



TONY BLAIR
INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL
CHANGE

White Widows: The Myth of the Deadliest Jihadi Women

KATHERINE E. BROWN

CO-EXISTENCE

Contents

Overview	3
Introduction	4
Deadlier Than the Rest?	7
Religion: More Than Belief	11
Understanding Religion and Radicalisation	14
Key Lessons	16
The Full Series	17

OVERVIEW

In stories about European women terrorists, their sex and religious identity dominate explanations of their suspected violence. Whether it's today's 'jihadi stars' Samantha Lewthwaite and Sally Jones, known as 'white widows', or the first European female suicide bomber, who blew herself up in Iraq more than a decade ago, Muriel Degauque (aka Myriam Goris), the reports imply that radical female converts are deadlier than all other extremists. Their relatively ordinary upbringing, their whiteness and their gender mean they avoid suspicion. With their fanaticism, devotion and sacrifice, they become poster children for extremist groups, symbols of the persuasive power of their ideology. The media and the propaganda of extremist groups bestow on them a twisted celebrity.

The idea that converts to Islam make the most violent jihadi women only disrupts counter-extremism efforts.

Looking at four well-known examples, this paper explores the myths surrounding radical female converts. It offers an alternative framework for understanding religion and terrorists. Misunderstandings of these issues are no trivial matter. Epithets like white widows, Jihadi John and Jihadi Jane add to the media buzz around stories of extremists. They influence the way news consumers understand the likes of ISIS and al-Qaeda. Debunking biases and assumptions, and differentiating between exceptions and more typical examples, can help policymakers in efforts to counter extremist violence.

The views of the author do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute.

INTRODUCTION

The so-called white widows are European or American white women who converted to Islam and later engaged in terrorism linked to radical Islamist groups like ISIS. They are seen as distinct from the jihadi brides reported on widely by the media. This is because they are more prominently involved in violence and they stay active after the death of their husband(s). The name is a twist on the 'black widows', women involved in militant Chechen separatism, and the venomous spider, whose female is known for being more deadly than the male.

What is striking about the white widows' stories is how incredulous and contradictory the details are. And yet, the myth remains intact. The first white widow to be given the name was Samantha (Sherafiyah) Lewthwaite, the widow of Germaine Lindsay, one of the 7/7 bombers. She is one of the world's most wanted terrorist suspects. Lewthwaite has been connected to the Euro 2012 attack in Mombasa, Kenya. There is speculation that she was also involved in the 2013 assault on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, along with another attack in Mombasa in 2016. Links to al-Shabaab were confirmed through Kenyan police and later via South African criminal investigations. She appears to have been married three times to men connected to jihadi groups.

Her death in 2014 was reported by Russian news agency REGNUM in Donbass, although the Aidar Battalion in Ukraine, with which she was allegedly fighting, challenged the report. British media periodically claim sightings of her and report she is recruiting an army of women to attack the UK. Piecing together this narrative reveals how Lewthwaite has travelled the globe foiling police, security services and militaries as she masterminds mass destruction.

Fifty-year-old Sally Jones is another white widow. Jones was reportedly targeted by a drone strike in Syria in October 2017, dying with her 12-year-old son, JoJo. Two years earlier, her younger husband was killed in a similar strike. Sally Jones joined ISIS in 2013 and became a core recruiter for the group. She was prolific online. Known as Umm Hussain al-Britani, Jones issued advice and general threats against the UK.¹ She was also reportedly involved in training

female recruits in military tactics and was linked to plots against Britain. In yet another hard-to-believe biography, in her sixth decade Jones went from being a punk singer and benefits claimant to delivering complex organisational recruitment strategies that a top military officer would struggle with. It's not completely impossible that she would have the knowledge or talent, but it would certainly be an unusual twist of fate.

There are two others dubbed white widows. Born Muriel Degauque, Myriam Goris, the first European female suicide bomber, blew herself up in Baquba, Iraq, in 2005. She had travelled to Iraq from Belgium via Turkey with her husband to fight US forces. The former baker targeted an American road patrol but only managed to kill herself. Goris, it is reported, was only interested in boys at school and became increasingly religious under the influence of her Moroccan husband. Her husband's control over her was so strong that even after his death in an earlier failed suicide attack, she carried on with her own plan, perhaps out of extreme grief.

