

THE LACK OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN REGIONS THAT HARBOR  
AL QAEDA: HOW THE MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN  
MAY IMPACT TERRORIST PRODUCTION

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
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Art of War Scholars

by  
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| 14. ABSTRACT<br>Al Qaeda has affiliated organizations in almost 30 countries. The most prominent networks reside in Northern Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan. These areas coincide with the most dangerous places to be a woman due to the prevalence of gender-based abuse. Regions that harbor Al Qaeda lack women's rights, and that correlation raises some intriguing questions. Young men growing up in these regions witness violence against mothers, sisters, aunts and friends; this exposure warrants examination. At some point in their lives, young men have to make a choice. Should they perpetuate hate and violence that could lead to terrorism or should they choose a different path? The marginalization of women is one factor that could trigger an increase in terrorist recruitment and production. Conventional means of countering terrorism, for the most part, have proven to be ineffective. Military force, drone strikes and covert operations strain relationships with foreign governments and these activities tend to affect civilian populations negatively. Rather than fight evil men, the international community needs to take a good, hard look at those factors that make men evil. If the United States and its allies can get in a better position to fight the war on terror by empowering women, everyone will benefit. Incorporating mid-range regional leaders to endorse the most peaceful and equitable Islamic messages can create new ideas of inclusivity and relationship norms regarding women. Practical initiatives include educational radio programs, public service announcements, religious conferences, local addresses and public seminars. |                    |                                   |                               |                                                     |                                       |
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## ABSTRACT

THE LACK OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN REGIONS THAT HARBOR AL QAEDA:  
HOW THE MARGINALIZATION OF WOMEN MAY IMPACT TERRORIST  
PRODUCTION, by LCDR Leigh C. Shannon USN, 93 pages.

Al Qaeda has affiliated organizations in almost 30 countries. The most prominent networks reside in Northern Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan. These areas coincide with the most dangerous places to be a woman due to the prevalence of gender-based abuse. Regions that harbor Al Qaeda lack women's rights, and that correlation raises some intriguing questions. Young men growing up in these regions witness violence against mothers, sisters, aunts and friends; this exposure warrants examination. At some point in their lives, young men have to make a choice. Should they perpetuate hate and violence that could lead to terrorism or should they choose a different path? The marginalization of women is one factor that could trigger an increase in terrorist recruitment and production. Conventional means of countering terrorism, for the most part, have proven to be ineffective. Military force, drone strikes and covert operations strain relationships with foreign governments and these activities tend to effect civilian populations negatively. Rather than fight evil men, the international community needs to take a good, hard look at those factors that make men evil. If the United States and its allies can get in a better position to fight the war on terror by empowering women, everyone will benefit. Incorporating mid-range regional leaders to endorse the most peaceful and equitable Islamic messages can create new ideas of inclusivity and relationship norms regarding women. Practical initiatives include educational radio programs, public service announcements, religious conferences, local addresses and public seminars.

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To the Bernhardt clan, I am so thankful we made this move to Kansas. While the ocean is a bit far for my liking, I'll take the proximity of family. Kate, life got so much better once you came to town. Thank you doesn't quite cut it.

Meme, Beau and Erin: thank you for loving my boys the way my mom would have. I miss her every single day and I am so thankful my sons have you extraordinary women in their lives.

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everyday. Liam, your beating heart kept me focused on the finish line. We are quite a team. I love you both with all my heart and soul.

Daddy, we're ready for you to come home...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                            | Page |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....              | iii  |
| ABSTRACT.....                                                              | iv   |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                                                      | v    |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....                                                     | vii  |
| ACRONYMS.....                                                              | viii |
| ILLUSTRATIONS .....                                                        | ix   |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....                                               | 1    |
| Correlation Between the Lack of Women’s Rights and Al Qaeda Networks ..... | 1    |
| Explanation of Terms.....                                                  | 4    |
| Brief History of Al Qaeda.....                                             | 7    |
| Status of Women According to the <i>Qur’an</i> .....                       | 9    |
| CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....                                       | 14   |
| PART 1: Causes of Terrorism and Drivers of Violence .....                  | 14   |
| PART 2: The Marginalization and Dehumanization of Women .....              | 17   |
| Rape .....                                                                 | 17   |
| Domestic Abuse .....                                                       | 24   |
| Child Brides .....                                                         | 28   |
| Honor Killings .....                                                       | 32   |
| Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).....                                       | 33   |
| CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....                                                | 42   |
| CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS .....                                                   | 44   |
| The Generational Effect of Domestic Violence.....                          | 44   |
| Youth Bulge, Fertility Rate, and Education.....                            | 48   |
| The Potential of Improving Women’s’ Civic Voice.....                       | 56   |
| The Chance for Lasting Cultural and Behavioral Change .....                | 60   |
| It May Start at Home .....                                                 | 66   |
| CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....                             | 68   |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....                                                         | 76   |

## ACRONYMS

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| AF/PAK | Afghanistan/Pakistan               |
| AIDS   | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| CWP    | Coalition of Women for Peace       |
| FGM    | Female Genital Mutilation          |
| HIV    | Human Immunodeficiency Virus       |
| MENA   | Middle East/North Africa           |
| UAE    | United Arab Emirates               |
| UN     | United Nations                     |
| WHO    | World Health Organization          |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|                                                                 | Page |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Figure 1. Global Women’s Physical Security .....                | 2    |
| Figure 2. Countries Where Al Qaeda and Affiliates Operate ..... | 3    |
| Figure 3. Prevalence of FGM.....                                | 36   |
| Figure 4. 2013 Youth Bulge .....                                | 50   |
| Figure 5. 2010 Regional Terrorist Attacks .....                 | 52   |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Correlation Between the Lack of Women's Rights and Al Qaeda Networks

Mao Zedong once said, “Women hold up half the sky.”<sup>1</sup> The insinuation is not that women merely exist and breathe and therefore hold up their piece of the sky; but as sentient individuals, women are as capable and worthwhile as the other gender sharing the planet. Unfortunately, there are regions on the globe that have never viewed women in this regard. These areas have long-standing traditions, deep ingrained culture, and religious beliefs that allow the perpetuation of violence against women. Figure 1 shows the worldwide status of women's physical security. The graphic depicts the areas where women are exposed to the most egregious of human rights violations: physical assault, murder, rape and domestic violence. Of note, the regions depicted in dark green are locations where women are most susceptible to violence.<sup>2</sup> Northern Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan are the worst places to be a woman due to the distinct lack of human rights. There is another common theme amongst these geographic regions.

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<sup>1</sup> *The International Herald Tribune*, “Holding Up Half the Sky,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2012, accessed January 25, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/07/world/asia/holding-up-half-the-sky.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/07/world/asia/holding-up-half-the-sky.html?_r=0).

<sup>2</sup> Valerie M Hudson, “The Worst Places To Be A Woman,” *Foreign Policy*, April 24, 2012, accessed January 26, 2014, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/the\\_worst\\_places\\_to\\_be\\_a\\_woman](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/the_worst_places_to_be_a_woman).

The aforementioned areas are regions that harbor terrorist networks, specifically Al Qaeda.<sup>3</sup>

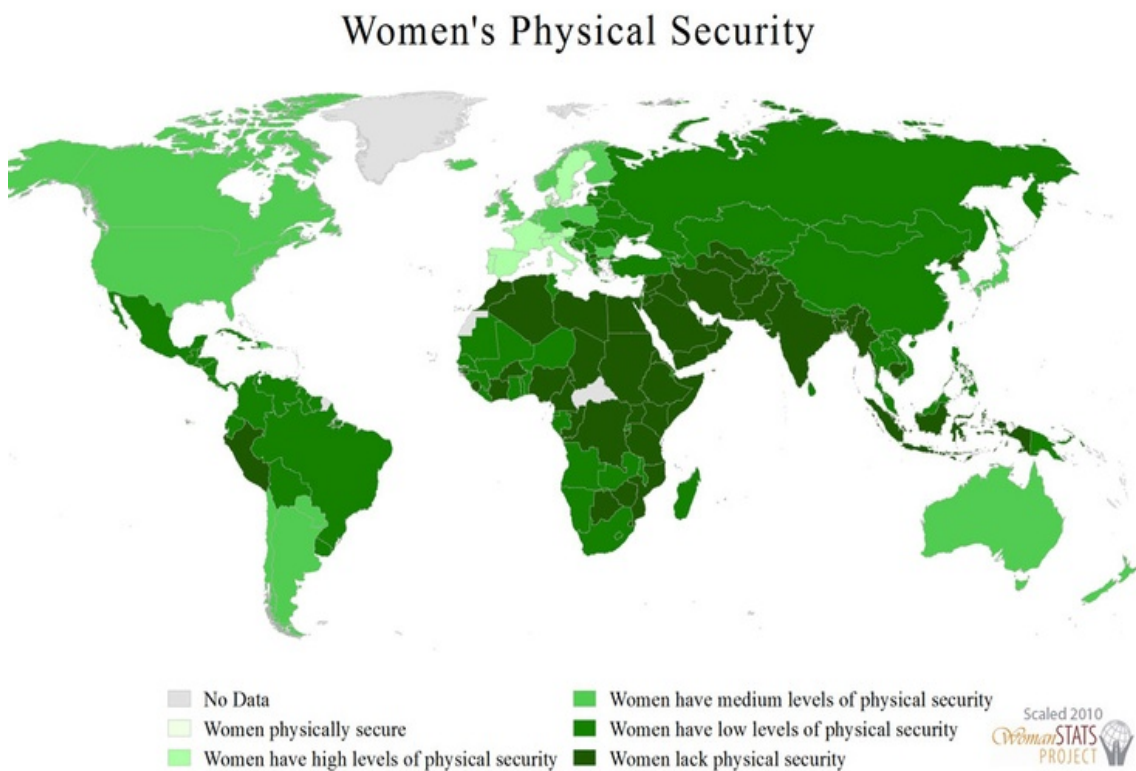


Figure 1. Global Women's Physical Security

Source: Valerie M. Hudson, "The Worst Places To Be A Woman," *Foreign Policy*, April 24, 2012, accessed January 26, 2014, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/the\\_worst\\_places\\_to\\_be\\_a\\_woman](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/24/the_worst_places_to_be_a_woman).

<sup>3</sup> Alan McLean and Archie Tse, “Map of Countries where Al Qaeda and Its Affiliates Operate,” *New York Times*, May 12, 2011, accessed January 26, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/12/world/12aqmap.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/12/world/12aqmap.html?_r=0).



Figure 2. Countries Where Al Qaeda and Affiliates Operate

*Source:* Alan McLean and Archie Tse, “Map of Countries where Al Qaeda and Its Affiliates Operate,” *New York Times*, May 12, 2011, accessed January 26, 2014, [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/12/world/12aqmap.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/12/world/12aqmap.html?_r=0).

While Al Qaeda has affiliated organizations in almost 30 countries, the most prominent networks reside in Northern Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Al Qaeda in Iraq and Al Qaeda (Afghanistan and Pakistan) are the organizational names given to the major respective geographic regions of operation.<sup>4</sup> Again, these areas coincide with the most dangerous places to be a woman due to the prevalence of gender-based abuse. Regions that harbor Al Qaeda lack women’s rights, and that correlation raises some intriguing questions.

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<sup>4</sup> The National Counterterrorism Center, “Al Qa’ida,” January 2014, accessed April 14, 2014, [http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al\\_qaida.html](http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/al_qaida.html).

Young men growing up in these regions witness violence against mothers, sisters, aunts and friends; this exposure warrants examination. At some point in their lives, these young men have to make a choice. Should they perpetuate hate and violence that could lead to terrorism or should they choose a different path? The marginalization of women is one factor that could trigger an increase in terrorist recruitment and production. If this is so, it is most prudent for the international community to attempt progressive change on this critical social issue. Conventional means of countering terrorism, for the most part, have proven to be ineffective. Military force, drone strikes and covert operations strain relationships with foreign governments and these activities tend to effect civilian populations negatively.<sup>5</sup> Rather than fight evil men, the international community needs to take a good, hard look at those factors that make men evil. If the United States and its allies can get in a better position to fight the war on terror by empowering women, everyone will benefit.

### Explanation of Terms

Chapter 1, Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* defines the purpose of the UN. There are four primary purposes and principles:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

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<sup>5</sup> Daniel P. Aldrich, "Mightier than the Sword: Social Science and Development in Countering Violent Extremism," U.S. Agency for International Development, March 23, 2012, accessed March 21, 2014, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/DanielPAldrich.pdf>.

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and

To be a center (United Nations 2014) for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.<sup>6</sup>

Human rights are delineated within the 30 articles of the United Nations (UN)

“The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”<sup>7</sup> The declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, aims to guarantee the inalienable human rights of every individual, everywhere. The right to security of person, education, equality before the law, freedom of movement within the borders of each state, consent to marriage, equal rights within marriage, and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment are several among the myriad of human rights. Gender-based abuse is a sub-category of human rights violations pertaining to women. The UN defines gender-based abuse as, “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 2014, accessed April 26, 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” 2014, accessed April 26, 2014, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, “Human Rights, Women and Violence,” February 1996, accessed April 14, 2014, <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772e.htm>.

This thesis covers an extensive geographic area and the complexity of each individual nation is understood. However, Al Qaeda is a sophisticated, global terrorist network; it is not confined by national geography. Neither are atrocities against women. Therefore, this thesis will not break down women's issues by country. Instead, it will scrutinize major concerns common to the regions of Al Qaeda operations backed up by quantitative data in the collective countries of occurrence.

The U.S. Secretary of State has designated Al Qaeda as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Although terrorism has been a tactic used for thousands of years, terrorism has defied a simple definition. *Webster's Dictionary* offers the broadest definition: "the use of violent acts to frighten the people in an area as a way of trying to achieve a political goal."<sup>9</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency defines terrorism more specifically as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."<sup>10</sup> Both definitions stress political motivation as a critical characteristic. However, the Central Intelligence Agency designates noncombatants as a limiting factor. This is an important distinction since wartime operations can convolute the definition of terrorism. Therefore, this paper assumes that the Central Intelligence Agency's inclusion of noncombatants is most appropriate.

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<sup>9</sup> Merriam-Webster, "Terrorism," Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2014, accessed January 29, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/terrorism>.

<sup>10</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Terrorism FAQs," April 19, 2013, accessed January 29, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/cia-the-war-on-terrorism/terrorism-faqs.html>.

