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American Women's Motivations to Join Overseas Terrorist Groups

Zuri Sushil Birla
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Zuri Sushil Birla

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

American Women's Motivations to Join Overseas Terrorist Groups

by

Zuri Sushil Birla

MA, Walden University, 2020

MA, Grand Canyon University, 2016

BA/BS, Loyola University Chicago, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

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August 2023

Abstract

An increasing number of American women are actively engaging in overseas terrorist organizations and networks. Their motives, though, are little understood by researchers, although familial relationships and other associations, gender roles, and social media propaganda may play a role. The purpose of this qualitative narrative case study was to better understand the motives, decision-making, and behaviors of radicalized American women. The theoretical framework was social behavior theory and the research design, narrative case study based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Motivation. The research question addressed American women's immersion into terrorism through social media outlets and familial partnerships that emphasize organizational leadership roles held by women within terrorist groups. Data were gathered from government sources and global terrorism databases containing information on American women who had engaged in attacks on the United States or who had traveled to high-risk countries. A systematic coding system with defined categories and themes was used to identify critical motives or needs of the sample. The data analysis suggested trigger spots for American women to be motivated over "time." Time is the essence that created these seven radical American women and the lack of emotional, cognitive, and psychological support. This study may promote positive social change by encouraging governmental, nongovernmental, and academic stakeholders to focus on women. With the knowledge from the study, officials can potentially address gaps in counterterrorism policies (e.g., by increasing monitoring of social media communications, implementing stricter sentencing on women, and capturing immigrational trigger points of women traveling to high-risk countries).

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Dedication

Jai Ganesh, Jai Saraswathi Ma, and Jai Sai Ram: Through god's grace, guidance, strength, and blessings, I travel the road less traveled. To my husband, Sushil Birla, who encouraged me to restart my educational endeavors as we faced the tides of life: This degree is equally yours. To my son, Rigel, who shows this family compassion and strength through adversity. To my families; friends; educators; employers; and, especially, my residency cohort group, W1, the members of whom were a fist of fury in telling me to "get 'er done" and who are waiting for me at the finish line. All showed their support during the toughest times of life and allowed me to never give up by supporting my dream. As Henry David Thoreau stated, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you've imagined."

Acknowledgments

Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.

—Abigail Adams in a letter to her son, John Quincy Adams

Completing this dissertation has taught me the value of a guru/educator in taking on a disciple/student to reveal divine knowledge, virtue, realization, integrity, and enlightenment. With gratitude, I thank my chair, Dr. Tamara Mouras, and committee member, Dr. Sean Grier, for being like water: transparent with flow. Thanks, also, to Dr. Jessie Lee, Dr. Gary Kelsey, and Dr. Hilda Sheppard, who have been my shadow since my first residency group. They continually told me to “be in it to win it” and to “get ‘er done.” I would like to thank my loving husband, Sushil Birla, who has been a pillar of strength and growth in enabling me to realize my/our fullest potential through this journey of life; this milestone would not have been possible without you. In addition, I thank our son Rigel. Lastly, thanks to all our family and friends who provided moral, mental, social, and academic support through life’s struggles while I pursued this ultimate milestone. This journey was made possible by all the people I have known who enabled me to become the person I am today. Each played a role in my realizing my educational dream over the years. A learner never stops learning; we just pass the baton on.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The focus of this research was on the internal and external environmental factors that motivate American women to engage in deviant behaviors to join terrorist organizations overseas. This behavior intertwines with the norms, values, and structures of society, and the desire for acceptance. According to Bigio and Vogelstein (2019), women's involvement in terrorism has not been considered as part of U.S. national security and counterterrorist strategies in the almost 2 decades since 9/11 (para. 2). The United States and the international community should not just consider women as weak or targets at a time of conflict but should discuss the opportunities welcomed by terrorist groups. It is critical to study what motivates women to travel to high-risk countries as such travel serves as a transnational gateway for radicalization (Borum & Fein, 2017). Women have had a high success rate as distressed suicide bombers or martyrs. However, terrorist groups are increasingly using women as public relations representatives, communicators, and intelligence managers (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019).

The social implication of the study pertains to its potential to increase understanding of American women's involvement in international terrorist organizations. The knowledge from the study may inform counterterrorism efforts, public policies, and the monitoring of immigration policies. The U.S. national security effort should become more apprehensive when an American woman is traveling to a radicalized international nation. This study findings may assist government officials and other stakeholders in identifying better counterterrorism strategies domestically and internationally.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the study, which I conducted to address the lack of understanding of what motivates American women to join international terrorism overseas. The chapter includes a background summary and the problem and purpose of the study. Key sections are devoted to the theoretical and conceptual framework, nature of the study, auxiliary definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance. Chapter 2 is a synopsis of key research studies that illustrate knowledge in the discipline on the study topic and address the importance of this phenomenon. Chapter 3 includes information on the research design and rationale for using a qualitative case study methodology, the instrumentation, and the ethical procedures undergirding data collection. Chapter 4 is an in-depth analysis of the results based on data collection. Last, in Chapter 5 I provide concluding remarks pertaining to the research findings, limitations, recommendations, and implications.

Background

Today women have gained prominence in several extremist groups around the world due to situational environmental factors including revenge, corruption, and victimization from war. This research study focused on understanding American women's motivation and fascination to radicalize by traveling overseas to join terrorist organizations. By traveling to countries at high risk for terrorism, women may be retaliating against fundamental American ideologies or lifestyle. According to Bloom (2012, 2017), "revenge, redemption, relationships, respect, and rape" are all factors in women's decision to engage in terrorist activity. Environmental factors related to joining terrorist groups overseas consist of vulnerabilities not met by families, communities, and

government assistance, and lack of personal accolades. Vargas (2017) suggested that environmental and sociocultural media assist in the radicalization process through conversion theory of minority influences defining difficulties with conformity, compliance, consistency, confidence, biases, and resistance. Paul (2019) examined the psychosocial risk factors of recruitment of women. The fundamental reasons for joining terrorist groups for American women may be different than those for women outside the United States.

The Counter Extremism Project (CEP; 2023) provides information on several radicalized American women who became an integral part of terrorist groups. For example, Ariel Bradley became radicalized by meeting her husband through an online Swedish Muslim group. Another example is American-born natural citizen Colleen LaRose, also known as Jihad Jane or Fatima LaRose, who served as an online recruiter and fundraiser for a terrorist organization. LaRose conspired and recruited Jamie Paulin Ramirez, an American woman from Colorado, to plot the murder of a Swedish artist Lars Vilks, who drew a cartoon of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Heather Elizabeth Coffman from Virginia cultivated relationships through several social media platforms to communicate with the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) and joined the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group. An ISIS terrorist recruit was sympathizer Jaelyn Delshuan Young from Mississippi, who had hoped to serve ISIS as medical personnel by fleeing with her Muslim fiancé, who wanted to serve as a combatant in Syria. Many other women have played critical roles in ISIS terrorist groups. A few to name are Asia Siddiqui, who inspired homegrown extremism in New York; Hoda Muthana, who left her

home in Alabama to join ISIS in Syria; and Jasminka Ramic from Chicago, who provided material support to ISIS. More recently, Tashfeen Malik conducted the San Bernardino, California hospital shooting. These women may have been driven by various motivational factors, unlike women from a radicalized Islamic nation (CEP, 2023).

Social media propaganda may make some American women vulnerable to collective extremist ideologies that they perceive as providing a social form of acceptance. As Shapiro and Maras (2019) suggested, women play a role in “pursuing, recruiting, supporting, and spreading the ideals of radicalization” (p.88). Therefore, it is essential to study the different motivations of American women to join terrorist organizations overseas. The gap in the research is supported by Alexander (2016), who noted women’s contribution to terrorism as (a) plotters, (b) supporters, and (c) travelers; this typology can define low-, medium-, and high-risk radicalizations. According to Benmelech and Klor (2018), individuals from economically and politically developed countries who are attracted to overseas terrorist organizations pose an increasingly significant threat upon their return to their homeland. This concept can be examined through Vidino and Hughes (2015), who addressing Americans’ interest in ISIS recruitment through their decisions to travel overseas and prophesize on infidels. Overall, it was critical to examine what are the main deficiencies that motivate American women to join terrorist organizations overseas. Through this research, scholars and government officials can understand what motivates the leaders of overseas terrorist organizations to radicalize American women for terrorist activity.

Problem Statement

There is insufficient evidence on what motivates American women to join terrorist organizations overseas. Exposure to female suicide bombings, marriage, financial funding networks, lone-wolf terrorism, and consumption of untraceable propaganda through technology may be factors in American women's involvement in these organizations, and study of these factors is important for counterterrorism activities and immigration policies (Bloom, 2017). According to Darden (2019), American women are a focal point of terrorist organizations because they may be able to engage in covert espionage and operational management, due to unique skills in comparison to men and astounding leadership skills, which make these women a higher threat to society than men (Darden, 2019).

The literature includes a number of case studies that reveal factors associated with women's involvement in terrorist organizations. These include increases in familial/partner associations, recruitment venues, female suicide bombers' initiation, gender roles within hostile environments, cultural attractiveness, and social media propaganda (Borum & Fein, 2017; Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019; McAleenan, 2018; Powell, 2016). The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates how women have a desire for conditional and unconditional empathy and immersive travel and seek cultural enlightenment driven by illusionary urges. I addressed a gap in the literature on why American women have been motivated to join male-dominant terrorist organizations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the motivations of American women to travel to high-risk countries to become radicalized. The goal was to understand how or what processes attract women to terrorism. I examined the potential influence of serving a pivotal role as a producer, initiator, perpetrator, educator, network communicator, and instigator in the private and public life of terrorist groups (see Bloom, 2012, 2017; Vargas, 2017).

Research Question

What are the motivating factors associated with American women's joining of terrorist organizations and commission of terrorist acts?

Theoretical Framework

I based the theoretical framework of this study on Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which is part of his theory of human motivation. The social-behavioral theory addresses a number of motivations applicable to women's joining of terrorist groups. These range from basic to complex needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) love, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization (Shafritz et al., 2016, pp. 142–153). The use of hierarchy of needs provided insight into the cognitive and behavioral decision-making of women and their ability to be persuaded to engage in activities that meet the definition of terrorism (e.g., intimidation, distraction, fear, and division). According to Shafritz et al. (2016, p. 142), self-actualization or status attainment is the crux of "any motivational behavior that is preparatory or consummatory, must be understood to be a channel through, which many basic needs may be simultaneously expressed or satisfied"

– typically an act has more than one motivation, such as social media propaganda used to enroll women into terrorism to be leaders, educators, and active members of a hierarchical order.

In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed explanation of contradictory theories (e.g., expectation-performance theory, general strain theory, socio-cultural conformity theory, social-network theory). As I discuss, motivation theory is not synonymous with behavior theory. Finally, motivations are only one class of determinants of behavior triggered by deficiencies. Although the need to belong or conform generally account for behavior, for women, biological, cultural, and situational factors, including social and religious concerns, influence women's engagement in terrorist activity (Shafritz et al., 2016, p. 142).

Nature of the Study

This was a qualitative case study of seven radicalized American women who were recruited and attracted to join overseas terrorist groups. For this research, I gathered secondary data from academic and government sources, who acted as primary researchers by collecting in-depth interviews of women defectors against the United States. Age range was a consideration. The average legal age of consent in the United States is 18 whereas the average global age of consent is 16 years. I used a purposive sampling strategy to create a focused sample based on women's citizenship and overseas radicalization to provide clarity regarding the study phenomenon (Laerd Dissertation, 2012). The data were analyzed using a theoretical coding framework of social behavior based on Maslow's theory of human motivation and hierarchy of needs.

To develop the case studies, I analyzed exploratory and theoretical patterns, categories, and similar themes in behavioral/motivational decision-making. The information obtained can potentially assist academia, government agencies, private and public sectors, and society by furthering understanding that terrorism is not just affiliated with men or children, but women may be even more advantageous in carrying out acts of terrorism. I sought to create breadth, depth, dependability, transferability, and credibility through use of a theoretical analytical approach and academic peer member checking by two to three Walden academic members. These efforts helped to create transparency of information (see Simon, 2011). As Ravitch and Carl (2026) noted, perceptions or perspectives that are not easily understood can be analyzed through examination of rich data to identify emergent themes or meanings. Remaining close to the data by focusing on documented event experiences is also helpful, they noted. In addition, the design may include sources of triangulation that will address and identify the problem posed by American women joining terrorist groups overseas.

Definitions

The following are relevant operational terms that are applicable to the theoretical framework and overall study:

Counter Extremism Project (CEP): An organization that combats the threat and ideology of terrorism by collecting data on individuals and groups involved in a variety of networks to further the existence of domestic and international terrorism. CEP provides information on several American women terrorists and trigger points that lead to radicalization.

Domestic terrorism: An incriminating act that inflicts fear through intimidation, sabotage, coercion, and mass destruction within the United States through formal or informal organizations (18 U.S. Code § 2331 – Definitions, 2020).

Global Terrorism Database (GTD; also known as Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism [START]): A scientific research database that consists of data on women who have joined terrorist groups overseas.

International terrorism: An interwoven, large network of perpetrators who obtain financial gain through obstruction and destruction of democracies of civilian populations and nations (18 U.S. Code § 2331 – Definitions, 2020).

Internet and social media presence: An online platform for individuals or groups to communicate socioeconomic and sociocultural ideologies without limitations.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs or theory of human motivation: The theoretical framework used in this study to analyze deficiencies faced by American women. The hierarchy of needs model includes the following stages of different human needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Green, 2000; McLeod, 2022). The needs can be grouped into two categories. The first category is deficiency or basic needs, which include physiological, safety, belonging and love, and esteem needs. Basic physiological needs consist of air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, and reproduction. Basic safety needs are personal security, employment, resources, health, and property. Psychological needs are the need for love and belonging, acceptance in friendship, intimacy, family, empathy, and sense of connection. The second category is growth or psychological and self-fulfillment needs, which include cognitive

and aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence. Psychological esteem needs relate to prestige, accomplishment, respect, confidence, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom, and cognitive and aesthetic factors. Self-actualization needs encompass becoming an honorable individual by achieving one's fullest potential and transcendence.

Propaganda: The ability to influence individuals or population through social media or a communication platform to promote ideas, injure, facilitate, or organize (Ali, 2015).

Radicalization and/or violent extremism: The ability to recruit by attracting individuals/groups through a variety of communication methods, psychologically funneling ideologies, and infecting by identifying a specific stressor (Kiener-Manu, 2018).

Women terrorism: The use and weaponization of women as an ideological symbol of strength and longevity through manipulation and reproductive empathy, fear, and violence.

Assumptions

An aspect of the study that I believed but cannot demonstrate is that an individual has a choice to assimilate or face the consequences of resisting American ideology. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and broader theory of human motivation encompasses choices, behaviors, and motivations and, as such, was an appropriate theoretical framework for the study. Using this perspective, though, required that I be able to

recognize the sociocultural taboos, social media influences, and public policies implications of women's behavior related to terrorist activity.

Researchers base their methodological assumptions and data collection on observable or factual evidence. Therefore, some aspects of a study cannot be demonstrated. The role of the researcher is to maintain neutrality, remain unbiased, and create a relationship with the participants to initiate a successful theoretical analysis. Unfortunately, due to a variety of concerns (e.g., safety and security, finances, historical and population validity, and resources), conducting a field study was not an ethical design to use for this investigation. Case studies from secondary research represented a credible methodology for me to maintain alignment through the theoretical and methodological frameworks. I used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to code specific descriptive and concepts. Overall, a content analysis allows a researcher to identify "new ideas, new relationships, new skills, changing attitudes, changing behaviors, and new goals" (Patton, 2015, p. 551) in narrative content.

Scope and Delimitations

I chose specific aspects of the research phenomenon to focus on due to their accessibility and the potential transferability of the research. The justification for the selection of the research problem included factors such as the required sample size and the potential to achieve data saturation within the United States without establishing any relationships that could hinder research collection. By focusing on U.S. women, I was able to study a population that had not yet been examined. The small sample size enabled

saturation and insight on American women's decisions to join overseas terrorist organizations.

Other researchers have sought an understanding of what motivates American women to be recruited to overseas terrorism using similar participant selection criteria and qualitative narrative case study designs. Sundlof (2017) studied the Baader-Meinhof gang of West Germany, Leila Khaled of Palestine, Kim Hyon-Hui of North Korea, and Sana Mahaydali of Lebanon. Bodziany and Netczuk-Gwoździewicz (2019) studied women's involvement in terrorist organizations in the Middle East, Asia (Sri Lanka), (c) South America (Colombia), and (d) Russia. Other researchers have examined cultural differences across several countries. Beavers (2019) addressed women's involvement in Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, and ISIS as suicide bombers. Beavers tracked the organizational structures and positions held by women in these groups.

All three of the researchers (Beavers, 2019; Bodziany & Netczuk-Gwoździewicz, 2019; Sundlof, 2017) conducted a qualitative case study based on observed narratives from documents gathered from secondary sources or government entities. The sample size was detailed and explicit; therefore, the sample size allowed for saturation due to a growing number of women joining terrorist groups in the context of a new wave of terrorism. All three shared a certain definition of terrorism and understanding of psychological motivations. By having a domestic focus on what motivates American women to join terrorism, I was able to further this research. My research may also be transferable.

Limitations

Issues of validity and dependability are key to understanding the limitations of a study (Simon, 2011, pp. 1–3). The limitations of this study involved time, resources, and finances. It was critical that I contact the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) early in the research process to avoid potential barriers that would make the study infeasible based on ethical issues pertaining to me the researcher, the data, and/or those involved in the research. In addition, qualitative research data gathering from databases and the use of the software program NVivo was potentially costly and time-consuming. Therefore, I opted to use secondary sources of data from government and global terrorism databases.

In addition, a potential bias was my analytical theoretical approach featuring case studies and exclusion of a field study. Researchers who wish to replicate the study must follow the same approach. Conducting research on sensitive classified information of women and terrorism can leave the researcher at high risk based on sociocultural taboos or bias. However, informed consent ensured respect, confidentiality, and contractual communication of shared information. While conducting research, race or ethnicity may have been a source of bias based on the number of case studies of American women motivated to participate in overseas terrorism. I engaged in early ethics consultations to move forward without any biases or coercion. I continued the analysis until I had achieved data saturation and no new themes emerged, which helped to establish validity (Simon, 2011, pp. 1–3).

Significance

The study of women terrorists has garnered increasing attention due to several events, among them the San Bernardino shooting, the Oklahoma City bomber, the Boko Haram kidnapping of approximately 250 young girls from school, the Boston Marathon bombers, and the Charlie Hebdo attack. In conducting this research, I addressed a gap in understanding regarding the importance of (a) social media propaganda, (b) mapping pathways, and (c) familial associations or partnerships in contributing to women's radicalization into international terrorist organizations. According to Speckhard and Shajkovic (2018), terrorist groups have managed to attract many Western men and women based on a group-think mentality, ideology, and vulnerability. Women involvement in radicalization provides strength to a terrorist group's survival from an organizational, religious, and reproductive ideological standpoint. Case studies may provide in-depth information on terrorist attacks/events, people, environment, and social norms, and convey meaning. The research is unique because it addresses a gap in immigration and counterterrorism public policy on understanding why there has been an increase in women traveling to high-risk countries to become radicalized.

Summary

In summation, the purpose of the study was to understand what motivates American women to join terrorism overseas. As I discussed in this chapter, this topic is currently little understood. In Chapter 1, I provided the reader with an overview of the study, including evidence related to the research gap and the assumptions, limitations,

and significance of this qualitative research. Next, in Chapter 2 I will assess the research on American women's pathway to radicalization by joining terrorist groups overseas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The phenomenon of women-involved terrorism spread from the Eastern to the Western hemisphere. However, it was not until the 1990s that research on women terrorists gained momentum and included a focus on the multifaceted ideological influences underpinning women's involvement in terrorism. Researchers have conducted several case studies on Russia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, South America, and Asia. However, the researchers have not scrutinized American women's motivation to join international terrorist groups. Sociocultural obligations may have contributed to the new wave of women terrorism. Although experts have identified situational environmental factors that contribute to women's involvement in overseas terrorism, they have not explored the social behavioral identifiers that create the urge for women to migrate or affiliate with terrorist groups, according to my review of the literature.

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivating factors associated with American women wanting to join international terrorist organizations and commit terrorist acts against the United States. Women's terrorist roles are varied, complex, and go beyond traditional and supportive functions in serving a dual purpose in an international terrorist organization. Understanding American women's attraction to international terrorism was an appropriate focus to comprehend specific pathways to radicalization against a country and its people. I begin this chapter by providing an overview on the comprehensive literature search strategy that I used. I describe the domains and terminology that I used find research on women terrorists' motivations.

Next, I provide an overview of the theoretical and conceptual framework, which includes a delineation a variety of theories that I could have used. Furthermore, there is an analysis of key variables and concepts to support the rationale for a qualitative study. In the literature review that follows, I provide insight into American women's motivation to join international terrorism. The literature review provides context on the motives of the increasing number of young American adult women who affiliate with international terrorist activities.

Literature Search Strategy

The literary search strategy involved the use of citation chaining (e.g., the search of references, footnotes, bibliographies, field research, books, peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, and research reports) and search alerts to identify new or recently published resources and experts in the field of women and terrorism. The search consists of psychological, sociological, political, criminal justice, international relations, and government databases. The databases and publications used to guide the literature search include a variety of sources, including EBSCO, SAGE Journal, Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group, Google Scholar, Walden Dissertations, RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, *Journal of Strategic Security*, Academia Publications Portal, Research Gate Publications, National Defense University, Homeland Security Digital Library, START: National Consortium of the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Studies in Conflict in Terrorism, The Investigative Project on Terrorism, National Archives – Terrorism, FAS Congressional Research Service Report on Terrorism, PEW Research Center – Terrorism, American Psychological Association,

Counter Extremism Project, The National Academies of Science Engineering Medicine, Council on Foreign Relations, Committee on Homeland Security, Government Technology & Services Coalition's-Homeland Security, International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies-International Center for Terrorism Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Heritage Foundation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) most wanted lists for international and domestic terrorism, and Perspectives on Terrorism.