Colleen LaRose, from Pennsburg, US, is also known as Jihadi Jane and Fatima LaRose. LaRose was captured and arrested in 2010 for her involvement in Islamic extremist plots, including one against Danish cartoonist Lars Vilks. She travelled to Europe to join a group that planned to carry out an attack, however she was frustrated by their inaction and returned to the US. In 2014 she was sentenced to ten years in prison for her online involvement in violent extremism. Her reduced sentence (from life) was attributed to her cooperation with the security services and the fact she suffered sexual abuse as a child.

These four cases are the cornerstone of the myths about female converts' participation in Islamist violence today. Through grand narratives, myths help explain what might otherwise be unintelligible. Myths reveal not only how a society thinks it works but also how a society thinks it should work. Myths do not gain authority by the accuracy of their claims to truth but because they are perceived as credible, as natural, almost obvious. As the political philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre said, "myths are alive or dead, not true or false".²

1 It is common in ISIS groups to adopt the honorifics of Umm or Abu. In this case, the name translates as "Mother of Hussain the Briton".

When it comes to terrorism, myths are very much alive. Terrorism generally, and women's participation in it, lends itself to myth because observers' understanding of this issue is incomplete and because it is so distant from the ordinary lives of most people. The evidence base is lacking to form scientific explanations, and women's participation seems to contradict dominant worldviews about the 'correct' role of women in society—as peaceful, as nonviolent and as mothers. Like it or not, the stories of white widows help frame mainstream understanding of how women take part in extremist violence, the role of religion in terrorism and processes of radicalisation.

² Alasdair MacIntyre, "Myth", in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* vol. 5, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 435.

DEADLIER THAN THE REST?

The white widow myth creates exceptionalism and celebrity status, where these women are seen as deadlier and almost mystical in their rarity. This has been seen before with the narratives of the actions of other female terrorists, such as Leila Khaled of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Thenmozhi Rajaratnam of the Tamil Tigers, Wafa Idris of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and Ulrike Meinhof of the Red Army Faction, among others. While fewer women than men participate in terrorism, they nevertheless represent between 10 and 15 per cent of a group's membership, on average. Researchers estimate that more than 200 female bombers carried out attacks between 2014 and 2017, according to the news agency IRIN. If ISIS is excluded, women commit almost 23 per cent of all suicide bombings.³ They are therefore less rare and less exceptional than the myth leads one to believe.

The rationale of the white widows myth is an extension of the operational utility of women in general. When women act as terrorists, they are capable of high-casualty attacks and, as such, have high value for terrorist organisations. It is also alleged that women's attacks kill more people than attacks by men.⁴ The standard explanation is that women evade security more easily than men and can consequently get closer to their targets.⁵ For white widows, their gender and the fact that they are white means they are even more likely to evade detection. Their successes confirm narratives of groups like ISIS, which tell their followers that Muslims are seen as "suspect communities" in the West, while those

3 The terms "suicide bombing" and "martyrdom operations" are both value laden but widely understood. Some academics use the phrase "human bomber" to avoid the judgments implied in these terms. See Tricia Romano, "Why the Boston Marathon Bombers Could Have Been Women", *Dame*, 29 April 2013, <https://www.damemagazine.com/2013/04/29/why-boston-marathon-bombers-could-have-been-women/>. The exclusion of ISIS is because most suicide-bomber attacks have been unreported for the last few years. In 2016, for example, ISIS reported on over 1,000 such attacks, none of which was said to have been carried out by women. Many thanks to Charlie Winter for noting this point.

