ABSTRACTS

Najib Azca, The Womb of Syuhada: The Role of Women in the Dynamics of Jihadi Activism in Contemporary Indonesia

This paper will discuss the role of women in the dynamics of jihad activism in contemporary Indonesia. Following the democratic transition and the outbreak of religious communal violence in eastern Indonesia during the period, jihad activism has re-emerged in the archipelago. Yet jihad activism in Indonesia has been generally under the ‘hegemonic masculinity’ as suggested by Ismail (2015). Other researches on the mobilization for jihad in eastern Indonesia has also found similar situation that mostly of the jihad activists were male (Noorhaidi 2006, Azca 2011). This paper will then ask a question on: how did the role of women play in the dynamics of jihad activism in contemporary Indonesia? In attempt to answer the question it will do research in two realms: digital and real world. On digital realm, it asks how the role of women in jihad was displayed by an Indonesian jihadi-sympathizer website the arrahmah.com? Interestingly, women were portrayed by the arrahmah.com for playing both passive role in supporting their husbands to go war or helping them in domestic needs such as preparing food for mujahidin and also active role taking part in the battlefield. On the other realm, a preliminary fieldwork research on the life of the (former) spouses of jihadi-terrorist prisoners in Indonesia demonstrated that they played important role in reproducing the ideology of jihadism through educating the new generation of jihadi activists at home while maintaining the network of the (former) spouse of jihadi-terrorist prisoners at neighbourhood level.

Brigadier Muhammad Asghar, De-radicalisation in Pakistan

Pakistan has been involved in the fight against terrorism for the last decade. The country has made significant sacrifices to defeat the aim of terrorists and add to the domestic, regional and international peace and security. It is imperative to know that a straightjacket counter terrorism strategy does not work in conflict management and resolution. While viewing regional dynamics of the Pakistan – Afghanistan security paradigm it becomes evident that both the countries are linked by social, religious and traditional constructive fields. The women in conflict zone suffer from various challenges including political, social, economic and religious challenges. In this regard a serious but controlled challenge has been with regards to the radicalization tendencies in women of conflict zones.

Radicalization of the women in conflict zones has been influenced by multiple sectors. The Pakistan Army is conducting kinetic and non-kinetic operations to neutralize the effects of radicalisation, thus helping to counterbalance the negative tendencies in the society. Concurrently women-folk’s tremendous potentials are also being utilized to de-radicalize the society both at home and outside, more involvement is highly respected. The success of this drive depends upon requisite commitment; understanding of the regional dynamics and true religious values and inter faith harmony. It is not an overnight solution but a comprehensive and robust response by the experts in the field.
Amina Rasul Bernardo. **Female Combatants of the Bangsamoro Struggle**

The struggle of the ethnic Muslims of the Philippines traces the roots of the struggle as early as the Spanish colonization of the country, a struggle for freedom and sovereignty. The struggle has continued through the period of American colonization to the present day. Forced to be a part of the Philippine Republic, the Bangsamoro communities have been the least served in the nation, with limited access to basic services such as education, health and shelter. Through generations, this conflict against the State has marginalized the people of the Bangsamoro. The peace process between the Moro liberation fronts and the State has resulted in the armed groups’ acceptance of autonomy in lieu of independence. Bangsamoro women have been active participants in the struggle, with many becoming armed combatants of the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. This paper will examine the circumstances under which these women have become armed combatants and the roles they have played in the liberation fronts. This paper will also discuss the roles played by the women in the peace process, assessing their reintegration into society. In addition, given that the armed conflict, if unresolved, has implications on regional security, this paper will also underscore its impacts, to include a discussion of the Bangsamoro situation amid the expanding threat of radicalization in Southeast Asia.

