CONTENTS

International terrorism is clearly one of the most important international security issues of our times. It is a global problem that has awoken the world community to the interconnectedness of our human survival concerns in a globalized 21st Century world. The stupendous event of *September 11th 2001 bombing of the US*, was clearly the wake up call to the magnitude and universality of the terrorist threat. The rapid expansion of globalization at the beginning of the 21st Century with all its benefits, complexities and challenges, has contributed to the increase of global human insecurity; upsurge of various forms, levels and magnitudes of conflicts and violence in all its aspects, including terrorism. Globalization has also inspired an upsurge of politics of identity and a resurgence of various forms of cultural and faith based fundamentalisms resulting in multiplication of conflicts and what Huntington terms: "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington, 1996) The rise of the Global Civil Society (Anheier, 2001), as part of a mushrooming industry of non-state-actors seeking to be major players on all key issues affecting the global community, has also challenged the traditional role of the state in International affairs. So, at both the level of analysis and praxis, the non-state actors either as perpetrators or victims have become key players in defining and shaping responses to international terrorism.

For some African countries such as those living in or within the proximity of the Horn of Africa, such as Kenya, terrorism has become a familiar but "unwelcome visitor" (Richardson, 2008) since the mid-1970s. Kenya experienced its first terrorist bombing in 1975 followed by another in 1981. But the most eminent terrorist attack was the August 1998 bombing that targeted American Embassies in Nairobi (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), leaving both countries with many casualties. In Kenya, 250 Kenyans and 4 Americans were killed; 4,000 wounded and all buildings and properties in the vicinity destroyed (Aronson, 2013). These terrorist attacks were followed by another attack of Kenya in 2002.

These series of attacks shifted the attention of the Horn of Africa region towards the search for viable responses to terrorism; by preparing anti-terrorist legislations and intensifying anti-terrorist surveillance. This policy and paradigm shift also occurred in other extra- African countries, including the US following the September 11, 2001 bombing of that country. The US Defense Strategy policy shifted from *deterrence* to *preventive* strategy, guided by the 2002 anti-terrorist legislation - the *Patriot Act*. The new security policy referred to as the "Bush Doctrine" was outlined in the US 2002 National Security Strategy, which declared global war on terrorism" (Aronson, 2013). Among the focal points of US counter-terrorism measures then and now included Afghanistan, Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Iran, the Asian sub-continent including Pakistan and India, the Horn of Africa and Eastern African countries of Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Kenya, among others.

Nevertheless, neither the "Bush Doctrine," nor the specific counter-terrorism measures that were put in place could prevent subsequent terrorist actions. Indeed, 9/11 was followed by a series of other high-profile terrorist-related incidents; such as the Madrid train explosions, the London Underground train attacks, the car bomb at Glasgow Airport, and the Taj Mahal hotel bombing in India, among others. Similarly, despite the immense pressure put on Kenya and Tanzania to enact counter-terrorism legislations and measures following the 1998 bombings, this did not stop the subsequent bombings, including, a Tourist hotel at the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa in December 2002, the emergence of *Al Shaabab*-as a terrorist organization based in Somalia with links to Al Qaeda; the July 2010 attacks of Kampala, Uganda and the 21 September 2013 terrorist attack of the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, to cite just a few cases.

Terrorism around the world has indeed continued to occur with increasing frequency and magnitude and with new modes of attack. This has provoked debates and raised questions among scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders in the Africa and elsewhere, as to the efficacy of the mechanisms and strategies in place for responding to terrorism. Indeed, the high occurrence and global spread of terrorism and the seeming inability of the World Community to combat it despite legislative and other counter-terrorism measures, has not only brought into question the viability of the strategies in place for responding to terrorism, but also the underlying conceptual, ideological and institutional frameworks underpinning action. In particular, feminist scholars have questioned the viability and efficacy of the state centric approach for managing terrorism that has tended to ignore the role of non-state actors (especially women) as both agents of counter-terrorism as well as perpetrators of terrorism.