4 Lindsay A. O'Rourke, "What's Special about Female Suicide Terrorism?", *Security Studies* 18, no. 4 (2009): 681–718.

5 Reed M. Wood and Jakana L. Thomas, "Women on the frontline", *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 1 (2017): 31–46.

perceived as non-Muslims—such as white women—are not deemed suspicious. The fact they are able to get through security infrastructure to carry out attacks appears to confirm systemic security profiling in Europe and the US. The women are seen as “clean skins”, a term referring to suspects with no known prior connection to radical groups or security services.⁶

Their white identity is also important. Younger non-white recruits to ISIS in the West are advised to “act coco”—that is, to blend in, to be a liberal Muslim in appearance and action so as not to alert suspicion. For Islamophobes, meanwhile, converts betray the generosity of the liberal good life. For those on the political extreme right wing, white converts also betray their race and racialised ideas of Christianity. According to the white widow myth, these women are especially capable of deception, of successfully living double lives until being called to action. They went from fairly ordinary backgrounds to developing almost supervillain-like abilities.⁷ They become the danger lurking in liberal society, undermining trust within and between communities.

The white widow myth also galvanises recruitment for extremist groups. White widows become poster girls for the cause. As causes

6 The term “clean skins” is used by security officials, counter-terrorism police and bureaucrats. It originally referred to an undercover operative who had no prior connections or history of dealing with the police or security services or the group they were meant to infiltrate, so that they were less likely to be suspected. It mutated to refer to those who joined radical groups and had no prior connection with them or the police. See “Changes in Modus Operandi of Islamic State (IS) Revisited”, Europol Public Information, November 2016, https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/.../modus_operandi_is_revisited.pdf. See also David Kilcullen, *The Blood Year: The unravelling of Western Counter Terrorism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 204.

7 Divorce is not unusual; dropping out of university or not being interested in school is not unusual; and while a brother or father dying or being a victim of sexual abuse is tragic, these are not sufficiently distinctive to be causes. At best, as Andrew Silke and I have noted elsewhere, such events might lead to mortality salience (obsession with death). Our report is unusually contained in full in the Judgment of Hayden J in *London Borough of Tower Hamlets v B* [2016] EWHC 1707. See also “Radicalisation and violent extremism – focus on women: How women become radicalised, and how to empower them to prevent radicalisation”, European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights & Equality, December 2017, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596838/IPOL_STU\(2017\)596838_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596838/IPOL_STU(2017)596838_EN.pdf).

célèbres they offer an indication of the power and strength of the organisation. If even these women are convinced, then surely the groups' ideology, motives and actions are correct? Additionally, women's participation is used to shame men who are sympathisers but not actively engaged—if even these women are willing to act, why aren't they?

A 2015 tweet by one woman in Syria, declared, "There are women who are already here before you and look, they are already doing more than you have for the Islamic State." A February 2016 message over Telegram, by an alleged American female ISIS recruiter named Umm Isa al-Amirikiah, was even more excoriating in tone: "Stop sitting behind your screens posting [sic] couple of dawlah [ISIS] videos, getting yourself 'caught' because of it. You are not men. You are an embarrassment for the Ummah [global Muslim community]." ⁸ Similarly, during Ramadan 2016, Sally Jones was reported to have tweeted to encourage lone actors. Typically, female bombers receive eight times more press coverage than their male counterparts, further adding to their value for extremist groups. ⁹

The white widow myth also relies on certain ideas about why and how the women are involved in the first place. When the underlying narratives surrounding the myths are unpacked, they end up negating the actions of these women, even while creating their own twisted celebrity. They allegedly joined jihadi groups because of love, religion and weak-mindedness. ¹⁰ The image their stories portray is one of passivity, despite the power and politics of their

8 Alejandro Beutel and Krystina Perez, "From WWI to ISIS, Using Shame and Masculinity in Recruitment Narratives", START National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 1 June 2016, <http://www.start.umd.edu/news/wwi-isis-using-shame-and-masculinity-recruitment-narratives>.

9 Mia Bloom, "Women and Terrorism", in Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, January 2017, <http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-124>.

