 'add women and stir' method of just increasing numbers of women in current security processes, instead of actually re-examining inequality in security.[44]

The process of implementing a meaningful strategy of gender equality as essential to security requires a multifaceted understanding of gender. Thus far, when there has been attention to including women in P/CVE policy, it has most often been focused on the empowerment of women as mothers, wives, and peacemakers in the community to counter radicalisation.[45] There is not only very little evidence of the effectiveness of this approach to including women, this is also encouraging gender essentialism and limiting the way in which women's roles in P/CVE are viewed.[46] The examination of gender in security needs a much wider perspective and the application of a gender lens to all policy and programming.

Historically, gender has been conflated with

39 UNOCT, "Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism," UNOCT, 2015. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674, accessed 27 August 2020.

40 EU Council, "Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism," 2014.

41 UN Security Council Resolution 1325, October 2000. Available at: http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325, accessed 27 August 2020; Christine Chinkin, "Adoption of 1325 Resolution," in Sara Davies and Jacqui True, eds., The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace and Security, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Thania Paffenholz et al., "Making Women Count-Not just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations," UN Women, Inclusion, Peace and Transition Initiative, 2016. Available at: http://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Making%20Women%20Count%20Not%20Just%20Counting%20Women.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

42 The 10 WPS UNSCRs are: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

43 Laura Shepherd, "The Women, Peace, and Security Agenda at the United Nations," in Anthony Burke and Rita Parker, eds., Global Insecurity, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 139-158; Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, "Women, Peace, and Security: A Transformative Agenda?" in Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True, eds., The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe, "Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security," International Feminist Journal of Politics Vol. 13, No. 4 (2011), pp. 489-503.

44 Jacqui True and Laura Parisi, "Gender Mainstreaming Strategies in International Governance," in Gülay Caglar, Susanne Zwingel and Elisabeth Prügl, eds., Feminist Strategies in International Governance, (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 59-78; Jacqui True, "How Effective is Gender Mainstreaming in International Peace and Security Policymaking?" in Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe, eds., Handbook on Gender in World Politics, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), pp. 457-466; Jacqui True, "Mainstreaming Gender in Global Public Policy," International Feminist Journal of Politics, Vol. 5, No. 3 (June 2003), pp. 368-396.; Paffenholz et al., "Making Women Count-Not just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations," 2016.

45 Emily Winterbotham, "What can Work (and what has Not Worked) in Women-Centric P/CVE Initiatives: Assessing the Evidence Base for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," (London: RUSI, 2020). Available at: https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/what-can-work-and-what-has-not-worked-women-centric-pcve-initiatives, accessed 27 August 2020.

46 Emily Winterbotham, "Do Mothers Know Best? How Assumptions Harm CVE," (London: Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, 2018). Available at: https://institute.global/policy/do-mothers-know-best-how-assumptions-harm-cve, accessed 27 August 2020; Jessica White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy" PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2020.

biological sex; however, in current feminist analysis, the term sex normally refers to the biological differences associated with being male or female and the term gender refers to the wider sociocultural construction of role expectations based on a person's sex.[47] This article argues that this wider perspective of gender needs to be employed as part of the gender lens for P/CVE programming and CT policy. Policy needs to take into account more than just essentialised roles women can play. Instead, it needs to look at how underlying expectations of masculinity and femininity impact the roles people play in communities and why and how people engage in VE or in P/CVE. Social construction of gender roles can play a significant role in how extremist communities are formed and why individuals seek to join or support VE organisations.[48] This is examined further in later sections.

The following sections now use the common formation of CT policy frameworks highlighted in this section to illustrate where challenges and opportunities are present for transferability across the threat landscape.

Tier 1: Challenges for transferability of CT policy

As shown above, there tends not to be explicit focus within the language of CT strategies on one type of threat. However, this section briefly identifies some of the ways in which current policy design is implicitly focused on the era of the GWOT and the threat of Islamist extremism – an issue which ultimately creates challenges for the policy to be transferrable between types of threat. First, it is important to remember that the terrorism threat landscape is constantly evolving.[49] In the 1970's and 80's the biggest concern tended to be left-wing extremism focused on anti-capitalism and colonialism, then after the 9/11 attack in the US the GWOT shifted the focus to Islamic extremism.[50] Now the XRW is presented as a new and rising concern on the CT landscape, especially in the West, due to rising expression of extremist sentiment and violence. However, this threat is historically engrained in most white, European societies and is a resurgence of extreme ideologies which have already caused conflict.[51] White majority societies have long demonstrated various elements of XRW ideology, often stemming from histories of colonialism and imperialism. These roots have manifested in transnational links between many of these ideological groups, with support bases in multiple countries.[52] As with all threats, this transnational ideological link sometimes manifests in the traveling of violent extremists from one location to other in order to fight for the ideological cause.

Due to the multiple pillars of many CT frameworks, programming can include a range of things from the 'hardening' of soft targets

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47 Terrell Carver, "Sex, Gender and Sexuality," in Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe, eds., Handbook on Gender in World Politics, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016), pp. 58-65; Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry, Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics, 1st ed. (GB: Zed Books, 2007); Jill Steans, Gender and International Relations, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013). The author acknowledges that gender is fluid and that people hold more than just male and female identities. The author also acknowledges that this gender fluidity does have an impact on VE because of the way that extremists characterise masculinity, but for the purposes of this paper male and female will be the primary distinctions.

