Abstract

Women affiliated with ISIS in a voluntary role, often hailing from the West, are often presented either as passive accessories and victims or as deviant, gender-norm-defying monsters. In fact, women are an indispensable component of ISIS, taking up roles both as perpetrators of violence and as mothers and educators of the next generation of ISIS fighters. Through the creation of an original database, I examine the roles and experiences of ISIS-affiliated women before, during, and after their time in the organization. I make connections between individuals’ roles and experiences and highlight identifiable trends in the behavior of these women. These findings suggest that there are misunderstandings in current counterterrorism efforts and policies. The data and hypotheses presented in this study provide a foundation for future data collection efforts and for the construction of fuller accounts of the nature and determinants of the behavior of this important category of women.

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TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this paper, please note the following:

**ISIS**: The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, IS, is a Sunni jihadist group with a violent ideology that claims religious authority over all Muslims and has declared itself a caliphate. In this paper, it is referred to as ISIS, the Islamic State, and the organization.

**ISIS-affiliated women**: The women of ISIS discussed in this thesis are separate from kidnapped women who are brought to the organization against their will and often enslaved. These women joined ISIS and participated in its pursuits in some voluntary capacity.
INTRODUCTION

“Understanding the threat posed by the continued concentration of ISIS fighters in northeast Syria points to the need for action: the only durable solution to the challenge we face in northeast Syria is for each country to repatriate, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and where appropriate, prosecute their nationals for crimes they have committed.”

-Ian Moss, Deputy Coordinator for Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorist Detentions Bureau of Counterterrorism

The Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL/Daesh), a self-declared caliphate that claims religious authority over all Muslims, is a sophisticated and complex terrorist organization, operating in ways that have not been seen in any previous Islamic terrorist organization. Over 41,490 individuals from 80+ countries have left their home countries to join the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq from 2013 to 2018. At its peak in 2014, ISIS held control of approximately 30% of Syria’s land and over 40% of Iraq’s land, before losing 95% of its territory in 2017. With the drastic loss of territory and decline in power and influence, many of these ISIS-affiliated fighters and their families have become displaced, often attempting to return home. These individuals, mostly women and children – as many of the male members have been killed or captured – have been stuck in a state of limbo, living in refugee camps or Syrian, Iraqi, and Turkish prisons, while their home countries refuse to allow their return.

The ISIS-affiliated women face a particularly difficult obstacle: they are viewed as both a threat – perpetrator of terrorism – and a victim – a
helpless accessory to the men of this seemingly patriarchal organization. So how do these contrasting perceptions of these women influence their path out of ISIS? The home countries of the women who joined ISIS struggle with this exact dilemma. Are these women worthy of repatriation? Can they be reintegrated into their former society without posing a threat, or will they bring the ISIS ideology back with them? Is it worth the risk to repatriate them at all or did they forfeit their right to citizenship when they left to join ISIS? Understanding the circumstances of these women will allow for governments to identify patterns, activities and outcomes of these women and evaluate them throughout their experiences. Doing so will foster the development of government-led proper policy that omits the risks associated with repatriation while upholding human rights.

So far there are no definitive answers to these questions, but much initial research has been done to help understand how to answer them. This database compilation and analysis seeks to provide additional holistic information to rid scholarly research and government policies of false assumptions, while giving governments the tools necessary to make effective general basis policies to act as a foundation for repatriation.

The information from this original database calls into question the narratives that have been created because the complete experiences of female ISIS members have not previously been examined both qualitatively and quantitatively. This database will show that while it may be impossible to judge these women on a case-by-case basis, it is also harmful to stereotype them into simple categories. Moreover it is possible to identify relationships that are likely to arise within many of their experiences, laying foundations for effective counterterrorism efforts.

**Significance of the Project**

Although there has not been nearly enough media and academic attention to the women of ISIS, established scholarly research affirms that it is impossible to draw a single or even a few profiles of Western women
migrants to ISIS territory. The Institute for Social Dialogue reports that “there is significant diversity in the profiles of women becoming radicalized by ISIL,” thus making it a significant challenge to create general policies that address individuals on a case-by-case basis. It would be highly ineffective and dangerous, though, for countries to ignore the issue as a whole, and be unprepared for the hundreds of women who must make their way home. The gap between too diverse profiles and ignoring the issue entirely is where this work fits in.

This paper aims to bring attention to how the experiences, circumstances, and motivations of women in the Islamic State can affect other experiences they may have, and how interactions between such activities may have identifiable outcomes. In doing so, this evaluation creates a basis for states to understand these women during their repatriation processes. Creating a database of information surrounding the involvement of dozens of former female members of ISIS will illuminate patterns that allow for the future development of tailored policy recommendations. This original dataset will test the relationships between different variables recorded from each of these women’s experiences. Based on initial research, this database is the first of its kind to track the experiences of these women before, during, and after their time in ISIS, quantifying these experiences, and then finding correlations between such variables. This analysis will highlight how the multitude of experiences that these women encounter, while unique, may have trends which can be identified to influence policy and to enable predictions on their actions and how they should be most effectively treated.

This information contributes to the development of counterterrorism efforts to better prevent re-radicalization and optimize reintegration. These practices must address women’s specific reasons for joining ISIS, as well as the experiences they had throughout their time in the orga-

nization. As women in extremist groups take on more central roles and become key to the organization's success, it is imperative that they are properly evaluated, reintegrated, and rehabilitated upon their return, in order to minimize the risk of putting these women into environments that could re-radicalize them and cause dangerous gaps in counterterrorism efforts.

This database, which provides information on individual cases of women who joined ISIS, will allow for a more in-depth understanding of effective policy reform to be constructed in the future. These detailed profiles of female members will contribute to work influencing legal frameworks that consider the gendered experiences of women, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of women's agency in their radicalization and actions within the Islamic State.

**Importance of a Gendered Understanding of ISIS Members**

For the design of policy that addresses prevention measures, as well as gendered repatriation practices, it is important to understand the female dimension of ISIS, as well as the difference between male and female experiences in the organization. Women's participation in terrorist organizations is not a recent phenomenon. The breadth and success of their roles, particularly in ISIS, is unique in many ways. The diversity and number of women joining the organization, as well as the responsibilities they are given within the group, present new challenges for countries aiming to combat the threat of ISIS.

As the Islamic State grew during the mid 2010’s so did the composition of their population. Around 2014, women made up about 10 percent of the foreign fighter population, and by 2017 grew to make up one fifth of their entire foreign population. Approximately 550 of the total number

of women in ISIS have come from Western countries.\textsuperscript{10} Thousands more hail from other parts of the world in addition to the women directly from the region in which ISIS operates.\textsuperscript{11}

**Background**

*The Female Experience in ISIS*

Women involved in the Islamic State are commonly portrayed as kidnapped slave brides, taken from their homes, communities, and schools by these groups.\textsuperscript{12} The shocking and tragic kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from Nigeria conducted by Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist, ISIS affiliated group in northeastern Nigeria, appeared in headlines across the world. The group is thought to have sold these girls as brides to their soldiers. Yazidi women in Iraq have consistently faced a similar fate at the hands of ISIS members. It is vital to shed light on the women who willingly join, and so may complicit to these sorts of activities.

It is recognized that women involved in ISIS, voluntarily and involuntarily are “disproportionately affected by the consequences of radicalisation and terrorism [and that] ISIS in particular has perpetrated abhorrent crimes against women, leveraging sexual violence as a tool for embedding the concept of inferiority and enforcing a rule of terror within their territory.”\textsuperscript{13} However, despite the global publicity of these atrocities, many women choose to pledge allegiance to ISIS, traveling to Syria and Iraq.

The novelty of the tactics and organization of women’s roles within ISIS,\textsuperscript{14} makes it difficult to ascertain the degree to which women are

\[\textsuperscript{10}\text{ Patel, “The Sultanate of Women.”}\]
\[\textsuperscript{11}\text{ Cook and Vale, “From Daesh to ‘Diaspora.’”}\]
\[\textsuperscript{14}\text{ Deborah Margolin, “The Changing Roles of Women in Violent Islamist Groups,”}\]
involved in acts of terror, in addition to general support of the organization. Many of these women take up roles as housewives, mothers, and caretakers. Others have assumed active roles in terrorist acts on behalf of the group.\(^\text{15}\) Home countries often deny these women entry and revoke their citizenship due to the potential threat they may pose as previous members of the organization.\(^\text{16}\)

Gender analysis in terrorism is not a new field of study, as researchers have focused in-depth on women's roles in terrorist groups, both as victims and perpetrators.\(^\text{17}\) Examinations of ISIS and other terrorist groups, however, have primarily focused on the experiences of male members—those who comprise the majority of the organization and for whom participation in direct acts of violence is a more central role.

Many questions remain regarding the potential threat of females previously involved in ISIS. Misconceptions of these women's contributions to the organization can have severe implications, including improper court mandated sentences, human rights violations, poor reintegration practices, failure to prevent the spread of ISIS ideologies, and failure to prevent these women from returning to environments that harbored these beliefs in the first place.\(^\text{18}\)

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The Women Remaining in the Territory: Al-Hol and Elsewhere

In March of 2019, the last ISIS stronghold in the Syrian town of Baghouz was defeated, bringing an end, however long-lasting, to the self-declared ISIS caliphate.\[^{19}\] During this defeat, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) detained tens of thousands of men, women, and children who lived under ISIS rule, placing male fighters in prisons and the rest in refugee camps.\[^{20}\] Al-Hol displacement camp in the city of Hasaka, Syria is the largest of the displacement camps, home to over 60,000 women and children, most of them being members of ISIS themselves.\[^{21}\] The captured male members of ISIS, husbands and fathers of these women and children, are being held in separate SDF prisons.\[^{22}\] This Al-Hol camp of women and children is made up of roughly 20,000 Syrian nationals, 31,000 Iraqi nationals, and about 8,000 children and 4,000 women from about 60 foreign countries. The living conditions of those 12,000 foreigners is particularly dire, and was rendered all the worse by the Coronavirus pandemic.\[^{23}\] The camp, however, is not unique; thousands more live in al-Roj camp in Syria as well as several others. Camps like these pose severe security risks, “primarily because [they] host a large number of female ISIS affiliates,” not just civilian family members.\[^{24}\]

It has been established by numerous scholars that women have held an important role in ISIS, promoting the ideology of the Caliphate, participating in direct combat and violence, and even carrying out hun-

\[^{19}\] “Timeline.”
\[^{22}\] Human Rights Watch, “Thousands of Foreigners Unlawfully Held in NE Syria.”
\[^{23}\] Ibid.
dreds of their own attacks. This active participation does not end with their capture. There is evidence—through social media—that many of the women living in Al-Hol and other refugee camps are keeping ISIS alive through interactions with their children and surrounding communities. It is also important to note that while the precise number of women in these camps that actively promote and advocate for the ISIS ideology is not known, it is a large enough group to be consequential. About 30% of the total women in these camps and about 20% of the European women in the camps continue to believe in ISIS.