10 Katherine E. Brown, "Muriel's wedding: News media representations of Europe's first female suicide terrorist", *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14, no. 6 (2011): 705–726; Maura Conway and Lisa McInerney, "What's Love Got to Do with It? Framing 'Jihad Jane' in the US Press", *Media, War & Conflict* 5, no. 1 (2012): 6–21; and Brigitte L. Nacos, "The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women in Politics and in Terrorism", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 5 (2005): 435–451.

actions.¹¹ The myth minimises politics and the context of female converts' participation. The focus of the myth is on emotions, psychological vulnerability and the irrationality of faith instead.

¹¹ Beverley Milton-Edwards and Sumaya Attia, "Female terrorists and their role in jihadi groups", Brookings Institution, 9 May 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/female-terrorists-and-their-role-in-jihadi-groups/>.

RELIGION: MORE THAN BELIEF

In the UK, religion is generally seen as a private matter, where one's belief guides one's actions. Religion is seen as irrational, a matter of moral or ethical conscience, of theology and doctrine. Within this framing, religious behaviour is seen as a general threat to the rational, secular order of politics.¹² The problem then becomes not politics but religion: How can you rationally debate "God says"? This logic about religion reinforces the idea that states should act now and ask questions later, because terrorists cannot be reasoned with. This might provide quick results and body-bag counts of success, but is unlikely to produce long-term solutions.

The white widow myth confirms this view. Accordingly, white widows participate in terrorism because of individual fanaticism, not to the cause, but to their faulty religious beliefs. It is known that they are not devoted to the cause in a political sense because they were groomed, seduced or brainwashed by men or because their tragic lives inevitably led to conversion and a radical violent path.¹³ This leaves religion as the key that turned them.

The first problem with this is the fact that it rests on stereotypes of women as more fervent in their faith and that converts are, in turn, more devout than those raised within a tradition. Globally, statistics show that women affirm the importance of religion in their lives more than men, and that, by most measures, women are more devout.¹⁴ However, unpacking these statistics, one finds that in Muslim communities there is little differentiation between men's and women's commitment to religion (except for mosque attendance, where cultural norms often limit women's participation).

Regarding conversion, there is a perception that a convert's zeal makes him or her more willing to die for their beliefs; this is

¹² Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Politics of secularism and IR", E-International Relations, 18 November 2008, <http://www.e-ir.info/2008/11/18/politics-of-secularism-and-ir/>.

¹³ Anselm Rink and Kunaal Sharma, "The Determinants of Religious Radicalisation", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, no. 6 (2018): 1229–1261.

¹⁴ "The Gender Gap in Religion Around the World", Pew Research Forum, 22 March 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/22/the-gender-gap-in-religion-around-the-world/>.

combined with the idea that more women convert than men.¹⁵ However, processes of radicalisation differ little between converts and those born into a religious group.¹⁶ While the idea of a convert wanting to outbid others is superficially appealing, it shows a lack of understanding of the conversion process, converts' experience and their motivations.¹⁷

The second problem with this component of the myth is that it implies all Muslims are suspect by association. If religion is merely about belief, then Muslims are but one step away from problematic belief. In the myth, Islam is reduced to a spectrum of nonviolence to violence, with no other defining features. For example, the discussion of jihad becomes simplified to determining its true theological meaning, ignoring its complex past as a code of chivalry in frontier states, as justification for revolution and an inner quest for transcendence.¹⁸ This idea of religion as a justification for violence allows Islamophobes to claim Islam is at fault in some way for the violence of a few.¹⁹

There is a racialisation of religion, specifically of Islam.²⁰ By blaming the white widows' conversion on foreign men, as in the

15 Matthew Francis and Kim Knott, "Are converts to Islam more likely to become extremists?"; Conversation, 28 March 2017, <http://theconversation.com/are-converts-to-islam-more-likely-to-become-extremists-75164>; Mia Bloom, "Female Suicide Bombers: a Global Trend", *Daedalus* 136, no. 1 (2007): 36; Jocelyne Cesari, "Muslims in Europe and the Risk of Radicalisation", in *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge in Europe*, ed. Rik Coolhaet (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008): 103.

16 Emmanuel Karagiannis, "European Converts to Islam: Mechanisms of Radicalization", *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 13, no. 1 (2012): 99–113.

