Chapter 13: Gender and Terrorism

Caron E. Gentry

In January 2016, an armed militia group took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County, Oregon. The leader was Ammon Bundy, who believed he was ordained by God to end the federal government's ownership of the mostly rural land in Harney County. He formed the Citizens for Constitutional Freedom, a far-right-wing militia, that cooperated with and was supported by other militias. Even though Bundy and his associates let law enforcement know that they intended to take over the refuge headquarters and did so on January 2nd, law enforcement stayed away from the area until the fifth week of the siege. During the siege, other militias set up a defensive parameter around the headquarters and the police allowed members to leave and enter the refuge at will. It was not until the fourth week of the siege that law enforcement intercepted some of the leaders resulting in a shooting, a car chase, and arrests. Still the siege went on for another two weeks before the remaining members surrendered to the FBI.

None of these men were charged with acts of terrorism—even though they: tried to supplant the US government's federal authority in this area; used the threat of force to achieve their goals; and shot at the police and resisted arrest. Ammon Bundy is a white, middle-class Mormon man who had managed a fleet of cars in Arizona but whose father is a local rancher. Imagine if Bundy was not white, not middle-class, and not a Mormon. What if he was brown, a migrant, and a Muslim believing to be led by God to challenge the authority of the federal government? Would law enforcement still have stayed away? Would the charges have included terrorism?

I use this example to demonstrate that terrorism is a heavily contested term and, therefore, activity. Most terrorism studies scholars would argue that terrorism is a method of violence or the threat of violence that targets non-combatants and is extra-judicial as it operates outside of the confines of war and challenges the state's monopoly on violence in order to achieve political goals (see Richards 2015). Yet, terrorism is a pejorative label (see Hoffman 2006, 23-4) that is applied unequally to non-state actors as opposed to state actors to denote illegitimacy and immorality (see Gentry 2014). While it may not be immediately apparent, this is evidence of the gendered hierarchical system that intersects with other factors, such as race, class, religion, etc.

Therefore, this chapter will look at gender and terrorism by starting at the same place that feminism did in IR: with the women as per Cynthia Enloe (1983). After that it will look at how men, the "normal" terrorists, are gendered. The following section is an intersectional analysis of neo-Orientalism and the War on Terror. The final section looks at the gendered hierarchical international system and how this automatically connotes legitimacy onto states and illegitimacy onto politically violent non-state actors, even if both states and non-states are using the same style of violence. The section concludes with the recent work on queering IR and Terrorism Studies, as sexuality is central to gender hierarchy of the international system and to the study of terrorism.

Where Are the Women?

The study of gender and terrorism in many ways began with the study of women and terrorism. The term terrorism originated during the French Revolution and the Rule of Terror (Hoffman 2006, 3-4). While first associated with state terrorism, terrorism became applied

and an accepted a label for non-state violence in the aftermath of the failed 1848 nationalist movements in Europe (Miller 1995). A detail that is often missed is that women were involved in these groups. For instance, in the Russian populist group, Naradnoya Volya that operated from 1879 to 1894, women were intimately involved in the activity and ideological development it (Carroll 2000; Siljak 2009).

Instead the first time that women's participation is noted and studied is in the Marxist-Leninist movements in the 1960s across the globe. Terrorism Studies only began in earnest in the 1970s mainly amongst a group of scholars in the West (see Ranstorp 2009). Several terrorism studies scholars, including Leonard Weinburg and William Eubank (1987; 1989) and H. H. A. Cooper (1979), looked at women's participation but the study of women or of gender by *feminists* (with the exception of Robin Morgan [1989] and Kathleen Blee [1991] who wrote on women and Ku Klux Klan) was relatively ignored until the early 2000s. Thus, this first section starts with the distinctly feminist question, where are the women (Enloe 1983), and it goes further to ask, how are they represented or gendered?

The first feminist text to look at women's participation in terrorism was second wave feminist Robin Morgan's *The Demon Lover: The Roots of Terrorism* (1989). Morgan's book is a reflection on her participation in the United States' student movement in the 1960s and her brief flirtation with joining the rising Weather Underground. The Weather Underground was a Marxist-Leninist terrorist group that led violent riots in Chicago, robbed post offices along the Eastern seaboard, and bombed banks on Wall Street and even the US Capital Building and the Pentagon (Gentry 2004). The Weather Underground, like other Marxist-Leninist groups worldwide (including West German Red Army Faction, the Italian Red Brigades, France's Action Direct, and the Japanese Red Army), had a high-number of women

members and leaders. When Morgan was a student in New York in the late 1960s, she found the Weather Underground's politics to be high masculinist (prioritizing the male members and leaders, as well as a violent masculinist ideology) and deeply sexualized, which they were (see Gentry 2004). Thus, her reflections on *all terrorist groups and members* is seen through her experiences with the Weather Underground.