The children in Al-Hol and the other camps are living without formal education, as the learning centers were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These almost 30,000 children, then, are learning directly from their mothers, a curriculum which, according to the UN and Kurdish officials, consists of radicalization with the teachings of ISIS. Thus, even after the formal end of the Islamic State, a new generation of militants is still being created. In this way, foreign countries are creating their own worst nightmare: radicalized children and women, too ideological to ever be reintegrated in their home countries, and not worth being repatriated. While it may seem as if the effect of the women and children of ISIS is insignificant within an organization that holds no territory, this situation could present a particular danger. If women and children are left in these refugee camps, it will only increase the potential for a more expedited return of ISIS. If this problem is to remain as is, or even worse, be exacerbated, the displacement camps in Syria pose the risk of fostering a climate in which the goals and activities of ISIS continue to flourish, a possibility which will promote resentment and inspire terrorism. Indeed, U.S. Commander Gen. Kenneth McKenzie warns of the clear danger of leaving these individuals in places like Al-Hol, stating that “unless we find a way to repatriate them, reintegrate

[27] Ibid.
them and deradicalize them, we’re giving ourselves a gift of fighters five to seven years down the road.”

**International Law Surrounding Repatriation**

Although international law does not currently directly address the issue of radicalization in detention camps, several legal instruments may offer avenues through which to compel states to repatriate their citizens. A number of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) outline the obligations that member states have to investigate and prosecute citizens who journey to join ISIS. These resolutions, including UNSCRs 2178, 2368, 2396, Resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy Review, and a 2019 UN document entitled ‘KEY PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION, REPATRIATION, PROSECUTION, REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH LINKS TO UNITED NATIONS LISTED TERRORIST GROUPS,’ “have called on states to take all necessary measures to investigate, repatriate, prosecute, and rehabilitate their citizens who wish to return home. Those resolutions, adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, indicate that states have an obligation to ensure appropriate prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of returning [foreign fighters].”

The International Center for the Study of Radicalization, an academic research center based in the Department of War Studies at King’s College London, explains that examining the women of ISIS is essential because, as the Islamic State has fallen significantly in the last half decade, many of the individuals who were once in refugee camps, prisons, or elsewhere, have increasingly been making their way back to their home country. The issue of repatriation upon return, then, is increasingly a salient one. General portrayals of female ISIS members, as previously

acknowledged, vary between jihadi brides, naive victims, or threatening, evil women who pose constant security risks. These views often play a role in developing the repatriation for each case. There is often less “political will or public acceptance to return women” who are viewed as threats, and “prospects for redemption and rehabilitation may appear more in public discourses” for those who are viewed as victims. Despite the many possible roles that women may occupy throughout their experience with ISIS, “repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, and re-integration (as appropriate) remain the most feasible for their successful long–term monitoring.”

Many women have not only been barred from returning to their home countries, but have also been stripped of their citizenships. Revoking nationality positions already vulnerable women into even more precarious situations that can again be influenced and taken advantage of by ISIS. Some may contend that those who join ISIS and other terrorist organizations should lose their right to the country from which they left. Counterterrorism policies have often warned of the risks that these former ISIS members pose if and when they return to their home country. Their exposure to extreme radicalized beliefs as well as the tools and skills they accumulate throughout their experience in the group can make them a threat upon their return. There is also an understanding that while some returning fighters may come back disenchanted with ISIS and their methods and message, others may be “battle-hardened [and] internationally connected.” This variety in the nature of former ISIS members’ returns is one of the largest concerns in counterterror-

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[31] Cook and Vale, “Daesh to ‘Diaspora.’”
[32] Ibid.
ism efforts and a main factor of the disinclination to repatriate their citizens.\textsuperscript{37} There is an advantage to allowing these individuals to return to their country of origin.\textsuperscript{38} Because of the vital role that women have played in sustaining and expanding ISIS's ideology, it is essential that countries take away ISIS's control over these women by allowing them to return to their home country.

\textit{Problems in Policy}

Due to the nature of war zones and the ambiguity of women's roles in terrorist groups, it is difficult to collect information on individuals in these organizations. On the government's side of the issue, there is a lack of precedent on how to properly repatriate, deradicalize, reintegrate, and—in some cases—prosecute women who return from ISIS. To ameliorate this lack of knowledge, governments must find a way to make information about the returnees available to one another, as well as share best practices and inform coherent policy.

Due to there being a large number of women in ISIS being held in prisons and refugee camps, it is difficult to examine each woman case by case. As such it is hard to determine individual-specific policies that would allow for these women's potential return to their country of origin. Women in ISIS have varying experiences depending on their particular exposures, which must be considered during the repatriation process. Women who spend time in captivity have significantly different experiences than women who did not, for example. The myriad of variables must factor into policy choices regarding their return. These factors include but are not limited to age, motivation for joining, involvement in violence or special roles within the organization, education levels, marriage status, disillusionment, and whether they have children. Understanding how patterns of behaviors or experiences may have a foreseeable effect on the women of ISIS will allow for a coherent and tailored approach to policy that addresses all relevant factors.

\textsuperscript{37} van Dongen, Wentworth, and Arkhis, “Terrorist Threat Assessment.”

\textsuperscript{38} Gibney, “Don’t trust the government’s citizenship-stripping policy.”
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

“At one point or another, these people will eventually escape, or they will be released. They have not undergone any deradicalization programs. They are free-floating. We don’t know how they are or where they are. From a security perspective, doing nothing is the worst of all options.”

- German Member of Parliament

While a great deal of research has been conducted on members of the Islamic State, and recently a particular focus on understanding the influence of gender, there has been little research on the complete experience of women in ISIS. Doing so would create, appropriate, safe, and effective repatriation processes, a process that would not pose a risk to nations to which these women may return. In this work, I expect to find connections between individuals’ roles and experiences and highlight identifiable trends in the behavior of these women. Further, I expect that motivations will play a key role in funneling women into specific positions within the organization. I will also explore the current understandings of female-specific motivations for joining ISIS as well as their roles and experiences within the group.

General Information Surrounding the Women of ISIS

There are limited reports from ISIS on the exact numbers of women who enter the organization, as well as details regarding their demographics and experiences. The women who most frequently travel to join the Islamic State range widely in age and nationality. A guesthouse log of over 1100 individual women “kept track of the women who ap-


[40] Saltman and Smith, “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part.”
Milton and Dodwell found that the women who went through the guesthouse had an average age of 29 years old. Of the women in the dataset, only five percent were 17 or younger, and less than 20 percent were 21 or younger. Anita Perešin states that Western women traveling to join ISIS are primarily between the ages of 16 and 24 and that it is not unusual for some of these women to either leave school or have high levels of education at the time of their departure. Within my own database, I will examine the average age of those women at the time they entered the territory and compare my findings to those within the guesthouse logbook and Perešin’s study.

Little is known about the number of children accompanying women who enter the Islamic State or the number who are born within the Islamic State. According to a 2018 report by the International Center for the Study of Radicalization, there were 730 recorded infants born inside ISIS to international parents. This number has led to “an underestimation of [the] minors that must now be accounted for as foreign returnees.” Similarly, the 2015 death rate amongst children is far higher than previously thought. My database will allow for further research into how the presence of or the death of children may affect the experiences of the women of ISIS.

[42] Ibid.
[44] Cook and Vale, “From Daesh to ‘Diaspora.’”
The presence and effect that prior criminal history poses on these female ISIS members is also vital to examine. A 2016 report regarding foreign fighters in ISIS, surveyed 91 men and 26 women who lived in ISIS territory, found that “17.9 percent had a criminal history, with 22.1 percent of European [foreign fighters] reporting a criminal history . . . [this] show[s] a strong interaction between terrorism and prior criminal behavior.”46 This is in contrast to Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg’s study which found that only 5.3% of women surveyed voiced prior criminal record as a vulnerability.47 Thus, there is conflicting information about the effect of criminal history as an indicator of vulnerability exploited by ISIS.

Motivations

Motivation is a crucial component in the examination of ISIS members, and much research has been dedicated to understanding the push and pull factors surrounding ISIS recruitment.48 Speckard and Ellenberg explain that, oftentimes women journey to Syria and Iraq to participate in ISIS for many of the same reasons as men, but evidence also points to gender-specific push and pull factors.49 They compare both male and female vulnerabilities, motivations, and experiences within the organization, and highlight the gendered experiences of individual ISIS members, particularly pertaining to their motives for joining. Their overall findings show a clear distinction between motivations for men and women, and provide insight into the intimate processes of radicalization and participation in the Islamic State.

According to Erin Marie Saltman and Melanie Smith, major push fac-

[46] Speckhard and Ellenberg. “ISIS in Their Own Words.”
[47] Ibid.
tors for women are often similar to those of their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{50} These motivations, supported by many other scholars, include a sense of oppression by the West, a desire for a meaningful self-identity, and a desire to participate in the so-called “Caliphate.”\textsuperscript{51} They also note that a common motivation specific to younger women is an attraction to the notion of a meaningful and fulfilling romantic relationship. However, Saltman and Smith agree that motivations to join ISIS go far beyond a one-dimensional desire to marry a jihadist fighter.\textsuperscript{52} It will be of use to examine the frequencies of various motivations that address an array of areas in my own database.

Governments and organizations that aim to create counterterrorism efforts have misunderstood women’s involvement in violent extremism, creating policy that perceives women as either passive accessories and victims or as deviant, gender norm-defying monsters. This skewed understanding denies women agency and complicity in taking part in acts of terror. The jihadi bride narrative that has come about in the media depicts these women as accomplices to their radical husbands, rather than as individuals who are responsible for the part they play in extremism.\textsuperscript{53} It is also common for women in interviews to maintain that they were coerced or forced to join the Islamic State, claiming that they were kidnapped and pushed across the Turkish border in order to garner sympathy.\textsuperscript{54}

This information pertaining to women’s motivations serves to supplement the database created in this study. It is valuable in examining frequencies of various motivations, background information of subjects,

\textsuperscript{[50]} Saltman and Smith, “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part.”
\textsuperscript{[51]} Termeer and Duyvesteyn, “The Inclusion of Women in Jihad.”
\textsuperscript{[52]} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{[54]} Vanessa Caldwell, “These Western Women Left Their Home Countries to Join ISIS. Why Did They Do It?” CBC Docs, October 12, 2021, https://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/the-passionate-eye/these-western-women-left-their-home-countries-to-join-isis-why-did-they-do-it-1.6207886.
and experiences and roles within ISIS. Speckhard and Elleberg’s work, while pertinent to this study, did not attempt to find correlations between variables. Furthermore, while there is research surrounding different aspects of the female experience with ISIS—mostly pertaining to radicalization—there is little work beyond this area. This database will take this information and go steps further, attempting to identify trends and correlations between variables, thus recognizing how policy can be shaped to address possible predictable patterns.