17 Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism", *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49–80; Monika G. Bartoszewicz, "Controversies of Conversions: The Potential Terrorist Threat of European Converts to Islam", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 3 (2013): 17–29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26296937>.

18 Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Hugh Kennedy, *Caliphate: The History of an Idea* (New York: Basic Books, 2016). See also Hugh Kennedy, *The Caliphate: A Pelican Introduction* (London: Penguin, 2016) for a discussion of the idea of a caliphate.

19 William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

20 Jake Watson, Saher Selod and Nazli Kibria, "'Let's hope the Boston Marathon Bomber is a White American': racialising Muslims and the politics of

case of Myriam Goris and Sally Jones, there is an implication that what it means to be European is to be white and not Muslim.²¹ It also reduces what it means to be Muslim to not European, ignoring the diverse and long history of Islam in Europe and denying the existence of a European Islam.²² This is important because the white widow myth reinforces the extremist narrative of a world divided in two—the world of Islam and the world of war. The ‘world of war’ is where Muslims are not welcome – as ISIS claims Muslims must leave Europe because they will never belong, and must instead join them in their so-called caliphate. By ignoring the diversity of Islamic traditions, beliefs and identities, this myth allows extremists to claim a homogeneous violent West and Islamophobes a homogeneous violent Islam.

The third problem with this component of the white widow myth is that it reinforces religion as individual and ignores collective belonging. Research and policies often downplay the role of social networks in considering women’s radicalisation, in contrast to theories about men’s radicalisation.²³ Nevertheless, women form strong bonds of sisterhood online and offline, often closed to outsiders, as Lewthwaite’s role as a recruiter and propagandist affirms. The white widow myth conjures the image of the lone-actor terrorist, whereas in all the cases the women acted with others, formed networks of support and created collective identities.²⁴ Counter-extremism efforts need to be mindful of the fact that white widows do not act alone.

white identity”, in *Identities* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2017.1397964>.

21 On converts generally, see also Amena Amer and Caroline Howarth, “Constructing and contesting threat: Representations of white British Muslims across British national and Muslim newspapers”, *European Journal of Social Psychology* 48, no. 5 (August 2018): 614–628, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2352>.

22 For details refer to Jocelyne Cesari, *The Oxford Handbook of European Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

23 For a discussion of this occurring in the online world, see Katherine E. Brown and Elizabeth Pearson, “Social Media, the Online Environment and Terrorism”, in *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counter Terrorism*, ed. Andrew Silke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

24 Manni Crone, “Radicalization revisited: violence, politics and the skills of the body”, *International Affairs* 92, no. 3 (2016), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/ia/inta92-3-05-crone.pdf>.

UNDERSTANDING RELIGION AND RADICALISATION

In the white widow myth—as with general accounts of female suicide bombers—race, religion and gender combine to give a reductive idea of these women, as opposed to a nuanced picture that illuminates how they were radicalised and how extremist violence can be prevented in the future. Defining religion is notoriously complex. As with definitions of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism, how religion is understood frames responses to extremist violence.

Religion in much of terrorism research is simplistically reduced to a question of belief divorced from the social dimensions of faith. For instance, when religion is seen as simply belief, people feel free to randomly pull quotations from the Quran or Hadith without looking at contextual meaning for believers today, or the context in which those beliefs (for example, about the caliphate or jihad) were established. Pointing to centuries of discussion, theology and religious studies look towards both what religion does and its core components. Combining the two is essential to formulate better policies.

To make this move, it is vital to consider how religion serves to form a moral community (belonging),²⁵ is an attempt to answer ultimate concerns (belief)²⁶ and forms a series of life practices (behaviour).²⁷ Such insight draws out how religion is social as well as individual. Communal practices and shared activities are integral to religion—whether this is worship, private prayer or regulations on dress, food and social actions. Potential recruits are drawn to extremist groups not only because they subscribe to their ideologies but also because they are looking to belong and for an identity. Women who join groups such as ISIS are seeking a place where their religious beliefs can align with a way of life. In the so-called caliphate, women could fit into the ISIS hierarchy of

25 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1982).