Sharia Law, derived from the *Qur'an*, guides all aspects of Muslim life including daily routines, familial and religious obligations, and financial dealings.<sup>11</sup> “Sharia’s influence on both personal status law and criminal law is highly controversial. Some interpretations are used to justify cruel punishments such as amputation and stoning, as well as unequal treatment of women in inheritance, dress and independence.”<sup>12</sup> Countries within the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) and Afghanistan/Pakistan (AF/PAK) regions that govern purely under Sharia Law are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Other neighboring Muslim majority nations use a hybrid legal system combining French, British or Egyptian legal codes with Sharia Law.<sup>13</sup>

#### Brief History of Al Qaeda

Al Qaeda began to form after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970’s. It was not until the September 11, 2001 attacks, that Al Qaeda became a household name. Michael Elliot, a *TIME* magazine correspondent, composed a concise history of Al Qaeda two months after the twin tower attacks:

Al-Qaeda had its origins in the long war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. After Soviet troops invaded the country in 1979, Muslims flocked to join the local mujahedin in fighting them. In Peshawar, Pakistan, which acted as

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<sup>11</sup> Toni Johnson and Vriens Lauren, “Islam: Governing Under Sharia,” Council on Foreign Relations, January 9, 2013, accessed May 8, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/religion/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Regional Overview for the Middle East and North Africa: MENA Gender Equality Profile Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: United Nations Children’s Fund, 2011); United Nations, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

the effective headquarters of the resistance, a group whose spiritual leader was a Palestinian academic called Abdallah Azzam established a service organization to provide logistics and religious instruction to the fighters. The operation came to be known as al-Qaeda al-Sulbah--the "solid base." Much of its financing came from bin Laden, an acolyte of Azzam's who was one of the many heirs to a huge Saudi fortune derived from a family construction business. Also in Peshawar was Ayman Al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian doctor who had been a constant figure in the bewildering mosaic of radical Islamic groups since the late 1970s. Al-Zawahiri, who acted primarily as a physician in Peshawar, led a group usually called Al Jihad; by 1998, his organization was effectively merged into al-Qaeda.

In 1989, while on his way with his two sons to Friday prayers in Peshawar, Azzam was killed by a massive explosion. His killers have never been identified; Azzam had many enemies. But by the time of his death, the group around al-Qaeda were debating what to do with the skills and resources that they had acquired. The decision was taken to keep the organization intact and use it to fight for a purer form of Islam. The initial target was not the U.S. but the governments of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which al-Qaeda claimed were corrupt and too beholden to the U.S. It was only after the Gulf War, by which time bin Laden had moved his operations to Sudan (he would later be forced to shift back to Afghanistan), that he started to target Americans. To all but insiders, he first became notorious in 1998, when al-Qaeda operatives exploded truck bombs at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 12 Americans and hundreds of locals. Since then there has been a steady drumbeat of attacks linked to al-Qaeda--some successful, some not--on American targets and those of U.S. allies around the world.<sup>14</sup>

The fight, or jihad, for a purer form of Islam from Cairo to Riyadh is the basis of Al Qaeda's ideology.<sup>15</sup> According to the *Qur'an*, Islam's holy book, the concept of jihad has multiple meanings. "*Jihad* is commonly translated as 'fighting', although in certain situations it is more appropriate to render it as 'struggle'."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Elliott, "Hate Club," *TIME*, November 12, 2001, accessed February 9, 2014, <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,1001168,00.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict Between America and Al-Qaeda* (New York: Free Press, 2011), xvi.

<sup>16</sup> M.A.S Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, trans. M.A.S Abdel Haleem (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), xxxi.

Inner jihad is the struggle within oneself to avoid sinful behavior and live according to the principles of the Qur'an . . . Outer jihad, on the other hand, refers to the defense of the Muslim community under attack. This can be a "soft defense," such as through verbal or written debate or persuasion (jihad of the tongue, or jihad of the pen), or "hard defense" (also known as "jihad of the sword"), such as through physical or military defense of a community.<sup>17</sup>

The standard interpretation of jihad is understood as religiously sanctioned warfare. Although the word was not meant to have purely violent connotations, the evolution of the definition is not surprising. Religiously sanctioned warfare is a constant theme in the *Qur'an*.<sup>18</sup> The Qur'anic verse 9:5 affirms, "Wherever you encounter idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they repent, maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful."<sup>19</sup> Bin Laden used this quote in his 1996 declaration of war against the United States. He used it again, seven years later, at the beginning of the Iraq war.<sup>20</sup> This verse legitimizes Al-Qaeda's religious justification for both war and terrorism.

#### Status of Women According to the *Qur'an*

The *Qur'an* undoubtedly contains gender-biased undertones. Further misinterpretations by Islamic extremists serve as justification for their misogynistic perspectives. When one feels as if Allah is on his side, how can he be wrong? The

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<sup>17</sup> Oxford Bibliographies, "Jihad," 2014, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0045.xml>.

<sup>18</sup> Bergen, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Haleem, 116.

<sup>20</sup> Bergen, 29.

following *Qur'an* excerpts reveal fundamental religious beliefs that suggest the marginalization of women by UN standards:<sup>21</sup>

“Divorced women have rights similar to their obligations, according to what is fair, and ex-husbands have a degree of right over them.” (2:228)<sup>22</sup> Unmistakably, this passage states that women’s rights during divorce proceedings are not equal to those of men. A degree of right over them implies men are in an advantageous position compared to women.

“Call in two men as witnesses. If two men are not there, then call one man and two women.” (2:282)<sup>23</sup> This implies that a woman’s testimony is only half as credible as a man’s is. The context goes on to say that women can work together in case they forget the details. This recommendation suggests that women can be absent-minded and require collaboration.

“Concerning your children, God commands you that a son should have the equivalent share of two daughters.” (4:11)<sup>24</sup> Inheritance is the subject matter for this verse. Clearly, it states that a daughter should inherit only half of a son’s share.

“If any of your women commit a lewd act, call four witnesses from among you, then, testify to their guilt, keep the woman at home until death comes to them or until God shows them another way.” (4:15)<sup>25</sup> The *Qur'an* singles out women as recipients for

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<sup>21</sup> United Nations, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

<sup>22</sup> Haleem, 25-66.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

this harsh punishment. There is no equivalent verse for a man accused of committing lewd acts. This double standard insinuates that women are the insatiable gender. The crime of *zina* (extramarital sex) blurs the definition of rape and is further examined in chapter 2. The requirement of four witnesses to prove non-consensual sex keeps rape a highly underreported offense.<sup>26</sup>

“If you fear high-handedness from your wives, remind them of the teachings of God, then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them.” (4:34)<sup>27</sup> Haleem’s *Qur’an* translation of this verse using the word hit is much milder than several other versions. Other translations use the verbiage such as scourge, strike, beat or lightly beat. Spousal abuse exists in all cultures. However, according to the *Qur’an*, it is acceptable to hit one’s wife under certain circumstances.

“If you are in doubt, the period of waiting will be three months for those women who have ceased menstruating and for those who have not yet menstruated; the waiting period of those who are pregnant will be until they deliver their burden.” (65:4)<sup>28</sup> This excerpt is disturbing as it mentions, those who have not yet menstruated. The subjects are child brides that are awaiting divorce. It is common for a man in his forties to marry a girl as young as 10. Iraq is currently legislating the “Jaafari Personal Status Law.” The law legalizes nine-year-old girls to be married and legalizes marital rape by stating, “a

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<sup>26</sup> Oxford Islamic Studies Online, “Zina,” Oxford University Press, 2014; Julia Feys, “Culture, Sharia Law and Rape” (Thesis, United States Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2011), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Haleem, 25-66.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

husband is entitled to have sex with his wife regardless of her consent.”<sup>29</sup> The new personal status law also prevents women from leaving the house without permission from their husbands.

“Your wives are like your fields, so go into your fields whichever way you like.” (2:223)<sup>30</sup> Interpretations of this quote verify the acceptance that Islamic husbands have unrestricted sexual access to their wives. The contractual agreement between man and wife results in rape being an irrelevant argument.

“If you fear that you will not deal justly with orphan girls, you may marry whichever other women seem good to you, two or three or four. If you fear you cannot be equitable, then marry only one, or your slaves.” (4:3)<sup>31</sup> The *Qur’an* advocates a man marrying up to four wives. Polygamy is a generally accepted practice within Islamic regions due to divine sanction.

Mona Eltahawy communicated an insider perspective from a Muslim woman’s viewpoint. “You--the outside world--will be told that it’s our ‘culture’ and ‘religion’ to do X, Y, or Z to women. Understand that whoever deemed it as such was never a woman.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Iraq: Don’t Legalize Marriage for 9-Year-Olds,” March 12, 2014, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/11/iraq-don-t-legalize-marriage-9-year-olds>.

<sup>30</sup> Haleem, 25-66.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Mona Eltahawy, “Why Do They Hate Us? The real war on women is on the Middle East,” *Foreign Policy*, April 23, 2012, accessed February 27, 2014, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/why\\_do\\_they\\_hate\\_us](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/23/why_do_they_hate_us).

The following chapter illustrates the modern day conditions for women of the MENA and AF/PAK regions, and how the environment may impact a young man's path towards terrorism. Throughout this thesis, evidence shows that systemic problems arise from states that are unresponsive to women's needs. The inability for women to seek recourse is what separates these regions from others and abets the maltreatment of women. The abovementioned quote implies that now is not the time for cultural relativism. To succumb to the notion that this is just the way things are, means the current situation will never see progress for human and women's rights. The international community could also neglect an opportunity to contain a trigger towards terrorism. International intervention has brought lasting cultural change to nations in the past, and certainly has the capacity to do so in the future. Our only limitation is the magnitude with which we are prepared to project our vision and hope for affecting change within these regions.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### PART 1: Causes of Terrorism and Drivers of Violence

Although no exact terrorist prototype exists, causal factors of terrorism and drivers of violent extremism are known. Reviews of radicalization and mobilization to violence utilizing neurobiological and cognitive science studies have also determined contributing factors. Endogenous and exogenous factors are categorically divided. Endogenous factors refer to “a person’s inherent characteristics that cannot easily be changed including genetics, culture, environment, values and emotions. Exogenous factors are external influences on a person that are not inherent to one’s personality, culture or genetics.”<sup>33</sup> Exogenous influences include exposure to dehumanization, radical social networks, perceived grievances and traumatic life experiences. Endogenous factors are often necessary, but not sufficient, to cause a person to take violent action. Exogenous influences typically act as a trigger causing a predisposed person to take up violent action.<sup>34</sup>

One of the most influential exogenous factors driving terrorism, pertaining to the treatment of women in the MENA and AF/PAK regions, is the exposure to dehumanization. “Dehumanization is a mental process that rationalizes the use of violent

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<sup>33</sup> Sarah Canna, Carley St. Clair, and Abigail Chapman, *Strategic Multilayer Assessment, Neurobiological & Cognitive Science Insights on Radicalization and Mobilization to Violence: A Review* (Washington, DC: National Security Institute, June 7, 2012), accessed March 29, 2014, [http://mappingideas.sdsu.edu/publications/Theories%20of%20Radicalization\\_Gupta.pdf](http://mappingideas.sdsu.edu/publications/Theories%20of%20Radicalization_Gupta.pdf), 6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

or degrading acts . . . not typically reserved for people against an individual or group. It reduces the individual's worth to the level of animals or machines. Dehumanized subjects are perceived as not worthy of human emotions such as empathy, reinforcing their degraded status. This process of dehumanization of the other is an important step in an individual's radicalization: it allows a person to rationalize committing violence against others."<sup>35</sup> The latter portion of this chapter addresses ways a society dehumanizes women as well as the exposure of dehumanization to youth.

Social networks are also an exogenous driver to violence and terrorism. A social network is an individual's network of friends, colleagues, and other personal contacts.

These networks have been shown to be a critical component of a person's radicalization process: people who spend time together influence each other . . . With regard to AQAP, recent examinations of fighters have shown that many are from the same tribe, suggesting that friends and family are the main influence on an individual.<sup>36</sup>

Considering "friends and family surrounding the individual have the most influence on their thoughts and actions,"<sup>37</sup> mothers can influence and nurture their children in ways to avoid joining terrorist networks.

The status of women is especially important. Although women are sometimes recruited as suicide bombers, in general they seldom support terrorism. Cross-national studies show that the higher women's relative educational status and political participation, the less frequent are political violence and instability. Three mechanisms may be at work: (1) educated and empowered women may socialize youth in ways that inhibit their susceptibility to recruitment to terrorism;

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<sup>35</sup> Canna et al., 7.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 31; Janice Adelman and Abigail Chapman, eds., *Influencing Violent Extremist Organizations Pilot Effort: Focus on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)* (Washington, DC: Strategic Multilayer Assessment Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, 2011), 52.

<sup>37</sup> Canna et al., 32.

(2) they also help strengthen civil society organizations that provide alternatives to political militancy; and (3) in the longer run, women's education contributes to declining birth rates, leading to a reduction in the problems associated with large youth populations.<sup>38</sup>

The status of women is further examined in the latter part of this chapter and in chapter 4—specifically, the lack of women's empowerment, civic voice, and education. The aforementioned importance of the status of women from the Club de Madrid, the world's largest forum of former democratic presidents and prime ministers, suggests that women play a pivotal role in the determination of their children's choice of social network.

A closely related concern to social networks is an individual's innate desire to be a part of a group. Social identity is an endogenous factor that allows a person to understand oneself, others, and the world around them.<sup>39</sup> As identity implies an inherent character trait, "people join groups to develop their sense of identity, significance, and purpose. Organizations that speak to an individual's sense of identity and group belongingness help shape subsequent loyalty to the group."<sup>40</sup>

Al Qaeda has more than enough manpower to draw on, now and in the future. Rather chillingly, it also demonstrates the very high degree of selectivity Al Qaeda depends on to screen out all but the most committed, most trustworthy, and most capable operatives. Islamists from all over the world regard it as the very highest honor to be accepted as a full Al Qaeda member; in fact they almost fight to get in, such is the high regard in which it is held. Even if 1,000 Al Qaeda

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<sup>38</sup> Club de Madrid, *Addressing the Causes of Terrorism, The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism*, vol. 1, The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, 8-11 March, 2005, Madrid, Safe Democracy Foundation, accessed February 27, 2014, <http://safe-democracy.org/docs/CdM-Series-on-Terrorism-Vol-1.pdf>, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Canna et al., 33.

<sup>40</sup> Adelman and Chapman, 13-15.

members were killed or captured . . . there are, even by very conservative estimates, still several thousand of trained Islamic terrorists or would-be terrorists at large.<sup>41</sup>

Individuals desire to belong to groups and develop satisfaction by adhering to their precise rules and unspoken norms. People who identify strongly with a group and have strong biases against out-groups are more likely to behave aggressively towards others in an effort to protect their own group and sense of identity.<sup>42</sup> Family and friends can influence the unique character trait of one's social identity. In sum, empowered women may socialize youth in ways that inhibit their susceptibility to recruitment to terrorism.

## PART 2: The Marginalization and Dehumanization of Women

### Rape

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 60 percent of national rapes go unreported, making rape one of the most under reported crimes.<sup>43</sup> This statistic is applicable to the United States, a country with implicit women's rights and fair legislation in the adjudication of rape. The disturbing nature of this crime, along with the stigma of victimization and the prosecution process, contributes to the reluctance to report.<sup>44</sup> In the MENA and the AF/PAK regions, victims face insurmountable odds when seeking punishment for their assaulters. Women in these regions fight to prove their own

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<sup>41</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2003), 11.

<sup>42</sup> Canna et al., 6-7.

<sup>43</sup> Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, "Reporting Rates," 2012, accessed May 4, 2014, <http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>.