**Experiences and Roles in the Organization**

It is understood that ISIS has differentiated itself from other Islamic-based terrorist organizations which only give women caretaking responsibilities, barring them from being an integral role to the organizations’ successes.\(^5^5\) Unlike this traditional view of women as jihadi brides, naive victims of the organization, many of these ISIS-affiliated women have participated in recruitment and propaganda efforts, some even taking up roles in the al-Khansaa Brigade the all-female religious police, a group that enforces laws and “punish[es] disobedience, including through violent means.”\(^5^6\) Women up roles in combat, as recruiters, as fundraisers, and in several other positions that are vital to the function of these terrorist organizations.\(^5^7\) Thus, ust as the male members, the women of ISIS have varied experiences within the organization stemming from their different roles.

While some women enter exercise agency in their decisions within ISIS, others are coerced or forced into these types of situations. While these women begin and remain victims of the institution, they become radicalized individuals that assist, promote, or directly commit acts of terror, thus also becoming perpetrators.\(^5^8\) The way in which the media

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\(^{[57]}\) Speckhard and Ellenberg. "ISIS in Their Own Words.”; Saltman and Smith, “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part.”

\(^{[58]}\) Khelghat-Doost, Hamoon, “Women of the Islamic State: The Evolving Role of
tends to portray women involved in terrorist organizations contributes to the idea that there is something particularly “unique, something just not right about the women who kill. . . . Considered nurtures and not destroyers, they are often regarded as too ‘soft’ and vulnerable for terrorism. Innovative terrorist groups exploit gender stereotypes and cultural cliches to their advantage.”

Maren Hald Bjørgum notes that scholarly work, as well as other information outlets, have often purported that female members of ISIS are usually assumed to be “passive, nonviolent or peripheral agents, being used, abused or conned into joining a cause by their dominant partner, father or other male authority figure.”

Understanding how women can act as both victims as well as perpetrators of terrorism allows for a clearer interpretation of the nature of the relationships found in this database study. This literature sheds light on how women in ISIS are often capable of - and likely to - experience situations in which they make autonomous decisions, but simultaneously have limited control over what they can do.

Norwegian news anchor and journalist Mah-Rukh Ali shares detailed information regarding the roles that specific women have taken up while living under ISIS’ rule. Based on their country of origin or particular background, Ali explains how women may undertake (or are even pushed towards) specific jobs within the Islamic State. The varying roles that women may participate in based on certain demographics (like country of origin) lead to diverse personal experiences.

Comparably, the women examined in my own database study participate in a range of roles, some of which are also covered in Ali’s research. This general information about the roles of women in ISIS is useful in developing an understanding of how the jobs and activities that they take part


in may vary for women based on their country of origin. These initial traits thus play a formative role in shaping their experiences under ISIS, which may have an effect on their circumstances upon return.

**Participation in Violence, Combat, and Propaganda**

While women’s roles in ISIS are still mainly relegated to traditional roles, mostly within the home as mothers, wives, and caretakers, ISIS has framed women’s responsibilities to be as useful as male fighters’ duties. ISIS has emphasized the importance of women to their success by writing manifestos directly for women, dedicating entire sections of their publications to them, and even providing them a platform to participate in recruitment efforts, most frequently as propagandists on social media. Saltman and Smith explain that ISIS conveys a message that recruits women who may feel out of place in their current, often Western, society: “women are valued, not as sexual objects, but as mothers to the next generation and guardians of the ISIS ideology.” One of the central duties of its female members is to create propaganda, and this becomes an integral part of the female experience within the organization, separating ISIS from other radical Islamic groups.

These pieces of information create a foundation for what is expected to be found in the database and will serve as a basis for comparison to the findings in this paper. The following chapters dive into the methods of collecting data and the variables used. Subsequent chapters will evaluate the existence of relationships between the variables outlined. Finally, a discussion of implications of the database will be presented.

**METHODS AND DATA**

*“Lack of transparency translates to lack of accountability.”* 

- Naureen Fink, executive director of The Soufan Center

[63] Saltman and Smith, “‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part.”
Currently, no comprehensive dataset exists that has information pertaining to the country of origin, age, experiences and number of the men, women, or children associated with ISIS. This lack of information includes but is not limited to individuals who are detained or held in camps in northern Syria, elsewhere in Iraq, as well as on the individuals who have been repatriated to their home countries. The original database I have produced aims to create a comprehensive view of the experience of female ISIS members who traveled to Syria and Iraq, some of whom have returned and some of whom wish to return to their country of origin. Most crucially, this database presents a holistic understanding of these women by providing documentation of journeys from before joining, their experience in the group, and after leaving the group. By analyzing the circumstances and experiences of a group of 75 female ISIS members, I will highlight the existence of identifiable outcomes or lack thereof that can be used to aid policy reform and creation. Whether these women are criminally charged, forced to travel to ISIS territory, widowed, have children, or any other possible variable, understanding the components of their experiences will contribute to more effective government responses in handling these individuals’ radicalization levels, their criminal guilt, or any other safety concerns.

Limitations

While it is nearly impossible to concretely ascertain the truthfulness of these women’s motivations, in cases where they are available, multiple sources have been compared to seek to establish sincerity and accuracy. For example, some women may have been motivated by disdain for Western life, some by religious obligation, while others have been forced or truly duped into traveling to the region. Nonetheless, each motivation and piece of information can be supported by external sources. While it is unfortunately impossible to conclusively verify each piece of information for every individual, such sources provide clarity in the analysis of women’s claims.

ISIS has kept few records of the individual members in their ranks nor general information about the group. Information pertaining to individuals who travel to ISIS territory, pledging their allegiance to the group, is often hidden or altered by the countries that these individuals come from. They do not want to disclose to the public information surrounding the departure or return of their citizens. Other data is also kept out of public reach by various countries due to differing privacy laws for ongoing legal cases or investigations, as well as as a result of varying laws regarding admissible evidence. Because governments have prevented the access of information in one way or another, it is difficult to find accurate and comprehensive information pertaining to ISIS affiliates. These restrictions result in some individuals in the database only having brief portions of their experience available for examination.

Additionally, this data only captures the picture of a select few women who spent time in the Islamic State. Many of the women found in the database made headlines for their particular stories or activities with the group, and thus the data may reflect commonalities that are not as frequent as the entire population might reflect. These women may be highlighted in the media for their unique story, one that makes for an attention-grabbing headline, and with a limited sample size, these abnormal activities may skew the perceived frequency of such experiences. Overall, though, there is a diverse sample of roles, experiences, and criminal responsibilities reported in the data.

[68] Dworkin, “Beyond Good and Evil.”
Hypotheses and Theory

The central theory of this paper posits that the experiences of women prior to joining ISIS help shape their experiences within the organization, which thus shapes their experiences after their time in the organization. These connections are essential to understanding identifiable trends in activities women may have participated in.

Within the general theory, I maintain an assortment of hypotheses concerning the relationships between many of my variables. Many of the variables examined function both as dependent and independent variables, and many may have confounding relationships. I have selected a handful of hypotheses to test in this study based on information reported in the database. This is just a select number of hypotheses that can and should be tested from the information in the database. Further additions to the database—both variables and individual women—will allow for more relationships to be identified and implemented in policy.

H1: Women who participate in violence, combat, or propaganda are more likely to be repatriated to their country of origin than women who did not participate in violence, combat, or propaganda.

I hypothesize that women who participate in violence are more often repatriated because there is information that allows countries to understand and evaluate their activities allowing for easier prosecution upon their return. As previously noted, a significant challenge regarding the repatriation process of members of the Islamic State, particularly regarding women, concerns the ability of their home country to collect evidence to prosecute them of crimes they may have committed during their time in the organization.69

The collection of evidence from ISIS territories is onerous, as the instability of the conflict-ridden region makes it particularly difficult to secure “the collection of evidence from the battlefield in Syria or Iraq,

[69] Dworkin, “Beyond Good and Evil.”
its transfer to other countries, and its use as courtroom evidence.”70 There is also the issue of a “lack of judicial cooperation agreement in place with the country where the crimes have been committed, or the legitimate government may not have any effective control over the area where the evidence is located.”71

Many ISIS members, especially women in recruiting and propagandist roles, have utilized the internet and social media to spread their message. While this seems like a clear resource for governments for prosecution purposes, many of these individuals use aliases that make it difficult to connect the individual with the profile. As recognized by Gilles de Kerchove, the EU Counterterrorism Coordinator, “it is extremely difficult to collect evidence showing that militants have fought alongside banned terrorist groups.”72 With this understanding women who have committed crimes where there is evidence to prosecute them will likely be repatriated. While some countries may find stronger reasons to strip these women of their citizenship because of the violence they have perpetrated, other countries will see these women as threats that need to be incarcerated to reduce their potential risk in society. These women, too, are viewed as deviant from the roles that they were supposed to have assumed, and thus harbor more attention. With the evidence of their participation in violence, these women will be put on trial and serve as a cautionary tale for countries with large populations of foreign fighters.

This relationship is important to understand because many countries and governments state that they do not want to repatriate ISIS members out of concern that they will commit terrorist attacks on behalf of ISIS upon their return home.73 Yet if nations are repatriating the women found to have actively participated in these activities, it would seem unreasonable not to repatriate women who have not been found to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda efforts.

[70] Hoffman and Furlan, “Challenges Posed by Returning Foreign Fighters.”
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
**H2:** Women who have dual-citizenship or who are eligible for additional citizenships are more likely to have one of them stripped than women without dual citizenship/eligibility for another.

Women who hold citizenship in multiple countries or who are deemed eligible for any additional citizenship are more likely to have one revoked than those who hold one citizenship or are ineligible for another. Numerous countries have implemented policies that aim to deflect their own responsibility for their citizens who leave to join ISIS.\(^{74}\) Governments may strategically choose to only proceed with this citizenship revoking process against those individuals who may be eligible or actually hold another citizenship in order to push the responsibility of prosecution onto another country.

Citizenship revocation practices must be examined in order to ensure that countries uphold the basic rights of their citizens. The process is fraught: Women deemed eligible for additional citizenships may not actually have that secondary one, and if the individual does not hold an additional citizenship, the removal of citizenship may result in an individual becoming stateless. Article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.”\(^{75}\) Therefore, if states are employing this practice, their actions are in direct conflict with international law and must be ameliorated.

What’s more, citizenship revocation employed as a tool to dissuade citizens from joining ISIS may actually have the inverse effect. By revoking citizenships for those with more than one nationality, states are creating a hierarchy which can foster an environment that further marginalizes those who are already vulnerable. This newly created environment may only give groups like ISIS that manipulate those on the margins more opportunity to recruit.

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\(^{74}\) “CTED Analytical Brief: The Repatriation of ISIL-Associated Women.”

\(^{75}\) United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”
**H3:** Women who converted to Islam are more likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than non-converts.

