“Unlocking the Clubhouse”

Gender inclusivity and nonviolent conflict resolution methods
in countering violent extremism

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Introduction

The nature of conflict has changed since the Cold War; no longer are wars about enemy world powers combating one another through military force or the threat of military force. Instead, there are now weak unstable nations where the use of any military force further weakens government and societal infrastructure resulting in environments that foster terrorism. Counterterrorism (CT) has become the new framework of war and, for the most part, still operates through old war tactics - military force vs. military or extremist force, resulting in a never-ending cycle of violent conflict and instability. Post-9/11 CT policies and practices have “increased Islamophobia and relied on arguments about ‘saving’ women.” However, CT efforts have ignored engaging women, and instead “emboldened extremist narratives; set women and sexual minorities up to become the targets of terrorist violence; and marginalized whole communities in ways that lead women and sexual minorities within those communities to keep silent about their rights, for fear of drawing further negative attention.”

A particular challenge in current “global war on terror” strategies is that CT, disarmament, and security enforcement usually comes from outside forces, often from the same sources that provided the weapons and training in the first place. Those outside sources are blamed for the causing the violence, even if the locals were facing local oppressive regimes. In many cases, any outside involvement is seen as furthering oppression and violence. When it comes to the women we are supposed to be “saving,” it turns out many are worse off than before and would rather live under former regimes than in the current chaos they find more confining.

It has become important now more than ever to look beyond failing military strategies in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq towards nonviolent methods of “civilian-based defense” (CBD) as outlined by Gene Sharp in National Security Through Civilian-based Defense, and towards a focus on fostering “human security” over “national security” as discussed by Mary Kaldor, author of New and Old Wars. Protecting the security of the individual and the community in which he or she resides instead of the security of states and borders is what ends conflict, builds peace and stabilizes a region where countering violent extremism is the goal. Engaging and empowering women to feel secure, many are learning, is the key to making a community feel secure.

Counter violent extremism (CVE) is a growing field grounded in CT that is defined by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) as “designed to prevent individuals from engaging in violence associated with radical political, social, cultural, and religious ideologies and groups” and is “guided by the realization among policymakers that some CT approaches … exacerbated the threat and added new recruits to the ranks of terrorist groups and movements.” This desire to understand violent extremism, its causes, ways to counter it through conflict resolution, conflict

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1 Huckerby, Jane; A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism (briefing paper); CHR&GJ; http://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Briefing-English-decade-lost.pdf.
2 Id.
prevention, rule of law strengthening and promotion of peace, acceptance and resilience make the field ideal for trained peacebuilders. And as gender equity and harmony is a central aspect of peacebuilding in any society achieving sustainable peace can only be possible with the practical engagement and consideration for the rights and needs of all impacted - men and women.

This working paper reflects my ongoing research towards a thesis on non-violent strategies of CVE that encourage, engage and empower women. My belief is that the inclusivity of women in CVE strategies is key to building peace and maintaining stability in a conflicted region. In this paper, I focus on U.N. Security Resolution 1325 and the challenges of its implementation in relation to CT/CVE. I provide recent reports and case studies of gender inclusivity in CVE strategy and peacebuilding from The Institute for Inclusive Security (IIS), the United Institute of Peace (USIP), and the NYU Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ). I will conclude with a brief analysis of the IIS Pakistan program, offer recommendations for fostering inclusivity and overcoming implementation challenges and proffer questions I wish to explore further in my research.

**The need for gender inclusivity in conflict resolution, CVE, and nonviolence strategies**

In *Approaches to Peace*, David P. Barash prefaces Gene Sharp’s essay with the following question: could nonviolence be applied, as a practical matter, to the defense of modern governments? I find the question and Sharp’s concept of civilian-based defense (CBD) fascinating in its possible application towards CVE.

Sharp points out that there are at least 125 methods of nonviolent action and that they fall into three main categories: nonviolent protest, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention. Nonviolent protest he describes as being symbolic in effect, action which spreads awareness of the existence of the dissent, such as marches and vigils. Nonviolent cooperation methods, like strikes or boycotts, make it difficult for the opponent to maintain the normal efficiency and operation of the system - in some cases the system itself may be threatened by such action. Nonviolent intervention is said to share some common elements with the other two types, “but challenge the opponent more directly” - sit-ins, fasts, obstruction, etc. These methods are key for women seeking peaceful conflict resolution strategies to end violence and oppression in their communities. The Liberian women in *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, for instance, protested with marches and sit-ins and perhaps most famously, a sex strike.