The literature gathered is discovered from keywords combinations and synonyms relative to *women's radicalization and the United States, case studies on women terrorist/-ism, social and behavioral studies, socio-cultural norms of men and women terrorist, countering female terrorism, women and terrorism, female terrorist, internet and women radicalization, domestic terrorism, recruitment, motivations, behavioral, perceptions, westernization, and experiences*. As research in the field is gaining continuous momentum, I strove to constantly discover newly published research. Doing so was important to garner comprehensive information on the importance of women involved in terrorism and present new vantage points of motivation to join terrorism overseas against one's birth country and people.

Theoretical Framework

Women's diversification or expertise in livelihood (e.g., educated professional, financial, psychology, personality, gender roles, reproductive, feministic nature of nurturing) is symbolic of growth or weakness found in domestic and international disputes, wars, and terrorism by being shadows or bystanders of terrorist activities. Such

as vulnerable populations or individuals show a lineage of traits that suggest a constant attraction to extremism, radicalism, and terrorism to provide themselves an identity. Researchers have found a transition from women suicide bombers passing traits such as leaders to geospatial locations to be obsolete, and vulnerabilities to be beyond traditional roles or interests (Turkington & Christien, 2018). Turkington and Christien (2018) stated, “Although women remain relatively neglected, their participation in violent extremism is only growing, and women represent up to 20% of Western recruits to the Islamic State, and Boko Haram has used female suicide bombers at unprecedented levels” (p. 1). Because women have become an integral part of terrorist groups, there is a correlation in the rise of research and literature documenting women’s motivations, behaviors, psychological impacts, and social-cultural changes. Thus, there is reliable and generalizable research on what motivates American women to join an international terrorist organization. However, to understand the impact on American women, it is essential to articulate the theoretical and conceptual frameworks drawn from past, present, and future research.

From the 1970s to the 1990s, the evolution of women and terrorism spread to the West through a slow progression. Women were known as victims of civil war or would join fighting groups for protection or psychological reasons. By the 20th century, “Women are ideal stealth operatives in terrorist organizations with access to an additional 50% of the population” (Bloom, 2017, p. 1). *Women and Terrorism: Bombshell* (Bloom, 2012) is considered a pivot-point regarding women’s motivation to radicalize based on “five Rs: revenge, redemption, relationship, respect, and rape” (p. 235).

In “10 Reasons Western Women Seek Jihad and Join Terror Groups,” Speckhard and Shajkovic (2018) identified motivational and vulnerability sets:

(1) true believer – is an individual seeking the purity in Islamism; (2) avenger- is someone who seeks revenge due to geopolitical reasons or trauma; (3) joiner – individual wanting to belong through brotherhood or sisterhood protections; (4) becoming someone – to create an identity or mission in life; (5) adventurer – seeking romance, pleasures, and follow an adrenaline rush; (6) romantic – seeking a partner through seduction; (7) materialistic – better standard of life with employment, rewards, salary, and housing; (8) submissive – paternal obligations and traditional roles that follow into violent extremism (e.g. coercion, blackmail, rape, economically dependent); (9) escape artist – seeking independence from oppressive situations for a better life; and (10) redemption seeker- seeks to purify sins based on circumstances to be convinced of becoming a martyr. (pp. 6–11)

Bloom, Speckhard, Shajkovic, and Yayla are lead researchers in the field of women and terrorists from several vantage points to understand terrorism and counterterrorism. These researchers have interviewed over 150 women defectors in terrorist activities. The four scholars are primary resources with evidence-based case studies, interviews, and questionnaires to address theoretical concepts focused on socio-cultural behaviors and motivation. In addition to the first account evidence-based primary researchers, other researchers have used secondary research to provide theoretical and methodological evidence.

Several theoretical propositions identify women as primary weapons for terrorist organizations from a hard power and soft power perspective. Hard power with exclusive leadership or recruiting roles and soft power acclimated to familial and religious relationships or teachings. These theories present onsets of radicalization by understanding the intent and the action of deviant behaviors of women. A few influencing criteria are subjugated to a reiterative process challenging or building upon existing theories.

Social Identity Theory

According to Harwood-Melligan (2019) social identity theory through case studies goes beyond a plethora of cultural-psychological relationships and theological attractions. Social identity theory examines environmental factors from a phenomenological and ethnographic perspective. Case studies on the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Chechen Black widows, and Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam identify “social isolation and alienation, trauma, revenge, religious ideology, and suicide bombers” (Harwood-Melligan, 2019, pp. 30–32). Similarly, Bodziany and Netczuk-Gwoździwicz (2019) used a psychological analysis to understand woman’s role in terrorist structures by examining reasons for woman to participate in terrorist groups. The case studies examined a variety of radical women’s groups (e.g., Sri Lanka LTTE freedom fighters, Colombia’s FARC, and Chechen’s Black Widows, and a variety of Middle East terrorist organizations), validating Bloom’s theories on women’s motivations to radicalize.

Psychological-Classic Interaction Pattern

Speckhard and Shajkovic (2017) provided distinct examples of women's pathways to join radical groups. On the notion of "classic interaction pattern is used to understand the psychological impact of confirming to (a) group, (b) its ideology, (3) social support, and (4) personal motivations or vulnerabilities" (p. 5), the researchers investigated multiple case studies and interviews to determine a contagion effect with psychosomatic epidemic to attract young adult women. The research gathered explicated women willingly to follow as "zombies due to psychological numbness as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder" (Speckhard & Shajkovic, 2017, p. 15).

Etiological Methodology

An etiological methodology (investigates causation or origination) allowed Spencer (2016) to analyze 72 individual profiles of ISIS women "who have traveled, resided, or joined the caliphate" (p. 88). The study investigated specific roles/myriad and activities in a terrorist organization through a vertical ranking system that contributes to privileges and opportunities. Spencer validated the findings of Bloom regarding women being abducted and subjected to sexual exploitation or sex trading through a hierarchical order within an organization (Ali, 2015; Bloom, 2017).

Social Learning Theory

Shapiro and Maras (2019) "conduct[ed] an open-source courts-case examination of thirty-one American women who were radicalized or conducted illegal activities under the social learning theory by understanding self-, dyad-, and group classifications" (p. 88). "Applying Aker's social learning theory to radicalization (consist[ing] of cognitive

and behavioral components),” Shapiro and Maras found religious terrorism differs by person with a similar basis in ideology, psychology, and community. A majority of radicalized individuals or groups learn deviance through imitation, modeling, and accessible reinforcement agents such as social media or networks of communicators. To emphasize the research study by Shapiro and Maras, which confirmed women who are unbeknown travelers seek three motives: “1. grievances (perception of mistreatment) , 2. solutions (state-building, belonging, identity, and equality), and 3. personal (revenge, redemption, relationships, and respect)” (p. 93).

Conclusion

The following theories present a human behavioral need or desire or characteristics that are identified by roles and/or environmental triggers or nodes. The sociological and psychological aspects to American women becoming radicalized should be explored through a number of meta-analytical approaches, such as multicausal, political, organizational, physiological, psychological, sociological, cultural, socio-cognitive, religious, frustration-aggression, historical, socioeconomic, and negative identities (Hudson et al., 1999; Shapiro & Maras, 2019). The following theories validate the use of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory from a motivational perspective, providing a vertical and triangular analysis to validate women’s positions and urge deviation against their countries of origin by traveling to high-risk countries. The literary concepts will articulate a dynamic understanding of American women’s motivation to join terrorism based on sociopsychological “trends, motivations, behaviors, and actions that reveal a vulnerability” (Hudson et al., 1999, p. i). The multifaceted theories show self-esteem to

be an integral part to understanding women deviants. The study will assist in counterterrorist methodologies and serve as an immigration resource for customs and border patrol.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Per Silke (2001), “80% of terrorism research is primarily on pre-existing data that reflects a decrease in primary data gathering from 46% as reported in 1988 for general terrorism research to 23%” (pp. 4–5). An influx of women joining terrorism possesses a critical research gap. In a review of 54 sources on women terrorism, Jacques and Taylor (2009) focused on secondary data due to difficulties in accessing confidential information. Therefore, this qualitative study used existing data from field researchers or government entities who have interviewed, examined cases, or questioned women terrorists. The problem with gaining access to primary research is danger and conflict-ridden demographics that can endanger individuals or groups. Secondary qualitative research allows multiple cases or individuals to be compared or contrasted through open-access websites, court documents, press releases, investigatory profit or nonprofit organizations, and individuals who have collected primary research data (interview or case studies). Harwood-Melligan (2019) and Bodziany and Netczuk-Gwoździewicz (2019) conducted case studies to understand different radical/terrorist groups organization that recruit women.

The study’s focus was on a psychological, social, and cultural dilemma to understand the motivation of women in terrorist organizations, specifically American women traveling to high-risk terrorism-driven countries. Shapiro and Maras (2019)

posited, “Interest resides in finding gaps in empirical research by understanding female supporters of ISIS in the United States through social learning theory to better assist in deradicalization or extremist beliefs and acts” (p. 96). Researchers investigate the roles of women or propagandization via social media or individuals already radicalized (e.g., family, friends, acquaintances, recruiters).

In a case study, Speckhard and Shajkovic (2017) collected data from young adult women through interviews and narrative experiences. Spencer (2016) used a mixed methods approach with quantitative data and qualitative case studies (interviews with former female terrorism participants) to obtain a comprehensive understanding of women’s roles from nationalistic and age perspectives. Although the age group presented a challenge due to availability, cross-studies among the 72 women ages 14 to 18 years support a purposive methodology to maintain a data stratification for a qualitative study.

The method consistent with this study’s scope was secondary data research to apply theoretical and conceptual analysis. Secondary data analysis allows the researcher to pinpoint details in which primary researchers may be biased or subjected to specific generalizations. The scope of the study relied on accessibility, national security measures, bias, and data saturation.

Current Research on Female Terrorists

The following theories and variables are an ongoing phenomenon with complexities in obtaining information (see Spencer, 2016). The phenomenon under investigation extended beyond media, biographical, and environmental circumstantial vantage points to focus on understanding the individual’s needs. I used a multifaceted, in-

depth approach to review case studies, interviews, and questionnaires, finding a motivation to progress based on unmet human needs. Shapiro and Maras (2019) stated that empirical data on Western women joining ISIS or other terrorist groups are controversial because the roles are described differently by different researchers, typologies can vary, and women's roles are unique to organizational groups.

Women terrorists are faced by a “triple bind of oppression [triggers-points]: societal gender inequalities, oppression within their terrorist groups, and Western oppression from imperialist nations - which make women militant” (Sixta, 2008, p. 261). According to Bodizany and Netczuk-Gwoździewicz (2019), “Cultural difference are acceptable as a variable, but the issue of feminization of terrorism is becoming more complex and complicated” (p. 15).

Even though historical, geographic, and sociocultural indications are crucial to the authenticity and diversity of women joining terrorist or rebel groups, research and analysis on root human motivations or identity crises is scant (Blaskie, 2016). A comparative extension among a variety of societies, groups, and waves of women terrorists is essential to investigate decisions women terrorist encounter to enable or disable continuous participation in terrorist or rebel groups from a needs-based or psychological perspective.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Researchers approach the problem of studying female terrorists through social justice controversies seen in gender role inequality and media-controlled propaganda, environmental strains, and unrealistic stereotypes (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Several

scholars have addressed the inequality of research relative to male versus female terrorists due to information access (Harwood-Melligan, 2019). There are inherent weaknesses to secondary research that lack substantial details sculpted via theoretical applications to explicated different vantage points in research. Overall, the strengths identified in most research strategies are data stratification. Spencer (2016) warned that gathering research from secondary or open sources could bias the sample based on a large secretive or clandestine population making data stratification difficult.

Spencer (2016) found limitations with identifying:

Meaningful data regarding patterns in the recruitment of women in different roles; therefore, profiling 72 homegrown women who traveled and joined a caliphate by identifying systematic patterns via independent variables by characterizing females holding specific roles by 1. participant nationality; 2. age; 3. technical expertise; and 4. Husbands rank in ISIS. (p. 96)

Spencer's research is influential due to "effective coding methods – prevailing primary, secondary, and tertiary roles (Spencer, 2016).

Shapiro and Maras (2019, p. 96) characterized 31 American women by age (18–21; $n = 9$; 21–30; $n = 7$), location (across the United States), marital/family status (most women were single or married with children), religion (50/50 chance of religious zest), birthplace (15 U.S. nationals), and education levels (50/50 chance of unknown or high school completion). From these characteristics, the researchers could identify self, dyad, and group radicalization typologies.

According to Dawson (2019),

A strong study creates a foundation in pursuit of new data and theoretical insights for future theories and models by tackling the problem of radicalization by focusing on dominant trends in: (1) specifying the problem, (2) shifting from profiles to process, (3) understand the necessity of a multi-factorial approach, (4) consider the heterogeneity as a problem, and (5) recognize primary data problems. (p. 147)

Global Participation by Women in Terrorist Activities

Women worldwide have played pivotal roles as revolutionaries, curators, and active members of a regime. They have fought for righteousness irrespective of their good or ill intentions. Bigio and Vogelstein (2019) noted,

Women are ignored by conventional depictions and are active participants in 60% of armed rebel groups; additionally, a number of women implicated in terrorism-related crimes is growing: in 2017 the Global Extremism Monitor registered 100 distinct suicide attacks conducted by 181 female militants, constituting 11% of all incidents that year. (p. #)

Western women have participated in many international terrorist groups, including FARC of Colombia, German Baader-Meinhof Gang is also known as the Red Army Faction, Tamil Tigers, Black Widows, Italian Red Brigades, Shining Path of Peru, Animal Liberation Front (ALF), Earth Liberation Front (ELF), Syrian Socialist National Party, Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Aryan Nation, Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Al-Qaeda, and ISIS (Bodziany & Netczuk-Gwoździewicz, 2019; Cronin, 2019; Sanchez, 2014;

Shapiro & Maras, 2019; Spencer, 2016; Von-Knop, 2007). American women have long been revolutionary fighters against oppression and equal rights. After 9/11, women's involvement in radical activities grew because of the strategic vision of Middle Eastern terrorist groups recruitment processes that allow women to be religious martyrs, rearers, supporters, and progressives (Spencer, 2016). Access to information through the internet exposes women to different ideas and uncensored cultural access points, specifically younger women seeking zest in life while attaining capital and relationships.

Women or male terrorists are known to be well educated, critical thinkers, and monetarily capable. A business model is needed to understand the spread of terrorism worldwide, specifically to capitalized nations, luring women into international terrorist organizations overseas. According to the *Harvard Business Review*, "An effective strategic vision statement, alignment, talent, and clarity matter for the short-term and long-term longevity of organizations" (LSA Global, 2020). Terrorist organizations have achieved new strategic vantage points presented by business models that "inspire and challenge, maintain a future orientation, motivate with memorable attributes, purpose-driven, create believable or achievable relevance, and maintain a uniqueness" (LSA Global, 2020). The business model's conceptual use could maintain relevance and presence for terrorist networks. When terrorist organizations create a wave of emotional triggers questioning American or Western cultural fanaticism and desires unmet by a retractor's government, citizens may perceive the terroristic standard of living as superior. The incompetence of government and social structures validates terrorist groups' propagandistic business models attracting young adult women.

Role of Media in Recruitment of Women Into Terrorist Groups

Radical groups have found enablers via the internet's social media and communication platform (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, websites, chatrooms). Online media is geared toward women who lack emotional expression, have broken communication barriers under a controlled environment, and seek an identity as part of a collectivist group. Online terrorist organizations' presence facilitates covert operations such as "information gathering, coordinate plans, solicit funds and support, attack critical infrastructure, and propagandistic recruitment while remaining anonymous" (Sanchez, 2014, pp. 6–12). It has become relatively easy to produce and spread information regarding any terrorist group's missions and caliphate that attract youths and women seeking escapism from personal bondage. The internet provides a portal for unanimity with continuous communication without boundaries. For example, Al-Khansaa and Al-Shamikha (also known as Dabiq's, a Western counterculture entertainment version of *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, and *Inspire* magazines) is an online periodical that urges women to take on a motherly role (i.e., a "Jihadi bride") and bear children to help the terrorist organization's Jihad efforts (Ali, 2015, p. 15; Shapiro & Maras, 2019, p. 105; Spencer, 2016, p. 79). Jihad is a religious duty to fight a holy war against non-Muslims and liberal or Western ways of life (Sanchez, 2014; Von-Knop, 2007). Beyond Jihad is the Hajj ritual, which grants permissions to women on the bases of prayer, Jihad, and respect toward parents, allowing their full participation (Von-Knop, 2007). Recruitment is focused on Maqar (married/unmarried matchmaking service), Al-Zawr (radicalized finishing schooling), and Wilayat (building of terrorist cells

worldwide), which are ameliorated through the Al-Khansaa to merge disciplines over a vertical transmission of time (Spencer, 2016).

The online platform initially attracts young women and men into relationships. There are multiple cases of women succumbing to radical websites, including the following:

- Malika el Around: A Belgian-Moroccan recruiter who later married and was linked to Osama bin Laden; arrested in 2008 (Sanchez, 2014).
- Roshonara Choudhry: A British student lone wolf (independently acting) who stabbed parliamentarian to avenge the Iraqi people (Sanchez, 2014).
- U.S.-born Colleen LaRose (“Jihad Jane”): Radicalized through an online platform and traveled to Europe; arrested for conspiracy and recruitment upon return to America (Sanchez, 2014).
- Sonja B.: A German who traveled to Iraq as a suicide bomber with her child; represents the extent to which terrorist organizations use the internet (Bloom, 2007, p. 101).
- Sinmyah Amara Ceasar: 24-year-old known as “Umm Nutella.” Pleaded guilty to connecting U.S.-based extremists to other terrorist groups. Traveled to Sweden and pleaded guilty to being a product of radical recidivism despite government arrest (Morales & Frechette, 2019).

Sanchez (2014) noted, “Women have contributed to a greater entity known as Umm Salameh (wives of terrorist), purportedly the widow of Al-Qaida’s leader in Northern Iraq, who is a leader and role model for other women, propaganda, and

recruitment” (p. 22). As radical groups disintegrated, Al-Shabaab and other groups have united, “promising women jobs, financial support, and counseling” (Cronin, 2019, para. 5).

A perception is that most young adult women (ages 16 to 30) are highly technologically driven, educated, financially apt, and likely to administer extremist ideologies to family members (e.g., children, spouses, and friends). Women can effortlessly attract many educated career-driven professional women seeking employment in impact-driven careers (e.g., “medicine, engineering, communication, linguistics, computer technology, sciences, weapons, financing”; Spencer, 2016, p. 89) and easily recruit through uncensored radical literature and social media to create many lone-wolf terrorists or leaders within a group (individually acting extremist women).

Gender Role Distinctions Pertaining to Women’s Involvement in Terrorism

The argument posed by researchers and government officials is that women terrorists only perform traditional roles, such as supporters, child-bearers, and street fighters, remaining local due to high positions within organizational hierarchy and familiarity to assimilate into terrorist units. Rebel groups like Boko Haram, the Islamic State (of Iraq and Levant/Syria), al-Qaeda, al-Shabab, and other groups take advantage of young adult women, creating revenue through trafficking and symbolizing terrorist groups achievements (Bigio & Vogelstein, 2019). Gender roles define situational representations of religious or cultural attributes that might bring retaliation (Speckhard & Shajkovic, 2017). Women serve as a layer of ideological purities at a personal, emotional, and religious support system by bearing children, multiple marriages to

maintain a husband-wife relationship, and create hierarchical longevity within radical groups (Shapiro & Maras, 2019).

In March 2003, Al Qaeda confirmed a woman-led group named Umm Osama (“The Mother of Osama”) training women in suicide attacks and allowing women from other nationalities to join carrying out operations via internet communications (Von-Knop, 2007). Since the 9/11 attacks, researchers have found a majority of women associated in promoting terrorist accounts tend to have strong financial and social media support structures. Essentially, women as recruiters and gender role distinctions are irreplaceable, creating a typology of women in domestic roles to be a virtuous instrument: home-science (wife and mother), operational roles, Al-Khansaa Brigade or other forms of women groups within an organization, recruiters, state-building roles, skilled workers, and students (molded into ideal retractionist; Shapiro & Maras, 2019; Spencer, 2016). Major terrorist organization prescribe moral duties to maintain purity, such as “the Al-Zawra, a finishing school that offers five disciplines: 1. first aid training; 2. social media marketing and computer programming; 3. Islamic law; 4. firearms and explosive training; and 5. domestic affairs” (Spencer, 2016, p. 79). Similarly, “Germany’s radical sisterhood conducts: 1. Subhiya – breakfast meetings, 2. Istiybal – receptions with greater number of participants, and 3. Dschahnyya – monetary distributions” (Von-Knop, 2007, p. 408).

Gender role distinctions are based on women from foreign or sovereign nationalities. As matchmaking or recruitment occurs, one would think native women would be considered a commodity; on the contrary, foreign women are considered high value due to their ability to assimilate and satisfy the organizational duties with ease

without objection (Spencer, 2016). Spencer (2016) continued, “Marriage within terrorist organizations [is] satisfied at youth till young adult age or approximately seventeen to maintain youthfulness, purity, and attractiveness with submission to husband and family’s needs” (p. 18). Manifestos are created to clarify separate gender roles between men and women, and foreign or nationalist persons. In the ISIS organization, clauses about marriage and motherhood are clearly laid out: “If widowed or disowned to be re-married withing four months and ten days per the idda, waiting period” (p. 82).

Operational roles and women’s brigades/groups (ages 18 to 25 years) within an organization are trained to protect the organization through intelligence-gathering, recruiting, and overseeing special activities (Spencer, 2016). Spencer (2016) noted,

Some analysts argue that the majority of the division’s 60 members are westerners, while U.S. Officials and counter-terrorism experts state women holding executive roles are solely of national descent because of the necessity to communicate and maintain origins within the organization and locals. (p. 83).

The executive or top women recruits operate as an “all-female ultra-oppressive militia or police force” (p. 84). Western women recruits are campaign managers displaying a high standard of life and organizing travel for future recruits through social media websites or chat rooms. Foreign-educated women are appreciated for state-building and as skilled workers who can extend organizations’ jurisdictions and weaponization. While men adhere to macroelements with major organizational and top leaderships, women contribute to the microelements of the organization for future longevity. Overall, the

internet's wide distribution creates a high demand for Western/foreign female recruits' transformation with integral roles within an organization.