Huma Chughtai. **Role of Women in De-Radicalisation through Jihad – Options and Opportunities for Pakistan**

The term *Jihad* is an Arabic word that has been derived from the word “Johudd”, i.e. “Struggle or Effort.” In the Islamic context, the Holy Quran prompts the believers to exercise “Jihad fi-Sabeel Allah”, i.e. “to strive in the way of Allah,” meaning thereby to make efforts to transform their lives towards positive, virtuous, and constructive lifestyle as ordained by The All Mighty through Quran and Sunnah. This includes, besides others, spreading and defending Islam through exemplary living, and by promoting peace and harmony through fighting societal injustices and oppression. Jihad is, thus, a religious obligation for the believers, both men and women, to primarily make efforts towards performing their duties as a good Muslim and achieving the benchmark set for them by Allah. It is considered to be the sixth pillar of Islamic belief. Jihad is referred to as making “internal” and “external” efforts including fighting one’s soul and its desires within, and dissemination of knowledge about the difference between good and bad (Ammar bil Maaroof Wa Niha ann ul munkar). The scope of Jihad is, thus, vast and includes internal and external struggle of mankind for perpetual transformation in all directions including physical, spiritual and mental.

Due to its humungous scope, the notion of Jihad has, over the passage of time, experienced successive variations in not only the connotation of this term but also of the gender roles in it, i.e., nature and extent of women’s role and participation in it. In contemporary world, Jihad is increasingly being misunderstood, misrepresented, and misused, making its interpretation extremely narrow, contentious and restricted to war/militancy. There is little understanding about the difference between Jihad and Qitaal which makes the concept of Jihad even more controversial.

With emerging socio-economic realities around the globe and the growing militancy, radicalisation, and disrespect for each others’ beliefs and cultures, it is imperative to develop counter narratives and strategies to moderate radicalisation and counter terrorism and violent extremism. At this point, there also arises need to set the record
straight and use Jihad as a tool to attain harmony between Peace (Islam), Faith (Imaan), and Virtuousness (Ihsaan).

Women are not only adversely affected by radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism, but are also known to have been the facilitators as well as the stoppers of extremism. Under the circumstances, women need to assume a rather central role in de-radicalisation as “their jihad” against the fassaad, militancy and extremism. The natural influence on their boys and families gives them a comparative edge and places them at a strategic position to identify, plan and address the issue through various mechanisms. For the purpose, while referral systems have to be put in place, the women and communities also need to be intensively sensitized and trained on CVE as a matter of Jihad to make it more attractive and inspirational for them. Training Modules should be developed on the basis of local socio-economic realities and cultural nuances and the existing regional best practices. These modules and counter narratives need to be supported by Quranic injunctions and Sunnah. Besides, various religious schools of thoughts promoting the misconception about Jihad need to be checked through counter-narratives, and excessive resource pooling for research and scholarly academia.

This paper will examine the concept of Jihad in the context of women’s role in countering terrorism, de-radicalisation and CVE in the perspective of Pakistan’s ongoing war against terrorism and CVE efforts.

Jessica Hazelwood, *Reconciling Siyar and Contemporary International Humanitarian Law*

Islamic *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* is rooted in Shari'a and its interpretations. Understanding Islamic legal sources and the interaction between these sources in shaping Islamic humanitarian rules and rules of war, needs to be balanced against an examination of the theological legitimacy of various militant groups, each claiming a religious stimulus. Competing discourses from various regions are engaged in a battle for legitimacy within Islam. While positioning the ‘law’ which these insurgents claim regulate their conduct, the very real possibility that these most extreme militants espousing a puritanical Islamic base, absent collective interpretation, consensus or tempering through legal tools, is unable to be reconciled with Islamic international law or its Western counterpart must also be considered when exercising leverage over coercion.

While conceding that the corpus of International Humanitarian Law ([IHL]) may not speak the exact tongue, it speaks a dialect intelligible to all peoples by virtue of its appeal to innate humanity. A regulatory system, universal without being dominant or homogenised, able to anastomose the conflict tails of siyar and ius gentium, it protects a common humanity and provides a ‘non-violent system for the regulation of differences.’ As such, IHL as bastion, a bridge between legal traditions, is presented as providing weight behind and through Islamic international law as it shares a common fabric with Islamic laws of armed conflict.

