

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

TARGETING A FEMALE AUDIENCE:

AN UNDERSTANDING OF MUSLIM WOMEN RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

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## 1.1 Introduction

This research examines how terrorist organizations, in particular Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) target Muslim women for recruitment. The discussion includes propaganda strategies used in *Al-Shamikhha* magazine, which entice, shame, and or appeal to Muslim women's Islamic sense of duty<sup>1</sup>; *sharia*'s affect on Muslim women and gender roles; Muslim women situated in the 'war on terror', in which media's portrayal on Islam makes them more visible; the psychological implications recruitment has on Muslim women;<sup>2</sup> and strategies Western governments should implement to encourage change in Muslim women to deter them and their offspring to join *jihad*. The main question is how to change the mindset of Muslim women so that they do not become radicalized.

The analysis includes counterinsurgency strategies to prevent the recruitment of women and to provide a better understanding of Muslim women. In order to gain an understanding of how AQAP targets women, there are some issues to examine. Al Qaeda's use of propaganda strategies, its influence on its Muslim population impacts recruitment. Understanding these propaganda strategies may be the first step in changing the hearts and minds of the populace. Just like terrorist organizations reach out through grass roots efforts for support for the cause, so must counterinsurgency efforts mirror this by using the same strategies, which include multimedia outreach community programs, including technology based environments, in which, much of today's recruitment efforts are conducted. This, in combination with traditional community outreach programs provides a foundation for counterinsurgency strategies, which should endure Islamist extremists' propaganda influences.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to learn how AQAP's uses propaganda towards Muslim women's attitudes and reactions to the propaganda, as well as the functional role that the propaganda plays in AQAP's terrorist organization. The focus is on Muslim women and the communities they reside

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<sup>1</sup> Some sections of this research was presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual IAFIE Conference: Expanding the Frontiers of Intelligence Education and a portion of the research was submitted for publication in the *Journal of Strategic Security*, Volume 6, Article 4, *Targeting a Female Audience: American Muslim Women's Perceptions of al-Qaida Propaganda*. The complete Al-Shamkhia's translated transcript is presented in this research.  
<sup>2</sup> This research was presented in DSS 5303, June 2, 2014, with the permission of instructor to include in my future research for thesis. "The Recruitment of Muslim Women into Terrorist Organizations."

in. AQAP's propaganda includes the use of magazines in particular, AQAP *Al-Shamikhia* magazine—a translated section from Arabic to English was used.<sup>3</sup> AQAP, propaganda use on the female Muslim population may provide crucial elements that are missing in examining the female jihadi, a growing concern worldwide.

This examination can provide some insight on the influential causes that can lead to the radicalization of Muslim women. This research can also clarify misconceptions about Muslim women that many Americans may have. Given the nature of this research, this particular demographic of targeted Muslims for propaganda use by AQAP may provide a more complete picture concerning the interactions within a Muslim community.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

AQAP propaganda towards Muslim women is analyzed using the following scholars to evaluate the material. Propaganda scholarship is used to examine the propaganda because it provides a foundation and a rationale for this issue. An examination of the review of literature includes the seminal works by Leonard Doob's *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* in which he discusses the psychology and techniques of propaganda.<sup>4</sup> Of particular interest is his section on the "psychology of living people" in which, he discusses attitudes including the organization of attitudes, social values and the psychology of suggestion. William Hummel and Keith Huntress' *The Analysis of Propaganda* provide an analysis of propaganda in particular that of the media of propaganda and the influence that media forms in people,<sup>5</sup> which include propaganda in action, the rhetoric of propaganda, the evaluation of the rhetorical devices and the logic in propaganda. Jacques Ellul's *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* discusses that propaganda is a "sociological phenomenon" and that it "exists and thrives in our technological society."<sup>6</sup> He warns that propaganda is a greater threat to the human race than any other form of

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<sup>3</sup> Some sections of this research was presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual IAFIE Conference: Expanding the Frontiers of Intelligence Education and a portion of the research was submitted for publication in the *Journal of Strategic Security*, Volume 6, Article 4, *Targeting a Female Audience: American Muslim Women's Perceptions of al-Qaida Propaganda*. The complete Al-Shamkhia's translated transcript is presented in this research.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard W. Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1935.

<sup>5</sup> William Hummel and Keith Huntress, *The Analysis of Propaganda*, New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Translated by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, Introduction by Konrad Keller, New York: Random House, 1965.

advertising.<sup>7</sup> Psychological warfare's ideas by Daniel Lerner's *Propaganda in War and Crisis* use of propaganda in war and crisis also, contribute to the conversation.<sup>8</sup>

A good foundation on the history of propaganda is the historical work by Phillip Taylor's *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era* who provides a detailed account of past propaganda to the present.<sup>9</sup> Taylor breaks down the historical information on propaganda and a good overview of how propaganda has evolved over time.<sup>10</sup> Several works on terrorism provide a good background, which helps examine and understand the terrorist mind and how the idea of *jihād* may effect how the propaganda is presented to radicalize the target audience. Walter Laqueur's *The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology* provides a good historical overview on terrorist activity throughout history.<sup>11</sup> Bruce Hoffman's *Inside Terrorism* provides a more current historical overview of terrorist activity, including sections on Al Qaeda, religion and terrorism, suicide and terrorism, new media and the shaping of public opinion, and the modern terrorist mind-set.<sup>12</sup> John Horgan's *The Psychology of Terrorism* work helps "explore ways in which our knowledge of psychology and psychological processes might inform and improve our understanding of terrorism."<sup>13</sup> Further works that are included in this research have similar ideas that will contribute to this section.<sup>14</sup>

Several works address the making of a terrorist and how propaganda efforts make this possible

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<sup>7</sup> Other sections of interest include the sociological conditions, the psychological effects of propaganda and the socio-political effects. Of particular interest to this research is the section on the effects on the structure of public opinion.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Lerner, ed., *Propaganda in War and Crisis*, New York: Arno P., 1972. The book is a collection of writings by different authors on the use of propaganda in war and crisis (psychological warfare)

<sup>9</sup> Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander L. George, *Propaganda Analysis: A Study of Inferences Made from Nazi Propaganda in World War II*, New York: Row, Peterson, RAND Corporation., 1959. This work examines propaganda analysis and the study of action. Of particular interest is propaganda analysis and the control structure of the propaganda organization as well at propaganda analysis and the study of communication. James, E. Combs, and Dan Nimmo, *The New Propaganda: The Dictatorship of Palave in Contemporary Politics*, New York and London: Longman, 1993. This work examines the emergence of the new propaganda. Of particular interest are the sections on the plural cultures of the new propaganda and the analysis and critique of political propaganda. Yahya R. Kamalipour, and Nancy Snow, eds. Forward by Ben H. Bagdikian, *War, Media, and Propaganda: A Global Perspective*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004. This volume is a collection of works, which presents a "multifaceted analysis of the consequences of war, media, and propaganda from diverse global perspectives." This volume also analyzes the three themes of the book using academic and nonacademic perspectives.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Laqueur, ed., *The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology*, New York: Meridan, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, New York: UP Columbia, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Pippa Norris, Montague Kern, and Marion Just, eds., *Framing Terrorism: The News Media, the Government, and the Public*, New York and London: Routledge, 2003. This collection of works examines how media frames terrorism and its effects. It looks at the concept of terrorism, techniques, targets, goals, groups and state terrorism and theories of framing. James J. F. Forest, ed., *The Making of a Terrorist: Recruitment, Training, and Root Causes. Volume I: Recruitment*, Westport, CT and London: Praeger Security Counsel, 2006. This collection of works examines the places and means of terrorist recruitment, which describes how terrorists use American popular culture to influence young Muslims; the social and psychological dimensions examines how terrorists recruit children and women; and ideological dimensions of terrorism examines the "perspectives on ideologies" that emphasize terrorist recruitment. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, New York: Columbia UP., 2002. This work is a detailed account of Al Qaeda's network on a global scale. It provides good background on this organization.

and provide a good insight of why propaganda works. Marc Sageman's works *Understanding Terror Networks* examine understanding terror networks in which "aims the theoretical insights and practical applications for global security;" and *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* terror networks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> His second work examines Al Qaeda terrorism strategies, and of special interest, is the section on radicalization and the rise of leaderless jihad. Further contribution by Laurent Murawiec's *The Mind of Jihad* discusses the mind of jihad and the leaderless jihad as that of "the contemporary jihad as a cult of violence and power."<sup>16</sup> Further works on radicalization are included in the discussion.<sup>17</sup>

The review of literature also examines how Al Qaeda and its affiliates use propaganda as a communication tool.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, the concept posed by Joseph S. Tuman's *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism* work on "terrorism as a communication process with rhetorical dimensions" is included when examining AQAP propaganda and the rhetorical appeals. Tuman states "to understand how the communication process operates and constructs terrorism for us (and by us), we must examine terrorism as persuasion—and assess its rhetorical dimensions."<sup>19</sup> This section of his work is of particular interest because he examines the different types of audiences that the communication process

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<sup>15</sup> Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century*. Philadelphia: UP Pennsylvania, 2008; and *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: UP Pennsylvania, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Laurent Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad*, Cambridge: UP Cambridge, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Adam Lankford, *Human Killing Machines: Systematic Indoctrination in Iran, Nazi Germany, Al Qaeda, and Abu Ghraib*, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Lexington, 2009. This work examines how specific strategies such as "recruitment, training, isolation and dehumanization are used to condition and indoctrinate members." Alice Lo Cicero and Samuel J. Sinclair, *Creating Young Martyrs: Conditions that Make Dying in a Terrorist Attack Seem Like a Good Idea*, Westport, CT and London: Praeger Security International, 2008. This work examines why terrorism is a significant threat to the world peace and that it will continue for a long time. Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges*, Washington, D.C. : United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006. This work examines terrorist use of the "Internet for the purpose of fund-raising, recruitment, training and instruction and propaganda and psychological warfare." Dan O'Hari, Robert L. Heath, Kevin J. Ayotte, and Gerald R. Ledlow, eds., *Terrorism: Communication and Rhetorical Perspectives*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton, 2008. This collection of work examines the rhetorical challenges and communication perspectives on terrorism. Of particular interest is the section on contexts and professional communicators. The two volumes on Al Qaeda by Angel Rabasa, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, Heather S. Gregg, Theodore W. Karasik, Kevin A. O'Brien, and William Rosenau, *Beyond Al-Qaeda. Part 1: The Global Jihadist Movement*, CA: RAND Corp., 2006. *Beyond Al-Qaeda. Part 2: The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe*, Movement. CA: RAND Corp., 2006, provide a solid background and discussion on Al Qaeda and its movements world wide.