The Gender Dimension of Terrorism: Knowledge Gap and Theoretical Argument

There are many studies that have been conducted on the phenomena of Terrorism. Despite this, there are still gaps in knowledge that beg analysis, and answers to one of the most important and vexing human (and gender) dimensions of war/conflict, terror and peace. In this connection, this paper shows that the existing frameworks for both analysis and policy interventions in conflict prevention and resolution as well as the existing counter-terrorism measures have not meaningfully addressed the gender question. Pursuant to this view, the feminist perspective, argues that at the level of theory, the dominant international relations paradigms that populate the academy remain gendered; not value free but heavily influenced by a patriarchal ideology that largely equates masculinity with objectivity. This is evident from the scholarly discourses examined below, that reveal the gendered stereotypes that continue to marginalize and distort women's agency in scholarship and public

policy. Similarly, governance structures and processes as they exist at the beginning of the 21st century tend to be patriarchal and highly gendered. In this connection, although there is a steadily increasing data bank on terrorism in general, neither policy makers, civil society nor scholars have paid meaningful attention at both the level of analysis and/or praxis, to the gender aspects of international terrorism in Africa. Thus, the gender information available employs perspectives that reveal the influence of patriarchal ideology. This tends to provide a distorted analysis of the gender dimension of international terrorism and the roles women play, especially as perpetrators, as demonstrated by the case of Samantha Lewthwaite, examined below.

Guided by the feminist perspective this paper therefore argues that women are actors and change agents, whose agency, presence and voice must be made visible in all areas of human endeavor. This visibility also needs to be accompanied by a recognition/appreciation of women's agency as change agents rather than as mere instruments or service providers for male terrorist leaders. By employing the feminist approach the paper seeks to highlight these distortions of women's agency and voice in terrorism activities and to point to the real, as opposed to imagined motivations of women's involvement in terrorism. It also explores and takes into account the gender differential modes of participation in terrorism, while recognizing equality of men and women and their capacities for being not only caring and empathetic, but also violent and exploitative (Eager, 2008). The paper further takes into account that the notion of a homogenous category of women as being non-violent, caring and empathetic is a misnomer. *In this regard, not all women are victims of war or a driving force for peace. Some* are *active actors in warsas active combatants and as terrorists*. The paper also attempts to unmask the stereotyped view of female terrorists as for example, "black (or white) widows"; to deconstruct and unveil gender roles as fluid, contextual and arbitrary (Goldstein, 2001), as well as correct the dominant narrative that propagates the notion that "normal" women are inherently more disposed towards moderation, compromise, and tolerance in their attitudes towards international conflict (Sahliyeh, 2003). In so doing, the paper hopes to contribute to continuing feminist efforts of de-masculinizing acts of violence and aggression and feminization of peace and tranquility.

The paper thus begins with an examination of the scholarly debates on motivations, factors and forces that lead women to be involved in terrorism, including exclusion from governance and decision making processes, oppression and discrimination and the gendered and masculine nature of the recruitment process.Within this context, feminist scholars note the increasing female involvement in terrorist networks and their changing roles within these networks. Unlike the past when women played primarily reproductive roles: birthing,

nurturing and nursing male terrorists, women are increasingly taking up principal roles at the forefront, notably becoming: suicide and homicide bombers, hijackers, and hostage takers. However, most of the same scholarly debates tend to feminize and explain away this show of agency, by arguing that the female terrorist actors are instruments of male patriarchs or "victims of social media, or some extreme condition of deprivation. The paper thus seeks to place into correct perspective female involvement in terrorism and make the case for women's agency on matters of peace and conflict. Furthermore, even when women are victims, for example when experiencing gender based violence, they still remain active participants in both securing peace and designing strategies for survival.