48 Martine Zeuthen and Gayatri Sahgal, "Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism" (London: RUSI, 2018). Available at: https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201809_cr_gender_and_ve_final_1.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020; Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Soldier, Sailor, Rebel, Rule-Breaker: Masculinity and the Body in the German Far Right," Gender and Education Vol. 29, No. 2 (January 2017), pp. 199-215.

49 David Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in Audrey Cronin and James Ludes, eds., Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), pp. 3-11.

50 Erica Chenoweth et al., The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism (Oxford University Press, 2019).

51 Rob May and Matthew Feldman, "Understanding the Alt-Right: Ideologues,'Lulz' and Hiding in Plain Sight," in Maik Fielitz and Nick Thurston, eds., Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right, (2019). Available at: https://www.degruyter.com/transcript/view/book/9783839446706/10.14361/9783839446706-002.xml, accessed 27 August 2020; Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe," Prism, Vol. 6, No. 2 (July 2016), pp. 84-105. Available at: https://cco.ndu.edu/PRISM/PRISM-Volume-6-no-2/Article/839011/right-wing-extremism-and-terrorism-in-europe-current-developments-and-issues-fo/, accessed 27 August 2020; Paul Hainsworth, The Extreme Right in Europe (Routledge, 2008).

52 Soufan Center, "White Supremacy Extremism: The Transnational Rise of the Violent White Supremacist Movement," (2019). Available at: https://thesoufancenter.org/research/white-supremacy-extremism-the-transnational-rise-of-the-violent-white-supremacist-movement/, accessed 27 August 2020; Soufan Center, "The Atomwaffen Division: The Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat," (2020). Available at: https://thesoufancenter.org/research/the-atomwaffen-division-the-evolution-of-the-white-supremacy-threat/, accessed 27 August 2020.

such as airports and crowded places, to legal deterrence through increasing punishments and strengthening international agreements, to outright police or military intervention and 'use of force', to use of P/CVE programming.[53] This established framework is challenged by the varied nature of different threats on the spectrum. However, from a practical point of view, the dismantling of the current CT framework and rebuilding of a new one would be an immensely political and lengthy process. Therefore, forcing examination of transferability for current policy and practice, with adaptation and improvement from lessons learned and emerging research.

Although, the challenges become apparent when examining the harder measures such as legal deterrence, tracking, and prosecution.[54] Due to the two-decade focus on the threat from international Islamist organisations, many of the policies, strategies, and international CT agreements have been built on the threat posed by foreign terrorist organisations, while in many countries not as effectively addressing the threat of domestic extremism.[55] The distinction of pursuing a foreign terrorist organisation in most Western countries' national CT legal frameworks and international intelligence sharing agreements opens the door for intelligence gathering and information sharing. However, this legal enforcement apparatus often depends on being able to link an individual or group to a foreign terrorist organisation and thus being able to designate them as a foreign terrorist threat.[56] While it was relatively easy to establish the transnational ties between organisations declaring their allegiance to al-Qaeda or ISIS, the evidence of these transnational links between XRW organisation and networks have been harder to prove.

It is not as easy of a process to designate the terrorist legal status when extremist organisations or networks are domestic. While the law may be equipped for terrorism, extremism is often a highly political issue. Even the designation of domestic terrorist organisation can still protect members of these groups in some ways from some of the layers of investigation and prosecution, as governments are bound by legal protections against gathering intelligence on their own citizens.[57] This proves especially pertinent in the case of the XRW, as even though individuals who identify with this ideology may be perpetrating or encouraging the same level of violence as foreign terrorist organisations, they are often able to evade much of the same scrutiny. XRW groups have shown proclivity for group and branding adaptation, as well as keeping violent activities minor enough to evade large scale legal and media attention.[58]

The XRW is often characterised as being more loosely affiliated individuals who do not adhere to the same rigid organisational structures as, for example, groups like ISIS.[59] This plays a significant role, as in this context it is difficult to attribute individuals to an organisation or network they may identify with. This presents challenges for transferability of many of the current tracking, prevention, and prosecution strategies which are based on the linkage of individual terrorists to proscribed organisations and the further transnational link of that organisation to a foreign terrorist threat. These challenges also highlight the issue of lone-actors and attributing individual crimes to terrorism.[60] While lone-actors are a threat under any ideology, this type of terrorist act certainly presents a unique challenge to CT frameworks.