Summary

Women's radicalization is based on enthusiasm versus repercussions that show a mix of traditional (high-risk) and modern-day (low-risk) aesthetics through internet and social media access. Traditionally, individuals or groups would meet in a specific or viable location to communicate. Modern affixes of technology allow access to a variety of expedient communication and reaction. Women are considered a prototype for being a suitable wife, "birthing the next generation of radicalism, advancing globally online, and maintaining a network of women" (Spencer, 2016, pp. 74–75). Shapiro and Maras (2019) attested that the internet is transformative with a wide distribution of romanticized gender-neutral roles, religious glorification, and idiosyncratic behavior to other forms of social media communication.

Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik radicalized before courting/dating online and marrying in Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Peralta, 2015). Malik received a U.S. green card, the couple held another ceremony in California, and gave birth to a baby girl. The couple was assessed on the nature of the inspiration they took from foreign organizations. They pledged allegiance with the Islamic State via Facebook, modified guns used in the shooting, and depleted their finances. San Bernardino husband-wife Farook and Malik shooters integrated gender roles and sensationalized media attention, inviting a psychological platform to other recruits. Virtual communities renege promises of "empowerment, deliverance, participation, and pity" (Shapiro & Maras, 2019, p. 93).

Satisfying interest on a psychological level represents sociocultural or religious appreciation as a form of motivation and acceptance. There is an ideological, operative, revolutionary, and progressive outlook for American women motivated to join international terrorist organizations. Several theoretical and conceptual studies show potential and kinetic behavioral inspirations as terrorist organizations fabricate intrinsic and extrinsic environmental (cause-and-effect) motivations to radicalize women against their countries of citizenship (Bizovi, 2014; Lynn, 2020).

Rationale for Conceptual Focus and Research Question

The rationale for the selected variables and concepts is to investigate the microscopic motivational trigger points of “social, personal, idealistic, key event, and revenge” (Jacques & Taylor, 2009, p. 506). Evidence-based research will continue due to the volatility of interacting with female terrorists. Topics in need of study include immigration policies and trigger points specific to counterterrorism. Secondary data are used to maintain consistency through an iterative process. The variables and concepts discussed move beyond general concepts with specific trigger points through the nine tiers necessary to support the study of women’s motivations to join international terrorism overseas through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies, research explores the strengths and weaknesses of theories in developing better variables or concepts for examination. In some studies, the variables and concepts are limited by the reliance on secondary data because of accessibility and national security. Information can be biased, require time and special

clearances to access data, lack evidentiary support due to redacted material, and unavailable to the public.

The research question of motivating factors associated with American women to join a terrorist organization and commit terrorist acts is meaningful because it moves beyond general concepts. The question validates the interjection of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to recognize motivation and behaviors from intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives. The social behavioral theory provided a pathway to understand violent extremism through a migration that led to two perspectives: "continued interest" versus "discontinued interest" to commit a terrorist act or join a terrorist organization. Prior research and limitations contributed to the identification of key variables in what motivates American women to travel to high-risk countries.

Summary and Conclusions

Women who join a terrorist organization overseas are not limited to a specific region, geographic location, or nationality (Ali, 2015). The use of modern technology is a predecessor to radicalization for many women. Further, women are often more capable and successful than men in carrying out propagandistic communication or deviant actions. The psychological approaches attempt to understand why individuals renounce to live an inchoate life of servitude or seek high-risk adrenaline within a collectivistic organization. It is unknown what incites American women from a needs-based motivation to join terrorist organizations overseas. The rise in American women joining terrorist groups was transparent through analysis of systematically collected data, as I will discuss in Chapter 3.

The study will fill a gap in the literature. The findings will show the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and needs of American women that are manipulated by disseminated ideologies or invoked changes in an individual's decision-making. The study's contribution is specific to the knowledge on motivating factors associated with American women's reasons to radicalize to join terrorist organizations and commit terrorist acts.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivation of American women to travel to high-risk countries to become radicalized against the United States. To demonstrate the gap in research on the study topic, I review key literature in Chapter 2. My focus is on providing a comprehensive understanding of the new era of terrorism, particularly in regard to the role of women in terrorist organizations and their motivations for joining these groups. To examine the research phenomenon, I used Maslow's hierarchy of needs and broader theory of human motivation. I also used Bloom's taxonomy. This classification system has four levels, as Tapia (2018, para 1–7) and Krathwohl (2002, pp. 212–218) noted:

1. Factual knowledge consists of terminologies, specific details, and basic elements.
2. Conceptual knowledge consists of interrelationships of classifications and categories, principles, and theories.
3. Procedural knowledge consists of subject-specific skills and algorithms, techniques, and criteria for using ethical procedures.
4. Metacognitive knowledge consists of analytical realm of critical thinking.

To answer the study's research question, I followed qualitative research methodology and analyzed secondary data. In this chapter, will address the procedural elements of the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher in maintaining credibility and ethical standards, the methodology and instrumentation, and the data analysis plan.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for the study was, What are the motivating factors associated with American women's joining of terrorist organizations and commission of terrorist acts? The research design for a majority of studies on women and terrorism features the qualitative inquiry framework with core questions in interdisciplinary roots in feminism, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. The central focal points of this study were (a) social media propaganda, (b) mapping pathways, and (c) women's views of and roles in familial associations and partnerships. The study of women terrorists undermines women in the advocacy of terrorism driven by public policy and sociocultural taboos.

Qualitative research features several approaches: autoethnography, ethnomethodology, realism, grounded theory, phenomenology, social constructivism, symbolic interaction, and hermeneutics (Patton, 2015). Per Cairney's (2013) viewpoint, picking a robust theoretical framework should involve practical synthesis and be complementary, empirically supportive, and replicable, which means narrowing a framework into a specific microtheory that is focused and complements the research question (see also USC Libraries, n.d.). Social learning theory devises several subgroups in organizational behavioral perspectives such as theories of organizational culture and change, modern structural organization theory, and human resource theory (Shafritz et al., 2016). Andrews and Bonta (1998, as cited in Cullen & Agnew, 2006) noted,

The word learning should not be taken to mean that the theory is only about how novel criminal behavior is acquired. Behavioral principles are limited to learning

but are fundamental principles of performance [that accounts for] ... the acquisition, maintenance, and modification of human behavior. (p. 135)

The human resource theory or the organizational behavior perspective—specifically, Abraham Maslow’s theory of human motivation—complemented this investigation of what motivates American women to travel overseas to join terrorist organizations. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists of a pyramid with essential to complex needs: (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) love, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization (Shafritz et al., 2016). Women who have migrated from other countries or domestically struggled in traditional or conservative lifestyles have been motivated to seek gratifying identities or opportunities with support and compassion personified by terrorist organizations. “Any motivational behavior is preparatory or consummatory [and] must be understood to be a channel through which many basic needs may be simultaneously expressed or satisfied—typically an act has more than one motivation” (Shafritz et al., 2016, p. 142). Channels include the social media propaganda used to enroll women into terrorism to be leaders, educators, and active members of a hierarchical order.

According to Green (2000), “Motivation theory is not synonymous with behavior theory, because motivations are only one class of determinants of behavior. While behavior is almost always motivated, it is also almost always biologically, culturally, and situationally determined as well” (para. 1). The San Bernardino, California women shooter, Tashfeen Malik, supported her husband Syed Rizwan Farook, who was a supporter of ISIS. Malik was from an educated family; traveled between Pakistan, Saudi

Arabia, and the United States; and used social media or the internet as a means of expression (Botelho, 2015). Maslow's hierarchy of needs could assist in understanding the phenomena of American women's attraction to join overseas terrorist organizations. Therefore, a qualitative purposeful sampling of case studies (American women retractors who are 18 years or older, natural-born citizens, and travel to high-risk countries) will assist in understanding in-depth motivations from basic to complex needs.

Qualitative research on terrorism contains secondary research analysis presented as case studies of textual evidence (e.g., field notes, classified information interview scripts or narratives between researcher-and-participant or a collection of government sources). Supplementing secondary research could be primary exploration from Speckhard or affiliates in high-ranking government or academic positions with data authorization. The chosen rationale by many researchers is due to high-risk fieldwork volatility, accessibility with high-ranking clearances, time, and resources.

Role of the Researcher

A researcher's role is to seek answers to the research question via defined procedural parameters and maintain ethical boundaries. The use of secondary data allows the researcher to access data that is difficult to obtain. "A primary researcher may not have considered different research questions from a secondary researcher's perspective that can deepen the understanding of data already in the literature" (DeCarlo, 2018, para. 11). Some limitations can be addressed to maximize a secondary researcher's cost-effective and timeliness approach (Ruggiano & Perry, 2019). The qualitative method for exploratory research allows flexibility in interpreting rich or detailed data, specifically

case studies (e.g., documented [analysis] transcribed written material: interviews, case files, or briefings) that cannot be analyzed via empirical quantitative methods.

I am a multiethnic woman researcher with Eastern and Western values. A conflict of interest between personal and professional environments could hinder data analysis, and gender-specific thoughts can compromise the study. However, information acquired by one or more researchers allows data collected to be analyzed beyond the established theoretical vantage point with an established methodology and instrumentation to maintain ethical credibility. The role of the researcher is to remain unbiased. Fink (2000) suggested,

Thematize; a design technique or character to explore the data collection process, and presentation; transcribe through systematic coding; explore with respect of the researcher's ownership and integrity of its respondents; verify with proper documentation of data, and report findings. (para 2.1)

“Reflection and refraction” coding is used to separate a conflict of interest of personal thought processes versus the observed materials interjection that could lead to insufficiencies (Saldaña, 2016, p.53-54). In this study, data saturation, instrumentation, coding, and academic member checking will minimize researcher bias. I will maintain alignment throughout the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks.

Methodology

Secondary data collection is appropriate to reach data saturation and depth so other researchers can replicate the study and achieve similar findings. The notion considered was:

(1) “Retrospective interpretation,” new or unanswered research questions is explored from the data which is not fully explained in the original research study; and (2) “cross-validation,” in which the researcher uses other databases to confirm or discount new findings and suggest patterns related to his/her own sample and research. (Turner, 1997, p. 4)

A purposeful sample maintained objectivity and participant characteristics through a specific population.

Participant Selection Logic

Government and academic sources provide a cogent population sample of young adult American women citizens with the legal age of consent of 18 years and older in the United States (which already considers the average global age of consent of 16 years and older). This study’s sample consisted of seven available cases of women (a) traveling between the United States and high-risk terrorist-infiltrated countries post-9/11 with (b) a history of resentment toward the United States and (c) possible actions in high-level criminal activity against the United States. This selection allowed the researcher to examine several American women to reach data saturation. As Mack et al. (2015) described,

The qualitative data is textual such as: in-depth interviews obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes from the primary researchers (obtained with consent) are optimal for collecting data on individuals, personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, mainly when sensitive topics are explored. (p. 2)

After I reviewed the secondary data and determined that several women matched the sample criteria, I input their information NVivo qualitative data software to code the data set and answer necessary aspects of the research question. I also used Maslow's motivational model to interpret the data. Microsoft Excel was used as part of the two-cycle coding system: descriptive-exploratory and theoretical concept (Saldaña, 2016). By using a purposeful sample, I was able to foster consistency between the research question and the data analysis (see Mack et al., 2015). Figures 1–3 contain, an illustration of Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, the NVivo coding categories, and the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet used for data analysis, respectively.

Instrumentation

The utility of secondary research synthesis comes from existing databases allowing the research question to be answered through established data and devices or tools for analysis instrumentation (Mack et al. 2015). According to Saldaña (2016),

Qualitative data analysis (QDA), a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or translates' data and thus attributes interpreted mean to each individual datum for alter purpose of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes. (p. 4)

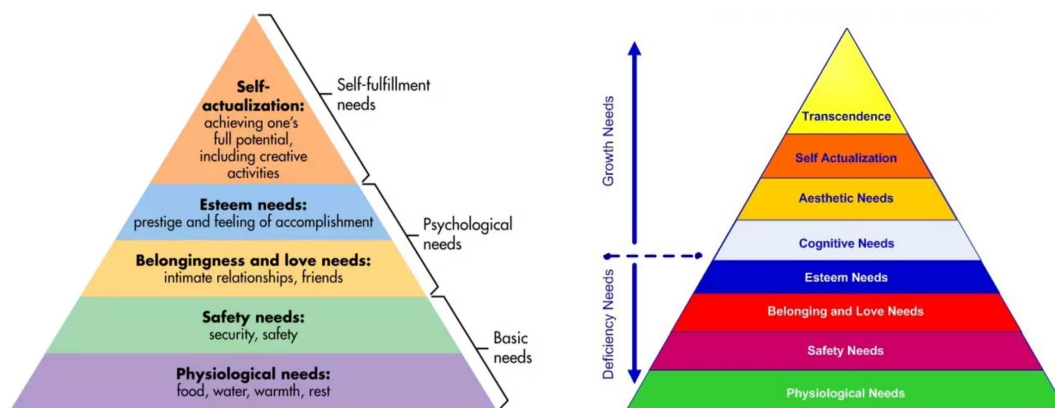
I reviewed the literature to identify several cases of young adult American woman citizens 18 years and older identified as high-risk travelers to terrorist countries and locations with feelings of resentment or retaliation to American thought.

Theoretical Model for Data Collection

Data collection was based on the concept of human resources theory that integrates behavioral cultural expectations such as organized behavior (Shafritz et al., 2016). Maslow's motivational model is appropriate because it imbricates a new perspective based on a central concept. Abraham Maslow first introduced his five-tier hierarchy of needs in his 1943 book, *A Theory of Human Motivation*. This later become an eight-tier model known as Maslow's motivational model addressing deficiency and growth needs (Kenrick et al., 2010; McLeod, 2022). The published data collection instrument noted in Figure 1 is the secondary data analytics framework to maintain content validity.

Figure 1

Maslow's Motivational Model



Note. This figure was produced by Maslow *Hierarchy of Needs* (5-tier) in 1943 (left side) and Maslow's *Motivations Model* (8-tier) redefined in 1962 (right side).

Data Source

Several government or academic databases provide a cross-check examination (accuracy) of selected woman affiliates that initiated travel to high-risk countries of terrorist homage. The databases used to evaluate the efficacy of the deviant women population sample and assist in assessing individual woman terrorist case studies and information were collected via the University of Maryland on Women, CEP, Global Terrorism Database (GTD), National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism (START), the Intercept: Trial and Terror (TITT) database, and Dr. Anne Speckhard's affiliation to International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (CSVE) and Government Technology-Service Coalitions. I documented the collected data in Microsoft Excel and input them into NVivo software per the foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

After the data were collected, categorized, and coded in NVivo software, information was converted into visual diagrams. I used a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to record my observational notes and reflections to add to the richness of data collection. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the foundation of convergence and divergence of the data collection tools needed to maintain procedural coding and conclusive analysis. The published and researcher-developed instruments provided the foundation for the data analysis plan attributes to answering the research question with depth, replication, and usability.

Figure 2

Example of NVivo Data Collection Tool (Classifications and Coding)

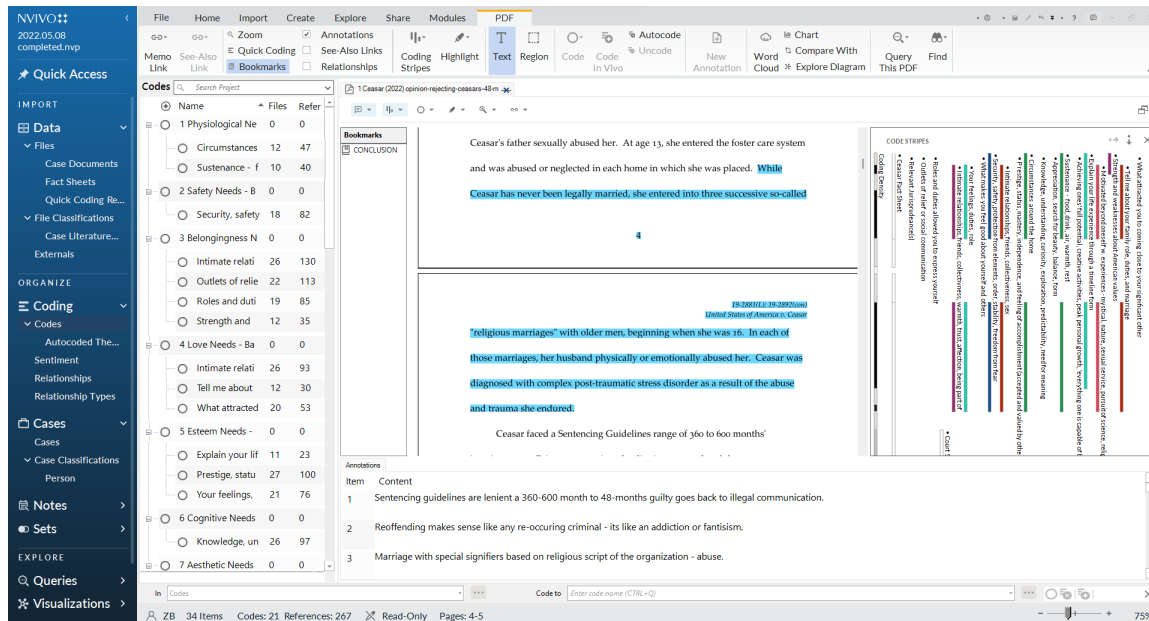


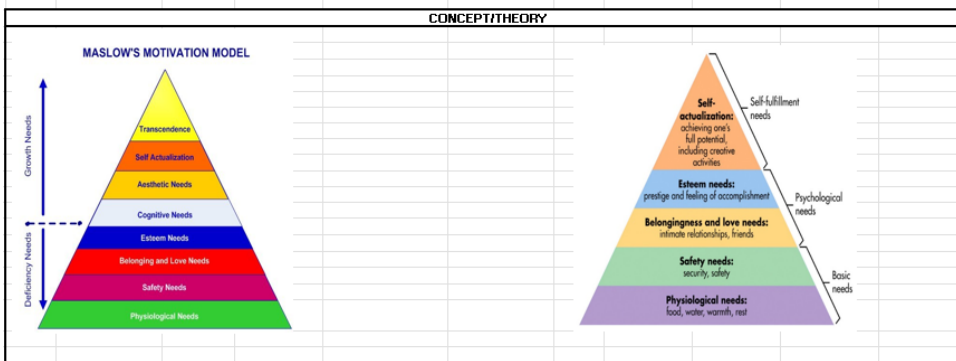
Figure 3

Microsoft Excel Coding Sheet

Transcription Coding	Secondary Researchers: Exploratory Questions to Maintain Alignment for Coding and Data Analysis
Q1: Physiological & Safety Needs	1. What were some of the circumstances around your home ? a. Physiological Needs (food, water, warmth, rest) b. Safety Needs (security, safety)
Q2: Love Needs	2. Tell me about your family role ? duties ? married ?
Q3: Love Needs	3. What attracted you to coming close to your significant other?
Q4: Belongingness	4. What are some outlets of relief or social communication?
Q5: Belongingness	5. What are some strengths and weaknesses about American values?
Q6: Belongingness	6. What roles and duties allowed you to express yourself ?
Q7: Esteem Needs	7. Can you explain your life experiences through a timeline form ? your feelings, duties, role ?
Q8: Self-Actualization	8. What makes you feel good about yourself or others ?

Transcription Coding	COLORS
Researcher Question	Yellow
1 Physiological Needs	Green
2 Safety Needs	Blue
3 Belonging Needs	Magenta
4 Love Needs	Red
5 Esteem Needs	Turquoise
6 Cognitive Needs	Gray
7 Aesthetic Needs	Brown
8 Self-Actualization Needs	Purple
9 Transcendence	Pink

Cases Name & #	Low-Risk		Moderate Borderline -Gray Area			High-Risk			
	Basic Needs		Psychological Needs			Self-Fulfillment Needs			
Total	Physiological Needs	Safety Needs	Belonging Needs	Love Needs	*Esteem Needs	*Cognitive Needs	Aesthetic Needs	Self-Actualization	Transcendence
1									
DEFICIENCY NEEDS TOTAL	0		*GRAY AREA TOTAL 0			GROWTH NEEDS TOTAL 0			
	Basic Needs	0	Psychological Needs	0		Self-Fulfillment Needs	0		



*aspects can be applied with positive or negative connotation

Data Analysis Plan

The qualitative data analysis plan was specific to the research question: What are the motivating factors associated with American women's joining of terrorist organizations and commission of terrorist acts? Per Ravitch and Carl (2016), "Defining and critically approaching qualitative data analytics is intentional, systematic scrutiny of data at various states and moments throughout the research process" (p. 217). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) expanded on

Three distinct approaches to data content-analysis being: (1) conventional; (2) directed; and (3) summative. All three approaches interpret meaning from the content of text data and, hence, adhere to the naturalistic paradigm. The major differences among the approaches are coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. (p. 1277)

The foundation of this research data analysis plan is configured on "directed content analysis, which starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes" (p. 1277).

This scrutiny considers "triangulation, which involves the specific process of (1) data organization and management, (2) immersive engagement with data, and (3) writing and representation" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 217). To maintain trustworthiness and credibility, transcription and coding provide a summative technique for a macro- or micro-perspective unique beyond numbers to engage with data and written interpretation. The secondary data are acquired through the consent of confidentiality agreements when necessary to ensure the researcher's safety and data collection sample. The manner or

treatment of discrepant cases of qualitative case studies is deciphered through the purposive sampling technique. The data analysis process used NVivo and Microsoft Excel to maintain a cross-check on the information obtained, tools to accommodate secondary data limitations for reflexivity, and future replication. A secondary researcher exploratory question noted in Figure 2 assisted in transcribing and coding data through an iterative process. Cases were coded (e.g., primary, secondary, and tertiary levels) and analyzed until data saturation was attained through available secondary documented sources to maintain alignment and remain unbiased in answering the research question. Lastly, data synthesis occurred to validate research findings.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Issues of researcher trustworthiness must be acknowledged due to the cause-and-effect of internal and external validity of research over time, empirical relationships, and relationships that cannot be explained by other factors. “As a qualitative researcher (using secondary data), we seek patterns as somewhat stable indicators of humans’ way of living and working to render the world more comprehensible, predictable, and traceable” (Saldaña, 2014, p. 12). Researcher’s findings become trustworthy pieces of evidence since patterns demonstrate habits, salience, and importance in people’s daily lives (Saldaña, 2014, 2016). “They (qualitative research findings) help confirm our descriptions of people’s five Rs: routine, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships. Discerning these trends is a way to solidify our observations into concrete instances of meaning” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 15). A way of being self-conscious of “the process of qualitative research’s reflexivity, inductivity, recursiveness, and systematics” (Ravitch &

Carl, 2016, p. 113). According to the 1985 Lincoln and Guba trustworthiness study (as cited in Qualitative Research Guidelines Project, 2008), researchers must address trustworthiness through pose, confidence, and parallels of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reliability (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility is visible when data is accurately aligned to address the research design and question. Patton (2015) and Saldaña (2016) questioned issues of trustworthiness to

Consider patterns and themes running through these metaphors: transformation, transmutation, conversion, synthesis, whole from parts, and sense-making.