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1 These are the three dimensions of Islam called “Ara Al-Deen”. In contrast to the emphases of islam (what one should do) and iman (why one should do), the concept of ihsan is primarily associated with intention. One who “does what is beautiful” is called a ‘muhsin’. It is generally held that a person can only achieve true ihsan with the help and guidance of God, who governs all things. While traditionally Islamic jurists have concentrated on Islam and theologians on iman, the Sufis have focused their attention on ihsan. [Sufism, William C. Chittick, p. 9]
The rapid rise in extremist violence and radicalization among adolescents has incited a surge in counter violent extremism (CVE) strategies focused primarily on military, legal, and intelligence efforts. Western governments have diverted significant funds to combat this problem, perpetuating the trope of the War on Terror. Very little attention has been paid to the role of civil society and the potential role of mothers in terror prevention, in particular. In order to fill this gap in the current security paradigm, the Mothers for Change! Study aimed to gather evidence from mothers, understood as underutilized key-informants, and to apply the findings in the development of new grass roots, CVE strategies. Using a mixed qualitative-quantitative methodology, data was collected and analyzed from mothers living in Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine — regions currently and historically affected by extremist violence. In the first step, a total of 200 in-depth interviews (40 mothers from each region) were conducted. Results from a subsequent qualitative data analysis (QDA) were used to develop a questionnaire for use in the same regions. A quantitative statistical analysis of these survey data (N=1023) revealed that mothers feared the Internet, radical leaders, and television as the most significant agents of radicalization. Additionally, with respect to keeping their children safe from radical influences there was little trust in state and quasi-governmental organizations, however, trust was highest in a child’s most immediate social network, most notably placed with mothers. Family members and teachers ranked next. A majority of mothers expressed a need for confidence trainings, trainings in parenting skills, and increased knowledge of religion. Furthermore, mothers also expressed the foreseeable benefit of networking with other mothers, one of the most salient findings. Overall, the results point to the importance of supporting mothers to cultivate awareness, confront concerning behavior, and open dialogue as a strategy to reduce radicalization and improve security. In the current preventative efforts, mothers have largely been overlooked, an oversight with potentially substantial security implications. Therefore, from the conclusions of this study Mothers Schools have been developed to provide a platform for the training and sensitizing of mothers to prevent radicalization in their families. To this end, we regard Mothers Schools as an effective alternative to the current War on Terror.

Leila Ben Mcharek, The Resurgence of Jihadism in post-Arab Spring Tunisia

Why has the country where the Arab Spring started and where a democratic transition was completed, become also the world’s single biggest exporter of jihadists joining extremist groups in Syria, Iraq and Libya, mainly the “Islamic State”? How is it that this country so deeply secularized under president Habib Bourguiba has been so overtaken by religious extremism? This paper will attempt to explain the “Tunisian exception” deriving from a curious paradox. The paradox of a country that was considered a beacon of secularism in the Arab world and which emerged from the storms of the January 2011 revolution as a successful democracy (with the drafting of a new constitution and organizing fair elections) but which became in a short period a breeding ground for jihadists as significant numbers of youth are reported to be involved in terrorist activities and to be mainly affiliated with IS. The paper will look at the resurgence of jihadism after the 2011 revolution and will examine the factors that favoured the progress of Islamic militancy among both Tunisian men and women. It will look at the pre revolution as well as the post revolution contexts.
Sara Mahmood, **Cyber Radicalisation: The Appeal of the Islamic State in Iraq & Syria (ISIS) for Women**

The paper focuses on the strategic manipulation of cyber space by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) for the recruitment and radicalisation of women from North America, Europe and Australia (collectively referred to as the West). It discusses the sources and motivations of radicalisation within the recruitment process of women by the women of ISIS on social media. The research details the process of online radicalisation in three stages: (i) indoctrination, (ii) identification or association, (iii) and jihadisation or hijrah. The paper asserts that this process of cyber radicalisation points towards a recurrence, where the recruited women could possibly become the recruiters after the final stage. The research stipulates that there are varied motivations which guide women systematically through the stages of radicalisation via social media that include: alienation induced by Islamophobia, the rhetoric of global Muslim persecution, the religious obligation of building the caliphate, bonds of sisterhood and the romanticism of being a jihadi bride. The research concludes that in order to counter the social media radicalisation of women, critical media literacy is essential alongside gender specific counter-narrative campaigns that delegitimise the ISIS utopia through exposing the reality of life under a brutal and violent terrorist group.