State Centric and Gendered Counter-Terrorism Response
Available evidence points to the fact that the counter-terrorism strategies in place are not only inadequate in respect to low appreciation of the role of non-state actors, but they also tend to be completely gender blind. A clear demonstration of this is evident in the numerous existing counter-terrorist national, regional and international legal frameworks. For example, the OAU Convention on the prevention and combating of terrorism, which was adopted at the 35th OAU Summit in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999, by African states, to provide the regional architecture necessary for preventing and countering acts of terrorism in the region (OAU, 1999), is largely gender blind. While the convention has general provisions to enable states to work towards countering terrorists activities, the gender dimension has been completely overlooked, with only a few phrases in the convention addressing a perpetrator as a "he or she" with no clear indication of the gender disaggregated composition of the terrorist make up characteristics.

In the case of Kenya, The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012 is the main legal framework concerned with counterterrorism efforts. The Act employs supposedly "gender neutral" language. The Act describes terrorist action as one which involves the use of violence against a person; endangers the life of a person other than the one committing the action; creates a serious risk to the health, safety of the public or a section of the public or results in serious damage of property through the use of firearms or explosives (http://frc.go.ke/leg./d/18).Even the criticisms made by human rights non-state actors prior to the coming into force of this Act, did not demonstrate any sensitivity to the gender concerns that should have been factored in by the Act. Civil society was only concerned that the government had developed a national counter-terrorism policy that seemed to be tailored to US demands, and hence argued the terrorist counter-terrorism law should not be dealt with in isolation, but rather as part of a broader initiative to deal with the range of security issues facing Kenya (Mulama, 2007). Neighboring states to Kenya like Tanzania and Uganda also have their own counter-terrorism legislations in place. Just like Kenya's Suppression of Terrorism Act 2012, Uganda's Anti-Terrorism

Act, 2002 and Tanzania's Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 (http://www.imm.go.tz, 2014) are also gender blind raising concerns about the lack of a strategy for addressing the gender dimensions of international terrorism in the region. The tendency by governments to keep gender firmly tied to sex and soft issues, is quite prominent within the field of counter-terrorism (Bedont, 1999).

Another state centric and gender blind instrument for countering terrorism is the *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy* which was adopted by Member States on 8 September 2006. The strategy, which consists of a resolution and an *annexed Plan of Action*(A/RES/60/288), was tailored to enhance national, regional and international efforts to strategically counter terrorism. Some of the practical steps outlined in the resolution range from strengthening state capacity through the involvement of non-state actors to promote and protect human rights within the context of counter-terrorism efforts and to counter terrorist threats, to better coordinating United Nations system's counter-terrorism activities. Although it recognizes the role of non- state actors it does not un-package the specific non-state actors (especially women's NGOs) and state how they would collaborate with the state to counter terrorism. Even where it highlights the way in which non-state actors can assist to bolster state efforts, it does not even mention the role women do and could play in counter-terrorism efforts. This gender insensitivity is even more intriguing, considering that UNSCR 1325 which was endorsed by UN member states has been in place since 2000. The UNSCR 1325, specifically amplifies the role of women in peace and conflict processes, and emphasizes the need for greater and effective participation of women in decision-making on conflict prevention, management, and resolution and post conflict reconstruction. However, this resolution although emphasizing the need for women to be included on peace keeping tables, does not go beyond the depiction of women in an instrumental manner; as a vulnerable group and as a problem to be resolved. In this regard, Shepherd (2008) notes that the resolution focuses on state sponsored armed conflict as opposed to other forms of structural violence such as terrorism. Furthermore, UNSCR 1325 excludes from its discourse structural factors that are an obstacle to women's agency, such as patriarchy, and other types of violence against women that occur outside the war system. Pratt and Ritcher-Devroe (2011) note in this regard, the Resolution's essentialist representation of women, in which they are only viewed as victims of war in need of protection or peace-builders. Pratt and Ritcher-Devroe conclude that if the United Nations language continues to work with 'utopian visions' of women in security, then transformative agency will remain impossible.