<sup>18</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Lasswell's Model: Communication Theory*, <http://communicationtheory.org/lasswells-model/>. This model is about process of communication and its function to society, According to Lasswell there are three functions for communication: surveillance of the environment, correlation of components of society, and cultural transmission between generation. Lasswell model suggests the message flow in a multicultural society with multiple audiences. The flow of message is through various channels. And also this communication model is similar to Aristotle's communication model. In this model, the communication component who refers the research area called "Control Analysis," says what is refers to "Content Analysis," in which channel refers to "Media Analysis," To," To Whom is refers to "Audience Analysis" With What Effect is refers to "Effect Analysis."

<sup>19</sup> Tuman, Joseph S. *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010, 37.

goes through. Besides incorporating these works, a long list of academic journals, newspaper and magazine articles, reports, think tank discussions, and blog postings contribute to the discussion.<sup>20</sup>

Also, included in the literature review are women scholars who specialize in women's global issues, including women and terrorism studies and feminist studies. Among these scholars are Mia Bloom, and the research she conducted in *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*.<sup>21</sup>

#### 1.4 Methodology

The methodology theoretical framework used for this project includes the following authors to analyze AQAP's, propaganda towards Muslim women. Jowett and O'Donnell's *Propaganda and Persuasion* model, which uses a 10-step plan of propaganda analysis is incorporated as the method to analyze Al Qaeda's propaganda towards Muslim women.<sup>22</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell's 10- step plan on how to analyze propaganda incorporates the major elements of propaganda:

A 10-step plan of propaganda analysis is identification of ideology and purpose, identification of context, identification of the propagandist, investigation of the structure of the propaganda organization, identification of the target audience, understanding of media utilization techniques, analysis of special techniques to maximize effect, analysis of audience reaction, identification and analysis of counterpropaganda, and completion of an assessment and evaluation.<sup>23</sup>

Jowett and O'Donnell state that "propaganda is a deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. Its systematic nature requires longitudinal study of its progress. Because the essence of propaganda is its deliberateness of purpose, considerable investigation is required to find out what the purpose is."<sup>24</sup>

Also, it is important to address AQAP use of cultural and religious symbols to target the Muslim woman and the use of these symbols in its propaganda efforts. Jowett and O'Donnell take in to account the following question while analyzing the propaganda: "To what ends, in the context of the times, does a propaganda agent, working through an organization, reach an audience through the media while using

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<sup>20</sup> For a detailed list on these sources refer to the bibliography.

<sup>21</sup> Among others women scholars include: Tamara Herath. *Women in Terrorism: Case of the LTTE*; R. Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly, *Women as Terrorists: Mothers, Recruiters, and Martyrs*; Janny Groen and Annieke Kranesberg, *Women Warriors for Allah: An Islamic Network in the Netherlands*; and Paige Whaley Eager, *From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists: Women and Political Violence*.

<sup>22</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 269

special symbols to get a desired reaction?”<sup>25</sup> Joseph Tuman’s *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism* discussion on symbolism examines this further.<sup>26</sup> AQAP has targeted Muslim women in its propaganda and believes that these strategies will work on this group, because they are relying in part on public opinion on the content that its magazine generates. Because of the cultural norms Muslim women adhere to, AQAP believes Muslim women will accept the documents presented in the magazine without hesitation, which in turn, will heavily influence public opinion in the Muslim community. Walter Lippman’s *Public Opinion* theories on the formation of “public opinion” are used to examine how AQAP uses public opinion to generate a favorable position.<sup>27</sup> In propaganda the public is limited to full access of a particular event. The event is sometimes concealed or misinformation is used to influence the public:

In order to conduct propaganda there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited, before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he [she] thinks wise or desirable. For while people who have direct access can misconceive what they see, no one else can decide how they shall misconceive it, unless he [she] can decide where they shall look, and at what.<sup>28</sup>

Not only is it important to know what is concealed or misrepresented, it is also important to address the opponents of the propaganda. Jowett and O’Donnell take into account what “if there is opposition to the propaganda, what form does it take, as well as, how successful is the propaganda in achieving its purpose?”<sup>29</sup> It is important to consider the opposition, because when public opinion is divided, then it may be used to counter the other side. The methods used by these authors are an integral part for analyzing and assessing the material in *Al-Shamikha*’s magazine. The data collected from Jowett and O’Donnell’s “How to Analyze Propaganda” provides a way to evaluate the material. The data collected includes perceptions about AQAP propaganda strategies uses of cultural and religious symbols used to target Muslim women, as well as AQAP exploitation of public opinion in Muslim communities.

The research design contains an examination of the propaganda elements that AQAP’s *Al-*

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<sup>25</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006, 270.

<sup>26</sup> Tuman, Joseph S. *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, New York, London: Free Press/Collier-Macmillan, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, “How to Analyze Propaganda.” *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006: 269.

*Shamika* magazine utilizes. Implementing Jowett and O'Donnell's framework for examining AQAP propaganda assists in exploring how AQAP target audience is affected.<sup>30</sup> Effective counter terrorism measures can then be developed to thwart AQAP propaganda strategies against its target audience and make it more difficult for AQAP to be successful in its propaganda efforts.

In addition, because AQAP uses *sharia* law to implement its propaganda strategies in the magazine, AQAP targets its propaganda towards Muslim women, in particular the new generation of women, by using Islamic culture to pressure them into more fundamental beliefs. AQAP *Al-Shamika* magazine, which is distributed by Al Qaeda's affiliated with *Al Fajr Media Centre* and the Women's Media Bureau in the Arabian Peninsula tries to do this by including articles such as "Sharia law that applies to you," "the female martyr," "meeting with a jihad wife," "marrying a jihadist" and "your house is your kingdom." *Al-Shamikha's* magazine implements American advertising methods to promote its ideals.

## **2.1 Propaganda Strategies**

Media has played an important role in propaganda efforts throughout history. Propaganda strategies are most prevalent in times of war, both by state and non-state actors. Al Qaeda has made the most of using propaganda strategies to spread its message and to recruit. AQAP has targeted its propaganda efforts towards Muslim women to assist in its terrorist activities, which has the potential to create long-term effects of further radicalization in Muslim communities worldwide. AQAP uses the Internet along with American advertising techniques to reach its target audience. AQAP has created a magazine, *Al-Shamikha*, tailored towards Muslim women. The goal of the magazine is to generate AQAP support within the female Muslim community.<sup>31</sup>

In recent years, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) realized that its propaganda efforts had not really addressed the Muslim woman. As a result, AQAP closed the gap in its communication

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<sup>30</sup> See [Appendix A](#) for breakdown of each of Jowett and O'Donnell's the ten-step plan for the case study.

<sup>31</sup> Some sections of this research was presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual IAFIE Conference: Expanding the Frontiers of Intelligence Education and a portion of the research was submitted for publication in the *Journal of Strategic Security*, Volume 6, Article 4, *Targeting a Female Audience: American Muslim Women's Perceptions of al-Qaida Propaganda*. The complete *Al-Shamkha's* translated transcript is presented in this research.



efforts to reach as many Muslims as possible with its message; AQAP developed a propaganda campaign specifically geared towards Muslim women. In order to cater to Muslim women, AQAP had to use a different propaganda strategy to attract women to be active participants in its cause. Ironically, AQAP turned to American advertisement approaches, which target specific demographics. The most recent digital media publication geared towards Muslim women, is a magazine with “glossy” pages similar to American magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Elle*. The magazine *Al-Shamikha* “the majestic woman,” launched in March 2011, is published by the Women’s Media Bureau in the Arabian Peninsula. “The magazine is marketed exclusively towards a female jihadi audience.”<sup>32</sup> Although, the magazine received some press and mild attention, mostly by the media, the U.S. has not really evaluated the magazine as a national security issue.<sup>33</sup> But moderate Western Muslims have taken notice and are countering AQAP attempts at recruitment.

Moderate Western Muslims are countering the negative messages, and most notably there are three western-based magazines, whose audiences are Muslim women. These are used for comparison, because the demographics of Western Muslim women read the magazines, which may be a good assessment to distinguish the differences to that of *Al-Shamikha*’s targeted audience. These Western magazines include, U.S. the *Azizah* Magazine, and Canada’s *The Sisters Magazine: The Magazine for fabulous Muslim Women*, all of which provide good insights on the positive elements of Islam and demonstrate how Muslim women use Western advertising to target its Muslim audience in a new direction, by promoting positive non-extremist views on Islam by educating Muslim women about their roles in Islam.<sup>34</sup> Also, most recently, a new magazine an extension of *Sisters: Young Muslimah: A Free*

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<sup>32</sup> Adam Rawnsley, “Jihadi Media Outfit Rolls Out a Terrorist Lady Mag,” *Wired*, March 14, 2011,

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/03/jihadi-media-outfit-rolls-out-a-terrorist-ladymag/> (accessed July 25, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> This was the case when the first *al-Khansaa*, monthly Internet publication for female militants that was hosted by several Islamist Web sites. In *Al Khansa*, the theorists of al Qaeda offer women “a path to reach freedom that would be denied in every other way — using the dominion of religion to oppose the dominion of men,” the Italian secret service report said, quoted in *Washington Times*, “Women Magazine Offer Tips to Terrorists,” (January 17, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> *Azizah* Magazine. U.S.A. <http://www.sisters-magazine.com/index.php>; and *Sisters Magazine: The Magazine for fabulous Muslim Women*. Canada. <http://www.sisters-magazine.com/index.php>

*Online Magazine for Aspiring Muslimahs* has been launched to target young Muslim women, thirteen and older.<sup>35</sup>

In *Figure 1: Magazines* are images of the four magazine covers, three of which are from a Western Muslim point of view.

*Al-Shamikha*'s promotes the following:

- Images on the cover of the magazine send the message that a Muslim woman can adhere to Islamic ways and be a jihadist;
- AQAP sets the parameters in this discourse community by selecting and canalizing in which way Muslim women may behave;
- Calls women to action. “*Al-Shamikha* targets would-be and veteran female supporters of AQAP;
- Articles reflect the radical ideology that AQAP promotes.

Both the U.S. the *Azizah* Magazine, and Canada's *The Sisters* Magazine promote the complete opposite:

- Waging Peace, seeking harmony in the world;
- Does hijab still matter;
- Waging Peace, seeking harmony in the world;
- Does hijab still matter;
- Seeking sanctuary, coming to America as a refugee;
- Examining hijab laws;
- Inspirational women;
- Living our best;
- Female chaplains;
- College life.