Sam Makinda, **Women’s role in the al-Shabaab group**

The purpose of this project is to investigate the role of women as possible agents for the radicalisation and de-radicalisation of the youth that participate in the Somali-based militant group, al-Shabaab. Most analysts have claimed that al-Shabaab is an Islamist group, but there are some doubts as to whether this group could pass the test as an Islamist entity. Other critics have claimed that al-Shabaab is a Somali organisation, but there are also doubts as to whether the group’s membership and leadership are exclusively Somali. Whatever underpins its identity, al-Shabaab has been a significant destabilising force in some parts of East Africa, especially Somalia, Kenya and, to some extent, Uganda. Moreover, its activities have been carried out by the youth from various communities. This project intends to examine the extent to which families, and especially women, have played a role in radicalising the youth that have participated in al-Shabaab’s activities. If families and women have played a role in radicalisation, could they equally play a role in the de-radicalisation of the youth?

Tahmina Rashid, **A Feminist Analysis of ISIS Magazine – Dabiq**

Contrary to the common narrative about oppressed Muslim women, evidence suggests that women are active participants in Islamist agendas and engage willingly as agents of “Islamic State”. It has been argued previously that young Muslims are being radicalised via cyberspace and new social media, not necessarily in traditional congregations at the mosque, Muslim community centres or dawah groups. As ISIS (Daesh) continues to attract young men and women from Western countries to join their ranks and migrate to the “ideal State” (Khilafah) that they have established across Syria and Iraq, it needs to be investigated why young people, especially young girls are attracted to their appeal. This paper is based on the analysis of ten
issues of Dabiq, ISIS (Daesh) propaganda magazine published online; their published manual for women, with a special focus on the column written by Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah.

It examines the ISIS’s use of history to argue for the establishment of the Khilafah, an ideal Muslim State legitimising the Hijrah (migration) from their home countries to this imagined utopia, where they can lead life as righteous Muslim women. This righteousness is potentially a power tool in the hands of the ‘righteous men and women’ to declare others as outsiders, and use history especially crusades to glorify a past that Muslims have lost due to their conformity and un-Islamic lives in the “apostate” West. Young Muslims living in the West are called upon to fulfil their Islamic duty by invoking their religious responsibility as Muslim men and women, reminding them that they are failing to do what is required of them - migration to the Khilafah to fulfil their duties as Muslims. Through social media and online publications, ISIS flaunts the presence of western educated young women to portray modern image of good Muslims, who have found peace in overt ritualistic religiosity of the Khilafah.

It seems that young girls who have left their families behind to secretly join ISIS were never involved in any political or radical movement but were searching for a sense of belonging in a society where they have to balance multiple identities in the public and private spaces they inhabit. Young women are not critically engaging in any religious discussion but use Daesh propaganda as an authentic source of religious information, hence a simplified version of religion. With instructions on how to live their lives in the service of God and an opportunity to actively engage in a polity based on a glorified past and a prophecy, they are encouraged to fulfil their religious duty as young Muslim women, with the promise of luxuries of life in a community where they feel they belong.

One must acknowledge that the savvy marketing techniques and use of new media and technology has influenced young women to justify their participation in religious congregations as a modern phenomenon. New social media facilitates and encourages talking about spirituality through religious ritualism and a narrowly defined notion of piety. At times they emphasize disregarding material and worldly pursuits for a simple life in the Khilafah with a reward awaiting them in the afterlife, while at other times they talk about a life of luxury where the Khilafah looks after its citizens, providing goods and services at no cost, including slaves. One of their key writers Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah justifies sexual slavery of non-Muslim Yazidi women as Islamic, arguing that supporting Western human rights agendas or employing the language of human rights is against “shariah”.