Through these metaphors, qualitative analysis is a heuristic and cyclical act in which magnitudes of information can distract the researcher's attention that characterizes strength and knowledge, experience, creativity, diligence, and work of the researcher. (Patton, 2015, p. 521; Saldaña, 2016, p. 9)

Secondary data collection and purposeful sampling methods adhere to transparency by respecting the Institutional Review Board (IRB), reaching data saturation with in-depth analyses, data organization consistencies with member check or peer review, the confidentiality of participants, and all aspects of the research process establishing veracity.

Transferability

Gauging transferability in research on sensitive federal information of women active in terrorism can leave the researcher at high risk based on sociocultural taboos or

bias. However, informed consent assures respect, confidentiality, and contractual communication of shared information, allowing future reflexivity or replication. To void biases in data collection and coding, secondary data collection verification was achieved through multiple governmental and academic sources. Selected participants' literature was input into NVivo for coding and schematics, and the researcher kept a Microsoft Excel journal to maintain a detailed two-way coding consistency check for contextually driven thick description and replicability (see O'Kane et al., 2019). The study will assist in domestic and international border securities appropriate for academia and public policy-making institutions to advance research in the field.

Dependability

Intellectual dependability through the principles of triangulation is a data analysis process that is intentional and systematic (Byerly, 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2016, 2021). An analytically focused purposeful sampling strategy allows specific cases to provide thick descriptions and emergent patterns and themes through audit trails. The coding process makes substantial amounts of data manageable for analysis. NVivo and journaling enhance reliability and dependability for replication to answer the research question. The research design ensures clarity and simplicity for peer-review or member check facilitated through Walden University faculty and IRB to ensure the validity of the research.

Confirmability

Confirmability as a secondary researcher is not to be objective but to rely on data that are present and to remain neutral and unbiased; at the same time, "being explicit

about the inevitable biases that exist” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 189) is important.

Reflexive journaling and audit trails in NVivo establish an apparent authority of the researcher selected participants with authenticity (Hays & McKibben, 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Ravitch and Carl (2016) noted,

Engaging in a relative theory (specifically Maslow’s hierarchy of needs) assist in the conceptualization of what is happening in the data by engaging in the collaborative process that challenge interpretations and analytical procedures with criticality, reflexivity, collaboration, and rigor (p.xxi).

Intracoder Reliability

An intracoder technique is an effective way to justify the qualitative case study analysis process to maintain the descriptive validity of information collected and remain unbiased (Belur et al., 2021). In coding secondary research, this process allowed the implementation of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory to drive the data analysis plan to answer the research question with thoroughness to reach data saturation.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures are administered via

- consent,
- confidential contractual agreements for neutrality and anonymity of human participants/individuals,
- any piece of information used for research, and
- permission driven to gain access to participant data, specifically secondary data from primary researchers.

Upon obtaining IRB approval, communication proceeded based on ethical paradigms. First, I obtained permission from the primary researchers for their data. Second, I retrieved data via documented contracts to gain access to participants' data (anonymous), including institutional permissions specific to the institution from which data were collected (i.e., the University of Maryland on Women, CEP, Global Terrorism Database [GTD], National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism [START], TITT database, and Dr. Speckhard's affiliation to the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism [CSVE] and Government Technology-Service Coalitions). For example, if the necessary data becomes challenging to obtain via confidential or high-risk sources, then publicly available federal court case information would have been utilized as a secondary source, keeping in mind data saturation and no regard for anonymity. If collected, any ethical concerns with private data were addressed with contractual consent of confidentiality with encryptions and security measures locked with password-protection software on a personal laptop and locked in a safe. However, upon identifying data sources, no confidential data were retained by me or Walden University faculty guiding the study (i.e., the chair and committee) for the required five years because publicly available secondary research maintained expediency and ethicality. Additionally, no conflict of interest will remain due to no affiliation or familial communication other than for professional academic research purposes per this research topic.

Summary

A qualitative case study design was used for this research study. The components of this study establish a systematic methodology in using secondary data, establishing the role of the researchers, defining the sampling strategy while addressing instrumentation, data analysis plan and ethical procedures or liabilities of IRB approval. In Chapter 4, I will present the data collection and analysis based on the established approach regarding the crux or root cause of women's motivation to join terrorist organizations overseas.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the motivations of American women who traveled to high-risk countries to become radicalized. I used the theoretical framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to understand what motivating factors are associated with American women joining terrorist organizations and committing terrorist acts. In this chapter, I present the information on the sample's demographics; the data analyses I performed using the qualitative software NVivo, including specific codes, categories, and themes; and the ethical trustworthiness of the research conducted. I then present the study results, the discussion of which includes information on the conformities and discrepancies encountered in data collection.

Setting and Demographics

After obtaining IRB approval to proceed with the research, I used secondary research techniques to collect public information from three specific databases. Therefore, external organizational or personal conditions did not influence the participants of this study. A total of seven American women were identified through a purposive sample. Each met the qualifications of being an American woman, a natural-born citizen, being 18 years of age or older during radicalization, being initiated post-9/11, engaging in individual high-risk travel to terrorist countries, having a terrorist group affiliation, and having resentment toward Americanism. I used only three publicly accessible websites with databases per IRB approval: (a) TITT, (b) CEP, and (c) IPT. The three open-source databases allowed for cross-examination of all the participants to

determine that they met the eligibility criteria for the purposive sample. I then inputted through Maslow's eight-tier theoretical framework. To address every tier, I broke apart belongingness and love to identify the specificity of each participant's needs or peaks of attraction. These three databases were used to maintain ethical data triangulation processes of collection, analysis, and results.

Data Collection

I collected data over 6 weeks from the TITT database, which, at the time of the study, contained records on close to 1,000 terrorism defendants who had been prosecuted by the U.S. Department of Justice. Similarly, the CEP "maintains a database of over 900 +/- extremist and terrorist leaders and operatives around the globe" (The Intercept, 2022), allowing me to cross-check both databases for the accuracy of American women selected. By searching the CEP and TITT databases, I was able to discover 98 women who met the necessary purposeful sample criteria for nationality, age of radicalization, travel agenda, and court document accessibility. As shown in Table 1, only seven American women participants were validated with public court case documents collected from IPT, which consisted of complaints, judgments, statements made by the defendant, motions, pleas, indictment, witness testimony, and press releases by the Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs.

Table 1*Overview of Sample*

Name	Age ^a (years)	Race	Charge	Confirmed travel (final destination)	Foreign terrorist organization affiliation
1. Ceasar, Sinmyah Amera	27	Unknown	Material support, obstruction of justice	Sweden to Syria, Afghanistan-Turkey (final)	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)
2. Conley, Shannon Maureen	26	Unknown	Material support, criminal conspiracy	Morocco-Iraq, Frankfurt, Germany, Syria and Turkey (final)	Multiple (Al-Qaeda, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Islamic State of Iraq, ISIS, ISIL)
3. Elhassani, Samantha Marie	34	White	Material support	Hong Kong, Syria (final)	ISIS, ISIL
4. LaRose, Colleen	58	White	Conspiracy to murder, kidnap, or maim overseas; making false documents; immigration violations; material support	South Asia, Europe, Ireland, Sweden (final)	Self-radicalized (variety of sources and countries; Ireland)
5. Ramirez, Jamie Paulin	43	White	Material support, coconspiracy	South Asia, Europe, Ireland (final)	Self-radicalized (variety of sources and countries; Ireland)
6. Thomas, Keonna	37	Black	Material support	Barcelona, Spain to Istanbul, Turkey (final), Syria (possible)	ISIS, ISIL
7. Young, Jaelyn Delshaun	26	Black	Material support	Turkey to Syria (final)	ISIS, ISIL

Note. The data in the table are from three publicly accessible online resources: the Intercept: Trial and Terror's database, the Counter-Extremism Project's database, and the Investigative Project on Terrorism's repository of court documents.

^a Age as of 2022.

All seven American women's details are publicly accessible through all three databases established by IRB - this does not allow other data sources to be used to maintain the research's authenticity. Therefore, the three databases created the foundation of the study based on the availability of documentation for analysis. This process is permissible by locating associated court documents through the IPT, validating participant selection to maintain researcher credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Over 6 weeks, data were collected through TITT, CEP, and IPT were gathered, inputted, recorded, and coded in NVivo based on Maslow's eight-tier theoretical framework (as noted in Figures 1 and 2). To maintain consistency, "belonging" and "love" needs were separated to maintain specific and credibility of each defined necessity (see Table 2). Therefore, the data reflect nine-tiered distinctions for every attribute. NVivo software systematically allows the researcher to organize each tier as codes and attributes defined by color schemes (see Figure 3 and Appendix). Classifications were connected as "person" and files to maintain a comparable database of each participant's relative attributes, as noted in Table 1. Each tier was attached with a subcategory question and definition to maintain researcher consistency as data is mitigated to the correct tier. Simultaneously, as data were coded and categorized, the researcher annotated and memoed thought processes without interfering with data categorizations. After data were selected and integrated to a specific tier, a reference count was maintained and organized into one location within the core categorical affiliation (see Figure 5).

To maintain alignment of the data, collected information was transferred into an Excel sheet to validate the themes and results that may have been missed in NVivo. NVivo and Excel imply a longitudinal and horizontal coding system. This technique reduces biases and creates a strong justification for the instruments used, moving from descriptive to conceptual or thematic coding as noted in Chapter 3. For data analysis constancies, I merged Figures 1–3 to create a quick coding reference guide (see Appendix) to maintain alignment and organization and eliminate bias during data analysis. Twelve weeks were necessary to locate and render the necessary instruments for data analysis and results.

Figure 4

Quantified Results to Evaluate Levels of Risk and Deficiencies

		Low-Risk			Moderate Borderline -Gray Area			High-Risk			
		Basic Needs		Psychological Needs			Self-Fulfillment Needs				
		Deficiency Needs			Growth Needs						
Case Number	Case Name	Physiological Needs	Safety Needs	Belonging Needs	*Love Needs	*Esteem Needs	*Cognitive Needs	Aesthetic Needs	Self- Actualization	Transcendence	
1	Cesar	60	55	198	72	90	34	31	70	32	
2	Conley	2	4	32	22	22	16	15	24	12	
3	Elhassani	1	2	7	7	10	3	4	12	6	
4	LaRose	9	7	49	25	36	19	15	38	20	
5	Ramirez	8	7	21	14	13	6	7	14	6	
6	Thomas	2	1	16	7	8	6	9	21	10	
7	Young	5	6	40	29	20	13	13	23	3	
	Total	87	82	363	176	199	97	94	202	89	
Totals		DEFICIENCY NEEDS 907			*GRAY AREA 472			GROWTH NEEDS 482			
		Basic Needs		Psychological Needs			Self-Fulfillment Needs				
		169		738			482				

The variation in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3 was the ability to use other forms or secondary data documents, such alternative media attributes other than court documents. The documents used per IRB guidelines remained from the TITT, CEP, and IPT website that consisted of court documents and press releases about the selected participants made available by the federal government. Maslow's hierarchy

of needs comprises eight tiers, including which belonginess and love. I divided the tiers to provide a clear understanding of infatuation or communalism.

There were a few unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection. The first was the repetition of information in court documents, where the duplication of thought or rhetoric was built on the emphasis of understanding the true intent of each participant's case. Some participants did not have many court documents to decipher great depths of material; however, it assisted in data stratification. Per Saldaña (2016),

The potential hazard is that the portions deleted might contain the as yet unknown units of data that pull everything together or include the negative or discrepant case that motivates a rethinking of a code, category, theme, concept, assertion, or theory. (p. 17)

Therefore, each piece of information was accredited and coded to maintain data saturation to find certainty in what motivates American women to become radicalized, creating an in-depth understanding of risk levels, deficiency needs, and growth needs that create a macro layer upon the nine micro tiers (see Figures 3 and 5).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of eight tiers; however, for detailed distinctions, the "belonging" and "love" needs were separated to maintain a clear understanding of infatuation or communal acceptance within the terrorist organization (further discussed in Chapter 5). Therefore, each essential piece of information is accounted for to emphasize decisions made based on risk or categories that become prevalent to count as points for each tier, establishing data saturation (see Figure 5). To ensure rigor and substance, I considered not eight but nine tiers from this point forward.

Additionally, critical information necessary to answer the research question, a section for federal policy, participant's quotation verbiage, and travel details were added separately to evaluate geopolitical movement as a future evaluative study and necessary social changes for federal sentencing. The participant's simplistic yet specific verbiage created a pedagogy to understand nuances or complexities in metaphors or ideologies.

Data Analysis

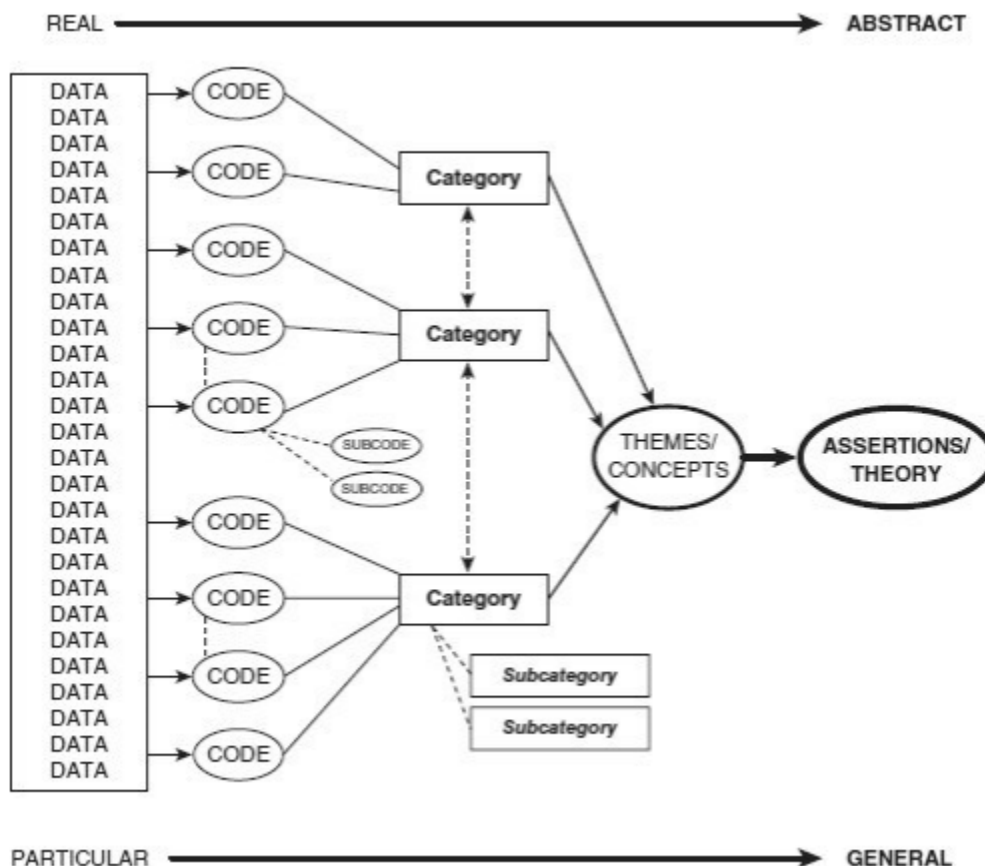
A vertical analysis process moves inductively from coding units to more prominent representations through the thematic foundation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, broken into nine tiers. A thematic analysis approach assisted in deciphering each government document collected from the IPT to reveal key themes in Excel and word frequencies in NVivo. According to Saldaña (2016), this process "transcends the 'particular reality' of your data and progresses toward the thematic, conceptual, and theoretical" (p. 14).

I organized the data in NVivo and then migrated the data set into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing a sheet per category, coding questions, and a three-tiered coding cycle (as noted in Chapter 3, Figure 2, and Appendix). The research consisted of several phases. First, I allocated each individual participant's court case literature to the augmented tier in NVivo. Then, I transferred the collected tiered data into Excel to find a descriptive thematic definition of the conglomerated data combined from NVivo based on Saldaña's (2016) codes-to-theory model, shown in Figure 4. The use of NVivo for coding and Microsoft Excel for developing themes reflected "an inductive thematic

metasummary and metasynthesis technique that collects, compares, and synthesis a number of related interpretive findings” (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 204–205).

Figure 5

Saldaña’s Streamlined Codes for Qualitative Inquiry



Per Chapter 3, the specific codes, categories, and emergent themes were framed through a two-cycle coding system: “(1) descriptive- exploratory cycle, and (2) theoretical concept cycle, leaving room for researcher’s quick reflective/pattern coding to avoid researcher biases” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 68). I created an Excel sheet with a list of women terrorists, finalizing the individuals based on the purposive sample. I collected each participant’s case document in IPT and fact sheets in TITT and CEP and imported

all documents collected into NVivo, classifying data into primary and secondary codes (see Table 1). Once each piece of data was coded, quantified, and annotated, I imported it into Excel to identify the emergent themes (see Table 2). After my thematic process was complete, the data were peer-reviewed and member checked by Walden University faculty to maintain the credibility of the research. Saldaña (2016) explained,

A set of initial codes progress through ‘iterations’ of analysis – in other words, from the full set of codes, which is then reorganized into a select list of categories [9-tiers and the sub-categorical created by researcher questions], and then condensed further into the studies central themes and concepts...which illustrates coding progresses from the first through the second cycle to bring meaning, structure, and order to data. (p. 218)

Figure 5 shows the emergence of an increase in deficiency needs that triggers weaknesses from physiological, safety, belonging, love, and esteem needs, with growth-seeking coming from a cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence need. Deficiency needs are considered low-risk needs that can be rectified or fixed. In contrast, growth needs for self-fulfillment trigger a higher risk for legal perspectives or actors to evaluate if the individual will need a higher or lower sentencing judgment based on reintegration.

Tables 2 and 3 consist of word frequency or keyword queries from NVivo on 200 to 300 most frequently displayed words in three-word segments or more. Saldaña (2016) suggested documenting “a short word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/pr evocative attribute for a portion of language based on

visual or summative data” (p. 4). This allows the researcher to understand a web/summary of words important to first cycle of coding terms within the nine tiers presented in alphabetical order of the most common words, such as exact word matches, synonyms, and stemmed words. My evaluations in Microsoft Excel comprised the second cycle of coding emergent themes. I presented the word frequencies and themes in alphabetical order to find any congruencies or discrepancies among the codes and categories.

Table 2

Codes and Categories per Maslow’s Nine Tiers

Categorical codes per needs	Defined per Maslow	Attribute/questions	Word frequency (alpha-order)	Themes
1 Physiological	food, water, warmth, rest, air	What were some of the circumstances around your home?	abuse, account, community, court, family foster, ISIL, ISIS, life, media, money, mother, personal, phone, physical, probation, social, support, time, trauma	escapism, relapse, exploitation, abuse, remorse, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sensitivity, ostracized, recidivism, derogatory
2 Safety	security, safety, protection from elements, order, stability, freedom from fear	(Not necessary as per inclusiveness of definition)	abuse, application, community, court, electronic, Facebook, family, fatayat, ISIL, ISIS, khalifah, media, money, office, online, phone, probation, release, see, social, support, time, travel	social media propaganda, communalism, collectivistic, security in financial-emotional-social-physical needs, wholesomeness acceptance, aliases, pseudonyms, security,
3 Belongingness	intimate relationships, friends,	What are some outlets of relief or	abuse, account, application, communications,	community, caliphate, phone, collectiveness,

Categorical codes per needs	Defined per Maslow	Attribute/questions	Word frequency (alpha-order)	Themes
	collectiveness, warmth, trust, affection, being part of	social communication? What are some strengths and weaknesses about American values? What roles and duties allowed you to express yourself?	community, conspirator, court, electronic, Europe, Facebook, family, Fatima, ISIL, ISIS, jihad, media, money, online, phone, social, support, time, travel	friendships, social media communication, broken families, alienation, disassociation, secrecy, lack of decision-making, cryptic ideological, influential, symbolic, culture, religion, sympathy, travel, brother and sister: identified relationships, joint efforts, religious and language assimilation, resource, marketing, recidivism
4 Love	intimate relationships, friends, collectiveness, sex	Tell me about your family role? Duties? Married? What attracted you to coming close to your significant other?	abuse, accounts, community, conduct, conspirator, contact, electronic, Facebook, family, Fatima, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, Jihad, marry, message, money, Muslim, online posts, personally, phone, physical plans, provide state, support Syria, time travel, years	religious-marriages, intimacy, attraction, status, children-reproduction, divorce, intercontinental, livelihood support, working together
5 Esteem	prestige and feeling of accomplishment esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery,	Can you explain your life experiences through a timeline form? Your feelings, duties, and role?	abuse, account, community, conduct, conspirators, contact, documents, electronic,	suicidal depression, sympathizer, support, planning and preparing, identity, emotional,

Categorical codes per needs	Defined per Maslow	Attribute/questions	Word frequency (alpha-order)	Themes
	independence); accepted and valued by others – status and prestige		engaged, Europe, Facebook, Individuals, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, Jihad, media, messages, money, Muslims, online, persons, phone, plans, provide, release, sent, social, support time, travel, wants, years	idealized, desire, want, fulfillment, social-media communication, praise, promote, planning and preparing, us versus them ideology, proud, ambient community, military training, pathway risk factors, aliases, insecurity, impressionable
6 Cognitive	knowledge, understanding, curiosity, exploration, predictability, need for meaning	(Not necessary as per inclusiveness of definition)	attempted, brothers, community, conspirator, contact, electronic, Europe, Extremist, Facebook, Fatayat, Fighter, Following, individual, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, jihad, Join, Khilafah, Material, Media, money, Muslim, online, Passport, personally, plans, probation, provide, recruited, sent, social, stating, support, Syria, terrorist, training, travel, twitter, violations, violent, young	co-conspirators, social electronic communication, material and financial support, unacceptable standards, training and knowledge gaining, bias obsessiveness, independent, experienced, resourcefulness, extremity, cryptic
7 Aesthetic	appreciation, search for beauty, balance, form	(Not necessary as per inclusiveness of definition)	account, attempt, brother, communicate, contact, electronic, engage,	Physical attributes, cultural attractions, conformity, fascinations, attention,

Categorical codes per needs	Defined per Maslow	Attribute/questions	Word frequency (alpha-order)	Themes
			Facebook, Fatayat, fighter, following, going, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, Jihad, join, Khilafah, lied, material, media, money, online, posted, present, provide, recruit, release, see, stated, support, Syria, terrorist, time, training, travel, twitter, wanted	connection, validation, beautiful and symbolic, humanistic, Arabic language skills, religious knowledge, community, extremist, possessed, obsessive, religious or radicalized language, ideological, biased, mysterious
8 Self-Actualization	Achieving one's full potential, including creative activities, seeking personal growth and peak experiences, 'becoming everything one is capable of becoming' - Maslow	What makes you feel good about yourself and others?	admitted, associates, attempt, brothers, conduct, conspirators, electronic, engage, Europe, expressed, extremist, Facebook, fighter, following, government, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, Jihad, join, Khilafah, know, marry, material, media, messages, money, online, overseas, passport, plans, posted, provide, recruited, resident, see, show, states, support, Syria, terrorism, training, travel, trust, twitter, used, wanted	Magnanimous, multiple personality and identity, encrypted, disseminator and connector of information, sympathizers, radicalized, extremist, martyr, propogandist, idealist, transformative brain-washed, methodological, dangerous, destructive, martyrdom

Categorical codes per needs	Defined per Maslow	Attribute/questions	Word frequency (alpha-order)	Themes
9 Transcendence	Individual is motivated by values beyond the personal self- mystical experiences, and certain experiences with nature, aesthetic-sexual- service to others, pursuit of science, religious faith	(Not necessary as per inclusiveness of definition)	account, attempted, brothers, communication, conduct, conspirators, contact, electronic, engage, Europe, extremist, Facebook, Fatayat, fighter, following, individual, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, Jihad, join, Khilafah, marry, material, media, messages, money, organization, passport, personally, phone, plan, provide, records, recruited, sent, sisters, statement, support, Syria, terrorist, training, travel, twitter	Euphoric, trance, religious inclination, psychological, powerful, connected, sensitive, Magnanimous, innocence is lost, fighter, martyr, triggered, martyrdom, ridden, passionate, destructive, mysterious, malicious

The qualities of discrepant cases are few based on the purposive sample; however, the number of court documents available was either limited or plentiful with contextual quality, regardless of the number of documents available. The cases are similar regarding travel to terrorist organizations' locations, but all participants had different risk-based agendas or life goals. For example:

- Ceasar is focused on belonging and finding love.
- Thomas is a fanatic about Islamic culture and travel.
- Elhassani is tied to radicalization through family affiliation.
- Young is an accomplice with her suitor.