Morgan (1987, 27-28) names the *male* terrorist, the Demon Lover, as "the terrorist…[,] the ultimate sexual ideal of a male-centred tradition [,] …is the logical extension of the patriarchal hero…." Morgan surprisingly refers to women as "token" terrorists because women typically exist "outside the body politic, except as victims or tokens." She denies women the capability to make decisions for themselves. The "token" terrorist "is no more a true representative of women than the airbrushed Playboy centrefold." A "'revolutionary' woman" buys into the "male 'radical' line" and "diassociate[s] herself from her womanhood…her reality" (Morgan 1987, 59-60). The token terrorist defends her loyalty and her commitment while in denial to her true self. Thus women who participate in the armed struggle have made the wrong choice, forsaking the more humane path of feminism for male-dominated political violence.

Morgan's perspective, while based upon her own experience, unfortunately contributes to some of the gendered stereotypes that existed in Terrorism Studies. For instance, that women became involved in terrorist organizations because of their boyfriends or husbands (Weinburg and Eubank [1987] although later work moves away from this argument [Weinburg and Eubank (2011)]) or were hypersexualized (see Anonymous 1976). Thus, Laura Sjoberg and myself (2007) began critiquing the narratives that surrounded women's participation in extranormal political violence. As Julia Welland discussed in chapter 12, our

work looked at Palestinian women's participation in suicide martyrdom as well as the Chechen 'Black Widows.' The main purpose of *Mothers, Monsters, Whores*, and its subsequent second edition (Gentry and Sjoberg 2015a), was to produce an intervention in the gendered narratives that claimed women participated in terrorism: out of some biologically determined maternal need (the Mother narrative [see also Gentry 2009]); because she was insane or irrational (the Monster narrative), or because she was either hypersexualized or 'deviantly' sexualized as gay (the Whore narrative [see also Sjoberg and Gentry 2008]). These narratives served to disassociate women from the political nature of terrorism (an element intrinsic to the definition of terrorism [see Schmid and Jongman 2006, 5]) and to complicate their agency regarding the choices they made to be violent.

Therefore, Swati Parashar's (2009; 2011; 2014) work on women's involvement in conservative/religious militant groups in Sri Lanka and Kashmir is incredibly important. Parashar's work looks at the women who have often been overlooked because the previous assumption was that as conservative groups had strict gender roles this limited women to the private and therefore their engagement with violence. Subsequently, women were not 'terrorists'—as they were not the ones pulling the trigger of the gun or planting and setting off a bomb. However, what Parashar found was the unseen labor of women and reached the conclusion that women's participation in political violence should be conceptualized not as a binary between victim or agent, but as individuals who challenge both feminist and mainstream notions of what it means to participate and support political violence.

While it has been accepted that more women participate in Marxist-Leninist groups (because of the equality emphasized in the ideology) or in ethno-nationalist groups (also owed to the slightly different nature of the desired social equality inherent to these primarily anti-

colonialist movements), an intersectional approach requires that feminist scholars ask the other questions (Matsuda 1991): if someone sees gender, they should ask where is race; if they see race, they should ask where is religion; etc. An intersectional approach acknowledges that gender, as a structuring force, does not operate independently but often works in tandem and indistinguishably from other forms of oppression, such as race, class, sexuality, religion, geo-political location, etc. (Runyan and Peterson 2013, 35; Davis 2008), and thus intersectional analysis of gender and terrorism requires us to look at what other factors are involved in the telling of women's participation in terrorism.

Intersectional approaches are needed more than ever as there has been increased media coverage of the women who are joining IS in Syria and acting in support of them in the West. Asking the other question has also led me to look at 'gendered neo-Orientalism' (Gentry 2016a), particularly in the ways that women's participation in al Qaeda are understood (Gentry 2016b). Gendered neo-orientalism is both a departure from Edward Said's (1978) orientalism and from the more recent neo-Orientalism. Said's Orientalism looks at the discursive binary from the 'progressive' and 'modern' West towards the people, places, and aesthetics associated with Arabia, holding these to be anti-progress and 'backwards.' Where Orientalism used to be a way of studying and describing those things associated with the East, Said introduces a post-colonial critique of it. Later work on neo-Orientalism took Orientalism further, arguing that neo-Orientalism is a bias against all of those associated with Islam (even tacit association) (Nayak and Malone 2009) and in the discourse that holds Islam as "atavistic, resistant to progress, brutal, and violent" (Gentry 2016b). This is related to terrorism through the neo-Orientalist assumption that Muslims' allegiance to sharia law means the liberal necessity of a "contract between society and state" cannot be formed (Tuastad 2003, 594-595).