While individuals who convert to Islam represent only a small percentage of the Muslim population in Western countries, research suggests that converts are significantly overrepresented in Islamist extremism and terrorism.\(^{[76]}\) It is important to note, however, that simply converting to Islam is not an indication of security concerns. Conversion, rather, often has positive influences, “such as increased self-esteem, that are too frequently left out of the discussion.”\(^{[77]}\) Individuals who converted to Islam, though, and subsequently joined ISIS, while small in numbers, are particularly important to examine through a gendered lens. Female converts are more numerous than their male counterparts. “For instance, Germany estimations indicate that one third of all female migrants are converts, while male converts only account for 17% of male migrants. Similar trends are visible in other European States, namely the Netherlands (31% of women converts vs. 7% of men) [and] France (25% of women converts vs. 20% of men).”\(^{[78]}\)

Because ISIS has promoted the importance of mothers, wives, and caretakers as a central responsibility of women in the organization, these female converts often participate in such duties. As a female convert, these women have had to overcome both a sense of alienation from Western society as well as learned to fit into a Muslim society that they were not born into.\(^{[79]}\) In addition to the often lower exposure to religious education, these women who have been radicalized and joined ISIS will likely proselytize others often through propaganda. Because of the overrepresentation of converts amongst ISIS members, as well as the common

\(^{[76]}\) van Ginkel and Entenmann, “The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union.”

\(^{[77]}\) Ibid.


\(^{[79]}\) Colson, “State of the Art: Radicalisation of Western Female Migrants to ISIS-Held Territory.”
occurrence of women being involved in violence, combat, and propaganda as a part of their expected roles in ISIS, I hypothesize that women who converted to Islam are more likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than non-converts.

**H4**: Women who are ideologically/religiously motivated are more likely to participate in acts of violence, combat, or propaganda than those without that motivation.

The relationship between participation in violence, combat, and propaganda and religious or ideological motivation is of particular interest, as both of these variables go against the narrative that women are inherently peaceful and lack agency. The participation in either of these variables has often been deemed deviant or considered only as special cases. Yet despite these misconceptions, both variables on their own are frequently present amongst women in ISIS. To be clear, women in ISIS who are ideologically or religiously motivated are not inherently violent. Factors that categorize the women as religiously or ideologically motivated include a desire to live under the idea of the Caliphate, a feeling of rejection or dissatisfaction with the West, or other non-explicitly violent reasons. These women are, however, ascribing to an organization that promotes its violence through propaganda, advocates for the elimination of opposition, and violently rejects anyone deemed as a “non-believer.” Women who are religiously or ideologically motivated to join the Islamic State are likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda because they are, to some degree, ascribing to these ideas just through membership.

**H5**: Those forced to join are less likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than those who are not forced into ISIS.

As previously mentioned, it is not uncommon for women to explain that they have been forced into participating in ISIS, or that they have even been kidnapped or forced across the Syrian border, resulting in

[80] Bloom, “Bombshells.”
time spent in the Islamic State. While this claim is false in some cases and true in others, it is valuable to examine the relationship between those who emphasized that they did not voluntarily choose to engage with ISIS and those who willingly contributed to the group’s violence, combat, or propaganda efforts. An examination of this relationship can help clarify if there are ways for women to not be involved in the activities undertaken by ISIS in the case that they do not support the organization. I hypothesize that those who express that they were forced to join ISIS are less likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than those who join of their own will.

**H6:** Those who spend time in refugee camps are less likely to renounce the ISIS message or voice remorse, disenchantment, or regret than those who did not spend time in a refugee camp.

Given the adverse conditions in refugee camps in northern Syria, it might be theorized that the women who spend time in these camps will voice whatever opinions necessary to garner sympathy from the countries to which they wish to return. A major concern of the countries from where these women hail is the issue of the likelihood of danger the women pose if they were to be reintegrated. It can also be argued, however, that many of these women will not renounce ISIS even within such conditions. As previously discussed, Al Hol and other refugee camps throughout Syria and Iraq are demonstrably breeding grounds for radicalism.  

tained by choice or by fear.\textsuperscript{83} I hypothesize that those who spend time in refugee camps are less likely to renounce the ISIS message or voice remorse, disenchantment, or regret than those who were not exposed to such re-radicalization in refugee camps.

**Database Overview**

This database evaluates women’s experiences before, during, and after joining ISIS. The present range of variables gives insight into individuals’ social, economic, and political status, factors which must be considered by their countries of origin during the repatriation process.

A holistic understanding of the female experience in ISIS must exist in order to best assess varying levels of individual agency in both decision-making and inner-group experiences. As stated by Milton and Dodwell, by understanding their circumstances causing them to join, their varying roles in the group, and level of disenchantment, proper steps can be taken by their countries of origin.\textsuperscript{84} According to Weixiong Chen, CTED Deputy Executive Director and Head of the CTED delegation at the Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) 14th World Summit on Counter-Terrorism, “States must combat and prevent terrorism through an integrated, comprehensive and holistic approach that includes, inter alia, identification of regional and national vulnerabilities, facilitation of technical assistance and project delivery, mechanisms to measure the impact of delivery, and measures to protect human rights."\textsuperscript{85} My database will allow for all of these factors to be considered when evaluating each woman, maintaining human rights while considering the degree of agency in the choices they have made throughout their time in ISIS.


\textsuperscript{85} Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, “CTED at ICT World Summit: Holistic Approach Needed to Effectively Address Terrorism.”
With a holistic approach becoming the standard approach at the international level, this database will allow for it to be put into action.⁸⁶

Data Sources

In order to effectively map these experiences in my database, I have collected information from dozens of websites, articles, interviews, and legal documents. I have examined claims made by these women about their motivations, journeys, roles, and other experiences within ISIS. Much of my data has come from news articles that detailed basic information about them, including their birth year, number of children, marital status, roles they may hold, and other components of their experiences. This general data lays a foundation for a deeper understanding of their journey. Further details supplemented this initial background information. Such information was collected from a variety of journalistic outlets that included The New York Times, CNN, The Guardian, The BBC, The Times, The Telegraph and several more. As these women hailed from different countries around the world, international journalistic sources were required and used to gain insightful information. Legal documents, too, have given insight on specific criminal charges that some of the women were given. Interviews also aided my ability to understand the experiences and circumstances that these women have faced. Many sources only gave information on a few or even one variable, meaning that most women were examined with the help of multiple pieces of information.

I considered government and legal sources to be the most reliable forms of documentation, as they drew information from interviews, witnesses, and available evidence, all deemed suitable for legal proceedings. This did not come without stipulations, though, as reliable information and evidence of truthful experiences is difficult to reliably evaluate. Most of the women with German nationality had consistently the most reliable information, while also having the least available information encompassing their entire experiences due to strict privacy laws.

Each country in this study had varying privacy laws concerning defendants and plaintiffs in ongoing or closed legal matters. In the majority of cases where legal documents and records were not available, information was taken from both academic and news articles to fill these gaps. While there is no database that quantifies the experiences of these women before, during, and after joining ISIS, I found many profiles of some of the women in my study. These profiles, like many of the other sources used, were often incomplete. A few sources used for data collection gave comprehensive information on some individuals, particularly the Counter Extremism Project. This source of data only had information pertaining to those classified as terrorists, not those just affiliated with a terrorist organization. A select few of the women within the database have relatively extensive profiles, but this was mostly limited to the “headline making” women. The incomplete profiles, though, are still useful for examining certain variables.

Case Collection

There were several requirements for the inclusion of an individual in my database. First, I exclusively consider women who are still alive with known whereabouts. It is important that the whereabouts of the women are known, as this knowledge allows for an understanding how they ended up in their current location. Several more women who have voluntarily joined ISIS have either died along the way or their locations are unknown, but in order to encapsulate their full experience, it is necessary to limit the database to only those with trackable experiences that encompass a full picture including their exit from ISIS, not one cut short or unknown. I also chose to only examine women who
have traveled from their home country and spent time in the territory of ISIS, rather than domestic sympathizers or individuals directly from the region. Domestic sympathizers have a far different experience than women who spend time in ISIS territory and are not at risk of expulsion from their home country. Joshua D. Freilich explains that the dominant themes and attitudes voiced between foreign fighters and domestic supporters are noticeably different in their online content. Similarly, the experiences of women from Syria or Iraq may also have a drastically different experience than those who traveled from elsewhere to the territory.87 Those directly from the region, too, do not have a repatriation process (or opportunity to have one) because they are already located in their country of origin.

Women who attempted to join and were unsuccessful before reaching the territory, whether they changed their mind or were caught by authorities, were not included in the database as they did not actively spend time in the region. It is important to note that the women considered members of the organization are sometimes referred to as foreign fighters or female fighters, regardless of their direct participation in acts of violence or combat. These women’s involvement in violent acts or engagement in terrorism is noted in the database, rather than it being a requirement for eligibility. Additionally, most of the women in the database are from Western countries. A few, though, are from non-Western countries, but were covered in Western media and academic papers.

**Steps of Collection**

The first portion of the database collection was to simply compile names of women who participated in the group. After collecting an initial list of names, I filtered through those that fit the criteria of being alive, who traveled to the territory, and with known whereabouts. After finding an initial list of names, further searches led to the discovery of more indi-

individual names, often with only small amounts of information regarding them, thus requiring deeper searches. A single research study done of German female ISIS members also allowed for several more names with pieces of information pertaining to their involvement in criminal activities.

In order to collect the data itself, I utilized many sets of terms in the Google search engine. To begin, simple terms along the lines of jihadi brides led to numerous articles of some of the most well-known names of female ISIS members. Additional names were found through further general Google searches of women.

General internet searches for women involved in the Islamic State partnered with reading through scholarly research and papers allowed for a list of 75 names which make up the current database. Additional names found were not included because their particular cases either did not have enough information or did not meet the initial requirements for being included in the database.

**Variables**

The variables evaluated in this study cover information pertaining to each individual woman’s life before, during, and after joining the Islamic State. Each of these variables are dichotomous with the exception of Date of Birth, Date of Joining, and Country of Origin which lists the year that the individual was born (if known), the year the individual traveled to join ISIS (if known), and the country(ies) where each woman holds citizenship, respectively. Many of the general experiences of the women were covered by several variables, including relationship status and motivation.

I chose to make most variables dichotomous in order to directly explain if an individual had involvement in a particular experience or activity and explore how that may increase or decrease their likelihood of participating in other undertakings. A dichotomous variable database allows for this straightforward statistical analysis and permits easy interpretation of results. See appendix A for a codebook of all variables used
in this database.

*Country of Origin*

The 75 women who make up my database all traveled from a nation outside of Syria and Iraq to either one of those two countries to live under ISIS rule. Their countries of origin vary, and some individuals either have or may be eligible for citizenship in additional countries. This categorical variable is assigned a numerical value based on an individual’s home country.

*Birth Year*

Understanding the approximate age of these women at the time that they joined ISIS will allow for insight into how motivations may be affected. Information pertaining to age is useful for evaluating drivers of joining and how they become most useful to the organization. Birth year is a numerical variable.

Figure 1:
Date of Joining

Throughout their existence, ISIS has endured mass exchanges of territory in Syria and Iraq and a variety of conflicts with other groups in the region. The time at which these women began participating in the Islamic State is vital to understanding the climate that they decided to enter. Date of joining is a numerical variable.