<sup>44</sup> Feys, "Culture, Sharia Law and Rape," 1.

innocence rather than attempt to see their assailants imprisoned. In Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, women who press rape charges risk being prosecuted for extramarital relations.<sup>45</sup>

Women who report sexual abuse or rape, whether perpetrated by an employer or otherwise, are unlikely to find a sympathetic hearing with judicial authorities. Instead of protection from the perpetrator, women may find themselves accused of illicit sex. Usually the burden to prove rape charges is on the woman victim, who must produce all required witnesses. The only basis for a rape conviction is a confession or the evidence of four witnesses.<sup>46</sup>

The threat of extreme consequences after coming forward with a rape charge undermines the ability to track statistics. The reluctance to admit or report the crime results in offenders going unpunished. Along with the fear of accusation involving illicit sex or adultery, is the punishment for such “crimes” is imprisonment or death by public stoning.<sup>47</sup> Afghanistan, Algeria and Saudi Arabia have conducted stonings as recently as the late 20th century.<sup>48</sup> In May of 2014, a three-month pregnant Pakistani woman was publically stoned to death with bricks. Her relatives were furious that she married against their wishes. Her father and two brothers participated in the stoning while the police and public stood by idly.<sup>49</sup> Public executions and the subsequent exposure to dehumanization

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<sup>45</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Regional Overview for the Middle East and North Africa*; United Nations, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sameena Nazir and Leigh Tomppert, *Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 264-265.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>48</sup> Oxford Islamic Studies Online, “Zina.”

<sup>49</sup> Jillani Shahzeb, “Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif orders action on stoning,” *BBC News*, May 29, 2014, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27622232>.

attract crowds of all ages. As mentioned earlier in part 1, exposure to this sort of violence can be an exogenous trigger leading to the path of terrorism.

Aside from the cruel consequence of imprisonment following rape, most prison conditions are very poor. Health conditions are typically unsatisfactory and prisoners are subject to extrajudicial torture.<sup>50</sup> The Yemeni constitution bans prison extrajudicial torture; however, prisoner mistreatment is still common.

Yemeni prison officials do not release women who have completed their sentences unless they can be released into the custody of a male family member. Partly due to the shame and social stigma associated with women in prison, many women who have served their time continue to wait for male family members to appear and authorize their release. Prison guards have been known to both impregnate women during their incarceration and marry off female inmates to men who bribe the guards. While the government began to take some measures a few years ago to remedy women's situations in prison, the state has mostly turned a blind eye to their plight. In addition to Yemenis, a number of women inmates from neighboring African countries languish in prisons past the expiration of their sentences.<sup>51</sup>

Rather than deal with the stigma attached to rape, women are forced to marry their attackers in order to preserve their honor. Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates all have similar laws and norms when it comes to dropping rape charges after a rapist marries his victim.<sup>52</sup> In Lebanon, penal code Article 522 declares that, "the state will not prosecute a rapist and will nullify his conviction if the rapist marries his victim."<sup>53</sup> Libya has strikingly similar legislation.

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<sup>50</sup> Shahzeb, 343.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Shahzeb, 343; United Nations Children's Fund, *Regional Overview for the Middle East and North Africa*; United Nations, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," 3.

<sup>53</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 150.

Rape that occurs outside the home is generally not reported or discussed. Problems are sorted within the family, as most families want to conceal any violation of “honor.” According to Libyan legislation, if a man rapes a woman, then he is expected to marry his victim to “save her honor.” The woman is supposed to agree to the marriage, but in reality, under social pressures, the victim has no option but to marry. In view of the shame associated with matters of violence, and especially sexual violence, there is no support system to assist the victims.<sup>54</sup>

In Egypt, current statistics on the prevalence on rape are rare. Daily newspapers show that rape is widespread; however, most cases are not documented or prosecuted. Recent laws abolishing the forgiveness of rapists that marry their victims are in effect. “However, the new law is often undermined by the police, who continue to encourage the marriage of a woman and her rapist and the dropping of charges against the man.”<sup>55</sup> With this kind of corruption in the legal system, the best intentions of protecting women cannot be achieved.

The MENA and AF/PAK regions’ concept of rape paired with the Sharia Law system, make the process of justice in a rape case dangerous and ineffective. These regions erroneously equate rape with consensual sex.<sup>56</sup> Even the *Qur’an* makes no distinction between the two. Several *Qur’an* verses mention sex with slave girls and war captives. These relations are not quantified as rape. Consent of the women is assumed and hence granted due to her status as a slave.

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<sup>54</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 172.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>56</sup> Feys, “Culture, Sharia Law and Rape,” 3.

The intent of Sharia Law is to provide a God-sanctioned legal system that will uphold society's moral values.<sup>57</sup> According to Sharia Law, the crime of *zina* is "Unlawful sexual intercourse; fornication or adultery. A criminal offense in Islamic law for which the *Qur'an* prescribes three possible punishments: stoning to death, whipping, or exile. Zina must be established by the testimony of four adult male witnesses of established character and integrity."<sup>58</sup> The crime of *qadhif* is "Slander, defamation, or accusation. To accuse someone without proof is a serious offense in Islam."<sup>59</sup> The *Qur'an* addresses both crimes. A woman's insurmountable odds of justice lie in the fact that four witnesses or a rapist's confession is required as proof of rape. Otherwise, she will be found guilty of the crimes of *zina* or *qadhif*. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch organizations estimate over the past 15 years, *zina* crimes account for 33 to 79 percent of women in Pakistani prisons.<sup>60</sup> Women are incarcerated for several years prior to their court date, and typically released following trial.<sup>61</sup> Admitting that one is a victim of rape is synonymous with confessing to fornication out of wedlock. Likewise, the accusation of

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<sup>57</sup> Feys, "Culture, Sharia Law and Rape," 4.

<sup>58</sup> Oxford Islamic Studies Online, "Zina."

<sup>59</sup> Oxford Islamic Studies Online, "Qadhif," Oxford University Press, 2014, accessed May 7, 2014, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1903>.

<sup>60</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Prison Bound, The Denial of Juvenile Justice in Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, November 1999), accessed May 7, 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/pakistan2/Pakistan-01.htm>; Amnesty International, "Pakistan: No progress on women's rights," 2006, accessed May 6, 2014, <http://web.archive.org/web/20061104075745/http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENG.ASA330131998?open&of=ENG-PAK>.

<sup>61</sup> Feys, "Culture, Sharia Law and Rape," 6.

rape without the requisite four witnesses, or a confession, brings forth an unsubstantiated allegation. Both offenses warrant imprisonment. Therefore, most women remain silent.

The UN collected nine years worth of data in 103 countries concerning the number of rapes reported per 100,000 citizens.<sup>62</sup> Of the countries examined, the four reporting the least amount of rapes are within the MENA region. Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen have staggeringly low historic reporting rates. Ranging from 0.1-0.4 annual cases per 100,000 citizens, their statistics reside at the very bottom of the reporting index. The top four countries, within the American and European regions, ranged from 98-389 cases per 100,000 individuals. These statistics illustrate one of two issues: either rape is not occurring in the MENA region, or there is a systemic reporting problem.

Non-reporting rates of rape (including marital rape) in the MENA region are estimated at 92.5 percent.<sup>63</sup> In one 2007 example, a woman received six months in prison along with 200 lashes after being convicted of adultery.<sup>64</sup> Seven men had gang raped her 14 times. The men received prison sentences ranging from one to five years. In this instance, the woman was found to be the cause of rape, not a victim.

While Nigeria is not technically a part of the MENA region, it is a bordering nation and a country of Al Qaeda affiliation. A 2005 report from a Nigerian treatment

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<sup>62</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, "Total sexual violence at the national level, number of police-recorded offences," United Nations, 2011, accessed March 29, 2014, [www.unodc.org/.../statistics/crime/CTS\\_Sexual\\_violence.xls](http://www.unodc.org/.../statistics/crime/CTS_Sexual_violence.xls).

<sup>63</sup> Sam Brotman, Emma Katz, Jessie Karnes, Winter West, Anne Irvine, and Diana Daibes, Middle East and North Africa Report, *Implementing CEDAW in North Africa and the Middle East: Roadblocks to Victory*, University of Oregon, March 3, 2008, accessed June 4, 2014, [http://pages.uoregon.edu/aweiss/intl421\\_521/CEDAW\\_Report\\_MENAf.pdf](http://pages.uoregon.edu/aweiss/intl421_521/CEDAW_Report_MENAf.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 18.

center reported that 15 percent of female patients requiring treatment for sexually transmitted infections were under the age of five. An additional six percent were between the ages of six and 15.<sup>65</sup> In April of 2014, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from their school in the town of Chibok. Boko Haram, an al Qaeda affiliate, plans to traffic and sell these girls into sex slavery. Ultimately, the girls will be married and converted to Islam. Boko Haram believes in strict Islamic education; for boys only.<sup>66</sup> These statistics illustrate the degree to which women continue to be marginalized and the impunity with which violent men are allowed to operate.

Rape is not exclusively about sex. The act is about the expression of power and control.<sup>67</sup> Rape “is not acting out sexual desires aggressively; it is acting out aggressive desires sexually.”<sup>68</sup> As documented above, these acted upon aggressive desires typically go unpunished. Aggressive and violent individuals continue to mingle at large amongst society, without retribution.

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<sup>65</sup> Marie Vlachova and Lea BIASON, eds., *Women in an Insecure World, Violence against Women Facts, Figures, and Analysis* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, September 2005), United Nations Children’s Fund, accessed May 10, 2014, [http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/women\\_insecure\\_world.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/women_insecure_world.pdf), 9.

<sup>66</sup> Will Ross, “Nigeria schools walk line between Islamic and Western traditions,” *BBC News*, June 1, 2014, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27658382>.

<sup>67</sup> Feys, “Culture, Sharia Law and Rape,” 1.

<sup>68</sup> Department of Defense, Fleet and Family Support Program, *SAVI Victim Advocate Trainee Manual* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 3.

## Domestic Abuse

Except for Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, no country in the MENA or the AF/PAK regions has a specific law against domestic violence or marital rape. Domestic abuse is common; however, women are reluctant to seek outside help. In an Egyptian domestic violence study conducted between 2002 and 2003, 67 percent of women in urban areas stated they had been involved in some form of abuse.<sup>69</sup> Human Rights Watch reported in 2006, 85 percent of Afghan women surveyed across 4,700 households had been subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence.<sup>70</sup> Throughout the region, social customs tolerate a man hitting his wife and discourage reports of violence within the home.

A victim's family may intervene to speak to the abusive husband on her behalf, but most families choose not to endure the public attention of a legal suit and encourage the woman to stay in the marriage.<sup>71</sup> "There are no legal protections for women who suffer from domestic violence in Yemen. While a married woman may report acts of violence against her committed at the hands of her husband, a physical trace of the violence must be visible on her body."<sup>72</sup> Some countries such as Libya, Djibouti and Qatar have established laws stating that spouses should not cause physical or mental

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<sup>69</sup> Nazir Tomppert, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Afghanistan: Ending Child Marriage and Domestic Violence*, 2009, accessed March 2, 2014, [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/Afghanistan\\_brochure\\_0913\\_09032013.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Afghanistan_brochure_0913_09032013.pdf), 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

harm, but evidence of injury is usually required to prove assault.<sup>73</sup> In the UAE, according to Sharia law, a man may legally beat his wife in order to discipline her.<sup>74</sup>

Privacy and honor are dominating factors for remaining silent about domestic violence. The fear of retaliation is also enough to keep an abused woman silent. In Iraq, “the fear of retaliatory violence by male family members prevents an overwhelming majority of women from reporting these incidents or seeking legal help.”<sup>75</sup> The social stigma attached to taking any incident beyond the confines of the family renders a woman disloyal. She is likely to be ostracized by the community and regarded with disdain.<sup>76</sup>

Domestic violence remains a problem, yet there is not law that declares domestic violence or marital rape a crime in Libya . . . Article 63 of the penal code stipulates that there must be evidence of inflicted damage in order for the perpetrator to be punished. Little detailed information is available on the extent of the violence, as it often goes unreported, largely because the issue is still considered taboo and shameful. Furthermore, in some parts of Libyan society, hitting one’s wife is not considered unacceptable. Cases of incest or rape occurring in the home are also generally not reported or prosecuted, as this too is considered a private matter and also carries much social stigma.<sup>77</sup>

Gender inequality in divorce rights coupled with religious beliefs force women to stay with abusive husbands. In the UAE, a man can verbally divorce his wife, but a woman cannot do the same.<sup>78</sup> In Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, a man can register to

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<sup>73</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Regional Overview for the Middle East and North Africa*; United Nations, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

<sup>74</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 319.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 318.

divorce his spouse without a reason. Women may only undergo divorce court proceedings if their husband has deserted them, has a defect, or dangerous disease.<sup>79</sup> Domestic abuse is not considered a solid reason for divorce. For example, “there are no laws in Saudi Arabia that protect women from gender-based violence, domestic violence, or marital rape. These acts are not accepted grounds for divorce, and one woman’s testimony of violence is often not accepted as evidence against her husband.”<sup>80</sup>

Al Qaeda has found safe haven in Afghanistan and Pakistan because of the Taliban, an Islamic fundamentalist group. A domestic abuse story from a Taliban stronghold in the Afghan province of Uruzgan made the front page of *TIME* magazine in August of 2010.

The Taliban pounded on the door just before midnight, demanding that Aisha, 18, be punished for running away from her husband’s house. They dragged her to a mountain clearing near her village in the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan, ignoring her protests that her in-laws had been abusive, that she had no choice but to escape. Shivering in the cold air and blinded by the flashlights trained on her by her husband’s family, she faced her spouse and accuser. Her in-laws treated her like a slave, Aisha pleaded. They beat her. If she hadn’t run away, she would have died. Her judge, a local Taliban commander, was unmoved. Later, he would tell Aisha’s uncle that she had to be made an example of lest other girls in the village try to do the same thing. The commander gave his verdict, and men moved in to deliver the punishment. Aisha’s brother-in-law held her down while her husband pulled out a knife. First he sliced off her ears. Then he started on her nose. Aisha passed out from the pain but awoke soon after, choking on her own blood. The men had left her on the mountainside to die.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 342.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>81</sup> Aryn Baker, “Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban,” *TIME*, August 9, 2010, accessed May 10, 2014, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2007407-1,00.html>.

Because young Aisha had attempted to run away, she was automatically considered a prostitute. If her birth family or in-laws had taken her back, they would have been subject to widespread ridicule.<sup>82</sup> This is not the only case of a woman's nose and ears being cut off. Another incident out of Afghanistan was publicized in the United States in early 2014.

In December last year, 23-year-old Sitara was asleep on the floor with her daughters when her husband woke her. He needed money for a fix of heroin and crystal meth, an addiction he'd developed over the course of their marriage. When she was married off to him as a child bride at the age of seven, his drug of choice was hashish. But now this man, 20 years her senior, was a full-blown addict. He wanted to divorce Sitara so he could take their daughters and marry them off for a few thousand dollars for each girl's virginity. But Sitara refused - this protective mother adamant her children were not going to suffer the same fate as her. She'd reached her limit with his destructive drug use and the monster he'd turned into. But she didn't realize just how much of a monster he'd become. That night he demanded money and a simple ring she was wearing, the only jewelry she possessed. When Sitara said no, he bashed in her head until part of her brain was protruding from her skull. She was almost unconscious. He then pinned her down, got a knife and cut off her nose and upper lip.<sup>83</sup>

As four children slept on the floor, one was awakened. The father threatened his daughter that if she screamed, he would cut her just like her mother. In this case, the husband fled and has yet to be prosecuted.<sup>84</sup> Just as disturbing as the amputation of his wife's nose and upper lip is this husband's plan to sell his daughter's virginity for extra cash.

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<sup>82</sup> Baker.