Neo-Orientalism is deeply gendered. It assumes that rationality is a Western trait (as well as a masculine one as will be discussed further below). Within terrorism studies and in the discourse of the War on Terror (see Shepherd 2006; Nayak 2006), Muslim men (again, to be discussed below) were described as hypermasculine by being overly violent. This meant that Muslim women were presented as the victims of Muslim men's hyper-ness. As described by both Welland in Chapter 12 and Cecilia Åse in Chapter 26, Muslim women were scripted to fit the idealized (brown) woman in need of protection from brown men by the (superior) white forces of the US and/or NATO (which is a very Spivak-ian moment of "white men saving brown women from brown men" [see Spivak 1988]). The 'oppression' of Muslim women became the "categorical proof of Islamic terror" upon which the US could project its hypermasculinist protector image against and above the "dehumanized and demonized" Muslim men (Nayak 2006, 49-50).

Given this portrayal of women associated with Islam, it is difficult to makes sense of the women who choose to be violent. When women affiliate themselves with al Qaeda, such as Myrium Degaque, a Belgian woman who self-detonated in Iraq, or Sajida al-Rishawi, a woman whose bomb pack failed to detonate in Amman, Jordan (see Gentry and Sjoberg 2015a, 59), or are affiliated with al Qaeda, like Aafia Siddiqui, a woman who may or may not have fundraised for al Qaeda (Gentry 2011; 2016a), some in the media or academics have to make sense of them within the pre-set discursive arrangements in gendered neo-Orientalism. Thus, Degaque was described as a Catholic schoolgirl gone wrong who married a Muslim man that converted her to radical Islam; al-Rishawi was described similarly as a dominated wife; and Siddiqui has been described as alternatively crazy or also dominated by her husband (see Gentry and Sjoberg 2015a, 82-83; Gentry 2016a).

Furthermore, these problematic gender tropes are showing up in the discussions of the women who join or act for IS. IS differs from al Qaeda in that it has actively recruited women from the West to join it and come to the territory it controls in Syria. Because IS is interested in state-building, this has meant that women do have a dedicated role within this state—to marry and have children in the support of the nation. This role/cast-typing for women in IS is similar to what has been observed of women's ideal role in ethno-nationalist movements: to be the mother of the nation (see Yuval-Davis 1997). Yet, IS has also left the door open for women's participation in the armed struggle—if too many men have been killed, women will be allowed to participate in the struggle (Winter 2015).

Some of the media and other academics have cast women's decision to involve themselves in IS as wholly dependent upon these stereotypes. Some depict the young women who have gone to Syria as "schoolgirls" who "trundle[ed]" across the border (Baker 2014). These young women have been groomed online and therefore tricked or deceived into the struggle (Ferguson 2015). Others describe them as women who desire material possessions and that the promise of top-of-the-line kitchen appliances and marital bliss is enough to make them leave the West and join their future husbands in Syria (Bloom 2015). Yet, again, these narratives do not fully explore why women have become involved (Sjoberg and Gentry 2016). Trying to deflect or at least minimize women's agency and understanding of their choice to engage in political violence is at odds with how men's involvement and political choices are depicted. Instead, the normal terrorist or the terrorist 'norm' is often conflated with men, unless those men happen to 'deviate' from the white, Western ideal.

Masculinities and Terrorism

Since gender is a binary that assumes dichotomous differences between woman/femininity and man/masculinity, this binary also works in how female terrorists are discussed—in opposition to male terrorists. Masculinity is associated with logic, rationality, strength/aggressiveness. Therefore, men are associated with these traits and from there it is assumed that men are naturally inclined to be involved in the public sphere (Pateman 1980; Elshtain 1983). Women are associated with opposing traits, emotion, irrationality or hysteria, and passivity, which excludes them from the public and shutters them in the private sphere (Pateman 1980; Elshtain 1983). These gendered assumptions about the presumed attributes and behaviors of men or women carry into Terrorism Studies.