The covers and the content of Muslim Western magazines is a good indicator that not all Muslim communities condone violent extremist radical Islamic views as those presented in AQAP *Al-Shamikha*.

This positive overview of Islam is an important aspect as a countermeasure to radicalization. The recent civil unrest in the Middle East, changes of government regimes and the “Arab Spring” has left in its aftermath the lack of strong governments in this region. This has created a vacuum, in which, it is easier for Al Qaeda to re-establish itself by using propaganda strategies in these communities. It is essential for the U.S. to understand the national security implications of AQAP's propaganda strategies towards Muslim women because of the important role women play in a community.

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<sup>35</sup> *Young Muslimah: A Free Online Magazine for Aspiring Muslimahs. Canada.* <http://www.youngmuslimahmagazine.com/>

Figure 1: Magazines



AQAP Al-Shamikha



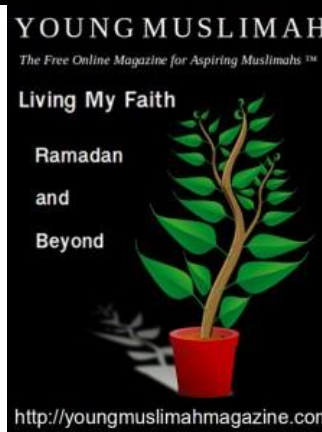
U.S. Azizah



U.S. Azizah



Canada Sisters



Sisters: Young Muslimah



Canada Sisters



Canada Sisters



U.S. Azizah



U.S. Azizah

Twenty-first century technologies provide a more connected global environment and makes it easier to spread propaganda. Propaganda is “a form of communication aimed at influencing the attitude of a community towards some cause or position.”<sup>36</sup> Most of Al Qaeda’s dissemination of propaganda is reliant on electronic media—such as the Internet. Al Qaeda was the first “terrorist group that revolutionized its operations by successfully utilizing information technologies (IT).”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, terrorist groups often include acts of violence to assist them in their propaganda strategies. “Militants have also sought to arouse the consciousness of the masses by carrying out ‘propaganda by the deed,’ that is, violent acts that in their brutality or audaciousness are intended to demonstrate the movement’s intensity and might.”<sup>38</sup> Al Qaeda’s use of media strategy gives it the interface to contact Muslim communities around the world and provides the means for easier access to potential recruits. Some have even argued that Al Qaeda has become the “first guerrilla movement in history to migrate from physical space to cyber space.”<sup>39</sup>

Al Qaeda uses a combination of “written and audiovisual messages that has transcended both technology and literacy barriers.”<sup>40</sup> With the ease of disseminating the magazine via the Internet, it has become a vital recruitment method for Al Qaeda. The “*Inspire* magazine “encourages young Muslims [men] in the West to commit terrorist attacks and publishes step by step directions for ‘homegrown’ terrorists.”<sup>41</sup> Al Qaeda’s strategic use of propaganda is postmodern in character.<sup>42</sup> Al Qaeda networks are located globally and connected digitally. Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was formed in January 2009, when Yemeni and Saudi Arabian branches of Al Qaeda merged under the leadership of Nasir al-Wuhayshi, who

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<sup>36</sup> As quoted in Rebecca A. Keller, Influence Operations and the Internet: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Issue: Legal, Doctrinal, and Policy Challenges in the Cyber World, *Maxwell Paper*, 52: (70). <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/maxwell/mp52.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> *Beyond Al-Qaeda, Part 1: The Global Jihadist Movement*, Rand: Project Air Force. (2006): 17.

<sup>38</sup> Laqueur (1987), pp. 48-49. As cited in *Beyond Al-Qaeda, Part 1: The global Jihadist Movement*, Rand: Project Air Force. (2006): 15.

<sup>39</sup> Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, “Terrorists Turn to Web as Base of Operations,” *Washington Post*, August 7, 2005. As cited in Magnus Ranstrop in “The Virtual Sanctuary of Al-Qaeda and Terrorism in an Age of Globalisation,” (2006), *International Relations and Security in the Digital Age*, London: Routledge, (2007).

<sup>40</sup> *Beyond Al-Qaeda, Part 1: The global jihadist movement*, Rand: Project Air Force. (2006),16.

<sup>41</sup> Cynthia Hodges, “A New Magazine Inspires Female Terrorists,” *Chicago Homeland Security Examiner*, March 15, 2011. <http://www.examiner.com/homeland-security-in-chicago/a-new-magazine-inspires-female-terrorists> (accessed May 5, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> *Beyond Al-Qaeda, Part 1: The global jihadist movement*, Rand: Project Air Force. (2006), 15.

was bin Laden's personal secretary.<sup>43</sup> Both, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, now both deceased, transformed Al Qaeda to connect with the outside world through the Internet and global media. "Harnessing their media shrewdness, they connected with diverse audiences around the world with a constant message. The repetition of Al Qaeda's platform themes and use of 'message projection opportunities' demonstrate a great understanding of human nature, marketing strategy, global media and world politics."<sup>44</sup>

The U.S. and the rest of the world acknowledge that Al Qaeda's use of media and other forms of communication are sophisticated in nature. Some countermeasures that governments take are to remove or block websites and videos to prevent further dissemination of Al Qaeda's propaganda. Much of Al Qaeda's propaganda has been targeted at young men and so much of the literature surrounding Al Qaeda's propaganda techniques have focused on them. However, not much research has been done about how Al Qaeda targets Muslim women and how women may have the potential to play a larger role in Al Qaeda's organization.

## 2.2 Background

The idea of AQAP targeting its propaganda to a particular demographic group of society is nothing new to Al Qaeda. Among Al Qaeda's recruitment strategies is the use of magazines as propaganda tools available in several languages including English in order to reach a wider readership. Scott Stewart, vice president of tactical intelligence for *STRATFOR*, a global intelligence company, says the magazines are "very slick production-wise. It's meant to be appealing especially to younger aspiring *jihadis* in the English-speaking world."<sup>45</sup> *Inspire*, printed in Yemen, specifically targets young men. Magnus Ranstorp, research director at the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies at the Swedish National Defense College, states, "these publications are considered 'Jihadi cool'. These magazines like *Inspire* are published in English to specifically target [twenty-something] jihadists with European or American

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<sup>43</sup> *Anti-Defamation League (ADL)*, "The Christmas day bomber: Al Qaeda in Yemen's plot against Americans: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," November 8, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Carl J. Ciovacco, "The Contours of Al-Qaeda's Media Strategy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 32: 853-875, 2009, Routledge: 868, doi: 10.1080/10576100903182377 (accessed May 20, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> As cited in Mona Alami, "Al Qaeda Using Magazines to Spread Message," *USA Today: Special*, April 20, 2011, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-04-19-al-qaeda-magazines.htm> (accessed July 25, 2011).

citizenship.”<sup>46</sup> *Inspire* has received Western attention for the type of information that it disseminates. U.S. officials have expressed concern over the success of *Inspire* as a recruitment tool. However, U.S. officials have not placed the same scrutiny concerning *Al-Shamikha* magazine. Within the first few months of its publication, the magazine drew some attention mostly from media outlets that ran the stories on Al Qaeda’s new magazine targeted towards women. The media provides some insight on the publication of Al Qaeda’s magazine. Both the *Huffington Post* and *USA Today* posted stories.

The *Huffington Post*, (March 2011), writes, *Al-Shamikha* magazine's preamble:

Because women constitute half of the population - and one might even say that they are the population since they give birth to the next generation – the enemies of Islam are bent on preventing the Muslim woman from knowing the truth about her religion and her role, since they know all too well what would happen if women entered the field of jihad.... The nation of Islam needs women who know the truth about their religion and about the battle and its dimensions and know what is expected of them.<sup>47</sup>

*USA Today* compares *Al-Shamikha* to Western magazines. “‘Al Qaeda uses magazines to spread [its] message’ discusses that ‘*Al-Shamikha*, the Al Qaeda version of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, mixes beauty and fashion tips with articles encouraging women to push their husbands on the path of martyrdom.”<sup>48</sup>

Women play an important role in Western countries. Western advertising approaches understand the importance of targeting the female population—from their shopping habits to running their households.

Women play similar roles in other countries. Al Qaeda has discovered that women can play an operational role in its terrorists’ activities, so by making terrorist activities attractive to women, Al Qaeda has managed to capitalize on this opportunity by using a magazine tailored towards women. “By catering to women, Al Qaeda’s publication [encourages women] to play an operational role (in terrorist attacks), which is largely ignored, [including how their cultural roles affects this], specific society.”<sup>49</sup> Women have

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<sup>46</sup> Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, “Terrorists Turn to Web as Base of Operations,” *Washington Post*, August 7, 2005. As cited in Magnus Ranstorp in “The Virtual Sanctuary of Al-Qaeda and Terrorism in an Age of Globalisation,” (2006), *International Relations and Security in the Digital Age*, London: Routledge, (2007).

<sup>47</sup> *Huffington Post: Style*. “Al-Shamikha, Al Qaeda Women’s Magazine, Launces: Report,” March 14, 2011, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/14/al-shamikha-al-qaeda-womens-magazine\\_n\\_835572.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/14/al-shamikha-al-qaeda-womens-magazine_n_835572.html) (accessed August 3, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Mona Alami, “Al Qaeda Using Magazines to Spread Message, *USA Today: Special*, April 20, 2011, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-04-19-al-qaeda-magazines.htm> (accessed July 25, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, as cited in Mona Alami, “Al Qaeda Using Magazines to Spread Message, *USA Today: Special*, April 20, 2011, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-04-19-al-qaeda-magazines.htm> (accessed July 25, 2011).

always been the cornerstone to democratic societies because of the significant role women play in community building.

The radicalization of Muslim women creates an impact on Muslim communities. Generally, women tend to play an important role in the family structure; this is especially true in Muslim families. AQAP realizes that families hold the fabric of a society together and play an intricate role in that society. Women are usually the main care-takers and are the ones who rear children and help to mold them into what they become as adults. The saying that “it takes a village to raise a child” is definitely true. If Muslim women buy into AQAP newest propaganda efforts, what type of future children will Muslim communities then be raising? Legitimate Middle East governments struggle with terrorist groups infiltrating their communities and radicalizing the next generation. They are not alone in their efforts to prevent further radicalization. Western countries have realized that radicalization of communities is a global issue to be addressed not only at the national level but also at the local level.