<sup>83</sup> Anna Coren, "Afghan wife maimed for refusing drug-addict husband's cash demands," *Cable News Network*, April 10, 2014, accessed May 10, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/10/world/asia/afghanistan-child-bride-violence/index.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Many experiences shape an individual, especially tangible factors like exposure to a history of violence. “Children who grow up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioral and emotional disturbances. These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.”<sup>85</sup> Traumatic life experiences are previously identified as a driver to violence and terrorism. The amount of conflict an individual is familiar with can desensitize and subsequently drive a person to violence.<sup>86</sup> It is therefore plausible that domestic violence is a contributing factor to societal violence. Chapter 4 analyzes the effects of domestic violence on children who grow up with fathers who create an abusive household environment.

### Child Brides

In the Middle East, a five-year-old girl can be forced to marry a much older man if it means her impoverished family can make extra money and have one less mouth to feed.<sup>87</sup> “Early marriage denies a girl of her childhood, disrupts her education, limits her opportunities, increases her risk of violence and abuse, and jeopardizes her health.”<sup>88</sup> Being married off at a young age and having children early in life, before the body

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<sup>85</sup> World Health Organization, “Violence Against Women, intimate partner and sexual violence against women,” October 2013, accessed May 10, 2014, 4.

<sup>86</sup> Canna et al., 34.

<sup>87</sup> Cynthia Gorney, “Too Young to Wed,” *National Geographic*, June 1, 2011, accessed March 1, 2014, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/06/child-brides/gorney-text>.

<sup>88</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Program Brief, Child Marriage* (New York: United Nations Children’s Fund, October 2012), accessed July 29, 2014, [http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Child\\_Marriage\\_Programme\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Child_Marriage_Programme_Brief.pdf).

develops, poses risks such as mother and child mortality. In Afghanistan, one woman dies every two hours while giving birth.<sup>89</sup>

More than 50 percent of Afghan girls are married or engaged by the age of 10, and 60 percent of girls are married by 16. Up to 80 percent of marriages in poor rural areas are either forced or arranged. Most girls marry far older men, some in their sixties, whom they meet for the first time at their wedding.<sup>90</sup> In Kabul, it is common for young girls to be admitted to hospitals shortly after marriage in a state of shock from serious physical injuries, tearing, extensive bleeding, and psychological trauma.<sup>91</sup>

The United Nations Children's Fund regional director for MENA reported the death of a 12-year-old Yemeni bride in April 2010. Three days after her wedding, the cause of death was internal bleeding due to intercourse.<sup>92</sup> A similar incident was reported in September 2013. An 8-year-old Yemeni child bride died three days after her wedding due to internal hemorrhaging. Her internal bleeding is believed to be the result of sexual intercourse that tore her uterus and other organs.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Trust in Education, "Life as an Afghan Woman," 2014, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.trustineducation.org/resources/life-as-an-afghan-woman>.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Mohammed Jamjoom, "Yemeni child bride dies of internal bleeding," *Cable News Network*, April 2010, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/04/09/yemen.child.bride.death/index.html>.

<sup>93</sup> Mohammed Jamjoom and Hakim Almasmari, "Yemen minister on child marriage: Enough is enough," *Cable News Network*, September 16, 2013, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/15/world/meast/yemen-child-bride/index.html>.

Iraq's Council of Ministers approved the Jaafari Personal Status Law on 25 February 2014. Awaiting parliament's endorsement, the proposed law would allow men to marry girls as young as nine and give husbands license to force their wives to have sex with them without consent.<sup>94</sup> Yemeni law requires a non-virgin, usually a woman that has been previously married, to consent to marriage verbally. For a virgin, silence is deemed as consent.<sup>95</sup> Child brides do not have the authority to challenge or refuse a forced marriage.

Poverty and predators are causal factors for marrying off a young daughter. A girl's virginity can settle debt as well as family disputes. Considering that a non-virgin is considered ruined, marrying early builds the case for beating the odds of a girl getting raped.

Child marriage spans continents, language, religion, caste . . . In Yemen, Afghanistan, and other countries with high early marriage rates, the husbands may be young men or middle-aged widowers or abductors who rape first and claim their victims as wives afterward . . . Some of these marriages are business transactions, barely adorned with additional rationale: a debt cleared in exchange for an 8-year-old bride; a family feud resolved by the delivery of a virginal 12-year-old cousin. Those, when they happen to surface publicly, make for clear and outrage-inducing news fodder from great distances away.<sup>96</sup>

The book *I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced* is a firsthand account of a child marriage. Under the pretense that Nujood would not be touched until the year following her first period, she was raped on her wedding night.

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<sup>94</sup> Alexandra Sifferlin, "Rights Groups Decry Iraq Child-Marriage Bill," *TIME*, March 18, 2014, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://time.com/27696/rights-groups-decry-iraq-child-marriage-bill/>.

<sup>95</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 341.

<sup>96</sup> Gorney.

I would rather have never awakened . . . I'd barely opened my eyes when I felt a damp, hairy body pressing against me. Someone had blown out the lamp leaving the room pitch dark. I shivered. It was *him*! I recognized him right away from that overpowering odor of cigarettes and khat. He stank! Like an animal! Without a word, he began to rub himself against me.

"Please, I'm begging you, leave me alone," I gasped. I was shaking.

"You are my wife! From now on, I decide everything. We must sleep in the same bed."

I leapt to my feet, ready to run away. Where? What did it matter – I had to escape from this trap. Then he stood up, too. The door was not completely closed, and spying a glimmer of light from the moon and stars, I dashed immediately toward the courtyard.

He ran after me.

"Help! Help!" I shrieked, sobbing . . . "Somebody help me!"

"You can tell your father whatever you like. He signed the marriage contract. He gave me permission to marry you . . . You are my wife . . . Now you must do what I want! Got that?"

Suddenly it was as if I'd been snatched up by a hurricane, flung around, struck by lightning [sic], and I had no more strength to fight back. There was a peal of thunder, and another, and another – the sky was falling down on me, and it was then that something burning, a burning I had never felt before, invaded the deepest part of me. No matter how I screamed, no one came to help me. It hurt, awfully, and I was all alone to face the pain.

With what felt like my last breath, I shrieked one more time, I think, and then lost consciousness.<sup>97</sup>

Nujood is a modern day heroine. In this rare case, a young girl ran away from her abusive husband and sought justice within the Yemeni judicial system. She received a divorce and is considered a champion for the fight against child brides. Sadly, this is not the norm for the majority of marginalized young girls; however, it is an enormous step in the right direction.

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<sup>97</sup> Nujood Ali and Delphine Minoui, *I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010), 74-78.

## Honor Killings

Honor killings, retaliatory in nature, are murders for having brought dishonor to one's family. They occur when women are executed for an act that is perceived as bringing shame to their families; this can mean killing as punishment for adultery or even being a victim of rape.<sup>98</sup> Running away from an abusive husband or not bleeding on one's wedding night are common offenses resulting in honor killing. These murders continue to take place in Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen.<sup>99</sup>

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that 5,000 women are killed every year in "honor" crimes. In a study of female deaths in Egypt, 47 percent of the women were killed by a relative after the woman had been raped. It is estimated that at least three Pakistani women are murdered in "honor killings" every day. Sometimes attacks with fire or acid leave the woman alive but disfigured or blinded.<sup>100</sup>

Yemeni law provides leniency in punishments for men who commit honor killings. Typically, a man who murders or injures his wife (or her partner) at the time of adultery should only receive a maximum sentence of one year's imprisonment or a fine.<sup>101</sup> In Libya, both men and women are subject to 100 strokes of the whip in the case of adultery. However, Article 375 of Libya's penal code allows for a reduced sentence for men who kill a female relative for committing adultery.<sup>102</sup> "Furthermore, if a man inflicts

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<sup>98</sup> Advocates for Youth, "Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls Around the World," 2010, accessed May 11, 2014, [http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/gender\\_bias\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2010.pdf](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/gender_bias_fact_sheet_2010.pdf).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Vlachova and Biason.

<sup>101</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 339.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 168.

bodily harm against the female relative, the prison sentence is limited to a maximum of two years. Beating or light injury is not penalized.”<sup>103</sup> The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan explains, “honor killings are considered morally sanctioned and rarely lead to criminal prosecution.”<sup>104</sup> Typically, tribes within Pakistan rarely testify against murderers, witnesses do not come forward, and society generally agrees with the custom of honor killing.<sup>105</sup>

Nawal El Saadawi, a doctor and Egypt’s former Director of Public Health, summarizes the concept of honor in her book *The Hidden Face of Eve*.

There is a distorted sense of honor in our Arab society. A man’s honor is safe as long as the female members of his family keep their hymens intact. It is more closely related to the behavior of the women in the family, than to his own behavior. He can be a womanizer of the worst caliber and yet be considered an honorable man as long as his womenfolk are able to protect their genital organs. There are certain moral standards for females and others for males, and the whole of society is permeated by such double moral standards. At the root of this anomalous situation lies the fact that sexual experience in the life of a man is a source of pride and a symbol of virility; whereas sexual experiences in the life of women is a source of shame and a symbol of degradation.<sup>106</sup>

#### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is most prevalent in Africa and the Middle East.<sup>107</sup> Egypt, Somalia and Mali have made recent headlines because they are Al Qaeda safe havens. At over 80 percent,

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<sup>103</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 168.

<sup>104</sup> Amnesty International, “Pakistan: no progress on women’s rights,” 4.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Nawal El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve* (London: Zed Books, 1993), 31.

<sup>107</sup> World Health Organization, “Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet,” February 2014, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>.

these countries have the highest rates of FGM.<sup>108</sup> While FGM is not a procedure specific to Al Qaeda or its affiliated networks, it is widespread in the same fragile countries of Al Qaeda operations. Iraq, Yemen and Pakistan are also countries that perform FGM.

Countries that practice FGM label it female circumcision. The World Health Organization (WHO) has categorized “all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons” to be defined as FGM. This thesis will refer to this classification as FGM. Four types of FGM exist:

Type I–*Circumcision* is the excision (removal) of the prepuce (clitoral hood) with or without removal of a part of the clitoris.

Type II–*Excision or clitoridectomy* is the excision of the clitoris together with part or all of the labia minora (the inner vaginal lips).

Type III–*Infibulation* is the excision of part or all of the external genitalia (clitoris, labia minora and labia majora) and stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening, leaving a very small opening, about the size of a matchstick, to allow for the flow of urine and menstrual blood. The girl or woman’s legs are generally bound together from the hip to the ankle so she remains immobile for approximately 40 days to allow for the formation of scar tissue.

Type IV–*Unclassified* includes the pricking, piercing or incision of the clitoris and/or labia; also includes symbolic rituals. The application or insertion of corrosive substances into the vagina is also considered Type IV.

Defibulation or deinfibulation–Cutting open the scar tissue that has formed around the vaginal opening to allow penetration by her husband or for the birth of a child.

Refibulation or reinfibulation or recircumcision–The sewing up of a circumcised woman’s vaginal opening after childbirth or periodically during her life when she feels as though her opening has gotten too big or loose.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> BBC News, “Female Genital Mutilation: 30 million girls ‘at risk’,” July 22, 2013, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-23410858>.

<sup>109</sup> World Health Organization, “Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet.”

The WHO, along with the UN and the international community, defines FGM as a human rights violation. “It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person’s rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.”<sup>110</sup> The following is a list of facts from the WHO FGM fact sheet:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) includes procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women.

Procedures can cause severe bleeding and problems urinating, and later cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

More than 125 million girls and women alive today have been cut in the 29 countries in Africa and Middle East where FGM is concentrated.

FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.

FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women.<sup>111</sup>

Respectively in Egypt and Mali, 97.3 percent and 91.6 percent of women have undergone type I, II or III FGM.<sup>112</sup> In Somalia, an estimated 90-98 percent of women

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<sup>110</sup> World Health Organization, “Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet.”

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> H. L. Dietrich, “FGC Around the World,” The Femal Genital Cutting, Education and Networking Project, 2003, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.fgmnetwork.org/intro/world.php>.

have undergone type I or III.<sup>113</sup> Yemen has a much lower percentage of 22.6 percent experiencing type II or III.<sup>114</sup>

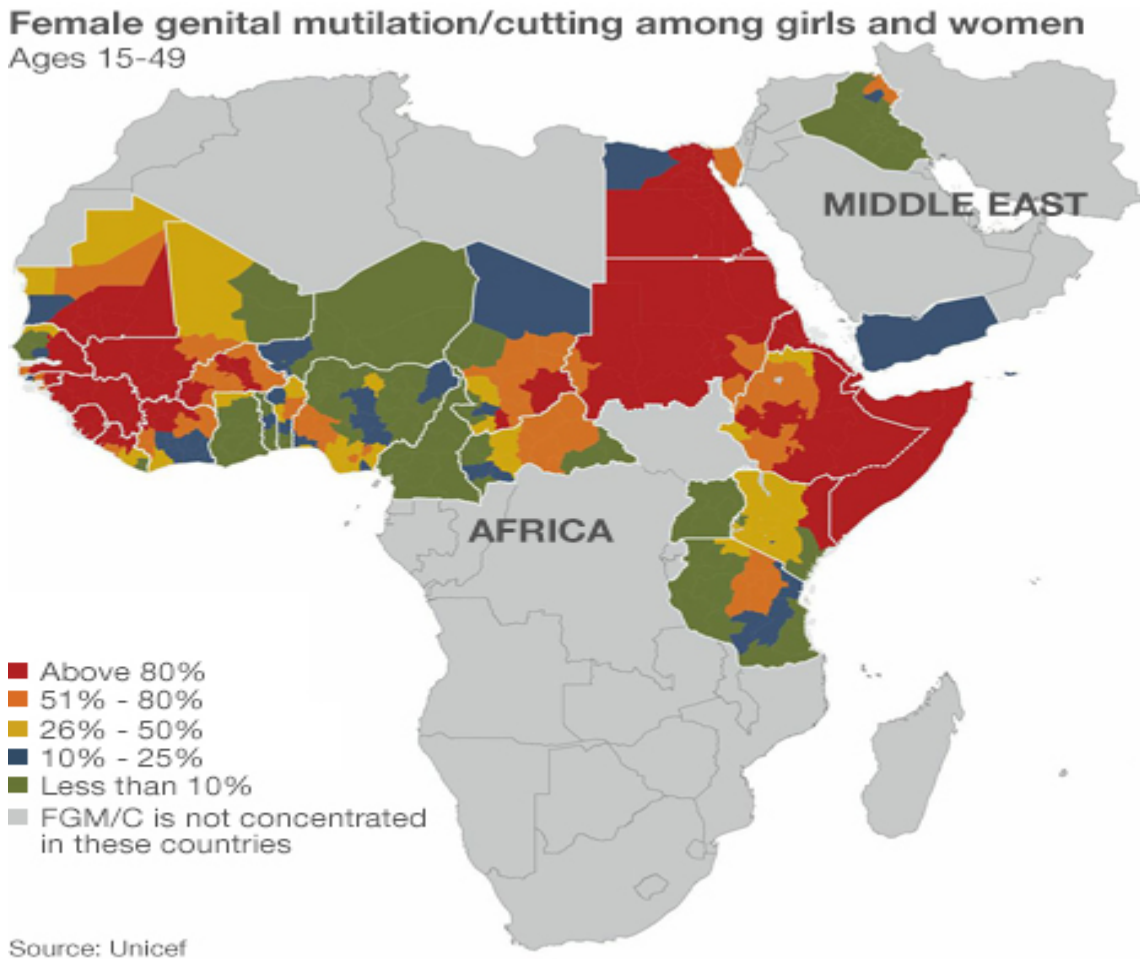


Figure 3. Prevalence of FGM

Source: BBC News, “Female Genital Mutilation: 30 million girls ‘at risk’,” July 22, 2013, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-23410858>.