53 Jackson et al., Terrorism: A Critical Introduction, 2011 p. 231
54 Jessica White, "Far-Right Extremism: A Challenge to Current Counterterrorism Strategies and Structures?" (London: RUSI, 2020). Available at: https://rusi.org/publication/rusi-newsbrief/far-right-extremism-challenge-current-counterterrorism-strategies-and, accessed 27 August 2020.
55 The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), Addressing Homegrown Terrorism Initiative Workshop: Scoping Working on Addressing Racially- and Ethnically-Motivated Terrorism (REMT). Valletta, Malta: 05-07 November 2019.
56 Ibid.
57 Brian Michael Jenkins, Andrew Liepman and Henry H. Willis, "Identifying Enemies among Us: Evolving Terrorist Threats and the Continuing Challenges of Domestic Intelligence Collection and Information Sharing," (RAND Corporation, January 2014). Available at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF317.html, accessed 27 August 2020.
58 Soufan Center, "The Atomwaffen Division: The Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat," 2020.
59 Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe," 2016; Daniel Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremist Radicalization Processes: The Formers' Perspective," Journal Exit-Deutschland, Vol. 1, No. 2196-8136 (March 2014), pp. 307-377.
60 George Michael, "Leaderless Resistance: The New Face of Terrorism," Defence Studies, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2012), pp. 257-282.

Some countries have used legal authority to designate XRW domestic organisations as terrorist threats, for example with the UK proscription of the group National Action. However, the US, for example, had been seen as reluctant to engage in this legal and political grey area, with their first designation of a XRW group, The Russian Imperial Movement, coming in 2020.[61] Additionally, the loose affiliations of domestic organisations to international ones and the legal framework around domestic terrorist statutes inhibit the designation of transnational links between organisations.[62] In the case of the US, reluctance to legally designate domestic VE groups as terrorist organisations means that the US Department of State cannot hinder travel of individuals with allegiance to these organisations, the US Department of Treasury cannot criminalise financial support for these organisations and the US Department of Justice cannot prosecute individuals for providing material support for these organisations.[63]

Another example of a challenge to current policy and legal frameworks can be the issue of denying a platform to or prosecuting hate speech and incitement to violence versus the protection of free speech. This tends to be to be hotly debated in the US, for example, where freedom of speech is strongly protected as a constitutional right.[64] However, some other countries, for example in Europe, demonstrate more protections against hate speech.[65] This is especially pertinent to the XRW context, as their extreme ideological perspectives can often be represented in more mainstream media sources or in far-right politics.[66]

These are a few examples of ways in which the transferability of harder CT policies can be hindered by the current focus on foreign Islamist terrorist organisations. The preventative strategies tend to display an even stronger bias towards addressing Islamist extremism.[67] This seems to be primarily due to the fact that the use of P/CVE programming in the transnational space has been developed as a pillar of CT policy during the period of the GWOT, thus programming in this space tends to be almost singularly focused on preventing or countering Islamist VE. The focus of P/CVE programming in the Western, domestic context can become a little more varied, often including more programming centred on the XRW, especially under the third tier of P/CVE or DDR focused programmes.[68]

Tier 2: Specific challenges for P/CVE programming and interpretation of community

Due to intensive focus on Islamist extremism for P/CVE programming since the beginning of its use about 15 years ago, the concept of extremism in policy and programming circles often becomes equated with Islamist extremism. However, the recent concern over increasing influence and impact of the XRW should emphasise to policy makers and practitioners alike that extremism comes in a multitude of expressions.[69] With the sentencing of the XRW terrorist in New Zealand comes a fresh reminder that terrorist violence is motivated by various ideologies.[70] Extremism,

61 Soufan Center, "The Atomwaffen Division: The Evolution of the White Supremacy Threat," 2020.

62 Ibid.

63 Soufan Center, "White Supremacy Extremism," 2020.

64 Caleb Yong, "Does Freedom of Speech Include Hate Speech?" Res Publica, Vol. 17, No. 4 (November 2011), p. 385; Nadine Strossen, "Hate Speech and Pornography: Do we have to Choose between Freedom of Speech and Equality," Case W.Res.L.Rev., Vol. 46 (1996), p. 449. Available at: https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2096&context=caselrev, accessed 27 August 2020.

65 Article19, "Responding to 'Hate Speech': Comparative Overview of Six EU Countries," Article19, (2018). Available at: https://www.article19.org/resources/responding-hate-speech-comparative-overview-six-eu-countries/, accessed 27 August 2020.

66 E.g. In the US in "alt-media" outlets such as Breitbart or the US-based websites The Daily Stormer and Renegade Tribune.

67 George Selim, "Approaches for Countering Violent Extremism at Home and Abroad," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 668, No. 1 (October 2016), pp. 94-101.

68 RUSI, "The Prevention Project", 2020.

69 UN CTED, "Member States Concerned by the Growing and Increasingly Transnational Threat of Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism," 2020.

70 BBC, " Christchurch mosque attack: Brenton Tarrant sentenced to life without parole," BBC News, 27 August 2020. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53919624, accessed 27 August 2020.

in all its forms, is often subject to the same psychological pathways and can evolve in similar ways across ideological perspectives.[71] Thus groups with similar fundamentalist views can gain momentum from each other, such as Islamist and XRW organisations. Often extremists "express oversimplified views which form an easy rallying point for their followers and focus on the way in which 'others' threaten their worldview."[72] Changes in social and political environments can be conducive for the spread of extreme ideology, allowing them to seize the opportunity to be more openly vocal with their ideas and amplify their impact while raising membership. For example, years of conflict in the Middle East leading to refugee crisis in Europe have fuelled anti-immigrant sentiment, giving oxygen to xenophobia and ultra-nationalism. Additionally, with the global crisis spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as racial tensions flaring in the US, a conducive environment has been created for XRW ideology to creep further into the mainstream.[73]