The United States continues to address the idea of radicalization in American communities.<sup>50</sup>

The new focus and resources that President [Obama] has devoted to this fight, the al Qaeda leadership in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan is hunkered down and it’s harder than ever for them to plot and launch attacks against our country. Because we’re helping other countries build their capacity to defend themselves, we’re making it harder for al Qaeda’s adherents to operate around the world.<sup>51</sup>

U.S. efforts in American communities are part of this strategy.

We’re confronting the broader challenge of violent extremism generally—including the political, economic and social forces that can sometimes lead people to embrace al Qaeda’s murderous ideology. This includes challenging and undermining the twisted ideology—the political propaganda—that al Qaeda uses to recruit, radicalize and mobilize its supporters to violence; and uses propaganda methods to include videos, Internet forums, online magazines, which are used to ‘convince Muslim Americans to reject their country and attack their fellow Americans.’<sup>52</sup>

This trend of recruiting Muslim Americans for terrorist activity continues to grow in U.S. communities.

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<sup>50</sup> Recently, in 2011, the President’s Deputy National Security Advisor, Denis McDonough stated that as part of the U.S. strategy to defeat Al Qaeda is to prevent radicalization, which can lead to violence in America. U.S. efforts overseas seem to be making an impact on Al Qaeda’s operations.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security. “U.S. Outlines Community Involvement to Prevent Violent Extremism.” *GovMonitor Public Sector News and Information*, March 8, 2011. [http://www.thegovmonitor.com/world\\_news/united\\_states/u-s-outlines-community-involvement-to-prevent-violent-extremism-47382.html](http://www.thegovmonitor.com/world_news/united_states/u-s-outlines-community-involvement-to-prevent-violent-extremism-47382.html)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

One of the most important ways to thwart Al Qaeda's propaganda efforts in the U.S. is to help Muslim Americans feel that they are part of American society and not part of the radicalization process that is occurring in the rest of the world. President Obama in the State of the Union, in 2011, conveyed this message:

As extremists try to inspire acts of violence within our borders, [we] are responding with the strength of our communities, with respect for the rule of law, and with the conviction that Muslim Americans are a part of our American family.

The best defense against terrorist ideologies is strong and resilient individuals and communities. This should be no surprise. In America we have a long history of community-based initiatives and partnerships dealing successfully with a whole range of challenges, like violent crime.<sup>53</sup>

While the U.S. can strengthen its communities against Al Qaeda's propaganda efforts, other countries with Muslim populations may not have the resources to prevent their own communities from Al Qaeda's propaganda campaign to radicalize as many Muslims as possible.

An analysis of AQAP's use of propaganda towards Muslim women, Muslim women's attitudes and reactions to the propaganda, and the functional role that the propaganda plays in AQAP terrorist organization may shed some light on how to best counter its influence. A qualitative discourse analysis of AQAP's use of propaganda towards Muslim women provides a better understanding on why and how AQAP uses its propaganda and what strategies the U.S. can use to prevent further radicalization within Muslim communities. Jowett and O'Donnell's *Propaganda and Persuasion* model, 10-step plan of propaganda analysis may help to analyze AQAP propaganda towards Muslim women.<sup>54</sup> Jowett and O'Donnell's 10-step plan on how to analyze propaganda incorporates the major elements of propaganda. As stated earlier, Jowett and O'Donnell state that "propaganda is a deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist. Its systematic nature requires longitudinal study of its progress. Because the essence of propaganda is its deliberateness of purpose, considerable investigation is required

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006, 270.



to find out what the purpose is.”<sup>55</sup>

AQAP seems to target its propaganda towards Muslim women, in particular the new generation of women, by using the discourse found in Islamic culture to pressure them into more fundamental beliefs. AQAP attempts to exploit centuries of cultural Muslim women’s societal discourse understanding of what it means to be a follower of the Islamic faith. “Discourse is what makes us human.”<sup>56</sup> AQAP’s *Al-Shamikhha* magazine, which is distributed by Al Qaeda’s affiliated with *Al Fajr Media Centre* and the Women’s Media Bureau in the Arabian Peninsula tries to foster these discourses in its propaganda by including articles such as “Sharia law that applies to you,” “the female martyr,” “meeting with a jihad wife,” “marrying a jihadist” and “your house is your kingdom.” *Al-Shamikhha*’s magazine implements American advertising methods to promote its ideology.

### 2.3 Analysis: Case Study

The goal of this discourse analysis is to evaluate AQAP propaganda techniques and its effectiveness on Muslim women. The following section uses Jowett and O’Donnell’s *Propaganda and Persuasion* model, 10-step plan of propaganda analysis to examine AQAP’s strategies. AQAP uses agitation propaganda, which “seeks to arouse people to participate in or support a cause. It attempts to arouse people from apathy by giving them feasible actions to carry out.”<sup>57</sup> AQAP implements its propaganda strategies of its “ideology and purpose” on its female Muslim population and shapes the discussion as part of the Muslim discourse community.<sup>58</sup> AQAP uses the discourse community in Muslim society to gain control. [Foucault makes] “the assumption that the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and canalized in every society—and that this is done by way of certain procedures whose task it is to subdue the powers and dangers of discourse, to evade its heavy and

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<sup>55</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006, 269.

<sup>56</sup> Arthur C. Graesser, A.C., Keith K. Millis, Rolf A. Zwaan. “Discourse Comprehension,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 48, (February 1997), 163-89, doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.48.1.163, quoted in Ruth Wodak and Mical Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 4.

<sup>57</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, “How to Analyze Propaganda.” *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 271.

<sup>58</sup> Some sections of this research was presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual IAFIE Conference: Expanding the Frontiers of Intelligence Education and a portion of the research was submitted for publication in the *Journal of Strategic Security*, Volume 6, Article 4, *Targeting a Female Audience: American Muslim Women’s Perceptions of al-Qaida Propaganda*. The complete Al-Shamkhia’s translated transcript is presented in this research.

threatening materiality.”<sup>59</sup>

Foucault provides a workable definition of the concept of discourse and is applicable in the power dynamics that AQAP uses. AQAP selects certain admirable qualities found in Muslim society and then warps them with radical Islamic beliefs. One way to accomplish this on a grand scale is to distribute material to encourage the discourse community to action. Understanding the discourse in a community is an effective tool when implementing propaganda, because it makes it that much easier to insert the propagandist ideology and purpose in such a way to reflect the discourse that the community has already developed. AQAP propaganda use of *Al-Shamikhah*'s magazine allows for the dissemination of its ideology and is used as a platform to recruit both men and women for jihad:

The first issue of the 30-page publication was released by the al Qaeda-affiliated Al Fajr Media Centre and must be ordered online. The cover features the barrel of a sub-machine gun next to the image of a woman in a veil. The magazine features exclusive interviews with martyrs' wives who praise their husbands' decisions to die in suicide bombings. Many of the articles have female authors. According to the editor Saleh Youssef, the aim of the magazine is to educate women and involve them in the war against the enemies of Islam.<sup>60</sup>

The images on the cover of the magazine send the message that a Muslim woman can adhere to Islamic ways as well as be a jihadist. AQAP sets the parameters in this discourse community by selecting and canalizing in which way Muslim women may behave. The magazine is designed to call women to action. It is no coincidence that AQAP has selected a certain demographic group to spread its radical views. “*Al-Shamikha* targets would-be and veteran female supporters of [Al-Qaeda].”<sup>61</sup> The articles reflect the radical ideology that AQAP is trying to promote. Muslim women write the majority of the articles targeted at the female audience. AQAP's use of the Muslim discourse community requires further examination of why AQAP believes that its propaganda strategies will work.

AQAP use of propaganda towards Muslim women is not a novel idea. Other terrorist organizations have done it in the past and continue to actively recruit women into participating in terrorist

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<sup>59</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” (1984): 10-11, quoted in Ruth Wodak and Mical Krzyzanowski, *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Daily India*, “New Al-Qaeda magazine offers beauty tips mixed with bombing advice,” March 14, 2011. [www.dailyindia.com/show/429741.php](http://www.dailyindia.com/show/429741.php). (assessed January 16, 2013), 1.

<sup>61</sup> Heidi Basch-Harod, “The Right to Choose: The Women of Al-Qaeda,” *Telaviv Notes: An Update on Middle Eastern Developments*, 6 no. 3 (February 9, 2012), *The Moshe Dayan Center*, <http://www.dayan.tau.ac.il>. (assessed January 16, 2013), 1.

activity. Women are active players in terrorist organizations and can be just as ruthless as their male counterparts.

The function of the women in religious terrorism organizations and movements is multifaceted. The role the world audience perceives is the one of a suicide bomber but the role of an ideological supporter and operational facilitator is not less important for the survival of the organization, the maintenance of the operational capabilities, and the ideological motivation. Concluding even when women are invisible for the world audience they play an essential role in the short- and long- term survival of the terrorist organization.<sup>62</sup>

In a sense, if it were not for women, much of the organizational functions of terrorist groups may not be as effective; women who are terrorists have greater mobility because they are invisible to the outside world. This invisibility is one reason that women are good unsuspecting weapons for terrorist groups. “Women provide many benefits to terrorist groups and organizations are increasingly recruiting women as a strategic choice. The use of women provides a new media dimension, which the terrorist group intends for the media to interpret as an indication of a worsening situation. Media images of women terrorists serve as powerful propaganda tools.”<sup>63</sup> There are many reasons why women join terrorist organizations whether they are recruited or join on their own. “Many women choose to join a terrorist organization to seek vengeance, because [their] men suffer the majority of casualties from counterterrorism, failed missions, and successful suicide bombing operations. Faced with the loss of male family members, women are motivated to take up arms.”<sup>64</sup> Once women join terrorist organizations they are usually fully committed. They do not waiver—they are loyal to the cause. “The wish and goal to carry out a political act should also not be underestimated.”<sup>65</sup> In general, female terrorists are motivated by political and personal reasons. Women can be driven and they too enjoy the power that comes with joining a terrorist group in an environment where they are very much marginalized within their society. Women who are in terrorist organizations want to play a more active role. “To understand the scope and rise of female terrorism, organizational motives for recruiting women must be explored. Women may want to become actively engaged in the conflict, but the evolution of women’s role from supportive to

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<sup>62</sup> Katherine Von Knop, “The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Women,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, (2007): 397-414, doi: 10.1080/105576100701258585, (accessed January 25, 2013), 398.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

active is initiated at the organizational level.”<sup>66</sup> AQAP by launching the newest women’s magazine understands how to actively engage in the rhetoric needed to propagate Muslim women to be part of the jihadist movement.