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<sup>113</sup> Dietrich.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

Documentary evidence shows FGM has been carried out as far back as the second century B.C.<sup>115</sup> The original reason for this procedure remains speculative. A story of Egyptian origin explains that a pharaoh, born with a small sexual member, required women to be infibulated as to enhance his pleasure.<sup>116</sup> The generally accepted origin is founded in ancient Egyptian Pharaonic beliefs. Humans were thought to share bisexual anatomical similarities of the Gods. Women bared the masculine “soul” in the clitoris, while men had a feminine “soul” in the prepuce.<sup>117</sup> By removal of the masculinity within the clitoris, it is thought that a woman fully becomes a woman.<sup>118</sup> Regardless of the original purpose, the modern day reasons have morphed.

In FGM practicing regions, a female is not considered a woman until she is circumcised. These regions do not believe FGM is a violation of human rights. Several factors perpetuate the practice of FGM. Social acceptance and cultural conformity are dominant reasons.<sup>119</sup> The WHO succinctly describes the cultural, religious and social causes of FGM:

Where FGM is a social convention, the social pressure to conform to what others do and have been doing is a strong motivation to perpetuate the practice.

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<sup>115</sup> Ellen Gruenbaum, *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 43.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Julia Feys, “African Female Genital Mutilation: Origins, Practices, Motivations and Change thru Social Identity” (Thesis, United States Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2011), 2.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 9.

FGM is often considered a necessary part of raising a girl properly, and a way to prepare her for adulthood and marriage.

FGM is often motivated by beliefs about what is considered proper sexual behavior, linking procedures to premarital virginity and marital fidelity. FGM is in many communities believed to reduce a woman's libido and therefore believed to help her resist "illicit" sexual acts. When a vaginal opening is covered or narrowed (type 3 above), the fear of the pain of opening it, and the fear that this will be found out, is expected to further discourage "illicit" sexual intercourse among women with this type of FGM.

FGM is associated with cultural ideals of femininity and modesty, which include the notion that girls are "clean" and "beautiful" after removal of body parts that are considered "male" or "unclean."

Though no religious scripts prescribe the practice, practitioners often believe the practice has religious support.

Religious leaders take varying positions with regard to FGM: some promote it, some consider it irrelevant to religion, and others contribute to its elimination.

Local structures of power and authority, such as community leaders, religious leaders, circumcisers, and even some medical personnel can contribute to upholding the practice.

In most societies, FGM is considered a cultural tradition, which is often used as an argument for its continuation.

In some societies, recent adoption of the practice is linked to copying the traditions of neighboring groups. Sometimes it has started as part of a wider religious or traditional revival movement.

In some societies, FGM is practiced by new groups when they move into areas where the local population practice FGM.<sup>120</sup>

The proponents of this flagrant human rights violation are Muslim, Christian and tribal members. However there is no mention of advocacy in the *Qur'an*, nor is there a mandate within any other religious text. While a Qur'anic obligation is the preservation

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<sup>120</sup> World Health Organization, "Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet."

of a woman's chastity, FGM is not mentioned in the text.<sup>121</sup> Male family members lead illiterate women and children to believe the *Qur'an* specifically directs FGM.<sup>122</sup>

Unlike male circumcision, which is thought to have health benefits, FGM has an entirely different intent. Male circumcision is predominantly aesthetic yet is believed to prevent urinary tract infections and sexually transmitted diseases. FGM is meant to preserve a girl's virginity and decrease her libido. "In addition to the pharaonic circumcision's barrier of scar tissue, the removal of the sensitive clitoris is believed to reduce the girl's sexual desires, so as to reduce the temptation to seek sexual experience inappropriately prior to marriage. Some also add that reduced desire will similarly help to promote fidelity during marriage because sex is likely to be less appealing and illicit sex therefore less of a temptation."<sup>123</sup> In essence, it is a way to control a woman's sexuality in the case isolation from men, body coverings and veils fail to accomplish the task.

Men are not the only ones to blame for FGM. Mothers support the cause because their daughters are considered more marriageable. Marriageability is an enormous motivator for the practice. Virginity at marriage is vitally important in many of the circumcising cultures, as is marital fidelity.<sup>124</sup> Infibulation, where only a matchstick sized opening remains, provides proof of virginity on a girl's wedding night. If a girl is not

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<sup>121</sup> Feys, "African Female Genital Mutilation: Origins, Practices, Motivations and Change thru Social Identity," 4.

<sup>122</sup> Geraldine Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire; The Hidden World of Islamic Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), 35.

<sup>123</sup> Gruenbaum, 78.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

“tight enough” on her wedding night, she can be divorced immediately.<sup>125</sup> This is a grave dishonor and disgrace for her family. Following forced FGM, with the inability to consent as a young girl, women grow up believing they are in a higher social class and thus, more marriageable. Parents feel they are depriving their daughters of their full marriage potential by failing to attain this social status.<sup>126</sup>

Implementation of legal measures to ban FGM is taking place in several African and Middle Eastern nations. Egyptian and Djiboutian laws criminalize FGM, however over 90 percent of girls still undergo the procedure.<sup>127</sup> “The penalties range from a minimum of three months to a maximum of life in prison. Several countries also impose monetary fines.”<sup>128</sup> Yemen’s Ministry of Public Health issued a decree banning FGM in official health centers. However, the state has remained silent on FGM practiced by traditional women in private places.<sup>129</sup>

In two firsthand accounts of FGM, both women specifically recall screaming in front of their siblings. In both cases, the procedure was conducted at home—which is common.

I screamed with pain despite the tight hand held over my mouth, for the pain was not just a pain, it was like a searing flame that went through my whole

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<sup>125</sup> Gruenbaum, 77.

<sup>126</sup> Feys, “African Female Genital Mutilation: Origins, Practices, Motivations and Change thru Social Identity,” 6.

<sup>127</sup> Center for Reproductive Rights, “Female Genital Mutilation: Legal Prohibitions Worldwide,” 2013, accessed April 27, 2014, <http://reproductiverights.org/en/document/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-legal-prohibitions-worldwide>.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 350.

body. After a few moments, I saw a red pool of blood around my hips . . . I just wept and called out to my mother for help . . . I saw them catch a hold of my sister, who was two years younger, in exactly the same way they had caught hold of me. I cried out with all my might. No! No! I could see my sister's face held between the big rough hands. It had a deathly pallor and her wide black eyes met mine for a split second, a glance of dark terror which I can never forget.<sup>130</sup>

When asked about the pain involved, the second woman answered, "It was like a burning flame and I screamed . . . I was scared and suffered such great pain that I lost consciousness at the flame that seemed to sear me through and through."<sup>131</sup> FGM becomes a factor in the exposure of dehumanizing acts as both older and younger siblings witness the torturous screams. Because of clinical bans on FGM, the procedure usually happens in the privacy of one's home.

Putting a child's life at risk for the sake of social acceptance warrants intervention. Young girls, unable to make the decision or give consent, are in peril of irreversible injury and death due to FGM. It is hypocritical and ethically wrong for countries to claim FGM is illegal while ignoring its prevalence. By turning a blind eye, deciding not to enforce laws, a nation's silence becomes consent. While the international effort to stop FGM is a worthy cause, the power to end it resides within the people of Africa and the Middle East.<sup>132</sup> Their values of social acceptance will continue to drive this sanctioned violence. As long as men want wives who have undergone FGM, this violent practice will continue to control and marginalize women.

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<sup>130</sup> Saadawi, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>132</sup> Feys, "African Female Genital Mutilation: Origins, Practices, Motivations and Change thru Social Identity," 12.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

After a detailed look into the marginalization of women in Northern Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan, this thesis focuses on the plausibility of gender-based violence affecting young men. Due to gaps in research on the implications of women's rights affecting terrorist recruiting, the research methodology includes studies conducted in free countries.

Existing studies on domestic violence, the lack of education and civic voice will provide qualitative data to determine the plausibility that the marginalization of women may influence young men to become violent individuals, susceptible to the temptation of social advancement through Al Qaeda networks. This thesis also examines the plausibility of international intervention actually creating lasting, cultural change.

Opportunities to suppress gender-based violence and expand programs to empower and educate women may reduce the pool of young men vulnerable to recruiting by Al Qaeda. Suppressing gender-based abuse within fragile states could set the conditions to gain an advantage in fighting the war on terror. Daniel Aldrich, from the U.S. Agency for International Development, has shed light on the "soft approach" to countering violent extremism:

The development approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) rests on new social science research on the root causes of extremism and radicalization. Researchers have started discarding folk wisdom that sought to tie radicalization to poverty, madness, and ignorance, and have come to recognize terrorism as a decentralized, complex, evolutionary process. Rather than envisioning counterterrorism efforts as a war fought through military tactics, this soft approach to CVE repositions military intervention as one tool among many. From an economic perspective, violent extremism can be seen as a labor supply problem, and development programs can dry up support for VEOs and reduce

their ability to recruit by enhancing the legitimacy of partner governments, integrating marginalized groups into society, and providing social services. This approach breaks the deleterious cycle through which violent extremist organizations are able to carry out more attacks more quickly over time as they gain new members.<sup>133</sup>

As stated above, social science studies aimed at determining the root causes of violent extremism are gaining momentum. The key phrase, integrating marginalized groups into society, can only be accomplished after gender-based violence has been addressed. Then, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense can work on enhancing programs to empower women.

If the answer to the original research question is yes, then the U.S. Agency for International Development's doctrine for the Suppression of Violent Extremism should address the expansion of programs that empower women. The inclusion of programs to empower women is not meant to be a new card game—rather, it should be another card in the deck.

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<sup>133</sup> Aldrich.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### The Generational Effect of Domestic Violence

In order to understand the implications of children growing up in violent households, domestic studies have been conducted throughout America and are believed to be universally applicable. Whether in mid-west America or the Arabian Peninsula, the effects on children to the exposure to domestic violence are consistent. The difference between the two geographic regions is the way in which abusers are remediated or brought to justice. Domestic violence is a worldwide issue, however, the regions reviewed in chapter 2 do not have legislation to prevent or punish domestic abuse. The familial cycle of domestic violence is proven to travel down through generations and perpetuated through childhood observance.<sup>134</sup>

Even though it is important to understand the ways in which to prevent violence, understanding why humans are innately violent is just as important. Actually, there is little evidence that proves whether humans are innately violent, but rather, a harsh environment creates conditions in which violence is necessary to ensure both personal and cultural survival. Research has shown that when exposed to violence, individuals must also be taught to value or at least engage in violence as part of the social learning process. For instance, children who behave violently are usually the product of a home in which one or both parents model violence. Thus, violence is a learned behavior in any culture or environment and is not proven to be a natural trait in humans.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Kelly E. Knight, Scott Menard, Sara Simmons, Leana A. Bouffard, and Rebecca Orsi, Report No. 2013-05, *Generational Cycles of Intimate Partner Violence in the US: A Research Brief* (Crime Victims Institute, College of Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University, October 2013), accessed May 27, 2014, [http://dev.cjcenter.org/\\_files/cvi/Generation%20Cycles%20IPVforweb.pdf](http://dev.cjcenter.org/_files/cvi/Generation%20Cycles%20IPVforweb.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> Lindsey Wright, "How Education can Prevent Violence," UNESCO in the Spotlight: Education and Culture Blog, November 27, 2011, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://unescoeducation.blogspot.com/2011/11/how-education-can-prevent-violence.html>.

Domestic violence is defined as a “behavior, or pattern of behaviors, that occurs between intimate partners with the aim of one partner exerting control over the other.”<sup>136</sup> These behaviors include physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and psychological threats. Children raised in abusive homes are exposed to violence in varying forms.

They may hear one parent/caregiver threaten the other, observe a parent who is out of control or reckless with anger, see one parent assault the other, or live with the aftermath of a violent assault. Many children are affected by hearing threats to the safety of their caregiver, regardless of whether it results in physical injury. Children who live with domestic violence are also at increased risk to become direct victims of child abuse. In short, domestic violence poses a serious threat to children’s emotional, psychological and physical well-being, particularly if the violence is chronic . . . Children who have been exposed to domestic violence often learn destructive lessons about the use of violence and power in relationships. Children may learn that it is acceptable to exert control or relieve stress by using violence, or that violence is in some way linked to expressions of intimacy and affection. These lessons can have a powerful negative effect on children in social situations and relationships throughout childhood and in later life.<sup>137</sup>

Studies concerning the effects of domestic violence on children show various trends in the way young boys and girls emote the manifestation of abuse. “Boys are at a greater risk of learning that violence gets them what they want . . . Girls are at risk of learning that violence is normal and as a result can be more apt to accept violence within their relationship.”<sup>138</sup> The tendency is for boys to resort to bullying, intimidation and techniques of physical aggression in order to achieve desired results. Once reaching

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<sup>136</sup> The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *What is Domestic Violence?* 2013, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/domestic-violence>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Gary Direnfeld, “Effects of Exposure to Domestic Violence from Childhood to Adult Life,” *Womans Divorce*, 2014, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://www.womansdivorce.com/domestic-violence-effects-on-children.html>.

adulthood, men previously exposed to domestic violence are more apt to use violence in intimate relationships than men raised in peaceful homes. Similarly, women exposed to violence as children are more apt to tolerate violence from intimate partners.<sup>139</sup>

For both men and women exposed to domestic violence in childhood, there is also a concern of desensitization when it comes to recognizing domestic violence in adulthood. In other word, they may only recognize certain behavior as violent when it reaches a threshold near their childhood experience. This means that while they may resist or object to violent behavior as experienced in childhood, they still may engage in, and/or tolerate violent behavior, not recognize it as such, because it is less than experienced when young. The problem here is that no amount of violence is acceptable and all violence carries consequences. So even if the adult domestic violence is less than experienced in childhood, intimate relationships will still be problematic and exposure to the children will still be problematic.<sup>140</sup>

In two American domestic violence studies, the findings were quite similar regarding the cyclic generational pass down of violence. The most recent study, published in October 2013, is titled *Generational Cycles of Intimate Partner Violence in the US: A Research Brief*. The study was conducted over the course of 27 years, with an original sample of 1,683 families. Following elimination based upon the lack of a romantic relationship spanning three generations, thereby negating involvement or exposure to intimate partner violence, 353 respondents remained: 151 second generation parents and 202 third generation offspring.<sup>141</sup>

The study found 80 percent of families in which parents were involved with intimate partner violence had adult children who committed violence against their

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<sup>139</sup> Direnfeld.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Knight et al.

partners.<sup>142</sup> Examples of violence include throwing something, grabbing, pushing, slapping, punching, hitting with an object, choking, beating, threatening with a weapon, using a weapon, or attempting to kill a partner or spouse.<sup>143</sup> Of the second-generation parents exposed to domestic violence, 75 percent of their offspring became victims of the same crime.