As mentioned previously, early terrorism studies rarely touched upon women's involvement in terrorism. When they were mentioned, gendered assumptions were often present—that they imitated men, had no understanding of justice or the political rationale behind the violence, or, again, that they were sex crazed (Anonymous 1976; Cooper 1979). Thus, much of the literature on terrorists within terrorism studies was implicitly about men or about a gender-neutral actor. This becomes clear when one looks at 'politicalization/mobilization' and the rational actor model versus the radicalization and postmodern/new terrorism.

When learning about the motivations behind a person's decision to join terrorism—this has historically been termed 'mobilization' or 'politicalization'—scholarship often centers on a belief in the political cause of the group as well as a desire to belong to something, often due to friendship and family ties (Peteet 1991; della Porta 1992). Several studies focus on 'push/pull' factors, or the factors that exist in mainstream society that push a person towards terrorism, like lack of education, low socio-ecnomic status, or low job prospects, and the

elements that are attractive about the terrorist organization (pull factors), such as money, status, and group acceptance (Taylor and Horgan 2006; see alo McCauley and Moskalenko [2008; 2011] for a longer discussion). While push/pull include both masculine (political) and feminine (emotional) reasons for involvement, this rationale begins to break down when conducts an intersectional analysis on the terrorism studies literature on mobilization/politicalization. For instance, the rational actor model that has been adopted is distinctly masculinist and when politicalization is applied to radical Islamist terrorism the term 'radicalization' is used, which relies upon problematic hypermasculinized discourse.

For instance, Sjoberg and Gentry (2009) used the work on suicide terrorism to argue that 'gender-neutrality' is never neutral and makes implicit assumptions based upon the masculine ideal (see also Charlesworth 1998, 381). Robert Pape's (2005) work on suicide terrorism employs a rational actor model and argues that suicide campaigns work because "the terrorists' political cause made more gains after the resort to suicide operations" (Pape 2005, 22). This makes suicide terrorism strategic choice made by persons capable of rational decision-making in the interest of political power and control. Furthermore, suicide terrorists are "psychologically normal," (Pape 2005, 23) and "come from a broad array of lifestyles" (Pape 2005, 17). Again, Pape's work depends upon gender-neutrality but it is couched within distinctly masculine discourse. Thus, Sjoberg and Gentry (2009) critique this study for masculinist bias: strategic logic prioritizes rationality and calculation (masculine-related values) over emotion and care (feminist-related values). Yet, both of these sets of values are important—no-one makes a decision without weighing both (Sjoberg and Gentry 2009; see also Crawford [2000] which is about the role of emotions in the study and practice of IR).

The masculinist norm of strategic, logical (suicide) terrorism loses its neutrality when it is intersected with other factors, in particular, gender and the neo-Orientalist conflation of religion and race. When Pape (2005, 209) considers women, separating them from the suicide terrorist norm, he hypothesizes that as women age, they receive fewer marriage proposals and "acting as a human bomb…is an understood and accepted offering for a woman who will never become a mother" (Pape 2005, 230). Additionally, women become suicide terrorists due to rape, which is "a stigma that destroys their prospects for marriage and rules out procreation as a means of contributing to the community" (Pape 2005, 230; Bloom 2005; Bloom 2011). While this tells the reader more about Pape's thinking on women, it serves to highlight how he accepts masculine traits as the norm for suicide terrorism.

Intersectionality also needs to be applied to the study of religious terrorism. As terrorism studies began to address religious terrorism in the 1980s, the work slowly became imbued with gendered neo-orientalism. The Marxist-Leninist groups' dominance faded in the 1970s and in its place groups with religious ties, such as Hamas in the Palestinian Territories and Hezbollah in Lebanon, grew in prominence. This resulted in a new emphasis on the study of religious terrorism (see Ranstorp 1996). By the 1990s, after the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway system by Aum Shinrikyo, the truck bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVey, a white nationalist with ties to Christian extremist groups, and the first World Trade Center bombing by al Qaeda in New York, terrorism studies experts Walter Laqueur (1996; 2000) and Bruce Hoffman (Lesser, Arquilla, Hoffman, Ronfeldt, and Zanini 1999) began to herald the rise of what they called 'postmodern' or 'new' terrorism. The postmodern terrorism thesis warns that in the coming decades terrorist attacks would be on a massive scale with very high number of fatalities and it would be driven by fundamentalist or

extremist ideology. This theory only seemed to bear out with the events of 9/11, 3/11 (the 2004 attack on Spanish trains), 7/7 (the 2005 attack on London's transit system), and now with the shootings in Paris in 2015 and bombings in Brussels in 2016.