The negative responses by states to the adoption of a gender perspective on counter-terrorism in 2009 in the General Assembly indicates just how deeply rooted patriarchal norms and values are in states-craft and hence the resistance

towards the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into legal and institutional structures and processes. Patriarchy mainly needs women to conduct a mopping exercise as an aftermath of war and violent conflicts. In this case, after terrorist incidents the institutional response and recognition of women is only in connection with the role women play at community level post conflict peace processes. State response also depicts women as a showcase category of protected subjects (Charleswooth, 2008). Therefore, the most prominent counter-terrorism narrative revolves around two main actors, the rogue terrorist against the just male warrior. This narrative relies on images and perceptions of the female mother, child or victim who require protection. Such images of women placed side by side with the gendered image of the Muslim terrorist, are concurrent with ideas that revolve around the sexual vulnerability of women rather than those highlighting female participation, empowerment or agency against terrorist acts. These perceptions legitimize the denial of women's agency and voice and their right to participate in matters of international terrorism. As Charlesworth observes in regard to the media response following the September 11 terrorist attack: *"Women were depicted as heavenly rewards for terrorists or as victims of the attack, preferably widows of murdered men, rather than focusing on bringing to the fore the women who themselves worked daily in the twin towers or in the rescue services."* She further notes that women in the armed services and firefighting teams were also conspicuously invisible (Charlesworth, 2008).

Women as perpetrators of International Terrorism

"Traditionally, women have been perceived as victims of violence rather than as perpetrators. Yet they are now taking a leading role in conflicts by becoming terrorists and, specifically, suicide bombers—using their bodies as human detonators." (Bloom, 2012)

As this quote suggests, there is a general misconception that only men engage in acts of terrorism. And yet, female involvement in perpetration of terrorism is neither new nor recent. One of the first documented cases in the history of women's involvement in terrorist activities dates back to 1881, when a female member of a radical revolutionary group at the time known as the People's Will, was named as the key mastermind in the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881. Although most perpetrators of terrorism worldwide remain men, women are increasingly becoming more involved in terrorist attacks. It has become increasingly evident that women are not only victims of terrorism and counterterrorism measures, but may also be volitional actors in perpetrating acts of terrorism. Furthermore, emerging research shows that globally, the percentage of females in armed combat ranges from between 10% to 30% of the total combatants. Further still, between 1985 and 2006, over 220 women engage in suicide attacks, constituting about 15% of the total suicide attacks worldwide. In 2007, there were eight instances of female suicide bombing in Iraq, and by August

2008, 27 more female suicide bombers gave up their lives in support of the terrorism (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011).

Triggers of Female Involvement in Terrorism: Scholarly but gendered debates

"If we are to comprehend more fully the role of women as terrorists, we must recognize that women comprise a self-conscious, dynamic sector of our society which often perceives itself as an oppressed majority – a majority oppressed not only because of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin but also because of sex" (Georges-Abeyie, 1983)

The idea of female participation in terrorist activities continues to baffle both scholars and policymakers as it defies the logic of patriarchally defined roles of women as peace-makers, life-givers, nurturers and care takers. Though scholars are divided on the factors and forces that explain female involvement in terrorist activities, *most seem to suggest thatwomen are not volitional actors but "victims of circumstances"* which lead them to terrorism. Some argue that women are recruited into terrorist activities through "an appeal to ideology, coercion using physical and emotional distress, leveraging family relationships, causing dishonor or shame, and conducting internet campaigns". In this respect, it is argued that terrorists understand society's social, political and economic organization and use the psychosocial positioning of women as vertical transmitters of morals and family values (Byrd and Decker, 2013) to involve them in terrorism. Other scholars assert that women's engagement in terrorism derives from socio-cultural variables such as marginalization, social dislocation, and alienation, which drive women into terrorism in order to: earn a living, gain respect or acquire social status, isolation caused by cultural norms and practices, emigration, conversion to certain religions and criminal behavior. Sageman (2014) for example, takes the view that terrorist groups recruit women by employing one of three approaches: i) *top-down, ii) horizontal and iii) bottom-up.* In regard to the *top-down approach,* terrorist organizations actively recruit female members by approaching them. The PKK (women joint terrorist) for instance actively approaches Kurdish women with promises of freedom and protection, while employing slogans such as 'liberating women, liberating Kurdistan'. In addition, religious terrorists in Pakistan target young girls through *Madrassas* (Religious School), and use them to exercise control over their families through the radicalized girls. The advent of information technologies especially the internet and its widespread use and accessibility to people from all walks of life, has resulted in the shrinking of time, space and distance, thus facilitating the expansion and connectedness of terrorists networks globally. Thus, the 21st Century terrorists conduct their campaigns, recruitment and other terrorist actions through the internet's social media. The scholars note in this regard that there are a number of websites dedicated to instructing women on the