In the second American study, published in 2005, children witnessing marital violence were analyzed as adults. One hundred and four men were categorized into two distinct groups: 52 men that witnessed severe domestic violence during childhood versus 52 that did not. Their ages ranged from 19 to 61 years-old. Doctor Gary Dick determined there were substantial differences between the two groups concerning the use of abusive tactics and the propensity for becoming violent toward their own intimate partners. Men who witnessed marital violence during childhood were 67 percent more likely to abuse an intimate partner in adult-hood than men who did not witness marital violence during childhood.<sup>144</sup> Exposure to abuse between parents is a contributing factor to the perpetuation of domestic violence.

Both aforementioned studies illustrate the inability of most families to break the generational cycle of domestic abuse. Violence is a learned behavior and children are apt

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<sup>142</sup> Knight et al.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Gary Dick, *Witnessing Marital Violence a Children: Men's Perceptions of Their Fathers* (Cincinnati: Haworth Press, Inc., 2005).

to repeat what they have been taught.<sup>145</sup> As established above, children who behave violently are usually the product of a home in which one or both parents model violence. Witnessing violence between one's parents is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.<sup>146</sup> The prevalence of domestic violence within the MENA and AF/PAK regions is concerning considering the lack of legislation rendering spousal abuse illegal. When young men become exposed to and ultimately desensitized to violence, they are doomed to repeat the process, in both the domestic and social sphere.

#### Youth Bulge, Fertility Rate, and Education

Youth bulge is a term to describe a demographic composed of a disproportionately high number of 15 to 29-year-olds compared to the adult population.<sup>147</sup> When the 0 to 14-year age range reaches 30 percent, and the 15 to 29 year-old range reaches 20 percent, a youth bulge exists. Within the MENA and AF/PAK regions, this occurrence has been linked to an increased likelihood of terrorist activities.

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<sup>145</sup> Crisis Connection, "The Generational Cycle of Violence," September 5, 2012, accessed June 2, 2014, [http://www.crisisconnectioninc.org/justformen/generational\\_cycle\\_of\\_violence.htm](http://www.crisisconnectioninc.org/justformen/generational_cycle_of_violence.htm).

<sup>146</sup> National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Domestic Violence Facts*, 2008, accessed June 2, 2014, [http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet\(National\).pdf](http://www.ncadv.org/files/DomesticViolenceFactSheet(National).pdf).

<sup>147</sup> "Counterterrorism through female reproductive and education empowerment," Women's Courage Blog, Stanford University, February 3, 2011, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://stanford.edu/group/womenscourage/cgi-bin/blogs/blog/tag/youth-bulge/>.

Youth Bulges are prevalent today in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.<sup>148</sup> Figure 4 illustrates contemporary international youth bulges as of 2013.<sup>149</sup>

When a country has this overpopulation of young people, it has a statistically higher chance for civil conflict, terrorism, and widespread violence throughout society. The causes of this violence are attributed to the difficulty of the economic system to provide meaningful economic opportunity to occupy the population. The youth become disaffected and resentful of the population with means, especially when the educated population cannot find gainful employment.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Lionel Beehner, “The Effects of ‘Youth Bulge’ on Civil Conflicts,” Council on Foreign Relations, April 27, 2007, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/world/effects-youth-bulge-civil-conflicts/p13093>.

<sup>149</sup> Jonathan Wheatley, “Youth Bulge: a Demographic Dividend or Time Bomb?” Financial Times Blog, May 2, 2013, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-bricks/2013/05/02/em-youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-bomb>.

<sup>150</sup> Beehner.

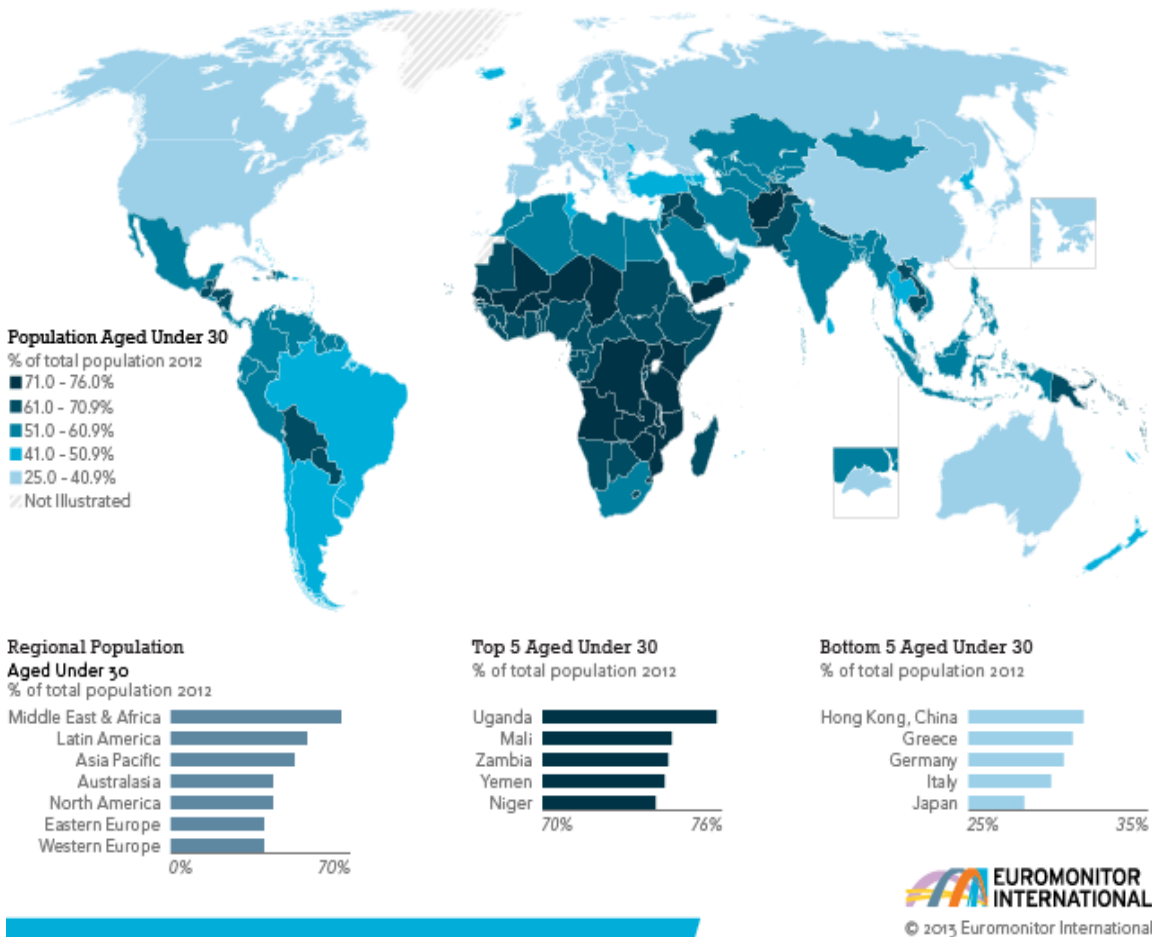


Figure 4. 2013 Youth Bulge

Source: Jonathan Wheatley, “Youth Bulge: a Demographic Dividend or Time Bomb?” Financial Times Blog, May 2, 2013, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-bricks/2013/05/02/em-youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-bomb>.

Terrorism is one of the greatest security threats to the United States and other Western societies, youth bulges and their link to terrorist production warrants attention and understanding. When a large youth population has little opportunity for employment and lacks the means to start a family, the cost/benefit analysis of taking up arms has an

appealing outcome.<sup>151</sup> The willingness of young men to join a rebellion depends on their income-earning opportunities. If young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating income.<sup>152</sup> Also, human nature's craving to identify with an exclusive group renders youth desperate for respectability and social advancement.<sup>153</sup>

Societies with rapidly growing young populations often end up with rampant unemployment and large pools of disaffected youths who are more susceptible to recruitment into rebel or terrorist groups. Countries with weak political institutions are most vulnerable to youth-bulge-related violence and social unrest . . . While this kind of frustration and competition for jobs do not directly fuel violence, they do increase the likelihood these unemployed youths will seek social and economic advancement by alternative, extralegal means . . . And because younger people have fewer responsibilities, like families or careers to tend to, that makes them more prone to taking up arms.<sup>154</sup>

The United States National Counterterrorism Center published a chart depicting numerically all international terrorist attacks during 2010. Figure 5 correlates the highest amounts of terror attacks taking place in regions with the youngest population. The Near East, South Asia and Africa had the most numerous death and wounded tolls on account of terror attacks.<sup>155</sup> This chart has significant overlap correlating not only to

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<sup>151</sup> Beehner.

<sup>152</sup> Henrik Urdal, Social Development Papers, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction, Paper No. 14, *The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict; 1950-2000*, The World Bank, July 2004, accessed June 4, 2014, [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/07/28/000012009\\_20040728162225/Rendered/PDF/29740.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSCContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/07/28/000012009_20040728162225/Rendered/PDF/29740.pdf), 3.

<sup>153</sup> Beehner.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Richard Chasdi, "Trends and Developments in Terrorism," Perspectives on Terrorism, 2012, accessed June 4, 2014, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/chasdi-trends-and-developments/html>, 2.

economically challenged, Al Qaeda designated regions; but also to areas where young males are exposed to widespread gender-based abuse.

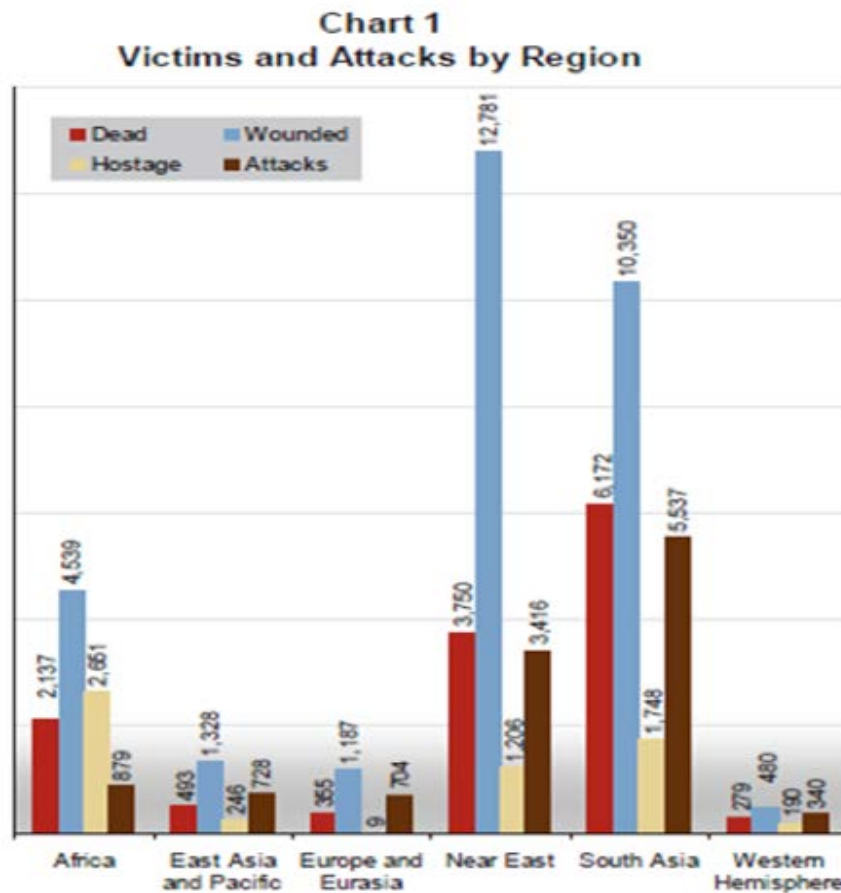


Figure 5. 2010 Regional Terrorist Attacks

*Source:* Richard Chasdi, “Trends and Developments in Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 2012, accessed June 4, 2014, <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/chasdi-trends-and-developments/html>, 2.

In a 50-year study from 1950 to 2000, Dr. Henrik Urdal examined the effect of youth bulges on domestic armed conflict. He is currently a senior researcher at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Norway. Published as a conflict prevention measure, his

empirical findings summarized that youth bulges indeed increase the risk of domestic armed conflict, especially under conditions of economic stagnation.<sup>156</sup> He calculated a nation's armed conflict vulnerability status by comparing the youth bulge percentage, polity scale (autocratic versus democratic on a respective scale of -10 to 10), annual gross domestic product and gross national product per capita growth. His research covered all sovereign states in the international system and all politically dependent areas with a minimum population of 150,000. Urdal determined youth bulges make countries increasingly unstable and more susceptible to armed conflict.<sup>157</sup> His study also discovered flawed methodology amongst other studies that do not support the youth bulge hypothesis. Other studies have derived the youth bulge percentage by comparing the ratio of 15 to 29-year olds against the total national population. The youth populace was being compared against itself, which diluted statistics. Again, the definition of youth bulge compares the youth population to the adult population, not the entire population. When the youth population is compared to the adult population, significant effects can be tracked. The study provides evidence that the combination of youth bulges and poor economic performance can be volatile.<sup>158</sup> "This is bad news for regions that currently exhibit both features to a large extent, often in coexistence with intermediary and unstable political regimes, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab World."<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Urdal, 16.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

Youth bulge is a natural phenomenon occurring in nearly all cultures. Major contributors are increased fertility rates and low mortality rates.<sup>160</sup> Increased fertility rates in the MENA and AF/PAK regions are attributed to child marriage, gender-based abuse and limited education opportunities for girls.<sup>161</sup> In order for a girl to be married young, she gets pulled out of school. Marrying young allows for more children over the course of a lifetime, and logically leads to youth bulge susceptibility.

A method for countering youth bulges is improving girls' access to education. Educational opportunity for women has been documented as an influencing factor on reproductive behavior. It has been proven that women's access to higher levels of education will delay the time a woman gives birth to her first child and increases the chances she has a smaller family.<sup>162</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and the World Bank have determined that one extra year of female schooling reduces an individual's fertility rate by 10 percent.<sup>163</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization has also determined in Mali that women with a secondary or higher level of education have an average of three children—

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<sup>160</sup> Population Reference Bureau, "PRB Discuss Online: The Middle East Youth Bulge: Causes and Consequences," May 13, 2008, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2008/discussionmay22008.aspx>.

<sup>161</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Women and Girls Education," 2014, accessed June 3, 2014, <http://en.unesco.org/themes/women-and-girls-education>.

<sup>162</sup> "Counterterrorism through female reproductive and education empowerment."

<sup>163</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Education for All Global Monitoring Report, *Education Counts, Towards the Millennium Development Goals* (Paris: United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011), accessed June 3, 2014, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001902/190214e.pdf> UNESCO.

while those with no education have an average of seven.<sup>164</sup> A 1998 study in Niger discovered a 31 percent decrease in fertility rate among women who had completed secondary school. A comparable 1997 study in Yemen found a 33 percent decrease.<sup>165</sup> Lengthening the timeframe devoted to women's education has also been proven to delay marriage, which is a phenomenon that has occurred in all countries where fertility rates have declined.<sup>166</sup>

The MENA region has made significant educational advances over the past three decades, cutting the regional illiteracy rate in half.<sup>167</sup> However, there are still many challenges concerning the quality of education. "For too many students across the region, schooling has not been synonymous with learning. Evidence demonstrates that school systems in MENA are generally of low quality. Basic skills are not being learnt, a fact most clearly captured by international standardized tests, whose results reveal that the Region is still below the level expected."<sup>168</sup> The World Bank has proposed an education strategy focused on improving MENA school systems through activities such as teacher training, school construction, building rehabilitation, and conditional cash transfers to

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<sup>164</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education Counts, Towards the Millennium Development Goals*.