Al Qaeda comprehends the use of the context in which its propaganda occurs; today it is the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the constant presence of the U.S. and other western entities in Muslim lands. Al Qaeda has used the U.S. wars in the Middle East as a backdrop for demonstrating to Muslims that there is a power struggle between Muslims and Westerners, and that Muslims souls are at stake. Also, the use of context involves knowing and understanding the historical background.<sup>67</sup> Al Qaeda uses its propaganda by exploiting Muslims deeply longtime “held beliefs and values” in their Muslim faith to move them to action. An example of Al Qaeda’s use of situating its propaganda in context is the preamble to *Al-Shamikha*’s magazine.

Because women constitute half of the population - and one might even say that they are the population since they give birth to the next generation – the enemies of Islam are bent on preventing the Muslim woman from knowing the truth about her religion and her role, since they know all too well what would happen if women entered the field of jihad.... The nation of Islam needs women who know the truth about their religion and about the battle and its dimensions and know what is expected of them.<sup>68</sup>

This is in reference to the role that Muslim women have historically played in the battlefield and the reasons a Muslim would join jihad. “Eight principle reasons for joining the jihad are: first, so that non-believers do not dominate; second, because of the scarcity of manpower; third, fear of hellfire; fourth, fulfilling the duty of jihad and responding to the call of Allah; fifth, following the footsteps of pious predecessors; sixth, establish a solid foundation as a base of Islam; seventh, protecting those who are oppressed in the land; and eighth, seeking martyrdom.”<sup>69</sup> Historically, both men and women have joined jihad; so the permeable in the *Al-Shamikha* magazine is only reminding Muslim women of their Islamic duty.

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<sup>66</sup> Katherine Von Knop, “The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Women,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, (2007): 397-414, doi: 10.1080/105576100701258585, (accessed January 25, 2013),. 400.

<sup>67</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, “How to Analyze Propaganda.” *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 272.

<sup>68</sup> *Huffington Post: Style*. “Al-Shamikha, Al Qaeda Women’s Magazine, Launces: Report,” March 14, 2011, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/14/al-shamikha-al-qaeda-womens-magazine\\_n\\_835572.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/14/al-shamikha-al-qaeda-womens-magazine_n_835572.html) (accessed August 3, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Columbia UP., 2002), 90.

Al-Qaeda's use of ideology and purpose are crucial to the recruitment of others, especially Muslim women. "To understand the mindset of Al Qaeda's volunteers [westerners] must appreciate their belief system and the group's ideology, which is founded on Islamism and the pursuit of *jihad*."<sup>70</sup> It is this mindset in which Al Qaeda relies on when considering how to approach its propaganda strategies toward Muslims. Al Qaeda gravitates towards Muslim communities, and use disenfranchisement of their governments who has befriended westerners, who allowed westerners into their countries and sullied their lands. This creates an "us against them" mentality that allows Al Qaeda's propagandist ideology seem rational to some Muslims. "Ideology as a coherent 'world view that determines how arguments will be received and interpreted. The common sense of the world view provides the basis for determining what is good, bad, right, wrong, and so forth'"<sup>71</sup> In the Muslim world view, for some Muslims, Al Qaeda's call to *jihad* seems acceptable. An Al Qaeda recruitment video states, "*Jihad*, bullets and martyrdom operation are the only way to destroy the degradation and disbelief which have spread in the Muslim lands."<sup>72</sup> Al Qaeda continues to use the same propaganda strategies today.

Raising awareness among Muslims of the grievances that gave rise to Al Qaeda is essential to recruitment, and therefore the organization attaches great importance to propaganda, in particular the need for Muslim youth to reflect on the state of their societies. Hence it attributes Muslim societies' greatest misfortune and decadence to their abandonment of *jihad* 'due to the love of this world and abhorrence of death.' Because of that, tyrants have gained dominance over Muslim[s] in every aspect and in every land.<sup>73</sup>

Al Qaeda has always identified itself as a leader in the struggle for *jihad*, and at the time before his death bin Laden was the leader of the organization, made videos, and wrote *fatwas* as the leader. Bin Laden as leader of Al Qaeda spoke frequently and with authority, which created a strong propaganda structure of the organization. "Successful propaganda campaigns tend to originate from a strong, centralized, decision-making authority that produces a consistent message throughout its structure."<sup>74</sup> AQAP provides

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<sup>70</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Columbia UP., 2002), 84.

<sup>71</sup> Martha Cooper, *Analyzing Public Discourse*. (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1989), 162, quoted in Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, "How to Analyze Propaganda." *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 271.

<sup>72</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, (New York: Columbia UP., 2002), 54, From a commentary from an Al Qaeda recruitment video seized by police in London after 9/11. This video was seized by London police after 9/11 and is a good example of Al Qaeda's use of propaganda to convey to Muslims to take action. Al Qaeda's main audience after 9/11 was young Muslims, who needed to take back their communities.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>74</sup> Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, "How to Analyze Propaganda." *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006), 273.

the same message throughout *Al-Shamikah* magazine, by reminding Muslim women of their culture and how they are expected to behave in order to support their jihadist husbands, brothers, and fathers.

Umm Badr makes this statement to Muslim women:

A Muslim woman is a female Jihad warrior always and everywhere. She is a female Jihad warrior who wages Jihad by means of funding Jihad. She wages Jihad by means of waiting for her Jihad warrior husband, and when she educates her children to that which Allah loves. She wages jihad when she supports Jihad when she calls for jihad in word, deed, belief, and prayer.<sup>75</sup>

Al-Qaeda's knowledge of Muslim culture and values makes the information and suggestions in *Al-Shamikah* a targeted campaign because AQAP knows that the presentation of the material will be most effective on the Muslim women who read it. The magazine is giving women empowerment in the family structure to follow through by participating and encouraging their males to *Jihad*. Von Knop argues "Women are similarly interested in power in the assigned scope by the society they are living in. This scope in fundamentalist societies is normally the family. Encouraging the male relatives to participate in a terrorism organization and supporting as well as facilitating operation gives women power and access to the public domain."<sup>76</sup>

The English translation of the editorial in *Al-Shamikhah's* magazine provides the backdrop for helping women achieve power.

Muslims currently are suffering from enemies who are targeting them. However, there is a small group that is ready to defend Islam and Muslims. This group promised to lose their lives for the sake of their nation.

As long as women represent the half of the society, at the end they represent the whole society they are the mothers, the sisters and the wives of the other half. The enemy of the society tried to push them away from this reality in addition to her ability to participate in facing the enemy.

The Islamic nation is in need of real women who can undertake the responsibility of protecting their nation. Taking care of men and supporting them could achieve this type of protection.<sup>77</sup>

The Editorial promotes the idea that women are contributing to the cause and that they have the power in their hands to make a difference. AQAP ascertains that Muslim women need to "defend Islam and

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<sup>75</sup> Umm Badr, "Obstacles in the Path of the Jihad Warrior Woman," al-Khansaa Katherine, quoted in Von Knop, "The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, (2007): 397-414, doi: 10.1080/105576100701258585, (accessed January 25, 2013), p. 397.

<sup>76</sup> Katherine Von Knop, "The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, (2007): 397-414, doi: 10.1080/105576100701258585, (accessed January 25, 2013), p. 399.

<sup>77</sup> Editorial is a Translation from *Al-Shamikah* Magazine by Shahbaa Zaidan.

Muslims” and that it is their “responsibility to protect their nation” because they are “the other half” of the equation to make *jihad* possible. AQAP’s *Al-Shamikah*’s magazine resonates on its female-targeted audience. Ellul says, “the propagandist builds his techniques on the basis of his knowledge of man, his tendencies, his desires, his needs, his psychic mechanisms, his conditioning.”<sup>78</sup> It is human nature to want to be a part of something bigger. AQAP promotes the use of the human-interest story to make stronger connections to the discourse community it is targeting. *Al-Shamikha* magazine includes interviews by mujahedeen widows. “A Heart Moving Interview with a Mohaheed Widow, by Umm Muhaned splashes the pages of the magazine.”<sup>79</sup> The section is an excerpt of one of the articles in the magazine.

You are the role models among the wives of sedition, and the bride of the *Ommah* in time of humiliation and shame, I just to remind myself and my sisters that sincerity of intention and sacrificing for God’s reward and satisfaction with his acts, all this trivialize the ordeal.<sup>80</sup>

The interview ends with the widow stating to Muslim women they should support Jihad because they are the role models that Muslim society should embrace, and the widow reminds Muslim women and, by extension, Muslim society that there is no greater sacrifice for God—drastic measures must be taken such as the ones that are used—that of terrorizing others into submission. Terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda exploit Muslim women to encourage terrorism. Al-Qaeda and AQAP use what Hoffman refers to the “deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change.... [and, thus] terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little.”<sup>81</sup> Al-Qaeda managed to create a long reach of recruitment by implementing such strategies, which are inexpensive and can be readily available in an online format.

The use of AQAP’s *Al-Shamikha* magazine as a propaganda tool may be successful for its organization, especially if it continues to use women, such as the widow as its messenger. The use of media techniques in AQAP’s *Al-Shamikha* magazine and other magazines like it, has demonstrated that the implementation this type of print/electronic media is a successful medium for recruitment of future

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<sup>78</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*. Translated by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, Introduction by Konrad Keller, (New York: Random House, 1965), 4.