Figure 2:

![Date of Joining](image)

Minor at the Time of Joining

Similar to the age of the individual at the time of joining, it is useful to understand how minors encounter ISIS. This information can shed light on particular motivations to join for younger demographics as well as their education levels and repatriation processes. The variable is dichotomous, and is coded to show that a 1 indicates that the individual joined as a minor, and a 0 indicates that the individual was 18 or above that age at the time of joining. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information on their age at the time of their departure.
Dual Citizenship

The number of citizenships each woman holds varies. Of the 75 women that make up the database, 60 of these individuals have single citizenship, 12 have dual citizenship, and three of the individuals have an unknown number of citizenships. The countries for the women with dual citizenship vary significantly. For those with dual citizenship, the first citizenship listed is the country from which the woman lived and departed, and the second is the country from which they hold the additional citizenship.

A 1 indicates that the individual has two citizenships, and a 0 indicates that the individual has one. An NA appears for those where it is not certain if they hold two citizenships.
**Special Role in ISIS**

Holding a special role is another variable examined that differs from any participation in general violence, combat, or propaganda. These special roles are largely leadership positions in combat units or other standings of influence that stretch beyond the home. Enforcers of ISIS’s gender standards and leaders of other combatants, however, are not the norm for women even for ISIS’s standards.\(^{88}\)

A 1 indicates that the individual held a special role, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those with uncertain information.

Figure 5:

![Special Role](image)

**Children**

This variable encompasses individuals who traveled with children and who gave birth within the territory. They are of distinct importance to the female experience as motherhood is an explicit role outlined by ISIS. It is important to examine how the presence of children may impel women towards activities in their roles as the carriers of the ISIS ideology to future combatants.\(^{89}\)

The UN Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social

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\(^{88}\) Patel, “The Sultanate of Women: Exploring Female Roles in Perpetrating and Preventing Violent Extremism.”

\(^{89}\) Margolin, “The Changing Roles of Women in Violent Islamist Groups.”
Council as well as declarations and other documents, like the Millennium Declaration, outline how children in conflict zones are exposed to terrorism and must be given special attention. This prioritization of repatriating children may have an effect on the paths that women take out of ISIS, as countries may be obligated to pay more regard to them.

A 1 indicates that the individual had a child/children, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not clear information.

Figure 6:

Deceased Children

It is useful to consider how the experience of losing a child affects these women. This event may alter choices of a woman and impact the roles or activities that they may participate in.

A 1 indicates that the individual had a child/children die, and 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

[90] Bagheri and Bisset, “International Legal Issues Arising from Repatriation of the Children of Islamic State.”
Figure 7:

**Individuals with Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NA</th>
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<td>60</td>
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**Familial Motivation; Ideological/Religious Motivation; Force as Motivation; Going to Marry as Motivation; Went with Husband as Motivation**

Motivations for joining ISIS are broken down into several variables. This particular variable is challenging to determine, as women may change their explanation for joining the group as it may have an effect on their legal proceedings or may be described differently by family members or nations, whether it be for security reasons or to portray a sense of innocence.

Motivations are broken down into categories that cover areas from romance and familial reasons to ideology and religion. Many of these motivations overlap as well; for example, women can be motivated by both ideology and traveling with a partner. It is important to acknowledge that there can be a crossover of different motivations for many women. While many of the women in this study as well as elsewhere decided to follow their partners into ISIS, Speckhard and Ellenberg warn that “one shouldn’t fall into the trap of zombifying women, as many security services do when describing them as completely powerless and without agency, as though they were completely manipulated and dependent on their male partners who decided to travel to and join ISIS.” 91

[91] Speckhard and Ellenberg, “ISIS in Their Own Words.”
A 1 indicates that the individual had a motivation pertaining to the specific category, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 8:

In School at the Time of Joining
The women who traveled to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS come from various educational backgrounds, and their enrollment in school during their time of departure may indicate their reasons for joining and the goals they have in mind when they reach the territory.

A 1 indicates that the individual was in school at the time of joining ISIS, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.
Converted to Islam

It is highly debated whether conversion to Islam has an effect on participants in terrorism. It will be of value to see how conversion plays into the motivations of those who are not born into the faith, as well as if it has any effect on their specific roles in the group or how they are treated afterwards.

A 1 indicates that the individual converted to Islam, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.
Employed Before Joining

It is of use to understand how those who were employed at the time of their departure were motivated, the roles held, and how they are treated.

A 1 indicates that the individual was employed at the time of joining ISIS, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 11:

![Employed at Time of Joining](image)

College Education or Higher

There exists a common narrative that members of ISIS are uneducated, marginalized young people. Examinining education levels is important in understanding how it may affect women’s experience in the organization.

A 1 indicates that the individual had college education or higher, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Crime Outside of ISIS

It is useful to understand the impact that past criminal history may have on the experience of women in ISIS. This variable is important to address in order to properly evaluate the vulnerabilities and risks of individuals with such experiences.

A 1 indicates that the individual did have some sort of prior violence outside of ISIS, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.
Entered Married; Entered Single; Married While There; Husband in ISIS; Widowed

Relationship status is particularly important to understanding the female experience in ISIS. This variable gives insight into the dynamics that these women have in a patriarchal environment and their immediate placement upon arrival. ISIS, as well as most other terrorist organizations, is a conservatively rooted society where marriage is directly tied to status, security, and position, thus relationship status dictates most life functions.

A 1 indicates that the individual was a yes in any of the categories, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 14:

Involved in Violence, Combat, or Propaganda

I examine if any of these individuals participated in violence, combat, or propaganda spreading on behalf of the organization during their time in the territory. For the purpose of this study, involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda includes but is not limited to being pho-
tographed with a weapon, using violence against an enslaved Yazidi individual, and posting messages of support for ISIS on social media. This variable does not include active battlefield activities, as that is not within the normal responsibilities of ISIS women. Rather, those frontline individuals are categorized as special roles.

Discerning how these particular variables influence women’s experiences before, during, and after their participation in ISIS will allow for a clearer understanding of how to examine repatriation processes.

A 1 indicates that the individual was involved in combat, violence, or propaganda, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 15:

Fled/Attempted
Fleeing or attempting to flee ISIS may give insight into factors that caused individuals’ disillusionment, as well as what they may encounter after leaving ISIS. Documenting the path that these women take out of ISIS may give indication to what they experience next.

A 1 indicates that the individual fled or attempted to flee, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.
Figure 16:

**Fled or Attempted to Flee**

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<tr>
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*Response*

**Arrested/Captured**

Women who are arrested or captured may take a very different path than those who are not. This particular variable is rather broad, encompassing those who were arrested or captured at any point, whether it be in the region or back in their home country. It will be interesting to explore what variables lead to arrest or capture and what experiences are likely to follow.

A 1 indicates that the individual was arrested or captured at any point, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 17:

**Arrested or Captured**

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<th>Count</th>
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*Response*


Repatriated

Repatriation is a vital variable to consider in each of these women's experiences, as it will contribute to the identification of patterns that allow for this process to take place. It is important to note that not all women who returned home (in the database and generally) went through the repatriation process. Some women were able to return to their home country of their own volition, even undetected.

A 1 indicates that the individual was repatriated, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 18:

Citizenship Status Revoked

Citizenship status revocation has been a common tool used by many Western nations to inhibit ISIS members from returning home. It is useful to examine if particular experiences lead to a likelihood of citizenship revocation, and if doing so leads to other experiences. Many Western states have enacted laws and policies that strip dual national citizens of one of their citizenships “– thereby not only not repatriating women, but also preventing their independent return.”

A 1 indicates that the individual had their citizenship status revoked, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 19:

**Citizenship Revoked**

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**Response**

*Detention Upon Return to Home Country*

As some women are repatriated or otherwise make their way home, governments are often concerned about the threat level that they pose. Some states may take these women directly into custody while investigations are ongoing, and some may not if there does not seem to be a reason that would allow for this.

A 1 indicates that the individual was subject to detention upon return to their home country, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 20:

**Detention Upon Return to Home Country**

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<tr>
<th>Count</th>
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[94] Banulescu-Bogdan, “Foreign Fighters.”
Time in Refugee Camp

There has been significant concern surrounding the conditions in Al-Hol and other refugee camps, as well as the individuals within the camps. “Analysts, government officials, NGO leaders and members of the community have a wide range of descriptions for [A]l-Hol, calling it a ‘ticking time bomb,’ the ‘Guantanamo of the Middle East,’ an ‘ISIS Depot,’ ‘ISIS University,’ or ‘the Caliphate,’ among other names. These names serve as both a call to attention as well as stating ‘that the camp’s residents are dangerous.’ ”

Further, it is useful to evaluate how time spent in these refugee camps may influence the likelihood of voicing continued support versus feelings of disenchantment. The rate of repatriation of women from refugee camps, too, is extremely low, thus it is of use to examine what may allow for those in the camps to be repatriated over others and the conditions that place them there.

A 1 indicates that the individual spent time in a refugee camp, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 21:

![Figure 21: Spent Time in Refugee Camp](image)

[95] “ISIS Is a Problem of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.”
[96] Speckhard, “Defected from ISIS or Simply Returned, and for How Long?: Challenges for the West in Dealing with Returning Foreign Fighters.”
**Criminal Charge**

Whether or not a woman is criminally charged may be affected by their country of origin as well as their participation in particular activities. States face obstacles that arise in “investigations and prosecutions linked to the particular difficulties in obtaining sufficient and admissible evidence of a crime.”

A 1 indicates that the individual was criminally charged, and a 0 indicates that the individual was not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 22:

![Criminal Charge](image)

**Remorseful, Renounced, Disenchanted**

Indications of remorsefulness, renouncement, or disenchantment with ISIS provide insight into women’s experiences after their time in the group. Many encounters can have an effect on disillusionment and it may also have effects on repatriation processes.

A 1 indicates that the individual voiced some sort of remorse or renouncement of the ISIS message, or showed disenchantment with the organization, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 23:

**Showed Remorse, Renouncement, Disenchantment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response**

*Detention by Syrian, Iraqi, Turkish Forces*

Similar to time spent in a refugee camp, detention by forces in Iraq and Syria may have an influence on women’s levels of disenchantment or lack thereof. It is relevant to explore how some women ended up prosecuted or detained by these forces while others did not.

A 1 indicates that the individual did face detention by Syrian, Turkish, or Iraqi forces, and a 0 indicates that the individual did not. An NA appears for those where there is not certain information.

Figure 24:

**Detention by Turkish/Syrian/Iraqi Forces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response**

[99] Speckhard, “Defected from ISIS or Simply Returned, and for How Long?: Challenges for the West in Dealing with Returning Foreign Fighters.”
The preceding variables are useful in evaluating the experiences of ISIS-affiliated women. In the following chapter these variables will be tested within my hypotheses and the general implications of the database will be examined. This database serves as a foundation for the creation and understanding of effective counterterrorism efforts.

RESULTS

“The enduring defeat of ISIS has got to incorporate a way forward for the displaced persons and all the people that are at risk across the theater; if not, we are actually never really going to defeat ISIS and the problem is going to come back.”

- General Kenneth McKenzie, former commander of the U.S. Central Command

The results of this study identify relationships between variables with varying levels of significance. While it is impossible to create overarching policies to address the issue of female members of ISIS returning home or to make exact case by case policies, this database allows for policy development that encompasses both individually examined experiences and predictable patterns.