terrorist activities increase the likelihood of terrorist networks utilizing female participants as their instruments to perpetrate terrorist acts.

The scholarly debates reviewed above share one running theme: that women join terrorist organizations for varied reasons but in most cases, not as volitional actors but as reluctant (victim) actors, driven to terrorism by either pressure or influence of male associates or extreme socio-economic or political circumstances beyond their control. Little attention is given to the possibility that women as autonomous actors, decide on their own volition, to join terrorist networks, driven by the same motivations as men, for national, political and human rights causes, as triggers for engaging in terrorist activities (Cunningham, 2003).

Media Portrayal of the Female Terrorist

Some sections of the media, through their portrayal of the female terrorist, tend to legitimize and reinforce the patriarchal mindsets and stereotyping of women prevalent in political and academic discourse. This gendered portrayal views female terrorist actors, as irrational, hysterical, hyper-feminine, masculine (Bielby, 2006), sexual deviants or fanatical and cruel perpetrators of violence. These portrayals according to Sternadori (2007) fall into four main categories: *naïve, defenseless victims* (Galvin, 1993); *failed wives and mothers* (Dickey, 2005); *sexual deviants* (Tremlett, 2014) *and ruthless aggressive perpetrators of violence* (Gentry, 2007). As Patkin (2004) rightly put it, "... *media representations of female terrorists consciously seek out alternate explanations behind women's participation in terror in a way that does not seem paralleled in the coverage of male suicide bombers, whose official ideological statements appear to be taken at face value*".

International Terrorism in the Horn of Africa: The gendered media portrayal of Samantha Lewthwaite

The Horn of Africa sub-region has indeed been dubbed as the most vulnerable to radicalism and extremism, especially international terrorism in Africa. Kenya and Somalia have been identified among the countries in the Horn of Africa region that are predisposed to terrorist activities, and are said to be the most vulnerable to terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa (Bashir, 2008). Rosand et al (2007) concur and attribute this to a number of factors including, severe civil and interstate conflicts, weak governance, and statelessness, poverty, political isolation, porous borders, which combined increase the vulnerability of the region to the growth of radical Islamic extremism. Since 1998, terrorist attacks have been on the rise in the Horn of Africa and in particular in Kenya and Somalia. Kenya has experienced the largest number of terrorist incidents and the trend is on the rise. In fact, following its military intervention into Somalia in October 2011 in pursuit of the *Al-Shaabab* Terrorists that had incessantly attacked Kenya, there has been a sharp spike in the number of terrorist incidents within the country (Wright, 2006). In Somalia, more

than two decades of civil war, has created insecurity, crisis of governance and loss of legitimate authority of the state. Within this context, violence perpetrated by the *Al-Shaabab* terrorist organization, continues to cause insecurity in both Somalia and the region.

In Kenya and Somalia specifically, a growing number of women have been involved in terrorist activities including the planning, training, financing, information dissemination and other forms of perpetration of terrorist acts. In Somalia, two major suicide attacks in 2012, are said to have been spearheaded by women working with A*l-Shaabab* (Nantulya, 2013). These attacks led to the death of the Transitional Federal Government's interior minister, and two other prominent government officials (Nantulya, 2013). It was also reported that another young female suicide bomber killed six people in Mogadishu on *Al-Shaabab's* orders. As elsewhere, such involvement has been aided by globalization and information technology.