<sup>79</sup> Umm Muhaned, “The English Translation of a Heart Moving Interview with a Mojaheed Widow,” *Al-Shamikah*, (March 3, 2011), quoted in Jihad’s Media Elite: Language and Translation Department, [www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=35521](http://www.as-ansar.com/vb/showthread.php?t=35521), (assessed April 1, 2013).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40-41.

jihadists. *Al-Shamikhah* magazine has the potential to increase the jihadist movement and has provided a platform for disenfranchised Muslim women playing a bigger role in jihad. Religious terrorists organizations such as Al-Qaeda,

See themselves not as components of a system worth preserving but as ‘outsiders’ seeking fundamental changes in the existing order. This sense of alienation also enables the religious terrorist to contemplate far more destructive and deadly types of terrorists operations than secular terrorists, indeed to embrace a far more open-ended category of ‘enemies’ for attack—that is, anyone who is not a member of the terrorists’ religion or religious sect. This explains the rhetoric common to ‘holy terror’ manifestos describing those outside of the terrorists’ religious community in denigrating and dehumanizing terms as, for example, ‘infidels,’ ‘dogs,’ ‘children of Satan,’ and ‘mud people.’ The deliberate use of such terminology to condone and justify terrorism is significant, for it further erodes constraints on violence and bloodshed by portraying the terrorists’ victims as either subhuman or unworthy of living.<sup>82</sup>

Al-Qaeda leaders use this rhetorical language in their argument to recruit fellow Muslims and it is reflective in the literature distributed by them and their affiliates. Even though, bin Laden is dead, his words continue to resonate. For example, in February 1998, bin Laden issued a fatwa, “a fatwa is (a legal ruling or statement of legal issues, given by a mufti—a qualified jurist—at the request of a religious court,”<sup>83</sup> which became one of his “major theological accomplishments: interpreting the imperative of jihad as an individual responsibility incumbent upon Muslims everywhere.”<sup>84</sup> This became bin Laden’s core message to alienated Muslims. Shortly after September 11<sup>th</sup>, bin Laden’s message of jihad, was delivered on December 9, 2001, and directed to the youth, “Message to the Youth of the Muslim Ummah,” (meaning nation or community in Arabic), where once again he detailed jihad:

[It] has become fard-ain [obligatory] upon each and every Muslim....The time has come when all the Muslims of the world, especially the youth, should unite and soar against the kufr [nonbeliever] and continue jihad till these forces are crushed to naught, all the anti-Islamic forces are wiped off the face of this earth and Islam takes over the whole world and all other false religions.<sup>85</sup>

Basically, bin Laden’s message to all Muslims is to restore the pan-Islamic caliphate. The caliphate disappeared when the Turkish Ottoman Empire fell in 1924. Prior to the demise of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, Muslims referred to this time as the “ ‘golden age of Islam,’ when the theocratic ‘structure of law

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<sup>82</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 89.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.



and governance bequeathed by the Mohammed to his successors' reigned and divinely revealed Sacred Law took precedence over secular 'arbitrary or natural law.'"<sup>86</sup> Today, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, use the venerated ideal in its propaganda.

It is the manner, in which, AQAP's use of propaganda in *al-Shamikhah's* magazine and other similar propaganda tools that should be alarming to Western governments. Al Qaeda's use of *sharia* law to aid in the recruitment of Muslim women into terrorist organizations, seem to be the linchpin that is underlying within the rhetoric of its use of propaganda to recruit.

### **3.1 *Sharia's* affect on Muslim Women and Gender Roles**

Terrorist organizations, in particular Al Qaeda, target Muslim women for recruitment by promoting the duties of Muslim women in relation to *sharia* law. The significance of this may help understand how U.S. counterinsurgency strategies may better address how to deter Muslim women away from radicalism. Some discussions included in the conversation are the following: *sharia's* affect on Muslim women and gender roles; Muslim women situated in the 'war on terror', in which media's portrayal on Islam makes them more visible; and the psychological implications recruitment has on Muslim women. The analysis in this section includes counterinsurgency strategies to prevent the recruitment of women and to provide a better understanding of Muslim women.<sup>87</sup>

Muslim women live by a strict code in which their gender roles are defined. *Sharia*, "the straight path," is the cornerstone to Islam, and is a comprehensive, legal, and political framework for how Muslims should conduct their lives. In particular, *sharia* affects Muslim women, and their gender roles within Muslim society. For Islamic radical terrorists, they take this further and seek to impose a global totalitarian system, with an Islamic state called a Caliphate. Even though this is part of Islamic society, Western society sees *sharia* as a threat and a strong motivation for recruitment among Muslim communities. *The Center for Security Policy* states, the contemporary threat in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from a

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<sup>86</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 96.

<sup>87</sup> This research was presented in DSS 5303, June 2, 2014, with the permission of instructor to include in my future research for thesis. "The Recruitment of Muslim Women into Terrorist Organizations."

Western perspective as an “insidious ideological threat: the totalitarian socio-political doctrine that Islam calls [sharia].”<sup>88</sup> *Sharia* is particularly important to note, for gender equality—*Sharia* relegates women to an inferior status that of men. Some examples include, “a woman’s testimony in front of a judge is worth half as much as a man; women are to receive just one half the inheritance of a male; Muslim men are given permission by Allah in the Quran to beat their wives; Muslim men are allowed to marry up to four wives and keep concubines; Muslim women may only marry one man and are forbidden to marry a non-Muslim; and a woman may not travel outside the home without the permission of her male guardian and must be accompanied by a male family member.”<sup>89</sup> There are four sources for *sharia* that make it authoritative: The *Quran* (direct divine revelation and primary source of Islamic law), the *Sunna* (Islamic jurists, indirect divine revelation arising out of the hadiths or sayings or acts of Mohammed), *ijma* (consensus of the grand *mujtahids* of the past, a historical process, once consensus attached, became a permanent part of the immutable body of Islam), and *qiyas* (reasoning by analogy, which applies an accepted principle or assumption to arrive at a legal ruling).<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, *Sharia*’s applications contain categories and subjects of Islamic law called the branches of *fiqh* (literally, “understanding”). They include Islamic worship, Family relations, Inheritance, Commerce, Property law, Civil (tort) law, Criminal law, Administration, Taxation, Constitution, International Relations, War and Ethics, and other categories.<sup>91</sup> *Sharia* today, continues to be an important part of every aspect of a Muslim’s life and dictates every decision made.

Suffice to say that living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century poses a problem for Islam and Muslims for much of their ideology is hostile to Western perspectives, practices, and institutions. Muslims view Western “encounters and the world largely in terms of their own internal processes,” but more than ever have been “significantly influenced by their experiences with the West.”<sup>92</sup> Most recently, the modern revitalization of Islam signifies these influences, which stress the importance of women maintaining Islamic values.

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<sup>88</sup> *Shariah: The threat to America: An Exercise in Competitive Analysis*, Report of team ‘B’ II. *Center for Security Policy*. (GP, 2010), 6.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 29

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-38.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>92</sup> Shahrough S. Akhavi, “Islam and the West in World History,” *Third World Quarterly* 24 no.3 (June 2003): 545-562, doi: 10.0180/0143659032000084465 (accessed March 15, 2014): 545.

The successes of The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, and the Islamic Society organized in Pakistan by Mawlana Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi in 1941, solidified these values. Mawdudi focused on “women’s weakness and the need for male authority and supervision, and he influenced many others who, in the name of protection, honour and sacred motherhood honour the status of Muslim women.”<sup>93</sup> The refocusing of these Islamic values over time have continued to spread through many Muslim communities as well as whole-heartedly embraced by Islamic extremists.

After the 9/11, Western awareness of Islam began to grow. Mass media contributed to Americans’ fear that associated Islam with terrorism and *jihad*. “Since 9/11, Islam became globally, and almost overnight, a field of study of immense significance to both politicians and the public. Since then Islamists have been challenged to reach out and talk to all kinds of people—often about terrorism and *jihad*.”<sup>94</sup> Moreover, U.S. involvement in Afghanistan captured images of human rights violations against Afghani Muslim women, which furthered the need among Western governments to intervene on their behalf. “At the same time the experiences of Muslim women have come to influence, even at times to dominate, moral debate about Islam. Muslims constitute nearly a quarter of the world’s people, and Muslim women are a vast and varied group belonging to hugely complex cultures.”<sup>95</sup> The intrigue of veiled women and their relationship to terrorism continues to be part of the global schematics on the ‘war on terror.’ Since the 9/11 tragic attacks, “Muslims have been positioned on the geo-political stage as anti-democratic, anti-liberal and living in societies located outside the western narratives of progress and modernity.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014):294.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>95</sup> Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014):293.

<sup>96</sup> Jasmine Zine, “Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women’s Feminist Engagement,” *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 2.

### 3.2 Muslim women situated in the ‘war on terror’

Muslim women find themselves situated in the ‘war on terror’ and media’s portrayal on Islam makes them more visible. Terrorism acts are often associated with men, not women. However, women cannot escape the violence that terrorism carries. For Muslim women it is even more so. Not only are they victimized; they are recruited and obligated to participate in many cases because of *sharia*. “The vast and growing literature on ‘women in Islam’ is evidence not only of the wide spectrum of interpretations, but also of more painful scrutiny of the place of violence in religion and particularly of violence towards women.”<sup>97</sup> This brings to the forefront Muslim women media’s portrayal on Islam makes them more visible. “Scholarly books do not reach millions of people, the *Daily Mail*, the *Sun*, and television news do. Post 9/11 viewers are familiar with images of ‘Muslim’ women caught up in wars, in violence and what is loosely called the war against terror. Women are depicted on the whole as [defenseless], innocent victims of violence.”<sup>98</sup> Additionally, terrorist organizations have wasted no time in capitalizing this valuable asset to their plotting. An example in Iraq, both captured public attention and disgust illustrates this further:

Furious bewilderment accompanied reportage earlier this year that Al-Qaeda had used Down’s syndrome women as suicide bombers. Since January 2008 however, there have been 24 attacks involving women suicide bombers in Iraq, and women have become ‘the perfect weapon’ in a country where males cannot search women for cultural reasons and where it is easy to hide a vest pack with explosives under women’s traditional Islamic robes.<sup>99</sup>

It is difficult as a journalist to report an unbiased story such as this, given the fact that Al-Qaeda purposely uses women for the sole purpose of mass destruction. However, those in honest reporting, as well as in government agencies do need to be careful on their representation of Muslim women and not depict all those who practice Islam as terrorists. “Just as politicians and reporters struggle not to equate terrorism with all Islam, so they struggle not to present a distorted picture of Islam as a particular religion,

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<sup>97</sup> Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014): 593.

<sup>98</sup> Haynes, as cited in Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014):300

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*,301.

predisposed to oppress and maltreat women.”<sup>100</sup> Destructive acts such as these demonstrate that the ‘war on terror’ does cross genders.