Often XRW and Islamist extremism are framed as being at opposite ends of the spectrum. This is perhaps due to an assumption of cumulative radicalisation - the idea that XRW ideology is becoming more widespread in reaction to Islamist attacks on the Western world of even immigration of Muslim populations.[74] XRW ideology is often fuelled by anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment, which has permeated Western societies over the last two decades.[75] However, in reality, they are not opposites. They are both fundamentalist and misogynist ideologies at the extreme-right end of the spectrum, which are repackaged as needed to include current social and political context. Negative perceptions of government overreach, economic downturn, and social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic are ultimately feeding both forms of extremism.[76]

The concept of community is often instrumentalised in the literature on P/CVE, especially when focusing on the importance of directing programming towards 'at risk' communities due to the budget and time length restrictions of most P/CVE programming.[77] Often, in the Islamist extremism-focused framework of transnational P/CVE programming, the main goal of a programme intervention is to develop further community resilience to VE.[78] Community in this sense can mean a variety of things - it can be a community located in a particular place where conflict is more common, thus fuelling joining of VE organisations; or a particular minority community; or it can be more abstract, for example referring to a group of 'at-risk' youth as the target community for programming intervention. Unfortunately, this framework has set up a system where P/CVE programming is often linked to profiling of communities in a negative way, such as profiling based on ethnic or religious background.[79] Preventative CT strategy in the transnational context, which is often linked with development aid, can even become a form of wielding soft power or 'virtue signalling'.[80]

71 Jane Prince, "Psychology of Extremism," in Imran Awan and Brian Blakemore, eds., Extremism, Counter-Terrorism and Policing, (Routledge, 2016), pp. 51-68.

72 White, "Far-Right Extremism: A Challenge to Current Counterterrorism Strategies and Structures?" 2020, p. 3.

73 Wallner, "The Far-Right and Coronavirus: Extreme Voices Amplified by the Global Crisis," 2020; CTED, "Member States Concerned by the Growing and Increasingly Transnational Threat of Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism," 2020.

74 Jamie Bartlett and Jonathan Birdwell, "Cumulative Radicalisation between the Far-Right and Islamist Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence," (London: Demos, 2013). Available at: https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos%20-%20Cumulative%20Radicalisation%20-%205%20Nov%202013.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020.

75 Cathrine Thorleifsson, "In Pursuit of Purity: Populist Nationalism and the Racialization of Difference," Identities, (June 2019), pp. 1-17.

76 Alexandra Phelan et al., "COVID-19 and Violent Extremism: Gender Perspectives," Monash Gender Peace and Security Webinar, 3 June 2020; Richard McNeil-Willson, "Framing in Times of Crisis: Responses to COVID-19 Amongst Far Right Movements and Organisations," The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - The Hague (ICCT), June 2020. Available at: https://icct.nl/publication/framing-in-times-of-crisis/, accessed 27 August 2020.

77 Khalil, "Countering Violent Extremism and Risk Reduction,"2016; Amy-Jane Gielen, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Realist Review for Assessing what Works, for Whom, in what Circumstances, and how?" Terrorism and Political Violence, (May 2017), pp. 1-19.

78 RUSI, "The Prevention Project," 2020; Stephens, "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature," 2019, pp. 1-16

79 Floris Vermeulen, "Suspect Communities—Targeting Violent Extremism at the Local Level: Policies of Engagement in Amsterdam, Berlin, and London," Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 26, No. 2 (November 2014), pp. 286-306.; Katherine Brown, Fiona de Londras and Jessica White, "Embedding Human Rights in Countering Extremism: Reflections from the Field and Proposals for Change," UK Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/embedding-human-rights-in-countering-extremism-reflections-from-the-field-and-proposals-for-change, accessed 27 August 2020.

80 James Pamment, "Towards a New Conditionality? The Convergence of International Development, Nation Brands and Soft Power in

Using a method of risk assessment or profiling to identify the most 'at risk' communities is also done in the domestic context, sometimes resulting in the profiling of minority populations. However, in the domestic context community profiling becomes a more inflammatory issue, where perceptions of social and welfare services being securitised and used as a CT tool become a politicised violation of citizen and human rights.[81] For P/CVE programming aimed at Islamist extremism in Western domestic contexts, it is often simplified down to identifying the minority ethnic and religious communities which hold beliefs based on Islamic religious ideology and targeting them. However, profiling for XRW extremism in the domestic context is not so easy. As XRW groups and individuals often fit into the majority ethnic and religious profile, it is simply not possible to identify and profile them in the same way that it is with minority ethnic or religious communities. Additionally, and "especially under the scrutiny of modern communications, it seems infeasible for the state to link terrorist designations to a domestic population which bases their VE views on the majority racial background and/or religious affiliation of its citizens."[82] Thus the transferability of current P/CVE strategy is not only questionable as an effective approach, but also challenged in how to identify who are the right "at risk" XRW communities to target with this type of preventative programming.[83]