<sup>165</sup> Joel Cohen, "Make Secondary Education Universal," *nature* 456, no. 4 (2008): 572-573, accessed June 4, 2014. <http://www.rockefeller.edu/labheads/cohenje/PDFs/347MakeSecondaryEducationUniversalNature20081.pdf>.

<sup>166</sup> Population Reference Bureau, "PRB Discuss Online: The Middle East Youth Bulge: Causes and Consequences."

<sup>167</sup> Arne Noel, "Education in the Middle East and North Africa," World Bank, January 27, 2014, accessed August 12, 2014, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/brief/education-in-mena>.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

support girls' school attendance.<sup>169</sup> Continued initiatives such as these are crucial in ensuring the amount of time children spend in school is actually comprised of quality education.

Education promotes gender equality and plays an important role in giving a woman more control over how many children she will have. While girls and boys have the same fundamental human rights, young women generally receive less education, have fewer opportunities and enjoy less freedom than young men enjoy. Almost two-thirds of the world's 792 million illiterate adults are women.<sup>170</sup> Education is the key to addressing gender-based inequalities, reducing fertility rates, and decreasing negative youth bulge impact.

#### The Potential of Improving Women's' Civic Voice

In the effort to promote peace in unstable regions, women are a vastly overlooked resource. Considering modern day norms, it is nearly impossible for women within the MENA and AF/PAK regions to have a quality civic voice. As analyzed above in the domestic violence section, women barely have a voice within their home. A voice within society presents an even greater challenge considering the traditional roles of women and threats to their security.

While "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" promotes freedom of movement for all individuals, within the state and the home, it is generally acceptable for men to severely isolate and restrict women from leaving the home without a familial male

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<sup>169</sup> Noel.

<sup>170</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education Counts, Towards the Millenium Development Goals*.

escort. Algeria, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the UAE and Yemen are countries that deny freedom of movement to women.<sup>171</sup> Chapter IV, Article 29 of the Algerian constitution states, “All citizens are equal before the law. No discrimination shall prevail because of birth, race, sex, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.”<sup>172</sup> Article 39 of the family code stipulates, “The duty of the wife is to obey her husband” thereby providing the husband with full authority over his wife in law and practice.<sup>173</sup> This conflicting guidance becomes an issue in matters of civic voice and freedom of movement.

Most Algerian policemen and court officials consider it standard social practice for a husband to forbid his wife to travel without permission. Women’s freedom of movement is further restricted by social traditions that support the belief that a woman’s social role is to remain at home. In some cases, a woman is required to seek the authorization of her father, brother or husband in order to leave the home, and upon failing to do so, can expect to face physical violence at the hands of family members or be confined to the home. The state does not intervene in such family matters. On rare occasions, a woman may find an open-minded government official to help alleviate restrictions on her freedom of movement, or she may go to the court to file a complaint; but, it is very uncommon for a woman to seek official assistance in these situations due to the social pressure placed on women to obey their fathers and husbands and the stigma attached to women who seek legal action against male family members.<sup>174</sup>

The Algerian Constitution becomes duplicitous when compared to the Family Code laws. Article 44 of the Constitution declares, “Any citizen enjoying his civil and

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<sup>171</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 37-341.

<sup>172</sup> People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, *Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria* (amended 1996), Constitution Finder, Richmond University, accessed June 5, 2014, [http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/local\\_algeria.pdf](http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/local_algeria.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 37.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 38.

political rights has the right to choose freely his place of dwelling and to move on the national territory. The right of entry and exit from the national territory is guaranteed.”<sup>175</sup>

While the law specifically includes any citizen, women are routinely denied this basic human right.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that bans a woman’s right to operate a motor vehicle. While they may not agree with the more conservative and patriarchal interpretations of Islam, Saudi women do not have open or safe ways to express their dissent or to promote alternative interpretations of their religion.<sup>176</sup>

Women’s freedom of movement in Saudi Arabia is limited through a combination of legal and social controls and religiously sanctioned local practices. While some Saudis perceive the laws and practices that govern women’s movement as necessities to insure the protection of women, others view them as insuring the perpetuation of male dominance. Modern restrictions on women’s movement are basically derived from two practices in Saudi society. First, a woman is not to be outside her own neighborhood except in the company of her mahram (male guardian); and second, an unrelated man and woman are not to be in physical contact with one another. A woman may not drive cars, check into a hotel alone, rent an apartment for herself, or get on an airplane without her mahram’s permission. She is not supposed to ride in a car unless the driver is her mahram, though women do so out of necessity.<sup>177</sup>

“Women rarely have the same resources, political rights, authority and control over their environment and needs as men do. In addition, their caretaking responsibilities limit their mobility and ability to protect themselves.”<sup>178</sup> These factors limit freedom of

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<sup>175</sup> People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, *Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria*.

<sup>176</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 261.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>178</sup> Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Sirleaf, *Women, War, Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-Building*, Progress of the World’s Women, vol. 1, United Nations Entity for

movement and contribute to the difficulty of civic voice expression. Specifically, these factors are a hindrance to the promotion of peace. The inability to organize due to the lack of authority and mobility inhibits women's contribution to peace processes.

Due to women's conciliatory nature, many international institutions recognize women's engagement in peace building as a crucial element of recovery and conflict prevention.<sup>179</sup> Israeli and Palestinian women are breaking new ground to guarantee their civic voices are heard. The Coalition of Women for Peace (CWP) now serves as an example of what women can accomplish during the peace process when they are allowed to congregate and be heard.<sup>180</sup> Established in November 2000, the CWP is a non-governmental organization within Israel and the Palestinian territories. The CWP's focus

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Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2002, accessed June 5, 2014, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2002/1/women-war-peace-the-independent-experts-assessment-on-the-impact-of-armed-conflict-on-women-and-women-s-role-in-peace-building-progress-of-the-world-s-women-2002-vol-1>, 1.

<sup>179</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, 2014, accessed June 5, 2014, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/gender-equality/gender-peace-and-conflict/>.

<sup>180</sup> Others include: Commission on the Status of Women (1946)—principle global policy-making body dedicated to gender equality and advancement, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1982)—treaty monitoring body for the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWG) (2001)—network of UN offices, specialized agencies, funds and programs, UN WOMEN (2010)—the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; support others in development of policies and implementation of standards, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) sub working group—on gender humanitarian action, NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP)—advises NATO leadership and Member Nations on gender related issues in order to enhance organizational effectiveness in support of Alliance objectives and priorities, including the implementation of relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs).

is to seek a peaceful end to the occupation of Palestine while enhancing women's inclusion and participation in public discourse.<sup>181</sup>

CWP has been a leading feminist voice within the Israeli anti-occupation movement and human rights community, leading us to work intensively to confront issues of sexual harassment in political groups. CWP supports, empowers and assists human rights activists and organization, particularly women's and youth groups . . . CWP also aids independent and new peace and social justice initiatives by providing organizational and fundraising assistance, thereby creating meaningful partnerships and solidarity networks . . . In 2010, CWP opened an activity center, which is available for use by activists and groups and hosts a wide range of meetings and activities. The activity center holds lectures and courses for the general public on issues that are at the focus of our work, such as feminism and gender, social activism, culture and politics, international law, and economic justice. CWP also leads international campaigns for peace and justice, in cooperation with human rights organizations and women's movements around the world.<sup>182</sup>

Unwilling to lose anymore sons, husbands or brothers, the Israeli and Palestinian women set aside their differences in order to unite and find a peaceful solution. The CWP has acquired a central status in the peace movement and became a prominent voice in the struggle for social change.<sup>183</sup> When women, the other half of the population, are allowed to have a voice within society; the peace process can operate at its full potential.

### The Chance for Lasting Cultural and Behavioral Change

The African acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic of the 1980s is an example of the international community uniting efforts, and influencing lasting cultural and behavioral change. Initially, the initiative met with political and religious

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<sup>181</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Gender, Peace and Conflict*.

<sup>182</sup> Coalition of Women for Peace, "About CWP," 2014, accessed June 5, 2014, [http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/?page\\_id=340&lang=en](http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/?page_id=340&lang=en).

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

resistance. African nations eventually dropped their defenses and accepted international help.

Prevention efforts in Africa were often confronted with opposition from religious authorities. Both Muslim and Christian leaders found prevention campaigns such as condom promotion difficult to reconcile with their teachings, despite prevailing evidence that abstinence and mutual monogamy were perhaps not as common as they would like . . . Many senior politicians were reluctant to admit to a generalized HIV [human immunodeficiency virus]/AIDS epidemic in their country for fear of creating panic, or discouraging tourism . . . Uganda and Senegal are often cited as countries that did respond quickly and effectively to the AIDS crisis. Senegal has one of the lowest rates of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. The international community often attributes this low prevalence to the prompt response of the government and community organizations to the epidemic.<sup>184</sup>

Other African nations did not respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic so positively. In fact, President Mobutu of the Congo banned the subject from the press for four years between 1983 and 1987 and Zimbabwean doctors were instructed not to mention AIDS on death certificates. South Africa's white leaders refused to install an AIDS education program in schools and did not begin to take seriously the danger of a large-scale heterosexual HIV/AIDS epidemic until the end of the decade.<sup>185</sup>

The initial global outreach from the WHO was admittedly delayed. The WHO did not originally prioritize efforts in a timely manner, as they believed the most deadly humanitarian issue was malaria.<sup>186</sup> Following the mistaken underestimation of the epidemic, the WHO vowed to raise an annual 1.5 billion dollars in support of prevention and educational efforts.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Elizabeth Pisani, *Acting early to prevent AIDS: The case of Senegal* (Geneva: Joint United Nations Program on AIDS, June 1999), accessed June 7, 2014, [http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub04/una99-34\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub04/una99-34_en.pdf)UNAIDS.

<sup>185</sup> AVERT, "History of HIV and AIDS in Africa," 2014, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.avert.org/history-hiv-aids-africa.htm>.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

The United States played a direct role in pharmaceutical development and availability. On account of rapid, innovative research, the most effective Western treatments were incredibly expensive. Estimated annual medicinal regimens would average \$10,000-\$15,000 per person, which was completely unfeasible for the African populace.<sup>188</sup> “South Africa began to lobby the multi-billion-dollar pharmaceutical corporations of the West to either allow local companies to manufacture HIV/AIDS drugs themselves (compulsory licensing) or import them from other countries, that were producing generic (or copied) drugs at a low cost (parallel importing).”<sup>189</sup> Pharmaceutical companies argued that lowering the cost of their product and compromising patents would negate incentive for continued development.<sup>190</sup> In December 1999, President William J. Clinton ultimately decided the United States could waive patent laws and allow flexibility in generic drug production during the crisis. The United States continues to support Africa today.

The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the United States Government’s initiative to tackle the global HIV and AIDS epidemic. In 2013, PEPFAR supported HIV testing and counseling for nearly 13 million pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa. For 780,000 women who tested positive for HIV, PEPFAR provided treatment to prevent mother-to-child

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<sup>188</sup> Stephen Sackur, “The Drug Companies,” *BBC News*, 1997, accessed June 7, 2014, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/africa/2000/aids\\_in\\_africa/drugs.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/africa/2000/aids_in_africa/drugs.stm).

<sup>189</sup> BBC News, “World: Africa Aids drug trade dispute ends,” September 18, 1999, accessed June 7, 2014, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/450942.stm>.

<sup>190</sup> BBC News, “HIV drugs: You asked our panel,” November 21, 2003, accessed June 7, 2014, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking\\_point/3247391.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/talking_point/3247391.stm).

transmission (MTCT). From 2011 to 2013, 1.5 million pregnant women with HIV accessed interventions to prevent MTCT and improve maternal health.<sup>191</sup>

Seventeen million people were provided with HIV-related care and support in sub-Saharan Africa, including five million children and orphans. The organization also provided HIV testing and counseling for more than 57.7 million people in 2013.<sup>192</sup>

Along with international financial and pharmaceutical aid, education is the primary defense mechanism in combatting the spread of HIV/AIDS—particularly, women’s education. Knowledge of disease prevention is imperative in creating progress. The education piece started with the female population of Africa. Teaching women and girls how to apply a male condom and insert a female condom is part of the foundation of the preventative message. Education regarding condom use is a critical element in a comprehensive, effective and sustainable approach to HIV prevention and treatment.<sup>193</sup>

In Africa, young women are supposed to be sexually innocent and may therefore be reluctant to carry or suggest condom use. Since condoms are also associated with illicit sex or extra-marital sex, married women are often powerless to request their partner to wear a condom despite suspecting that he might be infected, for fear of reprisal at the

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<sup>191</sup> U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, *PEPFAR Annual Report, 10th Annual Report to Congress*, 2013, accessed June 7, 2014, <http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/223065.pdf>.

<sup>192</sup> AVERT, “History of HIV and AIDS in Africa;” U.S President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, *PEPFAR Annual Report, 10th Annual Report to Congress*.

<sup>193</sup> United Nations Population Fund, “Comprehensive Condom Programming: A Strategic Response to HIV and AIDS,” 2014, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/programming.htm>.

implied accusation of being unfaithful.<sup>194</sup> Coaching girls on condom negotiating techniques has been proven effective in the situation a partner is against condom use.

Clients also need to persuade their partners to agree to use condoms. This poses an especially difficult challenge for women, who may fear accusations of infidelity and violence if they even mention the idea of using condoms. Talk to clients about their relationships with their partners. How easy or difficult is it for them to discuss sexual matters with their partners? How much influence do they have over the nature and timing of sex with their partners? How are their partners likely to react to a request to use condoms? When advising women, investigate and acknowledge the possibility that male partners may react violently.<sup>195</sup>

Like any cultural change initiative, the initial reaction of resistance is not surprising. However, HIV prevention education and condom promotion must overcome the challenges of complex gender and cultural factors in order to sustain progress.<sup>196</sup> There has been marked improvement over the decades, instigated by the international community.

During the past 10 years, the AIDS response has been extraordinary, nowhere more so than in eastern and southern Africa. The countries in this region are using the latest tools available to save people's lives, halt HIV transmission and achieve the dream of ending the AIDS epidemic . . . The rate of new HIV infections has been reduced by more than 30% overall, and by more than 50% in seven countries in the region. Since 2005, the number of people receiving lifesaving antiretroviral therapy (ART) has increased tenfold—from 625,000 to more than 6 million at the end of 2012. Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland and Zambia reached universal access to HIV treatment (80% coverage of people eligible for treatment) by the end of 2011. Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe are on track to reach this goal. AIDS-related mortality has declined

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<sup>194</sup> United Nations Population Fund, "Comprehensive Condom Programming: A Strategic Response to HIV and AIDS."

<sup>195</sup> United Nations Population Fund, *Condom Programming for HIV Prevention, A Manual for Service Providers* (New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2005), accessed June 9, 2014, [http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2005/condom\\_prog.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/publications/2005/condom_prog.pdf), 24.