An event such as this forces Muslim women to realize that they are pawns in the global war on terror; and furthermore, Muslim communities are fearful to speak out against such atrocities. “Many activists in Islamic countries face tremendous struggles if they speak out against Islamist attitudes to women because they can be attacked as legitimating a Western agenda. [Practicing] Muslims do not want to suggest that Islam perpetuates violence towards women and even abused women do not want to portray Islam in a way which demonizes all Muslim men.”<sup>101</sup> However, given the fact that Muslim women are now situated in the ‘war on terror’ and play a major role in that war, both for terrorist organizations and for Western society, what they represent to both cannot be ignored:

In the post 9/11 era, Muslim women navigate between both radicalized and gendered politics and variously script the ways their bodies and identities are narrated, defined and regulated. Located within this dialectical dynamic, the rhetoric of Muslim women’s liberation is all too often caught up in the vast undercurrents of ideological extremism on the one hand, and racism and Islamophobia on the other. Muslim women’s feminist praxis is shaped and defined within and against these discursive terrains.<sup>102</sup>

For those Muslim women who have been radicalized by force or not given a choice does it mean that they too need rescuing? By Western ideology this is important to consider when fighting the ‘war on terror.’ “Saving Muslim women has become the justification for a range of interventions in a number of countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. The ‘war on terror’ contained as part of its justification—the idea of saving women in Afghanistan from the tyranny of Taliban “imposed restrictions that affected the status and dignity of women as defined by Western ideological interpretations of freedom.”<sup>103</sup>

Sentiments by military presence reflect the following comment: “Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan, women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach

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<sup>100</sup> Haynes, as cited in Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014):301.

<sup>101</sup> Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361(assessed March 15, 2014):322.

<sup>102</sup> Jasmine Zine, “Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women’s Feminist Engagement,” *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 1.

<sup>103</sup> Melani McNeal, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?:Mission, Reconciliation and Gender in the Arab World,” *St. Francis Magazine* 3, no. 4: (December 2008): 1-12. <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info> (accessed December 11, 2012): 1.

their daughters without fear of punishment.... The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women.”<sup>104</sup> These women are victims and Western ideological beliefs in freedom promote the ideals that it is their obligation to save them. “There are contradictory desires at the heart of the war on terror: to repress the Arab Muslim male on the one hand and to ‘liberate’ Muslim women on the other. Strategically images of burqa-clad Afghan women permeated the media to assuage any misgivings that the American public or world community might have about military intervention in Afghanistan.”<sup>105</sup> The United States intervention in Afghanistan initially was for hunting down bin Laden and Al-Qaeda terrorist cells. However, once they arrived and saw the Taliban’s mistreatment of female society, the scope of the mission altered to include the saving of Afghan women, thus situating Afghani Muslim women as part of the ‘war on terror’:

The static and [fundamental] construction of the Muslim woman as the abject, oppressed ‘other’ became an important tool in the arsenal of ideological warfare designed to gain public consent for the war on terror. This discursive positioning cast all Muslim women within this limiting narrative. Historically the category of ‘Muslim woman’ has been a malleable construct constantly redefined to suit particular political, cultural or ideological purposes.<sup>106</sup>

In a sense, there now was further urgency to liberate the people of Afghanistan from the Taliban tyranny, especially because it meant saving thousands of Muslim women and giving a future full of hope and dreams to Muslim girls.

### **3.3 Psychological implications recruitment has on Muslim women**

The dichotomy lies within Muslim women who are willing participants in the ‘war on terror.’ Muslim women who feel that Western society has encroached into the lives may not be so receptive to Western assistance, and may therefore, be willing participants in terrorist organizations. This is demonstrated in AQAP *Al-Shamikha*’s magazine. The psychological implications that recruitment has on Muslim women are just now being examined. “Related to these developments is the growth of

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<sup>104</sup> Melani McNeal, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?: Mission, Reconciliation and Gender in the Arab World,” *St. Francis Magazine* 3, no. 4: (December 2008): 1-12. <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info> (accessed December 11, 2012): 1.

<sup>105</sup> Jasmine Zine, “Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women’s Feminist Engagement,” *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 8.

<sup>106</sup> Jasmine Zine, “Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women’s Feminist Engagement,” *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 9.

fundamental movements in Muslim societies that engage in a reactive ideological and political tug of war with globalizing forces and the political, economic and cultural encroachment of the West. Women's rights, spiritual autonomy and physical safety have suffered as 'collateral damage' in this new ideological battleground."<sup>107</sup> Women who willingly turn to radicalized activity, such as terrorism, requires further investigation on what conditions influence female violence. Mia Bloom examines the psychological mind-frame of female terrorists:

Lots of women are just as bloodthirsty as the male members of terrorists groups, but women's motivations tend to be intricate, multi-layered, and inspired on a variety of levels. Anger, sorrow, the desire for revenge, and nationalist or religious zeal coalesce in ways that makes any simple explanation impossible.<sup>108</sup>

Women who are recruited also have to deal with the inequality that they face; and for Muslim women inequality is denoted further because of *sharia* laws. Becoming a terrorist, symbolizes an equal status to their male counterparts. It does not matter that inequality will continue in their lives. Other factors that add to this inequality as discussed by Muslim and non-Muslim feminists state "the structural inequality between the North and South that breeds poverty, dependency, political instability, hopelessness and finally rage among the disfranchised masses. Feminists have been quick to point out the interconnectedness of these factors and the rise of global fundamentalisms and religiously based extremism and violence."<sup>109</sup> Not only are psychological factors at play here, but physical barriers may also be reasons for Muslim women to join terrorist organizations. These psychological and physical conditions, in turn, promote radicalized Muslim women to "give rise to new generations vowing to fight again in the near and distant future."<sup>110</sup> This pattern of violence is multi-generational and is passed on to their children. "For young populations, the global jihadist movement is a long indoctrination process that goes beyond brainwashing; and takes place over the span of one's young adult life"—*Koran* verses are

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<sup>107</sup> Jasmine Zine, "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women's Feminist Engagement," *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012):1.

<sup>108</sup> Bloom, Mia. *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*. (Philadelphia, PA: UP Pennsylvania, 2011), Preface, i.

<sup>109</sup> Jasmine Zine, "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women's Feminist Engagement," *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 12.

<sup>110</sup> Bloom, Mia. *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*. (Philadelphia, PA: UP Pennsylvania, 2011), 27.

read and interpreted; jihad is instilled and its fundamental principles drilled into the young mind.<sup>111</sup>

Recruited Muslim women create scores of future jihadists for the terrorist organization. “Terrorists groups gain so much from women’s participation, it is far easier to understand way terrorist groups seek female activists than to explain why women oblige them by heeding the call to action.”<sup>112</sup> Many Muslim women who have been recruited have “family traditions, family relationships, and marriage ties to preserve memories and provide moral comfort to fighters. These family traditions mean that women are often under intense family pressure to participate in clandestine activities.”<sup>113</sup> They also serve as financial couriers, recruiters, and become combatants. Family structure, coercion, peer-pressure, and *sharia* manipulate Muslim women to engage in violence. The female suicide bombers are placed in a unique situation. “[Terrorist] organizations create mechanisms and manipulate cultural mores to justify suicide (which might be contrary to their religious beliefs), and use intense propaganda and indoctrination to convince their populations that they have more to offer when dead than alive.”<sup>114</sup> This is particularly relevant for Muslim women who have been raped or have been disgraced in some other way. They see suicide as the only means to redeem themselves in front of Allah. Terrorist recruiters also target young women, especially those that have lost someone in the war—they are stressed, vulnerable, and impressionable, making them easy targets for recruitment for suicide bombing missions.

Not all women are pressured into terrorist activities. A new generation of women terrorists has emerged. “New media technologies allow terrorists organizations to transmit messages more easily and freely than through other means of communication.”<sup>115</sup> Women who are recruited are operating in Europe and the United States. Female terrorists “use the Internet to radicalize and recruit scores of male *jihadis* and send them to their deaths.”<sup>116</sup> Today more than ever, women are vital to terrorist organizations, so

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<sup>111</sup> Benjamin S. Forster, “The Global Expansion of the Al Qaeda Franchise” *CMC Senior Theses. Paper 178*, (2011), [http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses/178](http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/178), (accessed March 15, 2014):47.

<sup>112</sup> Bloom, Mia. *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*. (Philadelphia, PA: UP Pennsylvania, 2011), Preface, i.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>115</sup> Gabriel, Weimann, “The Psychology of Mass-Mediated Terrorism,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 52, no.1: 69-86, (September 2008). doi:10.1177/0002764208321342 (accessed March 15, 2014):70.

<sup>116</sup> Bloom, Mia. *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*. (Philadelphia, PA: UP Pennsylvania, 2011), 32.



there is an increasing interest in recruiting them. Much attention has been given to the suicide female bomber; however, “the role of an ideological supporter and operational facilitator is more important for the maintenance of the operational capabilities and the ideological motivation for a terrorist organization. Muslim women follow a gender-specific interpretation of the radical ideology, the female Jihad.”<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, female terrorists provide strong role models for other women who may seek to follow in their footsteps. Al-Qaeda female terrorists’ major roles are mostly facilitators, supporters, and educators. However, it is difficult to profile these women because they come from “diverse educational, religious, social, and personal backgrounds.”<sup>118</sup>

### **3.4 Counterinsurgency strategies to prevent the recruitment of women**

Female terrorists pose a significant threat. Until recently, threat analysis on female terrorists had not been considered. Muslim women, who are being recruited, or are targeted for recruitment, in particular, should be examined using a different lens. “There is no single template that describes women who become involved in terrorism. Some women choose to get involved with terrorist organizations to help their community; others have no choice.”<sup>119</sup> There are several factors to be considered when conducting counterinsurgency strategies.

First, the concept of *sharia* law and how it applies to Muslim women needs better understanding. Consulting with Muslim feminists may provide better insights on how to help Muslim women not to consider radicalization. “The role and status of women are determined, enhanced or impeded by the social, political, economic development of a people’s history, the dynamic way in which politics, national identity, gender relations and religion are enmeshed, and the diverse cultural factors that impact on Islamic values and attitudes to women within the variety of nations that belong to the Muslim world.”<sup>120</sup> The *Sisters* Magazine promotes positive roles for Muslim women. For example, “The *Sisters*’ team is an eclectic group of writers, journalists, artists and readers who are based all over the world, from London to

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<sup>117</sup> Katherina Von Knop, “The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Women,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30: 397-414. (2007). doi:10.1080/10576100701258585 (accessed December 11, 2012):397.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, 411.

<sup>119</sup> Bloom, Mia. *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*. (Philadelphia, PA: UP Pennsylvania, 2011), 242.

<sup>120</sup> Anna King, “Islam, Women, and Violence,” *Feminist Theology* 17 no.3 (2009): 292-328. doi:10.1177/0966735009102361 (assessed March 15, 2014):322.