Unfortunately, new terrorism also became conflated with neo-Orientalism, especially in the War on Terror discourse (see Gentry and Sjoberg 2015b). Dag Tuastad (2003) traces how American politicians and academics adopted an increasing neo-Orientalist stance which gradually emerged in the post-9/11 era. The War on Terror discourse created a Manichean vision of the (Christian, white) West fighting an ages-old battle against the (radical) Islamic forces in the Middle East—a modern day crusade (Jarvis 2009; see also Jackson 2005). More particularly, it created a dynamic where the counter-terrorist (the US and allies in the War on Terror) were rational actors facing "Islamic terrorists" who are "'crazy madmen' acting under the influence of mental disorders and deprived of any rational logic related to social, political, or religious conditions" (Hellmich 2008, 113). Men associated with Islam were presented as "Irrational Barbarians" (Shepherd 2006, 25) who threatened, not just submissive Muslim women, but the very civilizational structure of the West as their atavistic violence was pointed at bringing down the US and its allies (see Nayak 2006; Nayak and Malone 2009).

This discursive binary that relies upon racialized hypermasculinity becomes clear if one contrasts the treatment of the men involved in the Oregon refuge takeover. By staying away and trying to negotiate with the militia, instead of immediately engaging them as terrorists, Bundy and his supporters were treated as rational actors who could reason and be trusted not to use force. It would be hard to imagine that this would be the same scenario if the people involved were associated with a group like IS or al Qaeda. This demonstrates that there is a hierarchy dependent upon, not just gender, but race and religion. In fact, this hierarchy

between white men who used the threat of violence and the fear of Muslims as exhibited in the increasing Islamophobic attacks in the West suggests that there is a larger structural hierarchy at play.

Gender Hierarchy and Queering Terrorism

Gender hierarchy is often associated with Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt's work on 'hegemonic masculinity,' where one form of masculinity dominates other masculinities and all femininities. In IR, the dominate form of masculinity is most often associated with white, upper-class, heterosexual, well-educated masculinities (Runyan and Peterson 2013, 6). While hegemonic masculinity is most often associated with individuals, it is also apparent in how organizations and structures work, which leads to situations like 'glass ceilings,' the euphemism for the unseen and unspoken structures that prevent women from advancing in their chosen careers, or 'pipeline leaks,' when these structures lead women to seek employment outside of what had once been their chosen career (Sjoberg [2008] is a great discussion of how this hierarchy exists in the field of International Relations. Gender hierarchical structuring is also seen in the ordering of international relations as both a field of study and how we study it.

In her 2013 book, *Gendering Global Conflict*, Sjoberg argues that the permissive cause of war is not anarchy, as concluded by neo-Realist Kenneth Waltz (1959; 1979), instead it is gender and the gender hierarchy of the international system. The Westphalian international system, with its focus on rational and sovereign states, is masculinist and prioritizes masculine attributes and behavior—power politics and assertive/aggression (see also Tickner 1992). Since states are the primary actor, they are also the prioritized actor. They exist in a

dichotomous relationship with terrorist organizations, as terrorist organizations are deemed illegitimate for violating the Westphalian norm of states as the only legitimate source of violence (see Sjoberg 2009).

Furthermore, Gentry (2014) argues that this binary does not just speak to state versus terrorist legitimacy/illegitimacy, but it also speaks to how morality is parcelled out. States with the monopoly on violence are also seen at the moral actors, making all groups that challenge a state's sovereignty and monopoly on violence illegitimate. Within terrorism studies, it is often acknowledged that terrorism is not just a pejorative, but a label that rests uncomfortably on a slippery slope to demonstrate non-state actor's illegitimacy. Even when terrorism is defined as a method of violence, if a state uses the same style of violence that state is not often labelled a terrorist state (even though the origins of the term began with state violence) (see Jackson 2005; Blakely 2007 and 2009). This can be seen in the conviction of Nelson Mandela for terrorism and sentenced to Robben Island, a former prison for political prisoners, in South Africa; yet, after he was released he went on to become the President of South Africa and a Nobel Peace prize winner in 1993.