26 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins, 1957).

27 Bryan S. Rennie, “The View of the Invisible World: Ninian Smart’s Analysis of the Dimensions of Religion and of Religious Experience”, *The Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 28, no. 3 (1999): 63–68, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/69f1/26999a453f915703dad8ec496a969c9715d1.pdf>.

humanity, where they earned their place based on understanding of correct belief and behaviour.

Religion is belief, belonging and behaviour. Unless all three components are taken seriously, myths will persist. Understanding religion as a component of identity that is central to lived experience and makes sense of the world for believers helps observers understand the actions of these women, and others, not as actions of deranged belief but as a combination of extreme belief, belonging and behaviour. The white widow myth ignores this. Policy should not.

KEY LESSONS

White widows carry two key lessons for policymakers and practitioners. The first, regarding gender, is that it is important to see beyond stereotyped assumptions about women (and men). The second, regarding religion, is that it is important to see beyond a narrow association of faith with individual belief to the exclusion of the social role religion plays. Failure to do so obscures the motives and actions of these women (and other terrorists), rendering them cartoon-like supervillains.

The challenge is how to carry out this more complex analysis of religion, gender, radicalisation and terrorism to inform counter-extremism policy.²⁸ The first step is to learn from gender mainstreaming and expertise from other policy areas.²⁹ At least a decade since UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, there are ample examples of best practice that can be applied. The second step is to move beyond adding (religious) belief and stirring to better reflect the dynamic concept of religion. To build this nuance means looking not only at what religion is (dominant framing in terrorism studies and in policy) but also at what it does.

Considering gendered belief, belonging and behaviour can lead to better and more comprehensive understanding of people's actions. This will help the development and implementation of more effective counter-terrorism policies.

28 Andrew Davies, "Women and Radicalisation II: Gendering Radicalisation Theory", The University of Birmingham Cadbury Centre Blog on Religion in Politics and Public Life, 22 March 2018, <https://blog.bham.ac.uk/cpur/2018/03/22/women-and-radicalisation-ii-gendering-radicalisation-theory/>.

29 Katherine E. Brown, "Gender and the New Counter-Terrorism Strategy", Connect Futures, 5 June 2018, <https://www.connectfutures.org/gender-and-the-new-counter-terrorism-strategy/>.

THE FULL SERIES

Find all the papers in the series at:

- [Debunking Myths on Gender and Extremism](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/debunking-myths-gender-and-extremism)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/debunking-myths-gender-and-extremism>)
- [ISIS, Women and Jihad: Breaking With Convention](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/isis-women-and-jihad-breaking-convention)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/isis-women-and-jihad-breaking-convention>)
- [Boko Haram's Split on Women in Combat](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/boko-harams-split-women-combat)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/boko-harams-split-women-combat>)
- [Why Men Fight and Women Don't: Masculinity and Extremist Violence](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/why-men-fight-and-women-dont-masculinity-and-extremist-violence)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/why-men-fight-and-women-dont-masculinity-and-extremist-violence>)
- [White Widows: The Myth of the Deadliest Jihadi Women](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/white-widows-the-myth-of-the-deadliest-jihadi-women)
- [Do Mothers Know Best? How Assumptions Harm CVE](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/do-mothers-know-best-how-assumptions-harm-cve)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/do-mothers-know-best-how-assumptions-harm-cve>)
- [Neither Feminists nor Victims: How Women's Agency Has Shaped Palestinian Violence](https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/womens-agency-palestinian-violence)
(<https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/womens-agency-palestinian-violence>)

The idea that converts to Islam make the most violent jihadi women only disrupts counter-extremism efforts.

FOLLOW US

facebook.com/instituteglobal

twitter.com/instituteGC

instagram.com/institutegc

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

info@institute.global

FIND OUT MORE
INSTITUTE.GLOBAL

Copyright © September 2018 by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

All rights reserved. Citation, reproduction and or translation of this publication, in whole or in part, for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorised provided the source is fully acknowledged. Tony Blair Institute, trading as Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (registered company number: 10505963) whose registered office is 50 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BL.