Khartoum, from New York to Johannesburg. We are all committed to filling our magazine with uplifting, inspiring and enlightening material to help you become the best *Muslimah* you can be, from the inside out. *Sisters* cover a range of subjects in the areas of inspiration, self, family, community, world, homes, looks, tastes and a range of reader offers and competitions. Our magazine's ethos is rooted in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, according to the understanding of the Pious Predecessors, and our inspiration is Islam as a beautiful and richly rewarding way of life.”<sup>121</sup> Next, women’s personal rights must be part of the conversation. In order to address Muslim women personal rights, “The Codification of the Law of Personal Status is the most important and pressing measure that needs to be taken. This would solve a number of problems that Muslim women face because of sharia laws.”<sup>122</sup> In addition, Saudi Arabia has been reviewing international set standards of these rights and compares them with the Family Law rules of Islamic Law as applied in Saudi Arabia.<sup>123</sup> Finally, part of counterinsurgency strategies is to know the target audience well including cultural and religious factors. Zine recommends refocusing Muslim women into a ‘feminist insurgency’ that builds communities instead of tearing communities down:

Building alliances between secular and faith-based feminists in order to challenge common oppressions is necessary in building strategic coalitions between communities of difference. By respecting and validating the differences posed by the varied social and ideological locations that Muslim women inhabit, it then becomes possible to construct strategic spaces of Muslim ‘feminist insurgency’ in the global arena.<sup>124</sup>

This is significant because it helps to better understand how U.S. counterinsurgency strategies may better address this target audience. By understanding female terrorists’ “roles as operational facilitators, organizational and personal supporters, and ideological educators [will help] to develop long-term effective and efficient counterterrorism.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *Sisters Magazine: The Magazine for fabulous Muslim Women, Who We Are, Canada.* <http://www.sisters-magazine.com/index.php>

<sup>122</sup> Almihdar, Zainah. “Human Rights of Women and Children Under the Islamic Law of Personal Status and its Application in Saudi Arabia.” *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 5, no.1 (2008): 1-15. University of Texas Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012):13.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>124</sup> Jasmine Zine, “Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: The Politics of Muslim Women’s Feminist Engagement,” *Special Issue: Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> Developments in Human Rights in the Muslim World.* *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 3, no.1: (2006):1-24. University of Texas at El Paso Library Serials. (accessed December 11, 2012): 22.

<sup>125</sup> Katherina Von Knop, “The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda’s Women,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30: 397-414. (2007). doi:10.1080/10576100701258585 (accessed December 11, 2012):412.

#### **4.1 Conclusion**

In combination to developing strong community outreach programs to avert terrorist propaganda, Muslim women are in a particular situation concerning Islam, and that of *sharia* law and addressing women's personal rights is a good start to not only understanding Muslim women but also, provide a support system in which they can turn to instead of radicalization of ideas.

Furthermore, building alliances between secular and faith-based feminists in order to challenge common oppressions is necessary in building strategic coalitions between communities of difference. Counterinsurgency strategies include working together with Muslim feminist scholars, and sociology-anthropologists whose expertise is in Muslim culture and society. Their knowledge will assist in providing a stronger understanding of Muslim women and help foil their recruitment into terrorist organizations.

**Appendix A: Jowett and O'Donnell's *Propaganda and Persuasion* model: 10-step plan of propaganda analysis.**

<p>1. Identification of ideology and purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "To understand the mindset of Al Qaeda's volunteers [westerners] must appreciate their belief system and the group's ideology, which is founded on Islamism and the pursuit of jihad."</li> <li>• "<i>Jihad</i>, bullets and martyrdom operation are the only way to destroy the degradation and disbelief which have spread in the Muslim lands."</li> </ul>
<p>2. Identification of context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al Qaeda recognizes the context in which its propaganda occurs.</li> <li>• After math of 9/11, the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the constant presence of U.S. and other western entities in Muslim lands.</li> <li>• Al Qaeda uses the U.S. wars in the Middle East to demonstrate to Muslims the power struggle between Muslims and Westerners.</li> <li>• The use of context involves knowing and understanding the historical background</li> <li>• Al Qaeda exploits Muslims longtime "held beliefs and values" in their Muslim faith to move them to action.</li> <li>• Example: Because women constitute half of the population - and one might even say that they are the population since they give birth to the next generation – the enemies of Islam are bent on preventing the Muslim woman from knowing the truth about her religion and her role, since they know all too well what would happen if women entered the field of jihad.... The nation of Islam needs women who know the truth about their religion and about the battle and its dimensions and know what is expected of them.</li> <li>• The role that Muslim women have historically played in the battlefield and the reasons a Muslim would join Jihad, reminds Muslim women of their duty.</li> <li>• Eight principle reasons for joining the jihad are: first, so that non-believers do not dominate; second, because of the scarcity of manpower; third, fear of hellfire; fourth, fulfilling the duty of jihad and responding to the call of Allah; fifth, following the footsteps of pious predecessors; sixth, establish a solid foundation as a base of Islam; seventh, protecting those who are oppressed in the land; and eighth, seeking martyrdom.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Identification of the propagandist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al Qaeda identifies itself as a leader in the struggle for <i>jihad</i>.</li> <li>• bin Laden made videos and wrote <i>fatwas</i>.</li> <li>• As leader of Al Qaeda, he spoke frequently and with authority.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Investigation of the structure of the propaganda organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bin Laden and leadership structure created a strong propaganda structure for the organization.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Identification of the target audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Al-Shamikah</i> provides a constant message; it reminds Muslim women how they are expected to behave in order to support their jihadist husbands, brothers, and fathers.</li> <li>• A Muslim woman is a female Jihad warrior always and everywhere. She is a female Jihad warrior who wages Jihad by means of funding Jihad. She wages Jihad by means of waiting for her Jihad warrior husband, and when she educates her children to that which Allah</li> </ul>

loves. She wages jihad when she supports Jihad when she calls for jihad in word, deed, belief, and prayer.

- The magazine gives women empowerment in the family structure to follow through by participating and encouraging their males in *Jihad*.
- "Women are similarly interested in power in the assigned scope by the society they are living in. This scope in fundamentalist societies is normally the family. Encouraging the male relatives to participate in a terrorism organization and supporting as well as facilitating operation gives women power and access to the public domain."
- The editorial in *Al-Shamikha* calls women to action.
- Muslims currently are suffering from enemies who are targeting them. However, there is a small group that is ready to defend Islam and Muslims. This group promised to lose their lives for the sake of their nation. As long as women represent the half of the society, at the end they represent the whole society they are the mothers, the sisters and the wives of the other half. The enemy of the society tried to push them away from this reality in addition to her ability to participate in facing the enemy. The Islamic nation is in need of real women who can undertake the responsibility of protecting their nation. Taking care of men and supporting them could achieve this type of protection.
- The editorial promotes the idea that women are contributing to the cause and have the power to make a difference. AQAP ascertains that Muslim women need to "defend Islam and Muslims" and that it is their "responsibility to protect their nation" because they are "the other half" of the equation to make *Jihad* possible. *Al-Shamikhah* creates meaning for its female-targeted audience.

#### 6. Understanding of media utilization techniques:

- *Al-Shamikha* includes interviews by mujahedeen widows. "A Heart Moving Interview with a Mohaheed Widow: Umm Muhaned"
- Umm Muhaned, god bestowed her and she became a wife of a mujahid and a mother to his children, and she is now a widow of martyr as we think of him. He has been killed in the land of jihad raiding the **Crusaders**, enemies of God may god accept him and raise his rank
- The interview begins with the introduction of the widow of a martyr who has been killed fighting the "Crusaders."
- AQAP, uses the term "Crusaders" to incite the readers and to remind them of the past abhorrent actions of The Crusades many centuries ago. AQAP delineates the similarities of the current fight that Muslims lead with the West—the new Crusaders that they must abolish from their lands.
- Many Muslims have a historical understanding and anger towards the role that the Crusades played in their religion, culture and lands.
- AQAP takes past experiences, in which Muslims and the Islamic faith were and continue to be threatened, and exploits this in its female readership of the magazine.

#### 7. Analysis of special techniques to maximize effect:

- Umm Muhaned's views seem to be similar to that of the Sisterhoods and the Global Salafi Jihad, a gender-specific interpretation of Jihad.
- "The concept of the female Jihad signifies that the women carry out the Jihad by educating, supporting, and encouraging their sons, brothers, and husbands. To reach this goal they have to prepare themselves as a struggler."
- Even bin Laden expressed clearly the role of women in the *fatawa* and in some audiotapes: ...women are playing an essential role as supporters, facilitators, and promoters in carrying out the Jihad. 'Our women had set a tremendous example for generosity in the cause of Allah; they motivate and encourage their sons, brothers and husbands to fight for the cause

of Allah. [...] Our women instigate their brothers to fight in the cause of Allah. [...] Our women encourage Jihad saying: Prepare yourself like a struggler; the matter is bigger than the words.'

- The interview delineates the role that women must play in the home and echoes bin Laden's beliefs.
- Umm Muhaned's establishes that the wife of a jihadist must be religious and accept jihad as a way of life for the marriage to work.
- In the next section, the widow discusses the Muslim folklore of Muslim women and their contribution to jihad. She romanticizes Khadija, Aisha and Safiyya's contribution to the cause.
- Not only does the interview show how much she has sacrificed, she also creates a connection to Khadija, Aisha and Safiyya's struggles to defend Muslims and Islam.
- The widow also shames those Muslim women who hesitate to participate in *Jihad*.

8. Analysis of audience reaction:

- The widow admits that the family has a critical reaction to her being the wife of jihadist.
- The widow explains the rejection of the community is one of abandonment and cowardice. AQAP's sentiments are transmitted via her interview accusing the Muslim community of forgetting both the fallen and those in prison.
- The widow values the respect and loyalty her supportive sisters and those in the community who embrace jihadists.

9. Identification and analysis of counterpropaganda:

- *Al-Shamikha* includes this section in order to provide the counterargument that many Muslim families object to their daughters being married to a Jihadist.
- The interview also acknowledges that the family knows that Jihad is the right thing to do; therefore, embarrassing the family for wanting their daughter to recant her life as a Jihadist.
- As AQAP's messenger, the widow praises those in the community who stand behind her and who believe in Jihad. In this part of the interview, AQAP's reference to the "humiliation of America" is code for 9/11.

10. Completion of an assessment and evaluation:

- The acknowledgment of support and the increase in participation is crucial for AQAP.
- The widow remarks that AQAP's recruitment efforts are successful because more than ever, there are more mujahedeen fighting.
- With affection and admiration both the widow and AQAP praise the women for their sacrifices.
- The interview ends with the widow saying that Muslim women who support Jihad are the role models that Muslim society should embrace, and that there is no greater sacrifice for God.

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