This chapter examines the methods of examining a number of variable relationships based on the information in this database. These relationships initially take the form of bivariate descriptive relationships. The significance of these variable associations appears in exploration of multivariate regression analysis. The following findings reveal several provocative relationships which suggest it may be possible to make certain assumptions of how ISIS-affiliated women act, without creating a stereotype. The following chapter discusses the implications of such relationships.

This research is the beginning of understanding, rather than a complete analysis, of women who travel to join Isis. Even still, many conclusions can be drawn from the database and literature surrounding the experiences of the women before, during, and after their time in the organiza-
tion. The database highlights that women most often take up traditional roles in the home, supporting their husbands and taking care of children. They also frequently participate in acts of violence, propaganda, and other methods of expanding the influence of the organization’s ideology.

It is important to note that, due to the meta-analytic nature of this research, it is risky to draw sweeping, definitive conclusions. Further, my aim in this research is not to address the question of how best to repatriate these women. Instead, my intent is to reveal existing connections between individuals’ experiences so they are available, and understood, for policy implementation.

The basic analyses of the database were conducted using R and RStudio. Chi-squared tests of independence were used to examine the relationship between two variables. Simple linear regressions tested the same relationships with the addition of control variables. See appendix B for summaries of the generalized linear regression models. These additional regressions help assess the degree to which confounding and other extraneous variables had an effect on these relationships. I used this same platform to create all data visualizations.

**Birth Year**

This database provides valuable insight into the demographics of the women who are traveling to Syria and Iraq to participate in ISIS. To the closest year, the mean birth year of this sample of women was 1990. The standard deviation of mean birth year was 7.819897, indicating most of these women were born within a span of nearly two decades. The oldest woman in the database was born in 1972 and the youngest in 2002. The most common birth years, with five births each, were 1990 and 1995. The average age of women entering ISIS is within a similar range as that of the aforementioned female guesthouse. The average age of entries in the guesthouse is around 29 years old. In this study, the average age

[100] “CTED at ICT World Summit: Holistic Approach Needed to Effectively Address Terrorism | Security Council - Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).”
of women entering the organization is around 24 years old (an average birth year of 1990 and average joining year of 2014). This variance may be because not every woman entering the guesthouse is having their first experience with ISIS. This difference between birth years and joining years identifies the individual’s age at the time of they entered ISIS. This finding is also supported by information from Perešin’s examination which suggested that the average age of female entries was between 16 and 24.

The mean birth year, to the nearest year, of those who joined the organization was 1992, with a standard deviation of 8.650893. Such a large standard deviation indicates a wide range of joining ages. This range counters the claims of much of the existing literature: that it is the young, single women who join ISIS with the hopes of marrying a fighter. The mean birth year of those who held a special role in ISIS was 1990, with a standard deviation of 7.227263. This standard deviation highlights that there was a wide variety of ages that held special roles. The mean birth year of those who were involved in violence, combat, or propaganda was 1991, rounded to the nearest year. The standard deviation of this mean is 7.647907, also emphasizing that there is no one specific age of those who participate in general violence, combat, or propaganda. To the nearest year, the mean birth year of those who entered married was 1987, with a standard deviation of 6.190221. This wide range also proves that relationship status is not exclusive to one age group.

Mean birth year by motivation did not range significantly. The mean birth year of those who voiced force as a motivation was 1992, and a standard deviation of 6.891365. The mean birth year of those who voiced joining ISIS to marry as a motivation was 1990, and a standard deviation of 10.16232. The mean birth year of those who voiced going with their husband as a motivation was 1988, with a standard deviation of 6.869583. The mean birth year of those who voiced identity/religious beliefs as a motivation was 1990, with a standard deviation of 6.285112. Finally, the mean birth year of those who voiced familial motivation was 1991 with a standard deviation of 3.05505. The wide ranging standard deviation continues to point to extensive diversity in motivation.
across age groups. This thorough analysis contradicts existing literature that oversimplifies reality, claiming that young women are motivated to join ISIS by hopes of finding a husband within the organization. The mean birth year of those who were repatriated in this database was 1989, rounded to the nearest year, with a standard deviation of 8.511388.

This information does not otherwise contradict information from literature pertaining to the age of female entrants. There are few claims in existing literature surrounding any correlation between the age of a woman and her roles/activities within the organization. This database fills such gaps while serving as a comparison with known information. Policymakers must consider this new information to avoid misconceptions in policy and to effectively address female motivations for joining ISIS. There is great danger in assuming the naivete of these women who are looking to align themselves with a terrorist organization.

**Date of Joining**

This database finds the mean date of joining ISIS to be 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.915109. This low value indicates that there was little range in the date that they joined.

The mean dates of joining depending on individual motivation did not significantly vary. The mean date of joining for those who cited force as a motivation was 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.9376145. The mean date of joining of those who cited going to marry as a motivation was also 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.766965. The mean date of joining of those who cited going with their husband as a motivation was 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.9704633. The mean date of joining of those who cited identity/religious beliefs as a motivation was 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.8701063. Finally, the mean date of joining of those who cited familial motivation was 2015, with a standard deviation of 0.8944272.

The mean date of joining of those who held a special role in ISIS is 2014, with a standard deviation of 1.272078. The mean year of joining of those who were involved in violence, combat, or propaganda, too, was 2014.
The standard deviation of this mean is 0.9013878, emphasizing that almost all who participate in general violence, combat, or propaganda joined in the same few years.

The mean year of those who were repatriated joined ISIS in 2014, with a standard deviation of 0.8101538.

The data analysis also displays that the travel of foreign members of ISIS to the territory picked up in the mid-2010’s, after ISIS officially declared the establishment of a caliphate in June of 2014.¹⁰¹

**Hypotheses**

Results from this analysis show varying relationship strengths between the variables considered. As the database continues to grow, more relationships, with potentially greater levels of significance, can be established. Despite this small sample size, some significant relationships have appeared. Below is a summary of the original hypotheses with their level of significance and p-value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis Number</th>
<th>Hypothesis Description</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>Women who participate in violence, combat, or propaganda are more likely to be repatriated to their country of origin than women who do not participate in violence, combat, or propaganda.</td>
<td>Slightly Supported</td>
<td>0.1526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>Women who have dual-citizenship/eligible for additional citizenships are more likely to have one of them stripped than an individual with one citizenship.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>0.03815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>Women who converted to Islam are more likely to participate in violence, propaganda, or combat than non-converts.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>0.7721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>Women who are ideologically/religiously motivated are more likely to participate in acts of combat, violence, or propaganda than those not motivated by identity or religious reasons.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>0.01607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 5</td>
<td>Those forced to join are less likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than those without force as a motivation.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>0.004303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 6</td>
<td>Those who spend time in refugee camps are less likely to renounce the ISIS message, voice remorse, disenchantment, or regret than those who do not spend time in refugee camps.</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
<td>0.3136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**H1 Addressed**: Women who participate in violence, combat, or propaganda are more likely to be repatriated to their country of origin than those who do not participate in violence, combat, or propaganda.

My hypothesis, while not statistically significant, is slightly supported by the data resulting from the analysis. This relationship, though weak, is not to be ignored. 65.71% of women that participated in some form of violence, combat, or propaganda were repatriated. Of those who did not participate in such activities, only 45.16% were repatriated. The p-value of this relationship is 0.1526. This value does not approach the .05 level of significance, thus I cannot confidently reject the null hypothesis. Given the current number of women analyzed within the database, a p-value in this range is notable. The further addition of individuals and their information will allow for more clarity on this specific relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 1 (Independent Variable)</th>
<th>Repatriated (Dependent Variable)</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combat/Violence/Prop</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to running a chi-squared test of independence, I also ran a series of generalized linear regressions, which allowed me to identify the presence of confounding variables. The simple regression between the initial two variables produced a similar significance level of 0.1, once again indicating slight support for rejection of the null hypothesis. Because the significance level did not reach below 0.05, settling in at a significance level of 0.1, this hypothesis must be approached with caution. It suggests that governments who have often indicated the danger of repatriating ISIS members for fear of attacks and their potential to spread ISIS ideology, may be acting against what they express.

Within this particular relationship, it can be argued that the presence of children can have an effect on the repatriation processes because of the several policies and practices in place that prioritize repatriation efforts. 
for children. Governments may be sympathetic to individuals forced into ISIS and to those who express remorse, renouncement, or disenchantment with the organization. Thus, it is important that the potential effects of these external variables on the relationship between repatriation and involvement in combat, violence, or propaganda be evaluated. When controlling for the variable children, the significance level of the relationship was 0.05, putting the significance level in the range that allows me to reject the null hypothesis. When controlling for the variable force as a motivation, the significance level remained the same, again indicating a cautioned approach even though the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Finally, when controlling for the variable renouncement, remorse, disenchantment, the significance level does not approach the .05 level of significance, with a p-value of 0.13286, and thus the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The relationship between repatriation and involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda is still notable, however. Feelings of renouncement, remorse, or disenchantment towards ISIS may have an effect on the repatriation processes, though further research is necessary in order to gain a clearer understanding of the initial relationship and the degree to which confounding variables may have an effect.

H2 Addressed: Women who have dual-citizenship/are eligible for additional citizenships are more likely to have one of them stripped than those with single citizenships.

A chi-squared test of independence between women who have dual-citizenship/are eligible for additional citizenships and those who have had their citizenship status revoked suggests that there is a significant and positive relationship between the two variables. Of the women who held dual citizenships, 25% of them had one citizenship revoked. Of those who did not have dual citizenships, 3.33% of them had theirs revoked. The p-value of the relationship was 0.03185. This value implies that my hypothesis is supported and I may reject the null hypothesis.
Governments have often resisted repatriation efforts because they believe that many of these individuals will continue to push the ISIS agenda upon return to their home countries. As a result, the effects these variables may have on citizenship revocation must be examined. A generalized linear regression between those with dual citizenships and those who have had a citizenship revoked produced a significance level of 0.001, indicating strong support for a rejection of the null hypothesis. When controlling for the variable involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda, the significance level of the relationship was 0.05, sustaining the rejection of the null hypothesis. When controlling for the variable special role, the significance level was 0.01, again supporting a rejection of the null hypothesis. These confounding variables highlight the strong, significant relationship between being eligible for more than one citizenship and the likelihood of having a citizenship revoked.

**H3 Addressed:** Women who converted to Islam are more likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than non-converts.

The relationship between those who converted to Islam and participation in violence, propaganda, or combat is currently too weak to reject the null hypothesis. Of those who were converts, 50% of women participated in violence, combat, or propaganda while non-converts made up 41.67% of such participants. The p-value of this relationship was 0.7721.
H4 Addressed: Women who are ideologically/religiously motivated are more likely to participate in acts of violence, combat, or propaganda than those who are not ideologically/religiously motivated.