- Conley joins the US Army Explorers, which adds to her nursing background to help the organization.
- LaRose is a homegrown fanatic.
- Ramirez is studying to be a nurse in need of financial stability, conspiring with LaRose.

All seven women have a specific motivation post-9/11 aligned to travel overseas with growing radicalized ideologies at different risk levels at specific tiers. Each woman's court document was coded in chunks or lengthy paragraphs that could not be separated because the verbiage involved consisted of multiple tiered levels of thinking or statements (thick descriptions). Additionally, three new topics emerged to strengthen the research question and future studies: (a) court system processes leniency: countries with disengagement of radicalization, relevant jurisprudence, and no leniency; (b) verbiage that consisted of quotes and definitions by the participants/perpetrators; and (c) travel arrangements. Table 3 presents the three points of interest that emerged from the first- and second-level coding. The table provides an in-depth understanding of reintegration, risk levels, and commonalities.

Table 3*Word Frequency and Themes for Additional Topics That Emerged From First- and Second-Level Coding*

Topic	Word frequency	Theme/generalization
Court process leniency	Appropriate, assistance, case, clear, commit, community programs, conditions, court, defendant, deradicalization, disengagement, district, effective, foreign, government, incarceration, intensive, ISIL, law, need, offense, presentencing, program guidelines, program treatment, provide, reasonableness, rehabilitation, release, sentencing, similar, support, terrorism, terrorist, time, United States	Awareness is justified; understand terrorist organizations identifications and legal court proceedings; definitional Islamic word identifiers; concealment, reoffending despite the consequences.
Travel arrangements	Afghanistan, airport, allegedly, arrested, attempted, brothers, camp, cash, cell, citizen, communications, complaint, contact, defendant, Denver, departing, electronic, Europe, facilitator, Fatayat, FBI, flight, fly, help, individual, international, Iraq, Ireland, ISIL, ISIS, Istanbul, Jihad, join, Khilafah, marry, online, organization, passports, plan, plane, provide, purchased, recruited, research, routes, Spain, states, support, Sweden, Syria, team, territory, ticketing, training, travel/-ed, Turkey, visa, Younglioness	Suitors' assistance; defined locations and organizational affiliations; planned and executed with material assistance; routes and immigration arrangements; material and tangibility; Turkey is a major connector to high-risk locations
Quotational verbiage of participant	Allah, allegedly, asked, based, believe, brothers, call, communication, Dawlah, defendant, direct, electronic, Facebook, Fatayat, Fatima, fighter, filed, following, get, giving, going, ISIS, Islamic, join, Khilafah, know, makes, message, people, plan, posted, provide, reference, see, sent, sister, stating, support, Syria, think-believe, training, travel, trust, trying, turkey, want, years	Baqiya wa tatamaddad means 'remaining and expanding'; Deen meaning group, derogatory and extremist ideological word usage; Kafir – criticizing anyone other than Islamism; Shaheed-individual achieving martyrdom

Note. ISIL = Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation.

ISIS = Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

The inconsistency in Tables 2 and 3 is due to NVivo's word frequency tool because it conglomerated participants' names, random duplications, and filler words that did not make the list. Only high-frequency action words, verbs, definitions, and synonyms with viscosity were documented. This ability allowed me to analyze the interconnectedness or discrepancies of each tiered data collection. These particularities allowed me to visualize a conclusive analysis of each individual within Maslow's hierarchy of needs comparatives versus superlatives: to follow a contiguous analysis of the qualitative data's veracity and results.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Several ethical issues and challenges must be articulated to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 2008; Patton, 2015). As noted by Ravitch and Carl (2016), "Triangulation involves the specific process of (1) data organization and management, (2) immersive engagement with data, and (3) writing and representing" (p. 217); to add member checking or peer review. The theoretical framework and organizational data coding framework create a natural, ethical transformation that exercises "perseverance, deals with ambiguity, flexibility, rigorous ethicality, and extensive vocabulary" (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 38–39).

Credibility

The implementation to maintain credible strategies was a purposeful sample of American women traveling internationally to foreign countries to become radicalized. The data collection site was three open sources approved by the IRB: TITT, CEP, and IPT. These websites are deemed credible based on open-source data collection, which

provides reliable information from the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justices' federal judiciary case management system (CEP, 2023; TITT, n.d.; IPT, 2017). Member checks or peer reviews were conducted throughout the data collection process by Walden University faculty to maintain the validity and reliability of the study.

Transferability

Transferability of a study is the ability to “use multiple research designs to answer the same research question, called triangulation, enhances generalizability, measurement validity, and causal validity” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 336). The data collected in this study consisted of thick descriptions, in which the qualitative data framework is “recursive, reflexive, inductive, and systematic” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 3) through researcher coding and computerized coding strategies. An audit trail of “the research study’s finding can be applicable to other context, circumstances, phenomena, and situations” (Statistics Solutions, 2021).

Dependability

Data analysis’s dependability is the availability of cross-validated data with “criticality, reflexivity, collaboration, and rigor” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 13). Researcher bias is dissolved due to content directiveness, thick descriptions, iterative process, reflexivity, corroborating, and legitimating emergent patterns through NVivo and Microsoft Excel coding use (Bachman & Schutt, 2011). I created a reflexive journal (e.g., memo) in NVivo and Excel to separate biases. The longitudinal coding and horizontal theoretical

method create immersive data saturation to answer the research question and note future studies.

Confirmability

The study's purposive sample and data collection confirmability were cross-validated by Walden University faculty peer-review. Additionally, the University of Arkansas Terrorism Research Center provided a public list of individuals and federal court documents that reflected the reciprocity of the purposive sample. Similarly found and cross-checked through IPT, TITT, and CEP, validating the sample of seven American women selected for this research study. It validates the crux of understanding what motivated the need for American women to join terrorism overseas. The findings remain neutral and devout to remove researcher bias with NVivo and Excel coding techniques. Per Bachman and Schutt (2011),

Qualitative data analysis consists of “(1) documentation of the data and the process of data collection, (2) organization or categorization of the data into concepts, (3) connection of the data to show how one concept may influence another, (4) corroboration and legitimization, by evaluation of alternative explanations, disconfirming evidence and searching for negative cases, and (5) representing the account by reporting the findings). (p. 281)

Overall, the evidence of trustworthiness is a natural process derived from triangulation and data saturation that allows the researcher to reaffirm the purpose of inquiry, be reflective, and be flexible to maintain a regiment in analysis (Patton, 2015, 523).

Results

The study's research question was, What are the motivating factors associated with American women's joining of terrorist organizations and commission of terrorist acts? All seven participants have different motivations but similar accessibility to radical social media communications, mapping pathways of influence, and psychological instabilities that mitigate unknown risk levels. Federal sentencing guidelines for terrorist acts assess risk, ability to rehabilitate within community establishments, and reintegration; however, Table 5 represents the risk spectrum of all seven women within nine tiers.

This study explored risks, deficiency needs, and growth that proves a discrepancy that all seven women's federal cases are post-9/11 within the available framework of analysis. All seven women wanted to join terrorist organizations somewhere in the Middle East but used European routes to gain access to Eastern countries. Therefore, these locations are major traveling and linking points of attraction. Over time, there could be a change in the type or location of women attracted to radicalization against the United States. The outcome in Figure 4 of quantified results to evaluate levels of risk and deficiencies, Table 2 codes and categories per Maslow's nine tiers, and Table 3 additional data implications from legal correspondences contribute to immersive analytics on answering the motivating factors, risk, and criticize specific deficiencies within the tiers.

The research supports that "the order of needs is not rigid but flexible based on external circumstance or individual differences in which most behavior is multi-motivated, simultaneously determined by more than one basic need" (McLeod, 2022).

The analysis was divided into two sections, as shown in Figures 1 and 5: (a) deficiency needs and (b) growth or being needs. The nine tiers foretold a spectrum of what goes into a woman's role to radicalization. Further disseminating the data into risk levels (low-risk, moderate borderline-gray area, and high-risk) allowed me to pinpoint major congruencies or discrepancies within the nine tiers followed by supportive quotational evidence from the American terrorist women's court documents and transcripts.

Deficiency Needs

Deficiency needs (building blocks) consist of the basic primary and psychological needs group of physiological, safety, belongingness, love, and esteem needs (see Figures 1 and 2). Low risk consists of physiological, safety, and belongingness needs, which further moves into the moderate gray borderline risk area of love and esteem needs. As per Figure 5, the majority of American women terrorist's deficiency needs outweighed their growth needs. McLeod (2022) summarized Maslow's statement, stating,

A need is not an "all-or-none" phenomenon...when a deficit need has been "more or less" satisfied, it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed toward meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs. However, growth needs continue to be felt and may become stronger once engaged.

Low Risk: Physiological Needs

Tier 1 physiological needs focuses on circumstances around home (e.g., food, water, warmth, rest, and air; McLeod, 2022). Each participants showed a change in family situation upon establishing radical Islamic ideologies, creating derogatory

environmental conditions of abuse or dissatisfaction that have led to posttraumatic stress disorder or psychological escapism. For example,

It is undisputed that [Sinmyah Amera] Ceasar has led an extremely difficult life. Her parents divorced when Ceasar was very young. Her father began sexually abusing her when she was four years old; the abuse continued until she was 11. Her mother was ill, suffering from diabetes and kidney failure, eventually going blind as a result of her diabetes. During Ceasar's childhood, she acted as her mother's primary caregiver. When Ceasar was 13 years old, her mother was admitted to a nursing home where she remained until her death from a heart attack at age 49, when Ceasar was 22 years old. The time her mother went to live in a nursing home, Ceasar was placed in the foster care system. She lived in three foster homes over four years and was abused or neglected in each. She dropped out of high school and signed herself out of foster care at age 17. Ceasar's prior suicidal ideation, which was exacerbated by her miscarriage and abuse by her then-husband. (The Investigative Project on Terrorism, n.d.)

Ceasar's permissiveness of her circumstance with several alienations led to poor decision-making skills and influences, making her suicide-susceptible and psychologically unstable. Shannon Maureen Conley was another example of familial influences. She lived with her parents' hypocrisies about Islamism by creating a threshold of secrecy regarding her influences of violent or extremist Jihad/Islamic radicalization. "She planned to tell her family about her Jihad plans once she was out of the US as there was nothing they would be able to do about it then" (The Investigative Project on

Terrorism, n.d.). Similarly, Colleen LaRose had a difficult childhood of abuse and neglect:

In 2007, Colleen R. LaRose was a lonely and isolated woman. Her live-in boyfriend traveled much of the time, her only sibling lived halfway across the country, and she had few friends. Bored with her life, LaRose turned to the Internet for distraction and, ultimately, personal transformation. (The Investigative Project on Terrorism, n.d.)

Conspiring with LaRose, Jamie Paulin Ramirez transformed her lifestyle. According to CEP (2023), “Ramirez became increasingly estranged from her family. She spent hours in Islamic online chatrooms, gradually radicalizing, and even neglected her son. She criticized her stepfather again, but this time for not praying openly and at the appointed times. Ramirez trained her son in jihadist tactics and the use of arms to shoot anyone non-Muslim. Samantha Marie Elhassani and her children tried to escape radicalism after her husband died in a drone strike.

All seven women dismissed Western practices, deeming Islamism the correct lifestyle and evaluating circumstances around the house. There were two nodes: a positively established household versus negative attributes of abuse. Ceasar, Conley, LaRose, Elhassani, Thomas, Young, and Ramirez showed vulnerability to fill the voids in as they sought to maintain safety, love, and belongingness to fulfill their self-esteem. The women drew upon cognizant levels to achieve a higher level of radicalization to reach self-actualization or transcendence within the terrorist organization by fulfilling nearly all nine tiers.

Low Risk: Safety Needs

Per Maslow, the second hierarchy is safety needs in search of “protections from elements to maintain or experience order, stability and predictability, freedom from fear, and security to maintain control in their lives” (McLeod, 2022). The participants showed a longing for security, communalism, and security through financial, emotional, social, and physical needs. Social media catered to the lifestyle and vulnerabilities of each individual, whether on probation, on trial or incarcerated, by providing the necessary resources to maintain safety through monies, relationships, or travel arrangements. Everyone is secretly connected to multiple social media communities with aliases for security, acceptance, and wholesomeness to fill gaps. For example,

Cesar has (1) re-contacted at least one individual she previously identified as a supporter of Islamic extremism and then attempted to cover up that contact; (2) received money from a foreign-based individual who has admitted to supporting ISIS and sought to conceal her communications with this individual; (3) without Probation’s knowledge or approval, installed and used numerous social media and electronic communications applications (The Investigative Project on Terrorism, n.d.).

Another aspect of safety is being married to a masculine patriarch for sustenance. Also, a counterpart to safety is financial resources. LaRose was a planner and initiator within the organization.

I write this message on behalf of a respected sister. . . . The sister has been in touch with a brother . . . [who] has appealed for urgent funds stating that his

resources are limited. The sister has provided me proofs that have confirmed that the brother is . . . true I know the sister and by Allah, all money will be transferred to her. The sister will then transfer the money to the brother via a method that I will not disclose.

“Elhassani admitted that she traveled overseas and pre-positioned over \$30,000 in cash and gold, knowing that her husband and brother-in-law would use the funds to join and support ISIS in Syria,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. Through these social media and internet-based communication systems, various tangible and intangible resources are mitigated as needed during any stage of the radicalization process.

Low Risk: Belongingness

Belongingness is a contribution, community, interpersonal relationships, affiliations, and connections. This motivational quality reflects on the societal strength and weaknesses of the American value system, facilitates outlets of relief through social communication, and allows women to express themselves by instituting a specific duty or role within the organization. Figure 5 indicates that the highest number of deficiencies and motivational factors dwell in the ability to belong to a group and conform. Each woman’s individual acceptance to belong creates the notion to radicalize. For instance, Conley’s court documents:

Include the stipulated facts in the plea agreement, from about February 2014 and continuing through April 8, 2014, Conley and a co-conspirator unlawfully worked together and with other individuals to provide and attempt to provide material

support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, specifically Al-Qaeda (AQ) and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), aka the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), aka the Islamic State of Iraq and Al Sham (ISIS), aka the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Cesar's court transcript shows that "her affiliation with ISIS was, 'emotional' rather than radical. She was attracted to [ISIS} because it was a caring community that would take care of her because she was basically looking for some people to take care of her." Social media's importance is a major driving factor to deflect events of the past to satisfy all needs, wants, or desires.

In 2007, Colleen R. LaRose was a lonely and isolated woman. Her live-in boyfriend traveled much of the time, her only sibling lived halfway across the country, and she had few friends. Bored with her life, LaRose turned to the Internet for distraction and, ultimately, personal transformation. By mid-2008, she had managed to align herself with violent terrorists who valued her ability and persistence as their online predator, or "hunter." In this role, LaRose spent most of her waking hours working obsessively on her computer to identify, communicate with, recruit, and bring together violent jihadists.

Belongingness drives the American women to act, travel, and execute as needs complement reassurance. A variety of aliases gave each woman power and worth:

- LaRose aka Jihad Jane, Fatima LaRose, ExtremeSister4Life, and SisterOffTerror
- Cesar aka Umm Nutella or Amara Cesar

- Thomas aka Fatayat AlKhilafah and YoungLiones
- Young aka Aaminah, which transpires her worth and importance within the organization.

In a culture where many women do not report family loneliness or abuse, they find peace and solace in foreign cultures or organization. Safety is prevalent in the acceptance of society. “[Ceasar] said social isolation and the trauma in her life had isolated her from others. She felt abandoned, but also, she was feeling socially isolated as a citizen in this country because somebody pulled her hijab.” Belongingness carries a stereotype that ties in radicalistic nuances of language, clothing, and etiquette developed at this at this stage that can either be rectified or move into the borderline risk or natural inclination seeking for love or enhancing the aesthetic needs.

Belongingness creates nostalgia of family bonds and relationships that feed emotional needs. For example, despite being married multiple times, Ceasar continuously sought to find belonging and love. In *United States of America v. Ceasar*,

“Religious marriages” with older men, beginning when she was 16. In each of those marriages, her husband physically or emotionally abused her. Ceasar was diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the abuse and trauma she endured. Ceasar herself intended to travel to ISIS-controlled territory by way of Sweden, where she planned to meet and marry another ISIS supporter. *Id.* at 202-03. On November 15, 2016, Ceasar was arrested at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport on her way to Sweden via Turkey.

Elhassani established her family status by providing funding to her husband and taking her children to radicalized countries:

In November 2014, Elhassani was informed by her husband that he and his brother wanted to travel to Syria to join ISIS, which she knew was a terrorist organization that engaged in terrorist activities. Between November 2014 and April 1015, Elhassani helped the two men join ISIS by making multiple trips to Hong Kong and transporting more than \$30,000 in cash and gold from the United States and depositing it in a safe deposit box in Hong Kong. Elhassani melted down the gold to look like jewelry and did not disclose the cash and gold on customs declaration forms. At the time Elhassani transported the money and gold, she knew that her husband and brother-in-law had expressed an interest in joining ISIS and that they intended to use these resources to support ISIS.

Per the TITT database,

Samantha Marie Elhassani and her children traveled with her husband Moussa, a Moroccan national, to Syria. Elhassani and her children are U.S. citizens.

Elhassani and her children lived in Raqqa while Moussa fought for ISIS. After Moussa was killed in a drone strike, Elhassani and her children fled Raqqa and were detained by Syrian Democratic Forces. Federal prosecutors allege that Elhassani provided tactical gear and money to two ISIS fighters. The Indiana Department of Child Services has taken custody of her children. In an interview with CNN before she was extradited, Elhassani said her husband forced her to cross into Syria while they were on a family vacation in Turkey.

Each women was an asset to the radical organization, bringing tactical militaristic skills and/or medical assistance training with nursing degrees. For instance,

Conley wanted to serve in the US military but no longer wanted to because she felt the following:

1. A hijab is a head covering worn in public by Muslim women.
2. US Army Explorers is a national non-profit youth career exploration program for persons ages 13-20. The program exposes participants to career opportunities in the military and provides knowledge and experience in military occupational skills. In Case 1:14-mj-01045-KLM *SEALED* Document 1-1 Filed 04/09/14 USDC Colorado Page 4 of 12 Case 1:14-cr-00163-RM Document 28 Filed 06/26/14 USDC Colorado Page 5 of 14 military would not accept her due to her religious beliefs and her wearing of a hijab and niqab.
3. She said she wanted military training, so the Explorers were the best option because she will never be deployed, and they will let her wear a hijab. Conley joined the U.S. Army Explorers (USAE) to be trained in U.S. military tactics and in firearms. She traveled to Texas and attended the USAE training. She also obtained first aid/nursing certification and National Rifle Association certification. Conley knew that ISIS was a designated foreign terrorist organization. In fact, on numerous occasions, ...Conley stated she wanted to wage Jihad and would like to go overseas to fight. She further stated that if she is not allowed to fight because she is a woman, she will use her medical

training to aid Jihadi fighters. Conley is licensed as a Certified Nurse's Aide in the State of Colorado. If she cannot fight or be a nurse for Jihad, Conley stated she will assist Jihadi fighters in whatever manner is needed.

4. From Morocco, Conley planned to go to Iraq. Conley went on to say that the purpose of going to Iraq was to make contact with a friend of a friend of one of her travel companions. The contact in Iraq was to help her find a Jihadist training camp. Conley did not know who the person was in Iraq, where in Iraq he lived, or what exactly he would do for her.