In order to further demonstrate the binary of legitimate/moral/state versus illegitimate/immoral/terrorist, Christine Sylvester and Swati Parashar (2009) used the *Mahabharata*, which is ancient epic Sanskrit tale about the Kurukshetra War between the Kaurava and Pandava princes. Sylvester and Parashar draw parallels between how the two sides represented themselves and their enemies with the War on Terror. The warring princes both claimed righteousness and designated the other side as immoral—both then claiming a masculinist right to use force and violence. Furthermore, in this epic battle represented as good versus bad, the individuals who were harmed and suffered from the violence were

obscured and seen as unimportant. This too is the operation of gender, where the agency and experiences of individuals is erased (see Sylvester 1994). Thus, Sylvester and Parashar use the *Mahabharata* as an intervening text to reveal the complexity of the gender hierarchy in the War on Terror and the silences it creates.

As feminism continues to interrogate the depth of intersectionality, sexuality and queer theory play a larger part in feminist International Relations. Queer

> designates 'the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically' (Sedgewick 1993, 8 as cited in Weber 2014, 596).

While Cynthia Weber (2014) argues that queering IR is important for a variety of reasons, including how cis-gender (or how an individual expresses their sexuality corresponds with their birth sex) and heteronormativity works on the lives of queer folk, Weber's third argument is quite important to the study of gender and terrorism. She argues that

> queer international theories explicitly engage … [IR's] governing dichotomy—order versus anarchy. Among the ways the 'order vs. anarchy' dichotomy functions (and, importantly, fails to function) in international relations is by articulating 'order vs. anarchy' as 'normal vs. perverse' and, more specifically, as 'hetero/homo-normative vs. queer' (Weber 2014, 597).

In this statement, Weber efficiently captures the sentiment of this chapter: that the gendered structuring of terrorism studies is used to uphold the 'order versus anarchy' dichotomy in which terrorists are gendered actors and terrorist groups and the act of terrorism are gendered

as immoral and illegitimate. Thus, queering IR aims to dismantle this hierarchical ordering which rests on more than gender, but also sexuality, religion, race, and other structural forces.

Jasbir Puar (2006) has already begun the work of queering terrorism studies by looking at the rise of nationalism within the US after the 9/11 attacks. In her article with Amit Rai (2005), they argue that sexuality is central to terrorism studies and its construction of the 'terrorist,' tying the terrorist with the monsters of the 18th and 19th centuries with their pathologized aggression. In post-9/11 America, al Qaeda and bin Laden were conceived as monsters living within a "shadowy evil" (118), which Puar and Rai (2002, 119) then tie to Michel Foucault's notion of the monster, which is an animal/third-gender human. In the post-9/11 discourse, al Qaeda 'terrorists' were often depicted, as mentioned, as hyper-masculine, -sexual, and – aggressive. In contrast, Puar and Rai (2002, 122) point out that American counterterrorism was a form of civilization and rational knowledge. In a rather impressive summation, Puar and Rai (2002, 124)

> Our contention is that today the knowledge and form of power that is mobilized to analyze, taxonomize, psychologize, and defeat terrorism has a genealogical connection to the West's abnormals, and specifically those premodern monsters that Western civilization had seemed to bury and lay to rest long ago. …The undesirable, the vagrant, the Gypsy, the savage, the Hottentot Venus, or the sexual depravity of the Oriental torrid zone shares a basic kinship with the terrorist-monster.

Therefore, the Western counter-part is able to maintain its rational, heteronormative, civilizational force, which governs the rest of the world. The process of queering this dichotomous and hierarchical structuring is to undo this power dynamic and to make clear just how absurd some of these discursive narratives and imaginings are.

Conclusion

Gender is threaded throughout the study of terrorism. It is seen in how politically violent individuals are conceptualized and understood. Women are often seen as lacking political rationale, which implicates how their agency is understood. When gender intersects with other factors—of particular importance at this time is the neo-Orientalist bias against Islam and all associated with it—women's involvement and personal understanding of the violence they are committed are further challenged. While the 'male terrorist' is presented as the 'normal terrorist,' this is only true if that male terrorist is white and driven by a secular ideology. Once religion and race become factors, as they do again with neo-Orientalism, then the male terrorist is stripped of (masculine) rationality and strategy. This creates a gender hierarchy, where, even in Terrorism Studies, once again white male actors are the ones to have the valued masculine attributes and those that do not possess them are somehow lacking. The gender hierarchy forms and informs the perceived moral legitimacy of states versus non-state terrorist actors, which has only recently begun to be interrogated with queer theory being the latest inroad.