There is a significant relationship between women being ideologically/religiously motivated and their likelihood of participation in acts of violence, combat, or propaganda. The initial regression test produced a significance level of 0.01. 67.65% of women who were identity/religiously motivated participated in violence, combat, or propaganda, while only 33.33% of those without the same motivation did.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 4</th>
<th>Combat/Violence/Prop (Dependent Variable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indentity/Religious (Independent Variable)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A multitude of variables could have an effect on likelihood to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda. From the literature, involvement in these roles is not unusual, and thus many experiences and situations can lead to such activities. This analysis, though, supports my idea that involvement in these activities is related to identity/religious motivation.

Control for the variable marriage as motivation resulted in a significance level of 0.01, which still significantly supports a rejection of the null hypothesis. Similarly, controlling for the variables children deceased, widowed, criminal record, familial motivation, and went with husband as motivation, resulted in a significance level of 0.05, signaling that the effect of these variables maintains a rejection of the null hypothesis. While there could be numerous reasons an individual would participate in violence, combat, and propaganda, I have ruled out the effect of these confounding variables. My hypothesis continues to indicate that identity/religious motivation is a significant indication of participation in such activities.

H5 Addressed: Those forced to join ISIS are less likely to participate in violence, combat, or propaganda than those who were not forced to
join.

While it is common to hear women say that they were forced into joining the organization—and it is likely that many are—few women voiced such experiences in this particular study. I have hypothesized that women who are forced into ISIS are not likely to participate in these roles as these actions do not conform to their intentions while they entered the territory. The chi-squared test of independence indicates that this hypothesis is supported by the database. There were 64 women who had information pertaining to both variables: those forced to join ISIS and those who participated in violence, combat, and propaganda. Of the women who expressed that they were forced into ISIS, 14.29% participated in violence, combat, or propaganda while 62% of the women not forced into ISIS also participated in those activities. The p-value of this relationship is 0.004303, suggesting that there is a very strong relationship between these two variables, and, thus, signaling that the null hypothesis can be rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 5</th>
<th>Combat/Violence/Prop (Dependent Variable)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force Motive (Independent Variable)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>62.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are alternative explanations that could cause this relationship. It is possible that women with children undertake roles in the home rather than participating in other roles. Similarly, women who later attempt to flee ISIS could exhibit disenchantment or remorse before they leave the organization by not participating in roles that push the ISIS agenda. Similar to the chi-squared test of independence, a regression analysis between force as motivation and participation in violence, combat, or propaganda produced a significance level of 0.01, revealing that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. When controlling for the variable children, the significance level of the relationship was 0.001, only increasing the strength of the relationship. Finally, when controlling for the variable flee or attempted to flee, the significance lev-
el output was 0.05, meaning that the effect of the variable is too minimal to diminish the significance of the original relationship.

**H6 Addressed:** Those who spend time in refugee camps are less likely to renounce the ISIS message and voice remorse, disenchantment, or regret than those who do not spend time in refugee camps.

I have hypothesized that women within refugee camps are unlikely to renounce the ISIS message because such camps harbor ISIS ideology and anti-Western sentiments. It is important to examine this relationship to understand how deradicalization processes may be implemented, especially for women who spend time in these camps. Based on the examination of the chi-squared test of independence, my hypothesis does not approach the .05 level of significance, and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. With a p-value of 0.3136, the relationship between these two variables is not significant enough to seriously consider. Indeed, 70.97% of those who spent time in a refugee camp later renounced their allegiance to ISIS, while 52.63% of those who did not spend time in a refugee camp did the same. The data indicates a contradiction to my hypothesis, too, pointing in a slightly positive direction.

There are a number of justifications for such support of the opposite hypothesis. First, a lack of a large dataset makes it difficult to establish relationships, regardless of the direction they point. It can be argued, too, that women may denounce ISIS, voice disenchantment, or show remorse for their actions in order to gain favor from their home country following their time in the camps. Women who are looking to be repatriated or accepted back into a non-ISIS affiliated society may voice their newfound opposition to the group in order to gain trust, acceptance, or other forms of integration. Thus, it is difficult to evaluate the authenticity of the views of these women, as there are many confounding reasons that may motivate their voiced opinions.
These findings emphasize that there are, in fact, identifiable relationships between variables in this database. These hypotheses exemplify what is possible with a comprehensive database. The implications of these findings and this work as a whole are discussed in the following chapter.

**DISCUSSION**

“The potential threat that foreign fighters, also known as foreign terrorist fighters, pose to their countries of residence once they return from the battlefield has concerned policy makers since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.”

- David Malet and Rachel Hayes

Women play an integral role in progressing the ideology and survival of the Islamic State. Researchers must remain cognizant of the evolving roles of female members in order to best understand what conditions contribute to the organization’s success. While there is a current decline in international focus on the Islamic State, continued vigilance is essential in order to enhance counterterrorism efforts. To be clear, conditions that permit the return of ISIS still exist. As countries and international bodies create counterterrorism policies, they must acknowledge that misconceptions regarding women’s contributions to ISIS can have serious adverse consequences. The threat women pose, even when not occupying roles that consist of direct violence and combat, should not be underestimated.

In spite of the sentiments of individual countries, there is a general consensus at the international level that repatriation of ISIS affiliates is
the most appropriate way to diminish the risk ISIS poses to the world.\textsuperscript{102}

The goal of this database is to identify patterns that will generate a more accurate understanding of women’s roles within ISIS so that countries and governing bodies may better undertake the task of repatriation. Further, this tool may help to avoid the formation of false assumptions that arise from blanket approaches. Several issues arise when adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to the repatriation of ISIS militants returning to their country of origin. Returning women and women aiming to repatriate pose a particular threat due to ambiguity about their roles within the organization. Generalized approaches may cause countries to make the misguided assumption that the task of repatriation is too difficult to carry out safely. Despite the lack of available information, patterns in experiences are indeed recognizable. In order to be most effective, policies should consider the experiences that women are likely to have during their time in ISIS.

My research contributes to existing literature, both by bolstering previously articulated conclusions as well as by problematizing some existing assumptions. Nonetheless, there remains much to be examined.

\textit{Implications of the Database}

There are several other variables that could be utilized for further evaluation of ISIS-affiliated women. Some of the variables open to future investigation include more specific versions of those already included in my database. These additional iterations of the pre-existing variables would yield a more in-depth analysis of such individuals. Other such approaches that I hope to include in future research would allow for deeper understanding of these women’s experiences. Some such additional considerations for future investigations include: Familial support for leaving; Victim of violence before entering; Heightened climate of

Islamophobia before joining; Left husband to join; Returned to home country undetected; Returned to ISIS more than once; Voiced feelings of social alienation; Poor economic status before joining; Entered with children; Had children while there; Married more than once; Participation in violence against Yazidis; Participation in propaganda before joining; Participation in propaganda while there; Family members in ISIS. Individual interviews with subjects would further enhance the depth of this database. Regardless, several conclusions can certainly be made from the current database and corresponding statistical analysis.

The results of this paper shed light on a small but impactful sample of female ISIS members. The database consists of women ranging in age, includes both Muslims by birth and converts, and reflects a variety of nationalities and different educations, and relationship backgrounds, among other factors.

While the current database allows only a limited number of significant relationships to be identified, the inclusion of more women and their specific information should elucidate more patterns. Similarly, the lack of identifiable significant relationships may provide useful information in and of itself. Supplemental investigation into these relationships may identify other relationships that may not have been evaluated in this initial study.

The information presented in this database allows for the identification of connections that have not previously been made in the literature examined. The hypotheses tested in this study speak to just a few important areas related to women and their roles, experiences, and activities in and outside of ISIS. Countries have often expressed their fear that returning ISIS members have the ability to spread their ISIS-related knowledge or conduct attacks once returned to their home country. By examining the ways in which female involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda may have different causes or effects, fears like these can be addressed via policy implementation. Some of these relationships are creating a dangerous climate that only serves to benefit ISIS. Other rela-
tionships emphasize that some components of policy might be headed in a beneficial direction.

While not statistically significant, involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda may favor a greater likelihood of being repatriated. This relationship implies that policy may be headed in the right direction; those who have participated in activities that promote ISIS’s violent ideology are being brought home and, whether intentional or not, removed from the spheres in which these ideologies flourish. Once home, depending on the availability of reliable evidence, these individuals may be criminally charged, closely monitored, or provided with the resources necessary for rehabilitation and reintegration.

My analysis leads me to suggest that, if those involved in violence, combat, or propaganda are being repatriated, then non-participants must also be allowed repatriation. Those individuals who have not participated in such activities may be evaluated in other ways in order to assess the threat they may pose. Other hypotheses tested in this database study aim to do just that. The various motivations that led individuals to join ISIS and the decisions made once in the organization provide a useful basis for predicting exposure to violent activities, practices, and opinions.

In the case of many women who claim that they were forced into joining ISIS, there may be indications based on their participation in certain roles that they do not necessarily ascribe to the ISIS ideology. By evaluating the relationship between force as a motivation and involvement in violence, combat, and propaganda, there may be identifiable reliability of these claims. Further examination of other roles these individuals undertake, the actions they take to leave ISIS, and their feelings towards the organization will help evaluate this claim.

Other hypotheses tested in this study, however, examine practices that may have the opposite effect than intended. For example, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between dual citizenship and the likelihood of having a citizenship revoked. The initial idea behind
doing so “reduces the security threat they pose and could deter those considering going to conflict zones or perpetuating terrorist offenses.”

This process, however, has adverse effects that may outweigh any benefits. Citizenship revocation creates a hierarchy between those with single status and those with dual citizenship. This process also creates a climate of distrust surrounding those with dual citizenship. It may even foster a climate of distrust among individuals affected by these policies against the country, giving groups like ISIS a platform on which to capitalize. It is my opinion that nations will be safer and prevent climates that foster radicalization and ISIS sympathy.

The approach to the thousands of women remaining in refugee camps in northern Syria poses a particular challenge to the repatriation process. Given the significance of this demographic, their experiences must be considered in repatriation policy. International groups have established that repatriation is the proper practice in regards to former ISIS members. Thus, policy must consider not only the experiences of women in the refugee camps, but also address the conditions that led them there. From the available information in the database, there appears to be no significant relationship between time spent in refugee camps and the likelihood of renouncing the ISIS message, or voicing remorse, disenchantment, or regret. These findings suggest that while some women demonstrated remorse and disenchantment, others did not. This lack of significance does not, however, mean that the relationship is unimportant. Rather, these results stress that there is more research to be done surrounding how climates in refugee camps can shape an individual’s experience. A further understanding of what causes remorse or lack thereof is necessary to repatriate these women while simultaneously maintaining national safety.

These hypotheses lay a foundation for future data collection efforts and research that may identify behaviors that will inform counterterrorism and reintegration policies. It is only through a database like this that it is possible to formulate and test these kinds of hypotheses.

[103] Banulescu-Bogdan, “Foreign Fighters.”
Key Understandings

Based on the literature used to understand women in the Islamic State, as well as the information and analyses garnered from the database, several generalities are apparent. These findings comport with most recent literature and contradict stereotyped assumptions about women in violent extremism and ISIS as a whole.

- Women, like men, join Islamic terrorist organizations for a variety of reasons. Regardless of their motives, the primary roles they fill within the Islamic State are as wives, mothers, and caregivers to the next generation of ISIS members. These women also play crucial roles in spreading propaganda and recruiting more women online.