Due at least partially to the less centralised nature of many XRW groups and their general lack of structured grouping, online forums and groups have become a type of community which are often used to spread XRW ideology.[84] This type of community can be more difficult to identify and investigate. However, online communities have an undoubtedly more

significant reach and can contribute to the radicalisation process of individuals.[85] This sense of online connectivity that is strong in the XRW context also encourages the transnational links between XRW organisations. Similar to the way in which ISIS recruited individuals from around the world to come and fight for them, XRW organisations seem to be growing their ability to expand their own transnational ties and, in the example of the conflict in Ukraine, to draw fighters. However, until these transnational links can be transferred into legal designation of individuals as tied to foreign terrorist organisations, this does not necessarily aid in the transferability of current legal CT apparatus to track, detain, and prosecute them. [86] The individual nature of many expressions of XRW violence challenges the organisational focus of much CT policy and the requirement to be able to tie actions to a proscribed terrorist organisation.[87]

The more decentralised structure of many XRW communities challenges current conceptions of what a community is, as well as construction of roles within those communities. This inevitably makes it harder to apply many types of P/CVE programming. Extremist groups across the board are forcing evolution of the meaning of community and tailoring it to fit their needs. Therefore, those trying to transfer P/CVE programming need to identify ways in which to reach these new types of communities. For example, counter-narrative programming (i.e. the development of messages and programming intended to counter radicalising content and narratives) has been a commonly used P/CVE tool, especially in the wake of ISIS' capability to produce high quality online radicalisation material. However, this type of P/CVE programming has gone

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the British National Security Strategy," Journal of International Relations and Development, Vol. 21, No. 2 (September 2018), pp. 396-414.
81 Brown, "Embedding Human Rights in Countering Extremism," 2019.
82 White, "Far-Right Extremism," 2020, p. 3
83 CARR and Connect Futures Webinar, "When it Comes to Preventing Far-Right Terrorism and Extremism, Who is the "Community" we should be Engaging with?" 9 September 2020.; William Baldet, "Here's How We Should Combat Radical Right-Wing Terrorism," CARR Insights, 31 October 2018. Accessed at: https://www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2018/10/31/heres-how-we-should-combat-radical-right-wing-terrorism/, accessed 27 August 2020.
84 Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner, "The Fringe Insurgency – Connectivity, Convergence and Mainstreaming of the Extreme Right" ISD, (2017). Available at: https://www.isdglobal.org/isd-publications/the-fringe-insurgency-connectivity-convergence-and-mainstreaming-of-the-extreme-right/, accessed 27 August 2020; Soufan Center, "The Atomwaffen Division," 2020.
85 Katherine Brown and Elizabeth Pearson, "Social Media, the Online Environment and Terrorism," in Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism (Routledge, 2018), pp. 175-190.
86 Soufan Center, "White Supremacy Extremism," 2020; Soufan Center, "The Atomwaffen Division," 2020.
87 Koehler, "Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism in Europe," 2014, pp. 84-105.

largely unevaluated and its impact still remains uncertain.[88] Therefore, the transferability of online counter-narrative programming to the context of XRW online communities depends on further research and data gathering in order for conclusions to be drawn on effectiveness, but it could potentially be adapted to address new types of communities. An arguably more evidenced type of effective P/CVE programming is mentorship, which is transferrable to the XRW context and is often found in DDR programmes.[89] In the DDR context, programming often focuses on creating a safe space for individuals to choose to disengage from these types of ideologies and groups.[90]

When thinking about the challenges of P/CVE programming and the issues that have been highlighted with how it is often applied to communities, this raises more concern in some cases over its efficacy in being adapted or transferred to the XRW context. As part of this examination of the efficacy of programming over the last few years, there has been increasing recognition of the role that gender (i.e. sociocultural interpretations of masculinity and femininity) plays in how extremist communities are formed and why people choose to join them. Therefore, when looking at the adaptability of community-based P/CVE programming it is important to consider gender and to take, where possible, lessons that have been learned on the importance of using a gender lens in analysis of the evolving threat landscape.

Tier 3: Importance of a Gender Lens in Understanding and Countering Extremism

The focus of gender research in the XRW context has largely been on constructions of masculinity or 'toxic masculinity' and how it drives radicalisation.[91] This focus on masculinity in XRW research highlights the historical difference between it and research in the Islamist extremism context.[92] Due to the emphasis on the need to empower women as part of the security solution raised through the WPS agenda, researching gender in the context of Islamist extremism and transnational CT policy has largely emphasised looking at the roles of women.[93] Thus, the two have often been siloed. However, this article finds that they could benefit more from each other and learn lessons from points of crossover in their analysis.

There are similarities between these two contexts and their expectations of gender roles due to them both being on the far-right, conservative end of the ideological spectrum. They follow many of the same narratives for engaging men and women in VE. The narrative for men to join both these types of extremism is often to protect their race, religion, and way of life, inciting the need to use violence in a heroic way. Women often join both contexts to fulfil their role to produce and socialise the next generation within the radical context.[94] For example, the role of women in the XRW context is often presented as mothering the next white generation. It is their duty to aide their male partners in their defence of the white racial identity. Women can join these

88 Michael Jones, "Through the Looking Glass," RUSI, 2020. Available at: https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/through-looking-glass-assessing-evidence-base-pcve-communications, accessed 27 August 2020.