Belongingness is categorized into two possibilities, illusion and reality, leaving the individual to progress through the radicalization process to the highest tier, stay neutral by maintaining a family life, or comply to create a safety threshold under U.S. federal law upon being caught. Each radicalization process is catered to each woman's individual needs that leaves a motivational factor, as with Ramirez, Thomas, and Young, Per TITT,

LaRose also introduced Ramirez to Ali Charaf Damache (a.k.a. Theblackflag) in an online chat. On September 12, Ramirez traveled to Ireland with her 6-year-old son and married Damache, whom she supported as a wife while he prepared for Islamist attacks. While there, Damache trained her son in the ways of violent jihad, and Ramirez had videotaped the boy discussing his desire to shoot *kuffars* (non-believers). She later told FBI investigators that she realized her mistakes within months of arrival, and that Damache misled her and used her as a sex slave.

Young, a fanatic of radicalized Islam, is located by FBI through multiple Twitter communications:

Young announced that she was preparing for “hijrah,” a reference to journeying to the Islamic State and further stated, “I have hijrah partner and we are planning to leave before August,” and that “[W]e just have to be careful because the NSA is launching new investigation programs and I dont want to be trapped here (sad emoji face).” YOUNG then added that her travel partner was a “brother” and that she would have to have “nikkah” (Islamic marriage) with him so that they could travel together without an escort. The partner was eventually discovered to be DAKHLALLA.

Thomas, a fanatic of radicalization through personal communication and online postings, is described in the *United States v. Thomas* transcript:

1. In numerous Twitter postings, Keonna Thomas expressed support for ISIL and urged people to commit acts in support of and donate money to ISIL.
2. Thomas repeatedly expressed a personal desire for martyrdom. For example, on or about January 1, 2014, she posted on Twitter, “ I see why the mujahideen [violent jihadi fighters] Sacrifice Dwlya [life on earth] for Akhirah [the afterlife] there’ s no comparison.” And on or about January 4, 2014, she posted on Twitter, “ Only thing I’m jealous of is when I see the smiles of shuhadaa [martyrs].”
3. In February 201 5, CC#2 sent an electronic communication to Thomas stating, “ U probably want to do istishhad [martyrdom operations] with me.” In

response, Thomas stated, “that would be amazing. a girl can only wish.”CC#2

re ponded, “ I can make that wish come true:

4. Thomas had never before owned a United States Passport nor traveled outside of the United States. But in February and March 2015, Thomas submitted an application for a United States Passport, conducted online research into “ buses from Barcelona to Istanbul,” purchased a last-minute flight to Barcelona, and purchased an electronic visa to Turkey. Set forth in the Complaint, Turkey is known to be the most common and most direct transit point for individuals traveling from locations in Europe who are seeking to enter Syria and join ISIL, and the route from Turkey to Syria is recommended by ISIL itself.

Most women have a pull or desire to continue through a repeat cycle because a unique feeling is evoked to create a motivational desire to travel for marriage, relationships, occupational goals, progress through the cultural aesthetic, and family building. The women “‘thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness’ is a presence of a psychological-painful mental state that results when a fundamental need for connectedness” (Van Orden et al., 2012). All women saw and sensed life goals differently because of the foundational flaws. There was a sense of promise and modesty in the radical group to motivate them to continue to psychologically radicalize under sympathized cultural or religious altercations from religious or social media propaganda (e.g., journals, encrypted messaging applications, telegram, picture graphic or video scenes, and pseudonymous social media platforms). Social media propaganda radically

motivated women to move beyond the ordinary or common woman's life goals to self-actualization or transcendence. At this stage, all seven women became proactive or highly motivated to travel overseas in relationships or social media propaganda, maintaining borderline risk with love needs.

Borderline Risk: Love Needs

The borderline gray area involves an individual imbalance in active or passive decision-making skills. Love, esteem, and cognitive needs flex the woman to lower or higher risk of questioning the individual's ethical or moral actions in the past, present, and future. Love and esteem needs fall into a deficiency, while growth needs consist of a cognitive curiosity. The results show that all women have an urgency to affiliate with a masculine entity of the organization through multiple marriages, suitors, brothers, or meeting with sisters within the same organizational context. Leaving behind children or non-conforming family members (Kaffirs) within an environment not deemed compatible with radical organizational ideologies. The fourth tier investigates love needs by assessing family roles, duties, and marriage. Figure 5 reveals that love involves community, livelihood, and bringing together several motivated individuals with similar interests (love, marriage, sex) via social-media communication resources. Radical organizations capitalize on love establishes a critical motivational factor for American women to join terrorism. Specifically, what attracted the individual to come close to a significant other, can be understood as establishing oneself within the radical organization.

Table 4*Love Needs of Sample as Represented in Court Transcripts*

Last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
1. Ceasar	<p>Ceasar herself intended to travel to ISIS terror by way of Sweden, where she planned to marry another ISIS supporter (met via facebook). He has since been arrested and charged with a terrorist bombing plot in the Philippines. This illustrates a critical reason why her continued and repeated violations of social media restrictions – first on bail in 2018, and now again on supervised release in 2020 – are so concerning; Ceasar’s unmonitored use of social media is dangerous. That is part of the conduct underlying her Material Support Offense and that is what led Judge Weinstein to impose the presentence release conditions he did.</p> <p>Per court documents, “Ceasar has never been legally married, she entered into three successive so-called ‘religious marriages’ with older men each whom physically or emotionally abused her [first with a 25- year-old man, second a 39-year-old man, and last 42-year-old man]. The marriage were arranged by a religious leader at Ceasar’s mosque. She entered the first such marriage at age 16 and was married twice more before the age of 20. Ceasar communicated about traveling to marry another ISIS supporter, going to ISIS controlled territory, and engaging in jihad, that Ceasar fell within the ‘planning and preparing’ stage. The third marriage ended in 2014 after a miscarriage that resulted in Ceasar’s hospitalization for suicidal depression. Records show that Ceasar began contacting (“X”), her former husband by Islamic marriage and a convicted felon, from her quarantine hotel landline phone beginning in July 2020</p>
2. Conley	<p>Conley met a new suitor ISIS fighter online (solider) – he is a 32-year-old. She planned to travel next week to meet her suitor in Syria and that they intended to reside near the Turkish border. During their communications, they shared their view of Islam as requiring participation in violent jihad. The coconspirator communicated to Conley that he was an active member of a group fighting in Syria known as ISIS. The two then decided to become engaged and worked together to have Conley travel to Syria to join her new fiancé. Before traveling to Syria, Conley refined and obtained additional training and skills in order to provide support and assistance to any AQ and/or ISIS fighter. Conley also intended to fight if it became necessary to do so.</p> <p>Conley stated the airline ticket was purchased for her. Conley said that if she was prohibited from leaving the country, she, “...would find another way.” Conley has not sent any material or money to her suitor but had been asked by him to transfer money for him. Conley did not transfer the money because she thought it may get her in trouble. Conley told investigators she planned to be the suitor’s housewife and the camp nurse. When Conley told the suitor she wants to provide his camp with medical services and training, he told her that was good because they needed more nurses. Conley quoted her suitor as having said, “We need some nurses over here.” Conley stated that she was aware that her plans were potentially illegal, and she could possibly get arrested, and therefore she has no intention to return to the US. Conley mentioned an incident where an individual was arrested for attempting to go fight in Syria.</p>
3. Elhassani	<p>Elhassani was informed by her husband that he and his brother wanted to travel to Syria to join ISIS, which she knew was a terrorist organization that engaged in terrorist activities. Between November 2014 and April 1015, Elhassani helped the two men join ISIS by making multiple trips to Hong Kong and transporting more than \$30,000 in</p>

Last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
	cash and gold from the United States and depositing it in a safe deposit box in Hong Kong. Elhassani melted down the gold to look like jewelry and did not disclose the cash and gold on customs declaration forms. At the time Elhassani transported the money and gold, she knew that her husband and brother-in-law had expressed an interest in joining ISIS and that they intended to use these resources to support ISIS.
4. LaRose	LaRose and her co-conspirators used the Internet to establish relationships with one another and to communicate regarding their plans, which included martyring themselves, soliciting funds for terrorists, soliciting passports and avoiding travel restrictions (through the collection of passports and through marriage) in order to wage violent jihad. LaRose also stole another individual's U.S. passport and transferred it in an effort to facilitate an act of international terrorism.
5. Ramirez	Ramirez accepted LaRose's invitation to travel to Europe and asked to bring along her minor male child. On Sept, 12, 2009, Ramirez traveled to Ireland with her child with the intent to live and train with jihadists. The day after she arrived in Ireland, Ramirez married CC#2, whom she had never before met in person, in an Islamic ceremony, knowing and intending that her presence in Europe, her marriage to CC#2 and her future actions would provide support for the conspiracy.
6. Thomas	<p>Keonna Thomas distributed ISIS propaganda online using the names Fatayat Al Khilafah and YoungLioness. On September 20, 2016, Thomas pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization. At the hearing, she admitted to planning to abandon her children, move to Syria to marry an ISIS fighter she met online, and participate in "martyrdom operations." "YoungLioness," posted on Twitter the following statement: "When you're a mujahid [violent jihadi fighter] your death becomes a wedding. #HoorAlAyn [pleasures in paradise]." On or about February 14, 2015, KEONNA THOMAS, a/k/a "Fatayat Al Khilafah," a/k/a "YoungLioness," sent an electronic communication to CC#3 advising that she sought help from CC#2 regarding "routes" and her "travel plan."</p> <p>33. On or about February 17, 2015, CC#2 sent an electronic communication to KEONNA THOMAS, a/k/a "Fatayat Al Khilafah," a/k/a "YoungLioness," stating, "Even my wife . . . If she turned out after all these years to be a spy I will personally blow her brains all over the bedroom ... Even to u ifl married U and u betrayed me But if my wife comes and it turns out she was a spy after all these years ... I will personally behead her." In response, THOMAS stated, "cutting head is more personal."</p>
7. Young	<p>After her conversion, Young distanced herself from family and friends and felt spending time with non-Muslims would be a bad influence. DAKHLALLA [suitor] taught Young how to pray and to recite the Quran in Arabic, and Young began watching YouTube videos about Islamic law. Young would soon have nikkah (there was a ceremony, but, as DAKHLALLA acknowledges, it is not legally recognized) and exhibited an understanding that he would be taking orders from ISIL when he arrived in their territory. In that same conversation, YOUNG announced that she is preparing for "hijrah," a common reference to journeying to the Islamic State. She further stated, "...I have [a] hijrah partner and we are planning to leave before August." She went on to discuss some of her concerns about being monitored by Government agencies, and she also added that her travel partner was a "brother" and that she would have to have "nikkah" with him so they could travel together without an escort. DAKHLALLA and Young maintained contact with who they thought were ISIL recruiters and continued to express concerns about being caught by U.S. or Turkish authorities, and explained the</p>

Last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
	<p>initial plan of travelling first to Greece posing as honeymooners, then going to Turkey and on to Dawlah. “Our story will be that we are newlyweds on our honeymoon.” Young also stated that “We won’t be flying to Istanbul. We will fly to a different country and take a bus to Istanbul.” In order to avoid suspicion YOUNG stated that they would: fly to Greece first as that would further support their cover story. On or about June 17, 2015, YOUNG confirmed that the wedding took place on June 6, 2015.”</p>

Table 4 captures moderate risk incentives concentrated on affection, acceptance, and intimate relationships. Per Maslow,

It is clear the order of needs might be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences. For some individuals, the need for self-esteem is more important than the need for love. For others, the need for creative fulfillment may supersede even the most basic needs. (as cited in McLeod, 2022)

The study’s findings showed a need for a patriarchal representative to initiate acceptance in the radical organization. Therefore, borderline risk consists of three types of needs: (a) love, (b) esteem, and (c) cognitive, as shown in Table 4.

Borderline Risk: Esteem Needs

Tier 5 esteem (“ego”) emphasizes managing feelings of accomplishment or pride by reflecting on one’s life experiences, duties, and roles that define “high esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence), and low esteem a desire for reputation or respect from others (status, prestige, recognition)” (McLeod, 2022). For example, a woman’s role in her family, work, and social life dictate self-dignity and prestige as a representation of themselves, family, and affiliations. All seven women had a sense of pride that boosted their self-esteem and contributed to their organization’s religious interpretations and initiations. Esteem is bolstered via propagandistic material,

multiple aliases, religious aesthetics, passing language barriers, marrying suitors, and praise from superiors or supporters.

For example, Conley displayed a level of high self-esteem by contributing her service skills set:

Conley stated she wanted to wage Jihad and would like to go overseas to fight.

She further stated that if she is not allowed to fight because she is a woman, she will use her medical training to aid Jihadi fighters. Conley is a licensed Certified Nurse's Aide in the State of Colorado. If she cannot fight or be a nurse for Jihad,

Conley stated she will assist Jihadi fighters in whatever manner is needed.

All seven women showed a motivation to counter past emotional experiences that had hindered their self-confidence. Each woman gravitated to create a compulsive sense of superiority and uniqueness that maintains persistency and dependency on positive reinforcement within a terrorist organization.

Per the court documents and prerelease sentencing, each woman was in "relapse," despite showing signs of rehabilitation or acknowledgment of their illegal actions. Each woman returned to reintegrate within the terrorist networks as a sign of respect and worth. Caesar and LaRose held a high place in the social structure as network communication producers with several ISIS supporters. LaRose's emotional vulnerability was a weapon of self-actualization and transcendence:

LaRose turned to the Internet for distraction and, ultimately, personal transformation. By mid-2008, she had managed to align herself with violent terrorists who valued her ability and persistence as their online predator, or

“hunter.” In this role, LaRose spent most of her waking hours working obsessively on her computer to identify, communicate with, recruit, and bring together violent jihadists. In fact, LaRose earned praise and attention from terrorists in Europe and South Asia, one of whom ultimately tasked her with an assassination assignment in Sweden. LaRose proudly accepted this assignment, viewing it as an honor, and she thus underwent a second transformation from online extremist to real-world assassin.

Vulnerabilities, popularity, needs, and desires drive the motivational factors of self-fulfillment (i.e., cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence). Driven by negative life experiences, Thomas, Elhassani, Ramirez, and Young took on an aesthetic appeal by “distancing [themselves] from family and friends and felt spending time with non-Muslims would be a bad influence.” All seven women’s esteem needs were fulfilled by viewing propaganda, establishing martyrdom as heavenly, and continuously reverting to terrorist support room communications, which drive the passions to continuously evolve in the radical Islamic woman enlightening each spirit in specific needs is psychologically driven. Especially, marrying or linking with the opposite sex (male radical as suitor, husband, or brother) as initiation into the organization or gateway. Young’s contribution was to start a family and raise children. Elhassani traveled to Syria with her husband and brother-in-law providing support. Each radical strove to build a healthy self-image and retain self-respect (feel good). It is a matter of self-centered indulgences driven by false rewards or propaganda that obscure right from wrong, leading to the next tier of cognitive needs.

Growth Needs: Self-Fulfillment Needs

A breaking point in deficiency needs versus growth needs (see Figure 5).

According to McLeod (2022), growth needs contribute to moderate- to high-risk self-fulfillment needs that

Do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. Most needs have been reasonably satisfied where one may be able to reach the highest level. Every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy. Unfortunately, progress is often disrupted by a failure to meet lower-level needs [or by being caught by federal agents or an unsuccessful terrorist plot]. Life experience may cause an individual to fluctuate between levels of hierarchy.

McLeod (2022) emphasized,

Not everyone will move through the hierarchy in a uni-directional manner but may move back and forth between different types of needs” allowing risk to be a determining factor in this analysis. Growth needs consist of a moderate-borderline risk area of cognitive needs. On the other hand, self-fulfillment and high-risk radicalization consist of cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence.

Borderline Risk: Cognitive Needs

Proceeding from esteem needs, cognitive needs probe “knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration, need for meaning and predictability” (McLeod, 2022). Over time, all seven American women created a bias toward other individuals

under radical viewpoints of “kaffirs”: the non-Muslims. Every radical American woman could mitigate personal risk and value systems such as Conley and Ceasar:

Conley stated that she reasoned “If they think I’m a terrorist, I’ll give them something to think I am.” She started keeping a notebook and acted like she was diagramming the church to alarm them. After that, Conley got into an argument with the pastor and was asked to leave. Conley stated that Jihad to her is war against “kafir” (derogatory Arabic term for non-Muslims) to protect Muslim lands, although she acknowledged that Jihad can also mean internal religious struggle. When asked her opinion about harming innocent people while waging Jihad, Conley stated that it depended on the circumstance. To Conley, it is okay to harm innocents if they are part of a target. She felt that if wives, children, and chaplains visiting a military base are killed during an attack, it is acceptable because they should not have been at a legitimate target. She repeatedly referred to US military bases as “targets.”

Terminology of circumstances shows the ability to weight goals and actions.

Ceasar’s testimony shows clear and present danger of her decisions:

Dr. Vidino testified that Ceasar exhibited two “red flags” signaling a danger that she would reengage with ISIL if released from prison: (1) maintenance of extremist views, and (2) engagement with people known by her to be ISIL supporters-in some instances the same people she engaged with during the charged conduct.

Inquisitiveness was explored by social media propaganda. “Using social media and the encrypted messaging application Telegram, Ceasar [plus, all seven American Women] expressed her support for ISIS, encouraged others to join ISIS abroad, and helped individuals in the United States contact ISIS members overseas.” Each woman was a delegation of empowerment by asserting gender roles within the organization or when tested by radical supporters.

When asked if she would engage in actual combat on the battlefield, Conley said,

“If it was absolutely necessary, then yes. I wouldn’t like it...but I would do it.”

Conley also said, “He’s the man, he should be doing the fighting.”

At this juncture, cognitive skills test actions and roles established by radical religious propagandistic philosophies. LaRose, Ceasar, Conley, Elhassani, Young, Thomas, and Ramirez followed their duties to support male members of the organization. Cognitive motivational psychology is led by controlling one’s circumstances and outcomes. Past deification dictates the ability to take control of one’s life, justifying a strict cause-and-effect based on new ideologies that were deficient. The deficiencies render growth needs through social media propaganda by embodying radical literature such as *Al-Qa’ida’s Doctrine for Insurgency: Abd Al-Aziz Al-Murqin’s – A Practical Course for Guerilla War* by Norman Cigar.

Conley’s fanaticism with guerilla warfare, attacking styles, and lac of American securities made her question her abilities:

Conley thought she could plan such an attack, but not carry it out. Conley liked the idea of guerilla warfare because she could do it alone. Conley stated she

needed three elements in order to wage Jihad: intent, means, and opportunity. She had the intent, but lacked the means and opportunity. Conley stated that if everything falls into place, she may be ready to wage Jihad in a year. Conley was reminded, and acknowledged, that she had made statements to overt law enforcement about waging Jihad against the US. Conley was further advised, and acknowledged, that what she wanted to do is illegal. When asked if she still wanted to carry out the plans, knowing they are illegal, Conley said that she does. Each radical is aware of repercussions, has an adrenaline rush to maintain secrecy, and is intelligent to carry out their plan in any executive order with resourceful social media communication.

High Risk: Aesthetic Needs

The aesthetic need is defined by an “appreciation and search for beauty, balance, and form” (McLeod, 2022). At this point a division can be seen in soft and hard radicalization of the seven women’s motivation to travel overseas. Hard radicalization is full transcendence and self-actualization by creating harm and danger to those opposing radical Islamic views along with a valued executive skill set (i.e., Ceasar, Conley, LaRose, and Thomas). Soft radicalization adheres to communication management, customs, language, baring children, and creating a household; not wanting to fight unless necessary (i.e., Elhassani, Ramirez, and Young). Despite the divide, each personality brings forth the ability to compliment the survival of the radical organization by learning foreign languages (e.g., kaffir, jihad, hijab, dawlah, hijrah, deen, mujahid etc.), multiple aliases, travel overseas, financial security, adopt tribal or ethnic customs internally or

externally, initiate with a male radical to travel overseas, and assist in subordination to sacrifice oneself as a martyr. An evolution of each individual is observed over time accomplishing a balance and solicited collectiveness with the assistance of internet propaganda and chatrooms. Table 5 Aesthetic Needs manifest the inclination for tier 8 ‘self-actualization’, and final tier 9 ‘transcendence’ of Maslow Hierarchy of Needs within the high-risk spectrum.