Amin Saikal, Jihad and Women in the Muslim Middle East

As controversial as the term has become, combative or smaller Jihad in Islam is conceptually defensive. It is waged in self-defence and only when Islam or an Islamic community is either invaded or mortally threatened by an outside force. No doubt, the ways in which it is deployed and conducted by an entity such as the ‘Islamic State’ (IS) in Iraq and Syria certainly falls outside the perimeters of the mainstream Islam, as many Muslim scholars and thinkers have argued. Even so, this has not prevented a noticeable cluster of young Muslims to join the IS and fight for it from across the world. Nor has it dissuaded many more in the Muslim domain from identifying with the largely earthly bound causes that the IS has promoted to justify its extremist ideological dispositions and combative actions. The reach is so vast that
whilst patriarchal in nature, IS has also attracted a number of Muslim women from abroad to support its Khilafat and Jihad.

This paper has three objectives. The first is to provide some clarification about the combative Jihad in conceptual terms. The second is to focus on the ‘Islamic State’ and its underlying magnetic appeal to the range of foreign Muslim male and female enthusiasts who have gone to Iraq and Syria to serve it for convictive or deceptive reasons. The third is to see what distinguishes IS from some of the other extremist groups in history, and to harness some ideas as to how to deal with violent Muslim extremism in the Greater Middle East.

Rabia Siddique, Women as Agents for Change in the Face of Militancy, Radicalisation and Conflict

The need to re-evaluate gender, and in particular the role of women within the contexts of warfare and terrorism is long overdue. The starting point for this presentation is the role of women in society and how their position and unique perspectives, approaches and language can and have been harnessed for counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation purposes. Notwithstanding the global marginalisation of women from decision-making processes, this presentation will reflect on recent examples where women have played pivotal roles, albeit often behind the scenes, in peacekeeping efforts and argues for the greater recognition and participation of women across the world in facilitating disengagement from terrorism and thwarting terrorist activity.

Katja Theodorakis, Western Women and the Islamic State (IS): A Search for Meaning and Morality?

In a recent commentary on female radicalisation and recruitment to IS, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop noted “that young Australian women seek to join or support Daesh when we know how it views women [i.e. it defied logic]”. According to the logic of Western liberal modernity, their cause is consequently seen as entirely irrational; moreover, it is commonly assumed these women are vulnerable, brainwashed and ‘groomed’ to willingly swap the freedom, comfort and opportunities of the West for an existence of quasi-slavery in a war-zone.

While it is certainly imperative to highlight and condemn the Islamic State’s brutal rejection of human rights, this paper contests such an assessment as too narrow and reductive. Instead it seeks to elucidate a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon and inquires precisely why IS’ anti-Western apocalyptic utopia holds such an appeal for even well educated young women. For this end, it focuses on selected biographies and first-hand accounts of female IS supporters, including blogs and Instagram posts from ‘within the Caliphate’. This is based on an understanding of IS, and militant jihadism in general, as a culturally constructed frame of reference or system of meaning which provides adherents with a distinct identity and set of moral formulations.

This paper consequently proposes that it is necessary to understand the wider search for identity, meaning and morality that underpins such seemingly irrational decisions to join IS, especially in terms of how these constitute a reactionary resistance to the West’s secularised and rationalised modernity. It argues that such deeper inquiries
into the women’s motivations and self-identifications in this perceived existential struggle to defend Islam should form a vital part of any counter-radicalisation effort.

Samina Yasmeen, *Jihad and Story-telling: Radicalisation of Women*

Traditional religious scholarship is rather silent on women’s agency in jihad. The focus has been primarily on men’s role in campaigns identified as constituting jihad. The silence, however, has not totally rendered women irrelevant to the jihad project initiated by different militant groups in contemporary international system. While the cyber space is being presented as the main venue where females are engaged, recruited and their participation in jihadi projects secured, a parallel trend of using stories to mobilize women for jihad continues. The paper focuses on the use of these stories by women affiliated with Jamaat ud Dawah in Pakistan. It argues that the presentation of stories in easily comprehensible form, with cultural meanings assigned to them enables both male and female leadership in the group to invoke images of the threat to Islam, and the condoned agency for women.