89 Emily Winterbotham, "How Effective Are Mentorship Interventions? Assessing the Evidence Base for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," (London: RUSI, 2020). Available at: https://rusi.org/publication/occasional-papers/how-effective-are-mentorship-interventions-assessing-evidence-base, accessed 27 August 2020.

90 Bjørgo, "Leaving Terrorism Behind," 2008; Tore Bjørgo, "Dreams and Disillusionment: Engagement in and Disengagement from Militant Extremist Groups," Crime, Law and Social Change, Vol. 55, No. 4 (February 2011), pp. 277-285.

91 Alex DiBranco, "Mobilizing Misogyny," Political Research Associates, (2017). Available at: https://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/03/08/mobilizing-misogyny, accessed 27 August 2020.

92 Ibid.

93 Katherine Brown, "Gender and Counter-Radicalization: Women and Emerging Counter-Terror Measures," in Margaret Satterthwaite and Jayne Huckerby, eds., Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives, (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), pp. 36-59; Katherine E. Brown, Gender, Religion, Extremism: Finding Women in Anti-Radicalization (Oxford University Press, 2020).

94 Zeuthen, "Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism," 2018.

organisations seeking to revert from ideals of a more liberal society to the patriarchal structure of this fundamentalist perspective, knowing and desiring to play the supporting role and finding a sense of empowerment in it.[95] This concept of extremist maternalism places birthing and socialising the next generation in a radical and heroic light and is used in both ideological contexts.[96]

Ironically, due largely to the nature of the WPS agenda being developed during the period of the GWOT and the push for transnational implementation of P/CVE programming, a huge portion of the work that has been done focused on utilising the role of women as wives and mothers and their ability to aid in identifying and potentially avert the radicalisation process in their male relatives and community members.[97] However, this narrow perception of the inclusion of women in P/CVE has been challenged over the last few years, encouraging more work looking at the wider impacts of gender and the role of social constructions of masculine and feminine identities on why individuals choose to participate in VE.[98] It is evident, especially from research in the Islamist context, that often women's roles are expanded and morphed, as either women push for more engagement in active roles within the organisation or need arises to use women in this way.[99]

More research is needed to fully assess the complexity of the ways in which gender impacts roles in extremist organisations. Unfortunately, a layer of difficulty can be added to researching group dynamics when communities are primarily based online. As indicated in the above section, this community dynamic can make identification and interpretation more difficult. However, online communities certainly play a significant role in extremism and radicalisation and thus are important to research. The encrypted nature of many of these online forums and the challenges of governance in this space (e.g. the lack of control over private tech platforms, the issues around governments gathering intelligence on their own citizens, etc.) can limit how much information is gathered from these channels of communication and dissemination, especially by governments. However, generally, there is a significant amount of academic research currently ensuing which attempts to monitor and understand these communities, in both the XRW and Islamist extremism contexts.[100] When trying to understand the narratives used in these online spaces, as well as with in-person recruitment, it is necessary to account for social construction of gender and the influence this has on the roles that individuals take in these organisations and why they choose to join them.[101] The crossover between the spheres of online XRW community and gender begin

95 Ashley Mattheis, "Shieldmaidens of Whiteness: (Alt) Maternalism and Women Recruiting for the Far/Alt-Right," Journal for Deradicalization, No. 17 (December 2017), pp. 128-162.

96 Ashley Mattheis and Charlie Winter, "The Greatness of Her Position': Comparing Identitarian and Jihadi Discourses on Women," International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR), 2019. Available at: https://icsr.info/2019/05/15/the-greatness-of-her-position-comparing-identitarian-and-jihadi-discourses-on-women/, accessed 27 August 2020.

97 Winterbotham, "What can Work (and what has Not Worked) in Women-Centric P/CVE Initiatives: Assessing the Evidence Base for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," 2020; Winterbotham, "Do Mothers Know Best? How Assumptions Harm CVE," 2018.

98 GCTF, "Addendum to the GCTF Good Practices on Women and Countering Violent Extremism, with a Focus on Mainstreaming Gender," 2020; Alexandra Phelan, Melissa Johnston, and Jacqui True, "Growing Threats of Violent Extremism: The Urgency for a Gender-Based Response," Australian Institute of International Affairs, (March 2020). Available at: http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/growing-threats-of-violent-extremism-the-urgency-for-a-gender-based-response/, accessed 27 August 2020; Jacqui True et al., "Building an Evidence Base for Empowering Women for Peaceful Communities: A Case Study of Bangladesh and Indonesia," UN Women, 2019. Available at: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/building-an-evidence-base-for-empowering-women-for-peaceful-communities, accessed 27 August 2020; White, "Evaluating Gender Mainstreaming in Counter-Terrorism Policy," 2020.

99 Devorah Margolin, "The Changing Roles of Women in Violent Islamist Groups," in Audrey Alexander, ed., Perspectives on the Future of Women, Gender, & Violent Extremism, (Washington DC: The George Washington University, 2019), pp. 40-49; Katherine Brown, Harmonie Toros and Swati Parashar, "Violent Extremist Myths and Masculinities: Two Country Case Studies," in Katherine E. Brown, David Duriesmith, Farhana Rahman, and Jacqui True, eds., Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia, UNDP and UN Women, 2020, pp. 31-52. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/03/conflicting-identities-the-nexus-between-masculinities-femininities-and-violent-extremism-in-asia, accessed 27 August 2020; Christine Sylvester and Swati Parashar, "The Contemporary 'Mahabharata' and the Many 'Draupadis': Bringing Gender to Critical Terrorism Studies," in Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning, eds., Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 178-193.