Table 5

Aesthetic Needs of Sample as Represented in Court Transcripts

Case number, last name	Hard or soft radicalization	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
1 Caesar	Hard	<p>Caesar had created a video “espousing not only travel overseas for Islamic purposes but also jihad,” and he cited her social media posts supportive of ISIS.</p> <p>After registering her Athan account [Muslim Prayer App] in August 2020, Caesar wrote a post in which she referred to non-Muslims as kuffar. On August 24, 2020, Caesar texted an associate about clothing and stated, “She can have it because I don’t wear there kuffar clothes.” On September 1, 2020, in text to another associate, Caesar wrote “I said they want me to look like a kafir immodest clothes.” On September 6, 2020, in response to a user’s question on the Athan application about the permissibility of eating Kentucky Fried Chicken, Caesar wrote “it’s not halaal, it processed and killed by kafir,” using an alternative spelling for “kuffar.” On September 20, 2020, while texting an associate, Caesar stated that Algeria was part of Morocco “until kuffar and devil split the Muslims up to settle in our land.</p>
2 Conley	Hard	<p>Conley made spontaneous statements to church staff to the effect of: “Why is the church worried about a terrorist attack?”; and, that terrorists are: “...not allowed to kill aging adults and little children.” She started going to Sunday services and classes, but did not discuss her views and dressed in her hijab. She previously wanted to serve in the US military but no longer wanted to because she felt the</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A hijab is a head covering worn in public by Muslim women. 2. US Army Explorers is a national non-profit youth career exploration program for persons ages 13-20. The program exposes participants to career opportunities in the military and provides knowledge and experience in military occupational skills. 3. Military would not accept her due to her religious beliefs and her wearing of a hijab and niqab. She said she wanted military training, so

Case number, last name	Hard or soft radicalization	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
		<p>the Explorers were the best option because she will never be deployed, and they will let her wear a hijab. Conley stated she wanted to wage Jihad and would like to go overseas to fight</p>
3 Elhassani	Soft	<p>Conley stated that Jihad to her is war against “kafir” (derogatory Arabic term for non-Muslims) to protect Muslim lands, although she acknowledged that Jihad can also mean internal religious struggle. When asked her opinion about harming innocent people while waging Jihad, Conley stated that it depended on the circumstance. To Conley, it is okay to harm innocents if they are part of a target. She felt that if wives, children, and chaplains visiting a military base are killed during an attack, it is acceptable because they should not have been at a legitimate target. She repeatedly referred to US military bases as “targets.”</p> <p>Qaida’s Doctrine for Insurgency: Abd Al-Aziz Al-Muqrin’s A Practical Course for Guerilla War” by Norman Cigar. Conley saw herself as being a part of tactics taught in the book.</p> <p>“Elhassani admitted that she traveled overseas and pre-positioned over \$30,000 in cash and gold, knowing that the funds would be used by her husband and brother-in-law to join and support ISIS in Syria, both of whom became ISIS fighters, putting the lives of her children at risk” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers.</p>
4 LaRose	Hard	<p>Bored with her life, LaRose turned to the Internet for distraction and, ultimately, personal transformation. LaRose earned praise and attention from terrorists in Europe and South Asia, one of whom ultimately tasked her with an assassination assignment in Sweden. LaRose proudly accepted this assignment, viewing it as an honor, and she thus underwent a second transformation from online extremist to real-world.</p> <p>She repeatedly referred to the “filthy kafir pigs” in America. And as recently as mid-2012 (two and-a-half years after her arrest), LaRose wrote a letter to an admirer saying: I made my plans with a Noble Brother in Pakistan. It was just me and him that made these plans. Really Sis I have no regrets. My Brother honoured me by giving me the assignments. Nowhere does a Sister get assignments like what my Brother gave me.</p>
5 Ramirez	Soft	<p>Ramirez accepted LaRose’s invitation to travel to Europe and asked to bring along her minor male child. On September 12, 2009, Ramirez traveled to Ireland with her child with the intent to live and train with jihadists. The day after she arrived in Ireland, Ramirez married CC#2, whom she had never before met in person, in an Islamic ceremony, knowing and intending that her presence in Europe, her marriage to CC#2, and her future actions would provide support for the conspiracy. KEONNA THOMAS, a/k/a “Fatayat Al Khilafah,” a/k/a “YoungLioness,” re-posted on Twitter a photograph of a young male child wearing firearm magazine pouches and camouflage attire, with the following caption: “Ask yourselves, while this young man is holding magazines for the Islamic state, what are you doing for it? #ISIS.”</p>

Case number, last name	Hard or soft radicalization	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
6 Thomas	Hard	<p>Thomas posted on Twitter a picture of U.S. Currency, with the following captions; “US Dollar notes donated by Kuwait nationals to the ISIS brothers;” and “Allahu Akbar [God is great]!! Support the Muslims by giving sadaqah [charity].”</p> <p>She later married an ISIS recruit in Syria via Skype and had plans to abandon her two daughters and move to Syria. “YoungLioness,” re-posted on Twitter the following statement by another Twitter user; “‘Happiness is the day of my martyrdom’ - Sheikh Khalid al Husainan.”</p> <p>KEONNA THOMAS, a/k/a “Fatayat Al Khilafah,” a/k/a “YoungLioness,” posted on Twitter the following statement: “I want these to be my last words.” Accompanying this statement was a photograph of the following text: “By the Lord of the Kaaba [a shrine in Mecca] I have succeeded.”</p> <p>On or about January 30, 2014, KEONNA THOMAS, a/k/a “Fatayat Al Khilafah,” a/k/a “YoungLioness,” re-posted on Twitter a photograph of an individual carrying an AK-47 weapon, with the following text: “Sponsor a Mujahid [violentjihadi fighter].” Accompanying the photograph, THOMAS re-posted the following statement by another Twitter user; “Did you know ... For as little as \$100 you can provide a #Mujahid with his basic necessities for 1 month?”</p> <p>DAKHLALLA, a United States citizen, first met Jaelyn Young in the spring of 2014 in Starkville, MS, where they resided, and began dating her in November of 2014. Young had expressed an interest in converting to Islam before she started dating DAKHLALLA, and she announced in March, 2015 that she had converted to Islam. Soon thereafter, Young explained to DAKHLALLA that she wanted to start covering her face, and by the summer, she began wearing a burkha at times.</p>
7 Young	Soft	<p>Young said that she could not “wait to get to Dawlah [ISIS-controlled territory],” so she could be “among brothers and sisters under the protection of Allah and to raise little Dawlah cubs in sha Allah. “She cited that the U.S. has a “thick cloud of falsehoods and very little truth about Dawlah makes it through.”</p> <p>YOUNG made it clear that, in relation to the Muslim family with whom she spends a great deal of time, and her local community as a whole, “many of the family members and members of the community do not support Dawlah ... “YOUNG expressed that she disagreed with those family and community members and stated, “Dawlah is correct.”</p> <p>Young distanced herself from family and friends and felt spending time with non-Muslims would be a bad influence. DAKHLALLA taught Young how to pray and to recite the Quran in Arabic, and Young began watching YouTube videos about Islamic law.</p>

Table 5 depicts each individual's motivation and recognizable soft and hard radicalizations. The seven women manifest an inclination to religious veracity in their way with the definitive use of social media propaganda or communication systems. Young, Ramirez, and Elhassani looked for household infatuation (kinship). While Ceasar, Conley, LaRose, and Young had an increased motivation to travel overseas to create a societal imbalance within the non-Islamic world.

High Risk: Self-Actualization Needs

It is admissible that several reach self-actualization needs and few achieve transcendences, but “progress is disrupted by failures” (McLeod, 2022). Self-actualization is a feeling of gratitude toward self and others by “achieving one's full potential, including creative activities, seeking personal growth and peak experiences – becoming everything one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1987, as cited in McLeod, 2022, p. 64). Self-actualization is an internal infatuation with self and others that defines an individual through many characteristics and behaviors. McLeod (2022) identified the following characteristics:

1. Individuals perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty
2. Accept themselves and others for what they are
3. Spontaneous in thought and action
4. Problem-centered (not self-centered)
5. Unusual sense of humor
6. Able to look at life objectively
7. Highly creative

8. Resistant to enculturation, but not purposely unconventional
9. Concerned for the welfare of humanity
10. Capable of deep appreciation of basic life-experience
11. Establish deep satisfying interpersonal relationships with a few people
12. Peak experiences
13. Need for privacy
14. Democratic attitudes (from a zealot perspective)

Behaviors leading to self-actualization include the following:

1. Experiencing life like a child, with full absorption and concentration
2. Trying new things instead of sticking to safe paths
3. Listening to your own feelings in evaluating experiences instead of the voice of tradition, authority or the majority
4. Avoiding pretense ('game playing') and being honest
5. Being prepared to be unpopular if your views do not coincide with those of the majority
6. Taking responsibility and working hard
7. Trying to identify your defenses and having the courage to give them up

Both behaviors and characteristics represent extremist connotations seen through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which recognizes the motivation to travel overseas for several reasons: religious fanaticism leaving biological families, the individual being malicious, and each woman being highly influential within the organization. LaRose and Ramirez (co-conspirators) represented self-actualization:

Larose received a direct order to kill a citizen and resident of Sweden, and to do so in a way that would frighten “the whole Kufar [non-believer] world.” LaRose agreed to carry out her murder assignment, and she and her co-conspirators discussed that her appearance and American citizenship would help her blend in while carrying out their plans. LaRose later traveled to Europe and tracked the intended target online in an effort to complete her task... In fact, LaRose earned praise and attention from terrorists in Europe and South Asia, one of whom ultimately tasked her with an assassination assignment in Sweden. LaRose proudly accepted this assignment, viewing it as an honor, and she thus underwent a second transformation from online extremist to real-world... She located her target in Sweden and then traveled to Europe to put her plan into action. Along the way, LaRose lied to the FBI, removed and concealed her computer hard drive, and stole her boyfriend’s U.S. passport for an overseas terrorist associate who needed to travel... LaRose ultimately grew frustrated with her co-conspirators and postponed her activities in order to return temporarily to the United States, resulting in her arrest. However, the harm caused by LaRose’s criminal conduct lingered on. Her associates continued to communicate about their plans even after LaRose’s arrest, the stolen passport has never been recovered, and the target of her murder plot still lives in fear for his life. In addition, news of LaRose’s arrest spread shockwaves throughout the West, as people recognized that the face of the terrorism threat had changed forever.

At this stage, every woman was a transformed instrument within the terrorist organization with clear intentions to travel overseas with an eminent foundation of radicalism. Ramirez and LaRose's chain of email communications defined the organization's structure as a valuable asset "divided into a planning team, research team, action team, recruitment team, and finance team," establishing superior leadership. Ceasar, Thomas, Elhassani, Young, Conley, LaRose, and Ramirez shared similar characteristics and behaviors with a tenacious devotion to their respective organizations' religious Jihadist culture (hate and prejudices). However, each was unique to Jihad based on motivation to travel overseas (e.g., Hijrah). Upon being caught by government officials in the domestic or international territory and trialed in the United States, each woman portrayed her clear intentions (plot/plans) under suitor relationships, social media communications, notion to acquire military training, and role within the organization:

- Ceasar attempted to become a warrior or pseudo commando
- Thomas desired to join, fight and be a martyr
- Elhassani was a reproducer, material, and resource transporter/supplier
- Young was a planner, attracted to medical assistance and distort Western biases
- Conley provided U.S. militaristic tactical training and medical assistance to Islamic Jihadist
- LaRose was super-radical, pivotal leadership/organization, and authorized to assassinate

- Ramirez was a co-conspirator, recruiter, resources supplier, and co-assassinator

The self-actualization stage equates to accomplishing one's desires or transformation. The final tier, transcendence, shows total surrender by shifting beyond one's high-risk operations or martyrdom restrictions. Transcendence is a form of resilience and honor by establishing oneself as a paragon.

High Risk: Transcendence

The most highly volatile tier is transcendence, defined by few and defended by many (prepotency). A stage of enlightenment, "mystic experiences, certain experiences with nature, aesthetic-sexual services to others, the pursuit of science and religious faith" at its optimal level are represented in resilience through continuous communication with people or use of technology, longing for martyrdom, and creating a euphoria for radical and nonradical countries to witness. Transcendence is the final phase of power and possession. In Table 5, soft and hard power radiate authority, initiating the desire to travel overseas to radical organizations. Each woman's livelihood was at stake. Despite being caught at airports by U.S. federal agents, they continued to radicalize themselves and others to create a resilient business model of autonomy. The specific verbiage of each individual indicated the emotional and psychological tendencies that validate the motivation to join terrorism overseas.

Table 6*Transcendence Needs of Sample as Represented in Court Transcripts*

Case number, last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
1 Ceasar	<p>“identification, is “an attempt to become a warrior or pseudocommando . . . , and usually it’s a sign that you’re affiliating with or interested in a particular group or individual.”... Id. at 225. As examples of Ceasar’s “identification,” Dr. Katsavdakos testified that Ceasar had created a video “espousing not only travel overseas for Islamic purposes but also jihad,” and he cited her social media posts supportive of ISIS. Id. at 226. The fourth factor, “leakage,” means “conveying to a third party, not the direct source, of your intent to engage in some kind of harmful act.” Id. Here, Ceasar’s internet posts and re-posts of videos were indicative of leakage.”</p> <p>“Ceasar already had engaged in the same kind of behavior—communicating with ISIS sympathizers—while on presentence release; that she equated Islam with ISIS and framed her prosecution for providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization as persecution for practicing her religion; and that she used the same derogatory language ISIS has used to refer to the American legal system. Id. at 138-45. As Dr. Vidino summarized: “The way she speaks is the way somebody [who] supports ISIS speaks.” Id. at 141.</p> <p>“Ceasar’s serious offense—providing material support to ISIS—coupled with her conduct while on presentence release, and her ensuing lies about it to law enforcement authorities, demonstrated her dangerousness and risk of recidivism.”</p> <p>“She acknowledged the wrongfulness of her conduct and that she “mistook a terroristic organization, who used [her] religion, to be a sort of guidance in [her] life.”</p> <p>“Ceasar discussed why Ceasar was incarcerated, during which Ceasar stated that she was “here for ISIS, I praise ISIS” and that the “FBI caught me.” Inmate-1 further reported that Ceasar also told Inmate-1, “I root for ISIS, you root for the USA.” Inmate-1 further reported that Inmate-1 did not witness Ceasar attempt to recruit anyone to join her feeling about ISIS, but that Ceasar was openly supportive of the terrorist group and frequently spoke about it.</p>
2 Conley	<p>“Conley showed interviewers a book called “Al-Qaida’s Doctrine for Insurgency: Abd Al-Aziz Al-Muqrin’s A Practical Course for Guerilla War” by Norman Cigar. Conley saw herself as being a part of tactics taught in the book. The book had several passages underlined by Conley, including motorcade attacks and waging guerilla warfare. Conley stated that attacking a motorcade in the US was not viable because security in the US is too good. Conley thought she could plan such an attack, but not carry it out. Conley liked the idea of guerilla warfare because she could do it alone. Conley stated she needed three elements in order to wage Jihad: intent, means, and opportunity. She had the intent, but lacked the means and opportunity. Conley stated that if everything falls into place, she may be ready to wage Jihad in a year. Conley was reminded, and acknowledged, that she had made statements to overt law enforcement about waging Jihad against the US. Conley was further advised, and acknowledged, that what she wanted to do is illegal. When asked if she still wanted to carry out the plans, knowing they are illegal, Conley said that she does. considered doing humanitarian work with a group like the Red Crescent, instead of waging Jihad. Conley stated she has no interest in doing humanitarian work. Conley felt that Jihad</p>

Case number, last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
	is the only answer to correct the wrongs against the Muslim world. Conley said she preferred to wage Jihad overseas so she could be with Jihadist fighters.”
3 Elhassani	“Elhassani admitted that she traveled overseas and pre-positioned over \$30,000 in cash and gold, knowing that the funds would be used by her husband and brother-in-law to join and support ISIS in Syria,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. Samantha Marie Elhassani and her children traveled with her husband Moussa, a Moroccan national, to Syria. Elhassani and her children are U.S. citizens. Elhassani and her children lived in Raqqa while Moussa fought for ISIS. After Moussa was killed in a drone strike, Elhassani and her children fled Raqqa and were detained by Syrian Democratic Forces. Federal prosecutors allege that Elhassani provided tactical gear and money to two ISIS fighters. The Indiana Department of Child Services has taken custody of her children. In an interview with CNN before she was extradited, Elhassani said her husband forced her to cross into Syria while they were on a family vacation in Turkey.
4 LaRose	<p>“Known as “Jihad Jane” and “Fatimah LaRose,” Colleen LaRose helped recruit Islamic terrorists and plotted to murder Lars Vilks, a Swedish artist best known for his drawing of Muhammed’s head on the body of a dog.</p> <p>“LaRose seemed to take pleasure and even pride recounting her glory days as “the hunter.” And even years after her arrest, her prison correspondence seemed to indicate a complete lack of remorse about her behavior. LaRose often signed her prison mail proudly using her alias “JihadJane” and referring to her Wikipedia page. She repeatedly referred to the “filthy kafir pigs” in America. And as recently as mid-2012 (twoand-a-half years after her arrest), LaRose wrote a letter to an admirer saying: I made my plans with a Noble Brother in Pakistan. It was just me and him that made these plans. Really Sis I have no regrets. My Brother honoured me by giving me the assignments. Nowhere does a Sister get assignments like what my Brother gave me.</p> <p>“LaRose received a direct order to kill a citizen and resident of Sweden, and to do so in a way that would frighten “the whole Kufar [nonbeliever] world.” The indictment further charges that LaRose agreed to carry out her murder assignment, and that she and her co-conspirators discussed that her appearance and American citizenship would help her blend in while carrying out her plans. According to the indictment, LaRose traveled to Europe and tracked the intended target online in an effort to complete her task.”</p>
5 Ramirez	<p>“In a series of electronic communications dated July 19, 2009, one co-conspirator (identified as CC#2 in the superseding indictment) directed another to recruit online “some brothers that can travel freely...with EU passports...[A]nd I also need some sisters too.” The co-conspirator further explained that “sister fatima [LaRose] will be in charge of other sister care...[W]e have already organized everything for her...[W]e are will[ing] to die in order to protect her no matter what the risk is.”</p> <p>“Ramirez accepted LaRose’s invitation to travel to Europe and asked to bring along her minor male child. On September 12, 2009, Ramirez traveled to Ireland with her child with the intent to live and train with jihadists. The day after she arrived in Ireland, Ramirez married CC#2, whom she had never before met in person, in an Islamic ceremony, knowing and intending that her presence in Europe, her marriage to CC#2, and her future actions would provide support for the conspiracy.”</p>

Case number, last name	Quoted legal correspondences within the court case transcripts
6 Thomas	<p data-bbox="451 344 1425 464">“On September 20, 2016, Thomas pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization. At the hearing, she admitted to planning to abandon her children, move to Syria to marry an ISIS fighter she met online, and participate in “martyrdom operations.”</p> <p data-bbox="451 499 1425 646">“Thomas repeatedly expressed a personal desire for martyrdom. For example, on or about January 1, 2014, she posted on Twitter, “ I see why the mujahideen [violent jihadi fighters] Sacrifice Dunya [life on earth] for Akhir ah [the afterlife] there’s no comparison.” And on or about January 4, 2014, she posted on Twitter, “ Only thing I’m jealous of is when I see the smiles of shuhadaa [martyrs].”</p> <p data-bbox="451 682 1425 800">“Thomas also expressed a personal desire to fight for ISIL. For example , on or about December 2, 2014 , she posted on Twitter the following statement: “If we truly knew the realities...we all would be rushing to join our brothers in the frontlines pray ALLAH accept us as shuhada [martyrs].”</p>
7 Young	<p data-bbox="451 835 1425 1073">“After her conversion, Young distanced herself from family and friends and felt spending time with non-Muslims would be a bad influence. DAKHLALLA taught Young how to pray and to recite the Quran in Arabic, and Young began watching YouTube videos about Islamic law...Young then discussed what skills she and her partner possessed that would be useful, and explained that they were fast learners and offered to provide medical assistance to the wounded. Young also informed the FBI employee that DAKHLALLA would like to help with the media operation to correct the falsehoods being spread by the Western media, and then he would be a mujahidin.”</p> <p data-bbox="451 1108 1425 1375">“DAKHLALLA, in contacts with the FBI employee, stated “I am good with computers, education, and media. What could I contribute to Dawlah? In sha Allah.” He went on to explain that he and Young would soon have nikkah (there was a ceremony, but, as DAKHLALLA acknowledges, it is not legally recognized) and exhibited an understanding that he would be taking orders from ISIL when he arrived in their territory. DAKHLALLA and Young maintained contact with who they thought were ISIL recruiters and continued to express concerns about being caught by U.S. or Turkish authorities, and explained the initial plan of travelling first to Greece posing as honeymooners, then going to Turkey and on to Dawlah.”</p>

Reaching transcendence was the ultimate goal that each woman possesses post-self-actualization. Each woman had a specific reason to travel, a patriarchal figure, communicated through social media networks, and lust for martyrdom within a collectivistic community. Carrying forward from aesthetic needs to transcendence, hard radicalization is visible through Cesar, a patriotic warrior; Conley learning tactical weaponization through radical literature to perform an attack; LaRose, a transformed

leader, and assassin; and Thomas, who is willing to do anything to achieve martyrdom. On the other hand, soft radicalization consisted of highly skilled field operators such as Elhassani, who transported tangible and intangible goods; Ramirez, a co-conspirator to LaRose's operations for emotional and occupational securities; and Young, who considered conditional love. Each woman may have had a different motive, but foundationally, all yearned for the same predisposition to travel abroad to facilitate organizational acceptance or martyrdom as a form of enlightenment.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented seven American women's motivational peculiarity to travel overseas to join terrorist organizations. The secondary data collection indicated that each woman was encouraged to travel through gateway countries (Europe then Islamic radical territory), which functioned as security barriers. The groundwork of field operators within radical organizations, public relations, and social media propagandists created multiple vantage points to attain necessary tangible or intangible goods to reach a radical or high-risk nation. The qualitative research process based on the nine tiers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs uncovered several deficiencies and the depth of each woman's transformation, making "belongingness" the highest vulnerability to joining terrorism overseas. A co-conspirator or network agent fulfills perceived burdensome deficiencies by providing financial, immigration, courtship for initiation or validation through a patriarchal figure, and community support group. The data analysis suggests trigger spots for American women to be motivated over "time." Time is the essence that created these seven radical American women and the lack of emotional, cognitive, and psychological

support. Chapter 5 provides a culmination of the study limitations, examination of peer-reviewed literature, recommendations, and future implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the motivation of American women to travel to high-risk countries to become radicalized to engage in terrorist organizations. I sought to identify the internal and external motivational factors underpinning American women's decisions to become radicalized in these male-dominated groups. I based the study on Maslow's nine-tier hierarchy of needs and theory of human motivation. The nine needs are physiological, safety, belonging, love, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence (Maslow, 1987 & McLeod, 2022). The participants selected for this study provided insight on American women's path to radicalization and their capability to be more violent than men, children, or older adults within a hierarchical position in a terrorist organization.

By interviewing more than 400 terrorists, Speckhard (2015) also contributed insights on women's radicalization and embrace of terrorism. However, this study offered a perspective on U.S. female radicalism that could add another layer of understanding on early onsets of radicalization and the need to enhance border security. Following IRB guidelines, I obtained a purposive sample from the CEP and TITT databases IPT. The participants selected for this study were seven homegrown American female terrorists—Ceasar, Conley, Elhassani, LaRose, Ramirez, Thomas, and Young—who transitioned to radicalism because of societal or familial problems and/or a quest for identity and acceptability to belong in a collectivistic group. It creates an internal concoction of

conflict expressed through social media platforms to satisfy vulnerabilities that become high-risk levels of transcendence or allegiance with one's life.