The 21 September 2013 Westgate terror attack in Nairobi that killed at least 72 people, a number of whom were foreigners, is believed to have been planned and headed by a female terrorist, Samantha Lewthwaite. This claim was further supported by accounts from a number of the hostages who managed to escape (Nantulya, 2013). Furthermore, *Al-Shaabab*, the terrorist organization that took responsibility for the atrocious act, actually praised Samantha Lewthwaite online for a job well done, following the terrorist attack at the Westgate shopping mall (Nantulya, 2013).

Lewthwaite and Gendered Media Portrayal

Sjoberg notes that the socially constructed meaning of femininity and masculinity defines women by their ability to have children. The motherhood role is then used to frame female terrorist activity. A good example to illustrate this argument is the case of Samantha Lewthwaite. In almost all media depictions of her, the writers and reporters tend to cast her in terms of her motherhood role and hence refer to her as 'the mother of three children' or 'the mother of four' among others. The Daily Telegraph (Planz, 2013) for example, in an interview with a police officer in which the paper was seeking information on Samantha, is quoted as having observed that "Samantha Lewthwaite is one of the names in our records. She had 'three children' with her..." Similarly, Samantha's father was also quoted as saying, "I cannot believe she would be involved in something like this and be there with 'the children'..." To amplify this image of Samantha, the newspaper posted some pictures of her posing with her young child and husband and her newborn child. In addition, the Sun's cover page on the day following the 7/7 London bombings, posted a large picture of Samantha Lewthwaite cradling her second child in a motherly gesture. The caption at the bottom of the picture read: "He

kissed 'our child' goodbye then went off to blow up King's Cross." This media portrayal of her role as a nurturer and life giver, seems intended to legitimize patriarchy by deflecting attention away from her role as a powerful agent of international terrorism. This narrative further depicts Lewthwaite the female terrorist, as a domesticated terrorist, thereby downplaying the violence of the terrorist act itself. In other words, according to this narrative, although women may be terrorists, they do not pose much of a threat because they are motivated by their nurturing instincts as women. Such ideas and accounts of female terrorists in the media have the effect of limiting the role of female terrorists to the private sphere, thereby reinforcing the patriarchally determined traditional gendered norms.

Another equally distorted media image of Samantha Lewthwaite, is as the "white widow" and a as a sexual deviant with multiple relationships with men. In this connection, several articles highlighted the number of husbands she has had and how 'quickly' she moves on to another upon the death of one. In the Guardian (June, 2014) for instance, the writer states that "for a while, she condemned his attack (her first husband's suicide attack at King's Cross), but by 2008, just three years after his death, she was in 'her search for a new husband', and was expressly looking for a jihadist – and found one--He (the second husband) has since been thought to have died while on a terrorist mission, and latest reports suggest Lewthwaite may have made 'a third match'. Another newspaper, the Mail Online, quotes an excerpt from a BBC interview that claimed that "Lewthwaite agreed to marry Salim because she wanted a young man of a different race, preferably the black race, who was very handsome and strong in Muslim faith." Such accounts of Samantha portray her as a cold-hearted "white widow" who has no qualms about moving from one man to the next following their death. According to Gentry and Sjoberg (Gentry, 2007), such gendered narratives are intended to portray violent women as wayward, dysfunctional or possessing a perverted sexuality. In such cases, female sexuality is highlighted as an underlying explanation for female violence. By dubbing Lewthwaite as the 'White Widow', the media was portraying her in a similar manner to 'black widow'- the term used in Chechnya to describe the Chechen female terrorists who took part in bombings and assaults following the death of their husbands (Belfast Telegraph, March, 2012). The 'white' part of the name is in reference to her ethnicity. Even some *Al-Shaabab* postings on the internet have described Lewthwaite as the 'white sister'. The use of such nicknames is not only derogatory to women but also serves to place such women in an "abnormal" class of their own-the class of ruthless female terrorists who are social deviants that have failed to live up to the expectations of society.