- The database highlights the significant diversity of women that become radicalized and actively seek the opportunity to join ISIS within their territory. These disparate demographics make it difficult to create a singular profile of females at risk of radicalization. Instead, background information, as well as experiences in the organization and after their time in ISIS, is vital for creating accurate profiles for each individual.

- Viewing ISIS-affiliated women as entirely nonviolent, passive victims is detrimental to counterterrorism efforts. Reasons for females traveling to join ISIS are often multifactorial, but frequently include some sort of ideological alignment with the ISIS message.

- This original database breaks new ground by identifying women in ISIS in a comprehensive manner. This database provides an extensive baseline for further analysis. Supplementary research about individuals already in this archive as well as additions of other individuals is needed to draw further conclusions.

Conclusion

The Islamic State is often viewed as a problem of the mid 2010’s – one that has been solved, in large part, due to ISIS’ final loss of land in 2019. That assumption, though, is problematic in and of itself. Some may be-
lieve that the current threat of ISIS to the Western world is constrained to domestic attacks by sympathizers, or that the threat of the organization is present only in Iraq and Syria at a small scale. Others, too, may suppose that the world has moved on to other, more important priorities – the war in Ukraine, White supremacy, domestic terrorism, or natural disasters. However, this underestimation of ISIS’ potential to return to its former strength could, in fact, be advantageous to the organization. According to Dr. Hamoon Khelghat-Doost, professor of political science at the University of Lincoln, UK, and Üsküdar University, Istanbul: “It has been a common practice by the members of different terrorist organizations to use humanitarian tragedies to cross the border to Turkey.”

As more international conflicts and disasters continue to play out, ISIS will continue to co-opt these events to capitalize on the instability of the region. It is the responsibility of those conducting counter-terrorism efforts to repatriate and rehabilitate those who were formerly or are still actively part of ISIS, as well as prevent more from joining their ranks. In order to do so, there must be a clear understanding of these individuals’ experiences and capabilities.

While there is a general notion from international bodies that countries should repatriate citizens who have left to join the Islamic State, there is little enforcement of this norm. These trends emphasize the need for the adoption of a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that can be a general guide implemented across nations. Nations not only need to address the issues inherent to identifying those at risk of recidivism after repatriation, but also to recognize the climate that enabled individuals to seek out such an environment in the first place. It is equally vital that these policies address the specific situations of each group that joins ISIS – men, women, and children. Each of these demographics is exposed to vastly different involvements within the group, and thus must be treated with individual attention. Countries must develop policies that are both

preventive and rehabilitative.

ISIS no longer has jurisdiction over the territory it once controlled, but the fight to eradicate the group is far from over. The future of ISIS depends on those opportunities which—even if unintentionally—are given to them. In order to prevent their ability to rise again and conduct future attacks, the international community must establish effective strategies to repatriate former members, rehabilitate such individuals, and disrupt the climates that fostered their initial radicalization. The creation and analysis of this database lays the foundation for the identification of patterns of experiences that can be addressed for women in ISIS who aim to return to their country of origin. Further expansion of this database will enrich the understandings of the grossly misunderstood and vitally important group: the women of ISIS.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth Year</td>
<td>Year individual was born</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>&gt;= year of data, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of joining</td>
<td>Date individual month to join ISIS</td>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>&gt;= year of data, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor at the Time of Joining (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual was below 18 years old when he left to join ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>algos: 5, Australia: 13, Belgium: 30, Belgium: 33, Canada: 41, Finland: 78, France: 75, Germany: 86, Ireland: 109, Kazakhstan: 37, Lebanon: 124, Morocco: 120, Netherlands: 156, New Zealand: 75, Pakistan: 50, Portugal: 179, Russia: 164, Spain: 204, Syria: 218, Trinidad and Tobago: 227, Tunisia: 528, Turkey: 229, United Kingdom: 298, United States: 359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Country the individual departed from</td>
<td>Categorized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Citizenship (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual had two or more citizenships</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Role in ISIS (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates individual had a role during their time in ISIS that was out of the designated roles leader of training, politics, etc</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual had children at any point in their lives</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Decayed (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual had any of their children die at any point</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familial Motivation (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that an individual’s motivation for joining ISIS was incorporated family (not including husband and children)</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity/Religious Motivation (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates the individual had an ideological or religious oriented reason expressed for joining ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force as motivation (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the decision to join ISIS was against the individual’s will</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going to marry as motivation (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Reason for going was to marry and remain an ISIS fighter</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>went with husband as motivation</td>
<td>Joined spouse to move to ISIS territory</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lived/interrupted (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>the individual interrupted or successfully fled from ISIS at any point</td>
<td>dichotomous / interrupted</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrested / captured (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>the individual was arrested or captured by ISIS at any point</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entered/returned (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Entered ISIS territory married to a man</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entered/charted (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Entered ISIS territory married to a man</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married while there (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Married during time in ISIS at least once</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widowed (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Widowed at any point during their lives</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship renounced (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Stripped of their nationality by their country of origin</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased upon return to home country (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Deceased after traveling back to their country of origin</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in refugee camp (1 yea, 0 mo, 2 NA)</td>
<td>spent time in a refugee camp after their time in ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reincorporated (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>government coordination to brought back to their country of origin</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal charge (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Criminally charged with activities relating to their time in ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarriage/Remarried (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Individual expressed some form of remarriage, remarriage or disintegration towards ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual was in some way involved in violent activities, combat, or propaganda efforts (including being photographed with weapons</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College education or higher (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>The individual is a college educated, some college education, or in college at the time of joining ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school at time of joining ISIS (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>The individual left school to join ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captured to Islam (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicate that the individual converted to Islam</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employed before joining ISIS (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Held a job at the time of joining and moving to ISIS</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departed by Syrian forces, Iraqi forces, Turkish forces (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates an individual was at some point driven by Syrian forces, Iraqi forces, Turkish forces (includes Kurds)</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held his ESS (1 yea, 0 mo)</td>
<td>Indicates that the individual’s husband was in ISIS at some point</td>
<td>dichotomous / categorical</td>
<td>1 = yea, 0 = no, NA = no data available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX B: SUMMARIES OF GENERALIZED LINEAR REGRESSION MODELS

**H1:** Initial relationship between repatriation and involvement in violence, combat, or propaganda

| Coefficients: | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)   | 0.45161  | 0.08857    | 5.099   | 3.26e-06 *** |
| thesissdata$ involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.20553 | 0.12162 | 1.690 | 0.0959 |

---

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 1

**Control: Children**

| Coefficients: | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)   | 0.36839  | 0.21911    | 1.462   | 0.1488   |
| thesissdata$ involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.26321 | 0.12324 | 2.136 | 0.0368 * |
| thesissdata$ Children (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.06958 | 0.25242 | 0.276 | 0.7838 |

---

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 1

**Control: Force**

| Coefficients: | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)   | 0.36500  | 0.1123     | 3.250   | 0.00191 ** |
| thesissdata$ involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.2493 | 0.1382 | 1.804 | 0.07627 . |
| thesissdata$ Force as motivation (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.1708 | 0.1651 | 1.034 | 0.30524 |

---

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 1

**Control: Remorse, Renouncement, Disenchantment**

| Coefficients: | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)   | 0.36500  | 0.1123     | 3.250   | 0.00191 ** |
| thesissdata$ involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.2493 | 0.1382 | 1.804 | 0.07627 . |
| thesissdata$ Force as motivation (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.1708 | 0.1651 | 1.034 | 0.30524 |

---

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 1

**H2:** Initial relationship between citizenship revocation and dual citizens

| Coefficients: | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|---------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)   | 0.03333  | 0.03156    | 1.056   | 0.29451  |
| thesissdata$ Dual citizenship (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.21667 | 0.07731 | 2.803 | 0.00655 ** |

---

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 1
Control: Special Role

Coefficients:  
(Intercept) 0.03341 0.04186 0.798 0.42817  
thesissdata$Dual citizenship (1 yes, 0 no) 0.26256 0.09312 2.819 0.00664 **  
thesissdata$Special role in ISIS (1 yes, 0 no) 0.04034 0.09312 0.433 0.66657  
---  
Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1  

Control: Involvement in Violence, Combat, or Propaganda

Coefficients:  
(Intercept) 0.05386 0.04757 1.132 0.262  
thesissdata$Dual citizenship (1 yes, 0 no) 0.21273 0.08124 2.619 0.011 *  
thesissdata$Involved in combat/violence/propaganda (1 yes, 0 no) -0.03319 0.08236 -0.392 0.596  
---  
Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1  

H4: Initial relationship between identity/religious motivation and involvement in acts of combat, violence, or propaganda

Coefficients:  
(Intercept) 0.33333 0.09186 3.629 0.000596 ***  
thesissdata$Identity/Religious Motivation (1 yes, 0 no) 0.34314 0.12304 2.789 0.007109 **  
---  
Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1  

Control: Children deceased

Coefficients:  
(Intercept) 2.917e-01 1.018e-01 2.866 0.0063 **  
thesissdata$Identity/Religious Motivation (1 yes, 0 no) 3.333e-01 1.409e-01 2.366 0.0223 *  
thesissdata$Children deceased (1 yes, 0 no) -8.654e-17 1.890e-01 0.000 1.0000  
---  
Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1  

Control: Widowed

Coefficients:  
(Intercept) 0.1622 0.1320 1.229 0.2253  
thesissdata$Identity/Religious Motivation (1 yes, 0 no) 0.2803 0.1371 2.044 0.0469 *  
thesissdata$widowed (1 yes, 0 no) 0.2738 0.1434 1.909 0.0626 .  
---  
Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1
Control: Criminal record

Control: Familial motivation

Control: Went with husband as motivation

Control: Marriage as motivation

H5: Initial relationship between time in refugee camps and renouncement of the ISIS message, voicing remorse, disenchantment, or regret
Control: Children

Coefficients:

|                      | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|----------------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)          | 0.600000 | 0.211479   | 2.837   | 0.00623  **|
| thesisdata$Force as motivation (1 yes, 0 no) | -0.461794 | 0.145509 | -3.174  | 0.00239  **|
| thesisdata$Children (1 yes, 0 no) | 0.004651 | 0.223436 | 0.021   | 0.98346  |

---

Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘***’ 0.01 ‘**’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Control: Fled/Attempted

Coefficients:

|                      | Estimate | Std. Error | t value | Pr(>|t|) |
|----------------------|----------|------------|---------|----------|
| (Intercept)          | 0.66500  | 0.09316    | 7.139   | 1.87e-09 ***|
| thesisdata$Force as motivation (1 yes, 0 no) | -0.49375 | 0.14262    | -3.462  | 0.00102  **|
| thesisdata$fled/attempted (1 yes, 0 no) | -0.06625 | 0.12064    | -0.549  | 0.58504  |

---

Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘***’ 0.01 ‘**’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Speckhard, Anne. “Defected from ISIS or Simply Returned, and for How Long?: Chal-