The seven American radical women's motivations were discernible through the use of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which clarified the individual's volatile nature of risk to civilians. The key findings revealed two needs: (a) deficiency needs (physiological, safety, belonging, love, and esteem needs) and (b) growth needs (cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence). The findings reflect that satisfying deficiency needs outweighs any other needs. Of the basic and psychological needs, belonging was the highest motivation to join terrorism overseas. This finding was consistent with Cherry's (2022) observation that "satisfying deficiency needs to avoid unpleasant feelings or consequences; on the other hand, growth needs do not stem from a lack of something but the desire to grow as a person." I found that radical American women consistently built upon or layered the nine-tier pyramid to reach optimization through social media propaganda, communication pathways, and sociocultural roles to fulfill belonging needs as an acceptance. In this concluding chapter, I interpret the findings, discuss the limitations of the study, offer recommendations for future studies, consider the study's implications for positive social change, and provide a reflective conclusion.

Interpretations of the Findings

The research question, which drew from the conceptual and theoretical framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and theory of human motivation, focused on what motivates American women to join terrorist organizations overseas. "Since 2012,

the National Institute of Justice's Domestic Radicalization to Terrorism program (NIJ) sponsors research on how radicalization to terrorism occurs in the United States. These projects have taken a variety of approaches in examining the process of radicalization to terrorism. Still, there is substantial overlap in the findings, which collectively provide evidence of several facilitators of radicalization and the need to understand how this process unfolds within individuals over time" (Smith & Muhlhausen, 2018).

In the literature review presented in Chapter 2, I engaged with studies by Speckhard and Shajkovic (2018), Bloom (2012, 2017), Shapiro and Maras (2019), and Turkington and Christien (2018) to articulate overlap of facilitation of radicalization through: "Terrorist belief or narratives, identity process, activities that demonstrate commitment to a terrorist group or cause, connection with terrorist in one's offline social network, connections with terrorist via the internet and/or social media, group dynamics, grievances, triggering events, and reasons why Western women seek terror groups" (Smith & Muhlhausen, 2018). This study's findings extend the knowledge in the discipline through the mapping of deficiencies and growth needs noted in Figure 4. I provide insight on the role of social media propaganda, mapping pathways, and women's role within a terrorist organization to assimilate.

The findings are interpreted based on deficiency needs that consist of basic needs and psychological needs, specifically: physiological, safety, belonging, love, and esteem needs. Growth needs consist of self-fulfillment needs: cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence. The nine-tier analysis also identifies individuals as low-risk, moderate-borderline-gray area, and high-risk. Although a specific need defines each

tier, each participant grows longitudinally by converging between levels over time. The findings confirm that all seven radical women gravitate toward Tiers 5–7 (the gray area for this study) before reaching self-actualization or transcendence. “Psychological deficiency needs” and “belonging” become the highest reasons for radicalization, leaving risk and motivation important in achieving self-fulfillment needs over a period.

A purposive sample of seven radical American women validated several perspectives on homegrown terrorism through secondary data collected from federal documents. The findings do not disconfirm but extend and validate the knowledge in the discipline by creating applicability to define the existence of the situation and counter deviant behaviors at a low-risk level for prevention or intervention strategies. Peer-reviewed literature concentrated on social identity theory, psychological-classical interaction patterns, etiological methodologies, and social learning theory; however, the importance of time, resources, and reintegration were questionable for an evolving radical woman (e.g., courtroom, social media, personal, and society). The data show adolescence to adulthood environmental experiences contribute to the motivation to radicalize and, over time, increase risk.

The results of this study are consistent with Smith and Muhlhausen (2018), who found, “As individuals’ relationships with others who support terrorism become stronger, they may begin separating themselves from those who do not share the same beliefs – isolation or challenging views” (p. ii). In an interview with Dr. Speckhard, Friedson (2020) mentioned:

Her model called the ‘lethal cocktail of terrorism’ – there are four things that make a terrorist: (1) group, (2) ideology that convinces a normal person to jump boundaries or willing to kill innocents, (3) a level of social support to create an organized network of agreement, and (4) individuals’ motivation and vulnerabilities.

Speckhard would agree that vulnerabilities drive an individual’s internal or external needs, which gravitate to leading a life or purpose. All seven women’s foundational motivation began with virtualization, a pathway to learning the cultural ideologies of radicalism, and a role within the group. Predominate themes from the study’s findings show that a motivation to belong create a constant exposure to radicalization due to human social nature.

Social Media Propaganda Evolution

The internet a primary source to satisfy and express one’s internal conflicts or needs. According to Sanchez (2014) and Spencer (2016), women gravitate toward propagandistic recruitment to fulfill a social desire to communicate and express vulnerabilities. Radicalized Conley “needed three elements in order to wage Jihad: intent, means, and opportunity,” which she found and organized through numerous social media accounts or affiliate aliases. For example, Noelle Velentzas and Kim Anh Vo hold stationary media communication positions as recruiters through the virtual world- a powerful entity that limits or eliminates the need for women to travel, unless they are of high status. The seven radical American women who pursued a desire or motivation to travel express their feelings of vulnerability and were psychologically manipulated.

Mapping Pathways

Several women were decoyed to a select country (see Table 1) to fulfill their paternal or marital obligations to proceed into gatekeeper territories. Post-9/11 expansion was physical and critical from lone-wolf terrorism and domestic and international terrorism. Over time, radical organizations began withdrawing activity due to current world situations such as financial breakdowns, employment, media taboo, wars, and COVID-19. “Baqiya wa tatmaddad” translates as “remaining and expanding” through the internet’s communication and numerous connected travel arrangements (Friedson, 2020). This study found details that could be missed through ongoing surveillance. Additionally,

While community members and practitioners can benefit from the types of evidence-based guidance provided by this research, it will continue to remain important that they take into consideration specific characteristics [through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs] and experiences of the individuals [who assimilate to radicalize]. (Smith & Muhlhausen, 2018, p. ii)

Women’s Role Within a Terrorist Organization by Assimilation

According to Speckhard (as cited in Friedson, 2020), a woman’s role is elicited when weakness is construed among the group or individuals. Women are effective in accomplishing a task built on compassion and mysteriousness. Once a woman is of legal travel age, she is considered highly competent, and over time, seniority offers each American woman a specific role and skillset within the organization as personal needs are met, reaping for advancement at multiple stages within the organization. Human

motivational needs are what inquisitively provide retribution and confirmation within the organization. According to religious texts and organizational ideologies, assimilation is initiated by appointing a paternal partner built on conditional love or necessities that define a woman's status or chain of command—established by a need to belong.

Court Systems and Sentencing Woes

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) researchers and studies confirmed that “intervention efforts may need to take into account both the individual and those with whom they interact, as well as potentially facilitate establishing or re-establishing their relationships with non-extremists” (Smith & Muhlhausen, 2018, p. ii). Each radicalized American woman in this study was conscious of the repercussions of being caught under the Terrorist Act of the United States. For instance, federal documents for Conley stated,

She was aware that Al-Qaeda and ISIS are US government designated foreign terrorist organizations. Conley further defended her actions by stating that she would be “defending Muslims on the Muslim homeland against people who are trying to kill them...she was aware that her plan was potentially illegal, and she could get arrested, and therefore she has no intention to return to the US. (The Investigative Project, n.d.)

The findings showed years of law enforcement engagement with a lack of ineffective positive reinforcement or sentencing guidelines due to long trials with retribution and recidivism only to reintegrate without rehabilitation or the necessary tools to grow or sustain one's needs. The individuals continued to validate their motivations or feel-good needs by secretly reengaging in social media to fulfill part or the majority of

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, despite being under surveillance. The seven radical women reengage due to the gratification of their standard of living and to build a life of purpose irrespective of the good or bad repercussions of their actions. The seven American radical women are aware of their actions and the repercussions of joining terrorist organizations domestically or internationally. According to Nesiah (2013),

In many ways, [women's rights are] at crossroads on the international plane. Feminist communities have engaged and fractured on different understandings and criticisms of the politics of counter-terrorism. Today, working for the dissolution of international conflict, feminism's marriage with counter-terrorism is a central starting point for a critical and self-reflective praxis on the [domestic] and global stage. (p. 222)

This study suggests judicial courts integrate expediency in rendering an adequate gender-oriented sentence for each radicalized woman trying to assimilate or reintegrate based on low- to high-risk ability to deradicalize (counterterrorism strategy; Chitadze, 2023).

Future of Women in Terrorism

Terrorism, radicalism, and women have changed over time based on conformity, innovation, ritualism, and retreatism. In a virtually evolutionary era, the findings of the study could assist academia, the federal government, and nation-states in understanding the five trends driving the future of terrorism (5D's), an effort to explain the trends in terrorism:

1. Diversity (ideology against unique groups),
2. Decentralization (lone-wolf, anonymity, leaderless resistance)

3. Democratization (barriers or entry accessible, do-it-yourself weapon making)
4. Disinformation (propaganda, falsified information, social media marketing, and conspiracy)
5. Deadly (various creative threats, CBRNE-chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive). (Clarke, 2022)

Post-9/11, ISIS fading, and post-COVID travel have made this virtual era a fluid weapon of tangible and intangible extremism. Therefore, stricter controls, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence will be a better threshold for counterterrorism strategies to quickly identify vulnerable populations of radicalization. The egotistical nature of “me, myself, and I” has a more extensive and incredible drive to motivate individuals at every level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The motivation to fulfill a desire creates significance for individuals with psychologically traumatic deficiencies or needs.

Consequently, in many of the academic works describing, exploring, and explaining a phenomenon of female radicalization, the motivational factors of female fighters of radical groups and organizations are mostly that of a personal, private character, and seldom political. However, whether or not we accept violence as a resource that can be used by women does not change the fact that female radicalization stands firmly on the international policy agenda. (Chitadze, 2023)

The motivation to fulfill a want or desire lingers in the feelings of hopelessness that leads to the desire to forget the past and render a new future. The individual does not know anything better but to constantly revert to radicalism due to the cyclical challenge

to assimilate by overriding feelings of hopelessness, challenging adolescence to forget the past and render a new future by reverting to radicalism. The study can assist in prioritizing surveillance, realigning a woman's developmental needs with reinforcement sentencing, and suggesting evidence-based communication strategies between local, state, federal, and international intelligence agencies.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study is that it contains only traveling women caught under the United States Terrorist Acts and available federal case documents upon acquiring IRB approval through TITT, CEP, and IPT. The purposive sample was time-consuming because the CEP database contains over 900 male and female extremists and leaders from around the world, in which 98 of women's nationality is verified through IPT's publicly available court documents. The challenge resides in learning new coding application systems such as NVivo to justify data analysis processes, understanding legal narratives, deciphering the necessary details through lengthy transcripts, and elongated member-check reviews. Several American women did not meet the purposive sample requirements due to the following:

- Confirmability of the birth country not acquired citizenship
- Unknown birth country
- Ongoing court case is pending a sentencing decision; inaccessible legal documentation
- Unavailable court documents
- Anonymous women with aliases in social media origins

- Unlocatable cyber plotter with no travel priorities
- Caught in other countries without release to the United States
- Deceased
- Killed
- Aged out
- Affiliate relationships that prioritize the patriarch as a primary offender, making court documents unavailable for the accomplice in IPT
- Women cannot seek reentry into the United States

Despite these limitations, seven radical American women were identified to create a concentrated, reliable, unbiased, and cohesive data sample with the assistance of NVivo and a three-tiered coding cycle to manage each federal document. The study focused on only American-born radicalized women; therefore, the study may need to be more generalizable to a bigger sample size incorporating other nation-states, legal systems, or broader demographic. Analyzing data from large databases required detailed agility across several variables when drawing conclusions based on specific demographics. However, the ideologies and theoretical methodology can be used to add to future studies as a comparative or advancement. Therefore, using available and necessary data within a relative timeframe is critical for future replicability or advancement with newly published U.S. federal or state court cases and extremist databases. The theoretical framework and coding process are easily replicable and create future inquisitive researchable topics. Despite the recognized limitations, data saturation was attained based on content, a

purposive sample of available secondary data, member checking, resourcefulness, and IRB approval to answer the research question ethically.

Recommendations

Research on radical terroristic women is conglomerated or separated in several studies from different countries or as a world entity from a psychological, sociocultural, political, counterterrorism initiative, and collectivistic groupthink. However, one allocation of a group of females such as radical American women is insightful to understand Western radical motivations specifically from the United States. In an era of women's empowerment, there is a growing phenomenon of the radicalization of women and increased ideological propaganda. Understanding an American woman's radicalization spectrum of risk, growth, and deficiencies can be reciprocated by improving counterterrorism surveillance strategies, through law enforcement social media communications, the dark web, and identifying deviant individuals at transportation checkpoints.

The limitation of the study is the accessibility of fieldwork research that remains confidential or unattainable due to high-level security clearances that would impede time and resources. Therefore, this study's strength is in the veracity of secondary analysis from precedent research studies, the availability of federal public court documents, and an elaborate theoretical framework for cross-examining radicalized women. Secondary research is a reliable and valid process to maintain controlled ethical variables and preestablished design methods with publicly available resources. This strategy allows

researchers to lead a path of progressive inquisitiveness, enhanced analysis, and newly derived results.

Recommendations for Future Research

One recommendation is expanding the sample by incorporating a larger demographic of women who have gained citizenship rather than natural-born citizens, which inversely expands the regional organizational selection that motivates women to travel to high-risk countries. By expanding the sample size, researchers could see if there is a similar deviant pattern to address the future of a new generation of radical women. Second, researchers could add another theoretical layer to understanding American women's assimilation to radicalization through Bronfenbrenner's ecological theoretical model (The Psychology Notes HQ, 2021). Bronfenbrenner's model focuses on the influences of social environments on human development in childhood, which develops over time through complex systems such as: "1. Microsystem – immediate environment; 2. Mesosystem – built on connections; 3. Ecosystem – indirect environment; 4. Macrosystem – social and cultural values; and 5. Chronosystem – changes over time" (The Psychology Notes HQ, 2021). Since the research is specific to understanding radical American women, this study can advance by assessing radical men, children, and elderly aged-out radicals. Fourth, future studies can investigate court judgments on preventive risk assessments and explore other nation-states' available court documents on radical women to recognize conflicts or limitations of criminal court sentencing or arguments on radicalized women. Finally, future research should be conducted from a "virtualization" of radicalism perspective, reinventing women's identities as a "generational"

organizational foundation. Generational means longevity through radical women who can fill several communicatory duties or leadership roles within any terrorist organization.

Implications

The findings of this qualitative case study contribute to the evolving and complex challenges of radical women traveling to high-risk countries through progressive virtual communications. The positive social change incentive is to provide homeland security professionals, academicians, and policymakers with an easily adaptable proactive technique to implement continuous monitoring of homegrown radicalization and to realize the importance of navigating women in counterterrorism incentives. Based on the participants' history of radicalization recorded in court documents, law enforcement and community stakeholders must have a holistic approach. The potential for positive social change is a multiverse conglomerate of space, time, resources, and energy from immediate groups (e.g., individuals, peers, families, organizations, society, government agencies, and foreign counterparts) to recognize deviant behaviors and proactively remedy individuals' growth and development needs at a low-risk level. Future counterterrorism incentives with this study's application can assist in recognizing the radicalization of men, children, and older adults traveling to high-risk nation-states.

The literature implies a social epidemiology on how society and different organizations influence a specific groupthink to create an identity; however, one must tackle antifeminist biases or lack of research and deconstruct social hierarchies based on gender, racialization, and class (Miani & Namer, 2021). Radicalization is a psychological communicatory weapon for the existence and expansion of terrorism. Therefore,

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a uniquely persistent alternative to identify early onsets of radicalization or deviant behaviors correlated to climbing risk factors.

This study can assist in countering leniency or ineffective lifetime surveillance sentencing of radicalized women by assisting court systems with a critique of evidentiary support to identify the level of risk to its citizenry within a nation-state. For example, news media statements identify Allison Fluke-Ekren as a radicalized American-born woman found guilty of traveling overseas as a high-level operative. Although Fluke-Ekren was not part of this study because judicial courts were under a verdict and there was a lack of accessible public documents at the time. The Fluke-Ekren case exemplifies the existence of the situation and the need for early prognosis for Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Security to identify radicalized women before they reach self-actualized transcendentalism (high-risk).

Allison Fluke-Ekren, also known as Allison Ekren, Umm Mohammed al-Amriki, and Umm Mohammed, was a resident of Kansas from September 2011 to 2019. A June 2022 federal report stated,

A US woman pleaded guilty to operating an all-female military group for ISIS in Syria, Libya, and Iraq; became a leader of the ISIS battalion known as Khatiba Nusaybah, taught women how to use AK-47s and explosive devices. Over 100 women and young girls, including as young as 10 or 11 years old, received military training from Fluke-Ekren. (The United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice, Department of Public Affairs, 2022)

Fluke-Ekren is an example of the importance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs application relative to the key findings in this study that focus on deficiency needs, with the psychological spectrum of belonging needs being the utmost culprit in American women's motivation to travel to high-risk countries. Such application could prevent women like the following:

- Portia Odufuwa, born in Texas, started opening fire at the Love Field, Dallas Airport
- An accomplice to Asia Siddiqui, Noelle Velentzas, born in Florida with Greek origins, lived in homeless shelters, and converted to Islam at age 17, conspiring through the internet as a plotter of weapons of mass destruction for ISIS and Al-Qaeda
- Fluke-Ekren, a Kansas City woman who led a female ISIS battalion in Syria

The seven radical women participants identify a gap in the study that implies an intelligence and judicial reevaluation of increasing situational awareness or surveillance of radicalized individual women or men who work alone or affiliate with a group. Over time, increasing border protections by using biometric screens is beneficial, but performing a strategic deradicalization program is a necessary incentive for international intelligence with their partnerships to provide a reliable, resilient, and streamlined process. Suppose radicalized individuals, specifically women, are making multiple trajectories of travel arrangements to reach a specific location and initially pled not guilty, only to realize a later guilty charge with a reformatory sentence. In that case, that information is used to assist in identifying high-risk countries by working with specific

nation-states. For instance, prosecutors in Ceasar's amended judgment stated, "In Europe, countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands have designed and used intensive disengagement and deradicalization programs to assist prisoners charged and convicted of terrorism." The application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is an early preliminary and comprehensive prevention system to identify risk, verbal recognition, and developmental status, which court systems can use to establish sentencing and deviate from clemencies that may allow relapse or reintegration into radical activities.

Conclusion

This study addressed the importance of identifying radicalized American woman's motivation to travel to high-risk nations and the evolution of an American woman's need to establish longevity within a terrorist organization. Lao Tzu foreshadowed the participants' transformation: "Watch your thoughts; they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny." Maslow's hierarchy of needs and human motivations theory analysis showcased women's powerful desire to belong and create an identity in a complex, varied, and amenable existence.

As defined in this study, radicalization is a transformation of one's political, social, and cultural behavioral beliefs to assimilate to an oppositionist ideology of a general citizenry at an individual or group level. On the other hand, terrorism is using illegal or negligent activities to inculcate fear, expand on one's beliefs, coercion, and violence against society through zealot ideologies. According to UN Women (2015),

women are autonomous; “as such, women are ‘squeezed’ between terrorism and counter-terrorism responses” because they have the freedom to create, learn, grow, protect, destroy, and transform for the good or bad of society. Maslow’s theory provides the ability to think critically to determine the growth and development needs that begin radicalization or deviant behaviors through societal isolation, virtual infatuation, and collectivistic belonging with evidence.

Several suggestions emanate from academia, the federal government, and nation-states on becoming vigilant on the evolution of women in terrorism and “how radicalization occurs in the United States to support prevention and intervention efforts” (Smith & Muhlhausen, 2018). With this assessment system, law enforcement and communities can better understand how to rectify development needs before an individual is considered a greater danger to themselves and others, whether it be a man, woman, child, or older adult. The study goes beyond traditional thought of gender roles, cultural taboos, and propaganda by the efficiencies to protect all venues of border security air, land, sea, and space. This study demonstrates the utility of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as a tool for society to create or facilitate the resources to counter basic, psychological, and self-fulfillment needs before the onset of deviant behavior.

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Appendix: Quick Coding Reference Guide

1st cycle: Descriptive (content analysis - information via gov't documents in Investigative Project Terrorism (IPT))

1st cycle: Concept/Theory: Codes = Themes noted below

2nd cycle: Patterns (reoccurring) = data highlights, reference

Quick Memos: Final Reflective/Pattern Code of Secondary Researchers Thoughts

- Aspects can be applied with positive or negative connotation
- 3: Sites used Investigative Project on Terrorism, Intercept, Counterextremism as per IRB
- Transcription Coding Colors & Research/Probing Questions as a Secondary Researcher below

A. Deficiency Needs - EXTERNAL

1. **GREEN** - Physiological Needs: *Basic Need 1/3*
 - a. (Food, water, warmth, rest, air)
 - b. What were some of the circumstances around your home?
2. **DARK BLUE** - Safety Needs: *Basic Need 2/3*
 - a. (Security and Safety, protection from elements, order, stability, freedom from fear)
3. **MAGENTA** - Belongingness: *Psychological Need 1/2*
 - a. (Intimate relationships, friends, collectiveness, warmth, trust, affection, being part of)
 - b. What are some outlets of relief or social communication?
 - c. What are some strengths and weaknesses about American values?
 - d. What roles and duties allowed you to express yourself?
4. **RED** - Love Needs: *Basic Need 3/3*
 - a. (Intimate relationships, friends, collectiveness, sex)
 - b. Tell me about your family role? Duties? Married?
 - c. What attracted you to coming close to your significant other?
5. **TURQUOIS** - *Esteem Needs - Psychological Need 2/2*
 - a. (Prestige and feeling of accomplishment)
 - i. Esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence)
 - ii. Accepted and valued by others – status and prestige
 - b. Can you explain your life experiences through a timeline form?
 - c. Your feelings, duties, and role?

B. Growth Needs - INTERNAL

6. **GRAY** - *Cognitive Needs: Self Fulfillment Need 1/4*
 - a. (Knowledge, understanding, curiosity, exploration, predictability, need for meaning)
7. **BROWN** - *Aesthetic Needs: Self Fulfillment Need 2/4* (appreciation, search for beauty, balance, form)
8. **PURPLE** - Self-Actualization: *Self Fulfillment Need 3/4*
 - a. (Achieving one's full potential, including creative activities, seeking personal growth and peak experiences, 'becoming everything one is capable of becoming'-Maslow)
 - b. What makes you feel good about yourself and others?
9. **PINK** - *Transcendence: Self Fulfillment Need 4/4*
 - a. (Individual is motivated by values beyond the personal self- mystical experiences, and certain experiences with nature, aesthetic-sexual-service to others, pursuit of science, religious faith).

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