Resilience of Patriarchy
The above review of the scholarly debate and media portrayal on women, participation in terrorism reaffirms my overall argument that International relations

discourse and action remains gendered and highly influenced by patriarchal ideologies. As in other areas of governance in public life, patriarchy is deeply rooted in the terrorist structures and hence there is really no tangible evidence that demonstrates that women's participation in terrorist activities lead to the transformation and humanization of the war system. In other words, the active participation of women in terrorist activities does not necessarily challenge or transform the underlying patriarchal values and norms engrained in the terrorist structures and processes. Beyler concurs and asserts that, "*It is mostly men who govern this infrastructure . . . . Women are rarely involved in the higher echelons of the decision-making process of these groups. Women may volunteer or might be coerced to conduct a murderous strike, but the woman's role is ultimately dictated by the patriarchal hierarchy that rules Islamic societies and its terrorist groups*" (Beyler, 2006). Beyler concludes that the emergence of female terrorists cannot and should not be construed as the emancipation or liberation of women, especially if used in the Western sense of the word (Farhana, 2003). Other scholars like Karla J. Cunningham (2003), Miranda Alison (2004), Caron Gentry (2004) and Jessica West (2004) emphasize female agency in terrorist activities but do not provide any evidence to show that their narratives view this agency as autonomous and volitional and whether such agency can meaningfully challenge patriarchy and masculinity in terrorist structures and processes.

Countering Terrorism in the Horn: Women and Non-State Actors
The gender factor in counter-terrorism measures is severely underreported and often disregarded by both scholars and governments.

The role that women can and do play in curbing and preventing terrorism outweigh the role they play in perpetrating it. Women are important actors against terror, as well as an instrument for peace. Women's role in other arenas of peace building and peacemaking especially in post conflict societies is well documented in many studies. However, the role of women in preventing violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism has hardly been documented. In the few documented cases, women are depicted as basically torturers. For example, Fletcher and Stover note that where women have been actors as counter-terrorist agents of the State, they have demonstrated the same type patriarchal mindset as men. They note in this respect that female guards and interrogators in some cases use counter-terrorism management techniques, in which they employ gender (feminized) coercion methods (Schmidt-Furlow Report, 2012) to interrogate male Muslim prisoners. The female interrogators use their bodies as an interrogation technique to coerce compliance of male Muslim terrorist prisoners, by for example, initiating physical contact to interrupt the prisoners during their prayers, which then would first require performing cleansings, as Muslims cannot pray after physical contact with females (Stover, 2009). The rationale of using this method of coercion and interrogation, derives from the belief that Arabs and Muslims only

understand force and that their biggest weakness is shame and humiliation in the form of being 'feminized' (Zurbriggen, 2008) De-masculinization and feminization of the subject is thus used as a tool of humiliation and extorting information from the terrorist suspects, in societies that are deeply rooted in patriarchal norms. What emerges from this example is that, even when women are portrayed as counterterrorist actors, their role remains instrumental and subordinate to a higher authority. Furthermore, patriarchal images of femininity and masculinity shape the strategies they employ in counterterrorist action.

Non-state Actors and Counter-Terrorism

The counterterrorism mechanisms and strategies have also remained weak partly due to government failure to collaborate with and recruit non-state actors in civil society and the market, as allies rather than adversaries in developing a united and cohesive strategy for effective war against terrorism. Instead, the relationship between the state and non-state actors has tended to be antagonistic rather than collaborative, thus rendering both actors weak and unable to devise effective counter-terrorism strategies. This increases vulnerability to terrorist manipulation.

The Civil Society actors, especially those working in the areas as of gender, peace and conflict, governance, human rights and media, could become key agents, players and reformers in defining and shaping counter- terrorism response strategies.