100 Mike Sutton and Cecile Wright, "Finding the Far Right Online: An Exploratory Study of White Supremacist Websites," Internet Journal of Criminology, 2009; Anne Aly et al., Violent Extremism Online: New Perspectives on Terrorism and the Internet, (Routledge, 2016).

101 Elizabeth Pearson, "Online as the New Frontline: Affect, Gender, and ISIS-Take-Down on Social Media," Studies in Conflict &

in the murky world of the 'manosphere' and various gendered expressions of hate online. There are multiple academic disciplines which analyse different aspects of this world of extreme expressions of masculinity; however, overall, there is very limited research and what is there can be difficult to find for non-specialists.[102]

Even in XRW online forums the overarching gender narrative is sometimes undercut by the desire of women to engage in wider roles.[103] In a recent study on the nexus of masculinities and femininities in VE narratives, Katherine Brown et al. look at:

> "...how structures of patriarchy and harmful performances of masculinity are deeply embedded in the modus operandi of violent extremist groups. The researchers found that such groups often manipulate or build on existing gender stereotypes to incite men and women to commit violence and to find refuge and support within extremist communities. Much greater efforts are needed to ensure policies address harmful constructions of masculinity and femininity promoted by violent extremist groups. Programmes must work with local communities to respond to the unequal gender power dynamics that shape and fuel extremist violence, including through empowering

women and girls to be agents of peace."[104]

This more recent shift to focus on a wider meaning of gender and the intersection of masculine and feminine identities is essential.[105] The application of a gender lens and focus on gender impact and equality are concepts which are gaining more traction in policy contexts, often referred to as gender-mainstreaming strategies. However, there is often still a lack of meaningful commitment and implementation. Thus, it is important to emphasise the need to seek gender equality as part of meaningful security solutions.[106]

CT policy needs to take into account the wider perspective of how socialised constructions of gender identities drive both men and women to participate in violence, how a gender lens can help in identifying areas of concern, and how gender equality is a necessary element of meaningful and sustainable peace. For example, there is work currently being done looking at how domestic violence can be a forerunner and warning sign of fundamentalism in many cases.[107] This type of wider examination of gender impact is needed, rather than repeating over-simplified assumptions about the roles that men and women play. These generalisations, which are often embedded in the CT framework, can make it difficult to identify and address the multidimensional nature of gender and

Terrorism, Vol. 41, No. 11 (September 2018), pp. 850-874; Emily Winterbotham and Elizabeth Pearson, "Different Cities, Shared Stories," The RUSI Journal, Vol. 161, No. 5 (2016), pp. 54-65.

102 Ashley A. Mattheis and Michael S. Waltman, "Gendered Hate Online," The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication (July 2020), pp. 1-5.; Bruce Hoffman, Jacob Ware and Ezra Shapiro, "Assessing the Threat of Incel Violence," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 43, No. 7 (April 2020), pp. 565-587.

103 Elizabeth Pearson, "Gendered Reflections? Extremism in the UK's Radical Right and Al-Muhajiroun Networks," Studies in Conflict & Terrorism (May 2020), pp. 1-24.; ICCT, "Gender and Violent Extremism Today," ICCT, Live Briefing, 4 June 2020. Available at: https://icct. nl/event/icct-live-briefing-gender-and-violent-extremism-today/, accessed 27 August 2020.

104 Katherine Brown et al., "Conflicting Identities: The Nexus between Masculinities, Femininities and Violent Extremism in Asia," UN Women, 2020, p. IV. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/03/conflicting-identities-the-nexus-between-masculinities-femininities-and-violent-extremism-in-asia, accessed 27 August 2020.

105 Elizabeth Pearson, Emily Winterbotham and Katherine Brown, "Countering Violent Extremism: Making Gender Matter" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Katherine Brown, "Gender Mainstreaming Principles, Dimensions and Priorities for PVE," UN Women, 2019. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/gender-mainstreaming-principles-dimensions-and-priorities-for-pve-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1610, accessed 27 August 2020.

106 Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, "Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview," (New York: UN, 2002). Available at: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf, accessed 27 August 2020; Naila Kabeer, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal 1," Gender & Development, Vol. 13, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 13-24; Sandy Ruxton, ed., Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice (Great Britain: Oxfam, 2004).

107 Jacqui True, "Ending Violence Against Women in Asia: International Norm Diffusion and Global Opportunity Structures for Policy Change," United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), 2016. Available at: https://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpPublications)/0AE05C2AE73E998DC1257FD10051838E?OpenDocument, accessed 27 August 2020; Melissa Johnston and Jacqui True, "Misogyny & Violent Extremism: Implications for Preventing Violent Extremism," UN Women 2019. Available at: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/10/misogyny-violent-extremism, accessed 27 August 2020.

the importance of a gender lens.[108] Thus, the essential nature of looking at the whole picture of gender adds robustness to the argument for a comparative approach, and accentuates the need to consider lessons learned from across the spectrum of ideological contexts where possible.