<sup>196</sup> United Nations Population Fund, "Comprehensive Condom Programming: A Strategic Response to HIV and AIDS."

worldwide from an estimated 2.3 million a year in 2005 to 1.7 million in 2011, 1.2 million of those dying in 2011 in sub-Saharan Africa. Saving 600,000 lives a year is real progress.<sup>197</sup>

International intervention changed cultural and behavioral patterns within Africa, no doubt for the better. “The Joint United Nations Program on AIDS reported in 2006 that there had been a behavioral change in some parts of Africa in the new millennium. This was believed to be partly due to increased condom use since the early 1990s, as well as young people delaying first sex and reducing the number of casual sex partners.”<sup>198</sup> Over the course of two generations, marked progress has been made. Educationally focused preventative measures, starting with women, allowed condom usage to become mainstream. Initially met with resistance, the international community did not accept no for an answer. As in Senegal’s case, the first step in creating progress was admitting there was indeed a problem. Senegal’s success in minimizing AIDS impact is attributed to admission of the problem, followed by early intervention. However, all of Africa still has progress to make and goals to reach, as the AIDS death rate is not yet considered acceptable. With persistent help from the international community, the African AIDS epidemic will continue to see progress.

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<sup>197</sup> Joint United Nations Program on AIDS, *Getting to Zero. Regional, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)* (Geneva: Joint United Nations Program on AIDS, 2013).

<sup>198</sup> Joint United Nations Program on AIDS, “Fact Sheet, Sub-Saharan Africa,” 2006, accessed June 7, 2014, [http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/200605-fs\\_subsaaharanafrica\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2006/200605-fs_subsaaharanafrica_en.pdf).

### It May Start at Home

What makes young people turn to acts of terrorism? This question may be answered within the home. “Studies are now showing that women, and mothers specifically, can be central to detecting and eventually preventing radicalization.”<sup>199</sup> UN resolution 1325 on women, peace and security determined that too little attention is being paid to the role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>200</sup>

Theorizing about women’s role in countering violent extremism is one thing, but how can this be put into practice? Some NGOs, such as Austrian-based Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE), are working with groups of mothers in various countries to counter radicalization in the home. Mothers are trained in anti-extremism and taught how to detect behavioral changes in their children. The aim of the organization is to help these mothers “become agents of a more peaceful culture.” Highlighting the role that women could play gives the fight against extremism a human face, and civil society organizations can certainly offer significant support to women in this regard. While these workshops have been focusing on extremism in countries like India and Pakistan, similar strategies could be used closer to home. Radicalization and extremism have led to the formation of armed groups in several African countries, such as al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in the Sahel. These groups recruit from across the continent. In 2013, the French

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<sup>199</sup> Aneli Botha and Liesl Louw-Vaudran, “It starts at home: how mothers can help in the fight against terrorism,” Institute for Security Studies, March 12, 2014, accessed June 6, 2014, <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/it-starts-at-home-how-mothers-can-help-in-the-fight-against-terrorism>.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.; UNSCR 1325 was passed in 2000. UNSCR 1820 and others have reemphasized certain aspects of SGBV. The complete list with short summaries is as follows: UNSCR 1325 signed 31 Oct 2000—Protection, Prevention, Participation, Gender Mainstreaming. Resolution 1820 (2008)—focus on addressing systematic sexual violence in conflict as a matter of security. Resolution 1888 (2009)—appointment of a UN Special Rep to Secretary General to tackle sexual violence—systematization, data and statistics. Resolution 1889 (2009)—reaffirms the importance of 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) and monitoring/reporting. Resolution 1960 (2010)—on sexual violence, ending impunity and sexual violence as war crime/ICC. Resolution 2106 (2013)—commitment to the continuing and full implementation, in a mutually reinforcing manner, of previous resolutions. Resolution 2122 (2013)—Reaffirming that women’s and girls’ empowerment and gender equality are critical to efforts to maintain international peace and security.

military intervention in northern Mali and the subsequent media focus on radical Islamic movements in the Sahel revealed the extent of recruitment of such groups. Members from Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Nigeria and further afield were detected in organizations such as AQIM.<sup>201</sup>

Al Qaeda's ability to recruit across the globe complicates the issue of preventing radicalization. The method of identification, imprisonment or elimination of terror suspects has shown limited progress over the past decade and a half. By killing one terrorist, there may be two more vindictive individuals ready to take his place. "Military intervention has its purpose, but it often does not fix the underlying problems in a society that produces terrorism. By looking into alternative means, to be used in conjunction with military operations, policy makers can not only increase the security of the international system but improve the lives of a significant population that resides within it."<sup>202</sup> The error of treating symptoms rather than the cause of terrorism needs to be reevaluated.

Empowering women within the MENA and AF/PAK regions will improve their voice within the home and society while enhancing regional security. A mother's ability to nurture moral children, and continue that connection throughout juvenile years, may be the key leading to early detection and prevention of terror recruitment. An increasing willingness to look at softer, gender inclusive approaches that explore preventative strategies could make the difference in reducing terrorist production.

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<sup>201</sup> Botha and Louw-Vaudran.

<sup>202</sup> "Counterterrorism through female reproductive and education empowerment."

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The United State's *National Security Strategy* acknowledges, "countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunities."<sup>203</sup> International support for women's equality is by no means a new concept. However, this thesis offers a different perspective on how the marginalization of women may impact the path to terrorism. Metaphorically speaking, "women are like canaries in the mines. Look at the condition of women in a country. As it begins to deteriorate and grow more dangerous, you know that place is in deep trouble. It is oftentimes the first reflection of worse to come. Women's physical security and higher levels of gender equality correlate with security and peacefulness of entire countries."<sup>204</sup>

Women's physical security and equality start within the domestic sphere. In the preceding chapters, this thesis has illustrated that safe homes and equality are not a guarantee for women or girls within the MENA and AF/PAK regions. The prevalence of rape, domestic abuse, child brides, honor killings and female genital mutilation are examples of gender-based abuse that severely limit a woman's voice within the home and society.

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<sup>203</sup> U.S. President, *National Security Strategy*, National Security Strategy Archive, 2010, accessed July 5, 2014, [http://nssarchive.us/?page\\_id=8](http://nssarchive.us/?page_id=8).

<sup>204</sup> Melanee Verveer and Daniel Benjamin, "The Roles of Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism at the Center for Strategic and International Studies," U.S. Department of State, April 19, 2012, accessed June 7, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/other/2012/189241.htm>.

Domestic violence is a common thread to several gender-based abuses. It starts with the removal of young girls from education in order to be married. Child marriage lends itself to marital rape. It is not surprising that a man, having made the transaction and paid for the ownership of a girl, will claim what he believes to be his. Most young girls are completely unaware of what sex is, and repeated rape will be a recurring nightmare. As a woman becomes embittered during her marital years, hardened attitudes can lead to the daily occurrence of domestic violence. If an abused woman then decides to run away or attempts to marry another man, her chance of being killed in the name of honor drastically increases. Concurrently, child brides are at the root of youth bulge issues supporting terrorist motivation. Too many young men with no gainful employment prospects will seek to raise their social status extra legally. The profundity of keeping girls in school coupled with the likely lowering of fertility rates cannot be overemphasized.

How is a mother supposed to raise a compassionate, rational, morally sound son after his repeated exposure to the dehumanization she is forced to endure? How can a mother positively socialize her son to become a strong, politically constructive member of society when she is isolated domestically and civically and unable to provide an example? Conversely, if rapists, honor killers and other violent individuals are allowed to act with impunity, the grounds for terrorist development remain fertile.

This thesis does not maintain that every household within the MENA and AF/PAK region is unstable. Nor does it assume the sweeping generalization that all men within these regions are inherently cruel, misogynistic individuals. This thesis does however establish the prevalence of gender-based abuse within these regions, and the

inability for women to seek recourse. All of these gender-based abuses are interwoven and warrant consideration for international intervention.

Violence begets violence. Considering the fact that exposure to violence, dehumanization and traumatic life experiences are triggers to terrorist activity; the generational cycle of gender-based abuse must be broken. When child brides have an additional decade to reproduce within a relationship where marital rape is socially acceptable, fertility rates will continue to climb. The concerning demographics of youth bulges can be contained when education is promoted and available to girls. This thesis is not arguing that the women's rights issue is a mono-causal driver of terrorism. Rather, the marginalization of women is a contributing factor that can be influenced and ultimately transformed in the overarching strategy that is needed to combat and minimize terrorism.

The U.S. Department of Defense has primarily used reactive tactics in response to the war on terror. Drone strikes, captures, imprisonments, interrogations and killing have resulted in limited progress over the past 13 years. As stated earlier, rather than fighting evil men, the international community should take a proactive approach and analyze factors that make men evil. Treating a cause of terrorism rather than its symptoms will give the United States and her allies the initiative in the war on terror. This thesis has identified a potential root cause and it seeks to promote a realistic plan within the regional infrastructure that can sustain lasting, cultural transformation.

The key to cultural transformation is to identify mid-range leaders within the MENA and AF/PAK regions who can influence social norms and opinions regarding gender-based abuse and education for women. Examples of mid-range leaders are "persons who are highly respected as individuals and/or occupy formal positions of

leadership in sectors such as education, business, agriculture, or health.”<sup>205</sup> Regional religious leaders are also a viable example.

The significance of mid-range leadership is the capability to network with both top-level leadership (highly visible political, military or religious figures) and grassroots leaders (local elders, chiefs, or indigenous non-governmental organization leaders). Mid-range leaders are ones that are connected to top-range leadership, yet maintain credibility with and are aware of the grassroots lifestyle and daily struggle. In other words, mid-range leaders “have contact with top-level leaders, but are not bound by the political calculations that govern every move and decision made at that level. Similarly, they vicariously know the context and experience of people living at the grassroots level, yet they are not encumbered by the survival demands facing many at this level.”<sup>206</sup>

The purpose of mid-range leaders is to accrue a guiding coalition of like-minded grassroots individuals who believe in educating and communicating the most peaceful aspects of Islam to the masses. By increasing awareness to more equitable Qur’anic interpretations, influential mid-range leaders can foster a more inclusive environment regarding relationship patterns. Mobilizing popular will and creating buy-in is the only true way to inculcate cultural change. The people of the MENA and AF/PAK regions need to believe it is not acceptable, popular or vogue to commit gender-based abuse or infringe upon women’s equality. Reinforcing this concept with legitimacy and

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<sup>205</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008), 41.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

convincing religious sanction should be the goal of mid-range leaders as agents of change.

Endorsement of the most peaceful and equitable Islamic messages by respected, legitimate and influential leaders can create new ideas of inclusivity and relationship norms regarding women. Practical initiatives include educational radio programs, public service announcements, religious conferences, local addresses and public seminars. The UN, U.S. Agency for International Development and United Nations Children's Fund have had success with educational radio programs in the past. The content of these programs and informational campaigns should espouse *Qur'an* verses such as 30:21 that states, "He created spouses from among yourselves for you to live with in tranquility: He ordained love and kindness between you. There truly are signs in this for those who reflect."<sup>207</sup> This and other passages can be broadcast to deter domestic violence and other gender-based abuse. Verse 33:35 promotes equality among men and women. It states, "For men and women who are devoted to God – believing men and women, obedient men and women, truthful men and women, steadfast men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, chaste men and women, men and women who remember God often – God has prepared forgiveness and a rich reward."<sup>208</sup> These are only two straightforward examples. However, mid-range leaders that are earnest students of the *Qur'an* could interpret many other verses to promote and empower women's status within the home and society.

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<sup>207</sup> Haleem, 258.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 269.

U.S. Agency for International Development conducted a 2011 mid-term analysis of its counter-extremism program in Africa, determining radio was one of the most influential means to communicating positive religious tolerance and anti-terrorism messages.

According to an analysis of the focus groups, the most successful and popular parts of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) have been the radio programs. These programs are widely listened to and discussed. They include advice on reducing domestic violence, building understanding and tolerance between Muslim and Christian communities, and providing news in the local language. Radio programming demonstrated real impact on public attitudes and understanding about tolerance and peace. It may be one of the most cost-effective means of helping people find peaceful resolutions to conflicts and supporting dialogue between communities.<sup>209</sup>

A joke made by a radio manager in Maradi, Niger explained, “If you want to hide something in Niger, put it in a book. People do not read, but they do listen to the radio.”<sup>210</sup> In Niger, Chad and Mali, peaceful radio programming stands out as a significant success. Radio has the broadest reach and is widely accepted, even beloved in most communities.<sup>211</sup> The success of these programs is based upon quantitative and qualitative survey research methods.

While legislation criminalizing domestic violence would be conducive to women seeking official recourse, it is still not a realistic remedy. Saudi Arabia banned domestic violence in 2013, however women cannot drive, nor can they leave home without their

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<sup>209</sup> Jeffrey Swedberg and Steven Smith, *Midterm Evaluation of USAID’s Counter-extremism Programming in Africa* (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development, February 2011), 3.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

appropriate male escort.<sup>212</sup> These details make the reporting process incredibly difficult. Despite gender-based abuse legislation, women still have obstacles to overcome in the attempt to report injustice; as well as the expectation of a satisfactory resolution following abuse. Again, the most effective way to prevent these issues is for trusted and respectable leaders to educate and influence the masses using equality-promoting Qur'anic messages that are most sacred to the region's lifestyle.

While this thesis provides a viable recommendation, its foremost intent is to raise awareness to a problem it deems plausible. The research conducted finds that gender-based abuse and inequality regarding educational opportunity and civic voice are all contributors to instability resulting in triggers for young men to consider the path of terrorism. Asking the thought-provoking question—Could the marginalization of women impact terrorist production? —is meant to bring the issue to the surface and start a dialogue. Through dialogue, leaders can engage the MENA and AF/PAK populations to reconsider their traditional views of women.

Subsequent research to further validate the plausibility of this thesis could focus on the experience of prior Al Qaeda operatives as well as evidence from any young men recruited into terror organizations. A glimpse into their upbringing, particularly relationships with their mother and other females would be of great insight. Accounts of exposure to violent dehumanization of women in their lives could add valuable quantitative data in determining the likelihood that the marginalization of women acts as a trigger towards terrorism. Another area that can benefit from additional quantitative research is the determination of the percentage of young men from youth bulge nations

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<sup>212</sup> Nazir and Tomppert, 261.

that seek economic and social gain from participating in terrorist activity. Lastly, research conducted in any nation regarding statistics of young men raised in violent households that continue to commit societal violence would add credibility to the views provided in this thesis. With the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, splintered from Al Qaeda, there is a contemporary terrorist organization from which the international community can attempt to draw information and intelligence.

It is essential for society to sanction and believe that treating women with dignity and respect is part of living in accordance with Islam. Empowering women's voice within the home and society should not be feared, but embraced. Empowered women, able to raise good, moral children can ultimately create strong, stable nations. The ideas presented in this thesis are not targeted at the men of the MENA and AF/PAK regions of today, but to their sons and daughters of tomorrow. This is a generational issue and will most likely take decades to measure results. Initial resistance to cultural change is to be expected; it can be overcome, as evidenced with the AIDS initiative in Africa and the reduction if not elimination of racial inequality in the United States. We are only limited by our ambition in focusing our effort and vision towards empowering the women within the MENA and AF/PAK regions. In the long run, by including women's voices in the home and society, these regions and the world will be a more stable and peaceful place.

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