For example in Kenya, women human rights and peace building NGOs such as, FIDA (K), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI-Africa), Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO), the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK), the Coalition on Violence against Women (COVAW), and the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) could work together with governments to implement at the national level, UNSCR 1325 and develop joint post-conflict programs and activities. The reality however is that governments have not demonstrated political will to implement UNSCR 1325, and women's voices still remain insufficiently heard at the decision-making platforms, their needs and interests are not factored in and women are rarely represented among those making decisions to choose war over diplomacy.

The above notwithstanding, it is increasingly acknowledged that women like men, have the potential to play a major role in combating terrorism. But this can only happen if they are actively and consciously involved in decision-making processes, intelligence efforts and community initiatives being implemented to deter extremism and radicalization. For women to become a strategic asset in combating terrorism, they also need an enabling environment that adequately responds to their socio-economic welfare and other needs that drive some to terrorist activities. Terrorist movements are increasingly taking advantage of the failure to tap into

this potential. In this regard, women's specific capacities, experience, knowledge and talents that can be utilized to make a vital contribution to a stable and secure society need to be investigated and documented, through systematic research. Such research would help identify under what social context and conditions some women could have a significant impact in preventing children from joining or getting exposed to extremist activity. They therefore can make effective agents of counter-terrorism within the context of their socially acquired maternal roles and capacity to influence and dissuading their children away from terrorism.

Some scholars assert that strengthening relationship ties within the family unit can serve as a credible counterterrorism strategy that is a non-violent alternative to extremism and terrorism. Bjørgo for example, notes the importance of avoiding a 'social vacuum' when a terrorist turns away from terrorism and repents (Bjorgo, 2008). In his study of what moves right-wing extremists to de-radicalize, he explains that upholding family commitments like getting a boyfriend or girlfriend outside that environment, are some of the strongest motivations for abandoning a terrorist organization. Good programs such as those that facilitate getting employment or getting married are all geared towards rehabilitation of extremists and terrorists (Boucek, 2008).These programs adopt 'softer' strategies rather than the military and police approach, which has been adopted by many states especially following the 2001 September 11 terrorist attack. The programs include education and dialogue, poverty eradication policies and increase in aid. In these programs, violent and radical terrorists and extremists get rehabilitated, for instance through education combined with religious texts. They are also incorporated into credible social networks and discouraged from involving themselves with their former extremist affiliations.

Conclusion

This paper has examined and analyzed the gender dimension of terrorism, paying special attention to the narratives inspired by patriarchal ideologies, that distort women's agency in terrorist activities and create the impression that only "abnormal " women engage in terrorist action. The possibility that perfectly normal women can independently and on their own volition decide to join terrorist networks, is silenced by the dominant discourse that insists on depicting the female engaged in terrorism as a social deviant or a vulnerable victim of circumstances.

The institutional and legal frameworks designed to counter terrorism are equally gendered, as is the media portrayal of female terrorists. Under these circumstances, moving forward, I suggest the employment of a feminist perspective in analyzing issues of gender in international relations. Further, strategies to combat terrorism must be guided by a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental causes that drive human beings to carry out suicidal actions that cause death to themselves and

many innocent people. Hard militaristic approaches alone have to date been proven to be quite ineffective in combating the growing intensity of the terrorism menace. Effective responses to terrorism require multifaceted strategies that seek to understand and positively harness the various roles played by both state and non-state actors /stakeholders, especially the female gender. For women to play an effective role in combating terrorism there has to be a true shift that embraces gender lenses in counter-terrorism response, peace, security and development. The social relativism that pays little attention to the contribution of women in decision making hinder the application of effective counter-terrorism strategies and loses women as important actors against terror and promoters of peace. Furthermore, there is need to critically analyze the impact of various global changes such as the swift expansion of globalization; explosion of information technology and the widening gap in the distribution of power and resources, as well as the extent to which these have shaped the rapidly multiplying modes of terrorist behavior and acceleration of terrorist and counterterrorist actors and actions.

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