Recent P/CVE programming which has utilised a gender lens is much more transferrable between the different community contexts. Due to academic recognition of the way in which these two extremisms are opposite sides of the same fundamentalist coin, there has been some acknowledgment of their similarities and the ways in which they drive each other in cycles of hate.[109] However there are very limited examples of data showing the gendered nature of Islamist versus XRW group dynamics.[110] Due to nascency of much of this research, the comparative perspective has largely not yet benefited the CT policy conversation. Lessons learned need to be transferred between the work that has been moving forward on gender in relation to transnational P/CVE programming, focused the importance of empowering women and gender equality, and the study of extreme or "toxic" masculinity which is more often happing in relation to the XRW context.

Ultimately, there is also a need to apply a gender lens to all pillars of CT policy.[111] Recently, there has been more focus on the roles that women play in harder CT policy approaches.[112] This type of research needs to be expanded on in order to allow a gender-sensitive perspective to shape military, legal, and protective CT policy as well as the preventative strategies. CT strategy also needs to account for the gendered nature of its impact. This is a lesson learned which could present an opportunity for CT policy to be positively adapted with a gender lens while being more transferrable

across contexts.

Conclusion

This article identifies multiple challenges to transferability of CT policy, due to the many differences between threats. While in some cases lack of efficacy indicates policies and programmes should not be transferred, the entire dismantling and rebuilding of the CT framework is a daunting practical and political consideration. Therefore, where reimagining a new framework presents a roadblock to change, transference of adapted and improved policies and programmes should be considered. Areas where this is possible are important to highlight for governments and international organisations as they move into a time of shifting focus and increasing acknowledgement of the various threat profiles which challenge CT policy and programming.

Focus on Islamist extremism throughout the last two decades, in the context of the GWOT, has shaped national and international level CT strategies to such a degree that it can make transferability very difficult. Legal deterrence and prosecution, intelligence gathering and sharing, and even identification of "at risk" communities can present unique challenges in varying contexts of domestic versus international and majority versus minority populations. These differences have made multiple elements of programming very difficult to adapt, especially in the context of P/CVE programming. Lessons still need to be learned and carried forward on how to interpret community and its importance to VE.

However, there are also similarities between different ideological contexts, and it is important to carry over some of the policy and programming advances when identifying new threats on the CT landscape. Using a

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108 Elizabeth Pearson, "Extremism and Toxic Masculinity: The Man Question Re-Posed," International Affairs, Vol. 95, No. 6 (November 2019), pp. 1251-1270; Marysia Zalewski, "Well, what is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?" International Affairs, Vol. 71, No. 2 (April 1995), pp. 339-356; Linn Egeberg Holmgren and Jeff Hearn, "Framing 'Men in Feminism': Theoretical Locations, Local Contexts and Practical Passings in Men's Gender-Conscious Positionings on Gender Equality and Feminism," Journal of Gender Studies, Vol. 18, No. 4 (December 2009), pp. 403-418.

109 Julia Ebner, The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism, (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017).

110 Pearson, "Gendered Reflections? Extremism in the UK's Radical Right and Al-Muhajiroun Networks," 2020, pp. 1-24; Elizabeth Pearson and Emily Winterbotham, "Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation: A Milieu Approach," The RUSI Journal, Vol. 162, No. 3 (August 2017), pp. 60-72.

111 ICCT, "Gender and Violent Extremism Today", 2020.

112 Joana Cook, A Woman's Place: US Counterterrorism since 9/11, (Oxford University Press, 2020).

gender lens to formulate effective CT policy and implement programming is essential to finding lasting security solutions. This is a structural element of policy and programming which presents an opportunity to carry forward lessons learned. While there are similarities and differences across contextual narratives, constructions of masculine and feminine identities play a significant role in why people engage in all forms of VE. The awareness raised on the importance of gender to security will improve transferability and adaptability of programming going forward.

Currently the attention is on the shift from Islamist to right-wing extremism. However, as issues of climate change and social inequality become more prominent and dominate the concerns of communities, left-wing extremism could become the next big concern on the horizon. Ultimately, myopic focus is dangerous – terrorism and extremism are constantly shifting and presenting different threats. Therefore, CT policy needs to be redesigned in a nuanced way that is adaptable and transferrable to various threat profiles, which means that programming needs to be designed with robust monitoring and evaluation so that data can be gathered, lessons can be learned, and good practice can be carried forward.

About the Author

Jessica White is a Research Fellow in RUSI's Terrorism and Conflict group. Her expertise encompasses counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism methods, as well as gender mainstreaming in program design, implementation and evaluation. She has a decade's worth of experience working on military and preventative counter-terrorism policy and practice, with regional expertise in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. Jessica has recently published on a range of topics, including gender in security, right-wing extremism, and terrorism in the media. She completed her PhD in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham and her a MSc in Conflict Resolution at Kingston University London. Before beginning her PhD, Jessica spent six years as an intelligence and language analyst in the United States Navy.

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