Sharp also asserts that nonviolent action, of any form, can reduce the willingness of the

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3 Barash, David P.; *Approaches to Peace*, 2010; pg. 212-8.
4 Id.
5 Id.
6 Id.
7 Id.
opposition to use violence. He goes on to bring up Liddel Hart’s argument that a direct strategy - confronting the opponent head-on - consolidates the opponent’s strength.\(^9\) Indirect strategies, such as the methods of nonviolence just described, is militarily viable and the results of such action are effective when the indirectness is planned to ensure the opponent is not ready to counter it.\(^10\) Such action can demonstrate the strength of the nonviolent actors and demonstrate that the repression is unable to intimidate the people and deprive the opponent of existing support - through this way, an opponent will be less willing to continue the use of violence. Thus, it becomes imperative as a military strategy “to nullify the opposition by paralyzing the power to oppose.”\(^11\)

Mary Kaldor, author of *New and Old Wars*, offers “Human Security” as an alternative to “National Security.”\(^12\) She describes this as being about “protecting the security of the individual and the community in which they live rather than the security of states and borders.”\(^13\) While Sharp focuses on militaristic nonviolent strategies in the context of enemy states, Kaldor points out in *War Redefined* that the nature of war has changed and the “source of war is not [powerful] enemy states… it’s weak states - that’s also the source of terrorism.”\(^14\) If CVE is the new front of war, so to speak, her theory reinforces Sharp’s recommendation for states to consider CBD and nonviolent methods as military strategies. She says, “the way you deal with those wars is not through defeating them - in fact, if you use military force, you further weaken those states… that’s what happened when we went into Iraq and Afghanistan.”\(^15\)

A challenge to this is that CVE, disarmament, and security enforcement usually comes from outside forces, often from the same sources that provided the weapons and training in the first place. Those outside sources are blamed by locals for the causing the violence, even if the locals were facing local oppressive regimes prior to intervention. In many cases, any outside involvement is seen as furthering oppression and violence. This directly impacts women and sexual minorities in several ways - 1) women and sexual minorities living under repressive regimes suddenly find themselves in even more dire circumstances, 2) women and sexual minorities become less inclined to speak out out of fear, and 3) existing gender equity organizations find it difficult to continue operating as anti-terrorism financing rules end up making it difficult for organizations working on gender equality to secure funding. These rules often support only large long organizations that are capable of handling extensive auditing and reporting procedures. Women’s and LGBTI rights organizations tend to be smaller and more recently established working “under the radar” for security concerns. Such groups usually also cannot accept government funding as doing so may make it seem they are supportive of an

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\(^9\) Barash; pg. 212-8.  
\(^{10}\) *Id.*  
\(^{11}\) *Id.*  
\(^{12}\) *Id.*  
\(^{13}\) *Id.*  
\(^{14}\) *Id.*  
\(^{15}\) *Id.*
oppressive regime or espouse Western values, which can endanger or undermine their work.

Again here, it is important for policymakers and strategists to consider not only the use of nonviolence but the role of women in the countries where CVE is the goal. In *War Redefined*, of *WWP*, former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discusses the importance of alternative strategies in the “war on terror” and what should be a lesson learned by the U.S. from being in Afghanistan and Iraq, she says - “if a population doesn’t feel secure, you’re not going to win ‘hearts and minds’ ... if you’re not winning hearts and minds, they’re not going to make choices in favor of your forces, they’re going to hedge their bets and perhaps help the terrorists.” The U.S. military has seen the importance of reaching out to women as part of its strategy to win “hearts and minds.” Female engagement teams (FET), for example, have been used in Afghanistan to assess the needs of a community based on women military officers building relationships with local village women. While it is still unclear as to whether such initiatives benefit both FET officers and the local women they engage, such tactics demonstrate the influence women have in their local communities. These women may not hold positions of military or government power in their countries, but they are the most impacted by the conflict and violence occurring there and they have the power to influence the men in their communities. Making the women feel secure, thus, becomes an important part of making a community feel secure.

**U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325**

On October 31, 2000, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. The resolution was regarded as a game changer for many women’s groups, as it is the first time the Security Council required that parties in a conflict respect women’s rights and, specifically, support their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction.

The resolution includes four “pillars” that support its goals as outlined below:

- *Participation* of women at all decision-making levels. This includes national, regional, and international institutions; mechanisms for prevention, management and resolution of conflict; all peace negotiations; peace operations, as soldiers, police, and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary General.

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17 Id.
18 Id.
• **Protection** specifically of women and girls from violence that is sexual or gender-based. This includes during times of conflict, emergency and humanitarian situations, such as refugee camps.
• **Prevention** of violence against women through improving intervention strategies. This includes prosecuting those responsible for international law violations; strengthening women’s rights under national law; and supporting local women’s peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes.
• **Relief and Recovery** efforts to address international crises through a gendered lens, including respecting the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps as well as taking into account the specific needs of women and girls in the design of refugee camps and settlements.

Tracking the progress of Resolution 1325 has been difficult. As pointed out on the WWP website, there is no formal method of collecting and analyzing the response to Resolution 1325, as gender issues are not, generally speaking, addressed systematically in political actions, preventative measures and post-conflict peace building.21 In many reports and discussions, including that of the Secretary General and Security Council, respectively, rarely, if at all, is attention given to gender specific issues.22 This seems to be a task that the U.N. and individual nations have not quite figured out how to mainstream. As such, it is the reports and case studies of NGOs and community advocates working on gender and peacebuilding that provide the best insight into successful approaches and challenges faced.

**Institute for Inclusive Security (IIS)**

The IIS, formerly known as Women Waging Peace, is funded by Hunt Alternatives Fund, a private family foundation based in Cambridge, MA.23 Founded by sisters Swanee and Helen Hunt, in 1981, the Fund has contributed over $80 million to programs that advance innovative, women inclusive approaches to social change at the local, national and global levels.24 Swanee Hunt was a major contributor to *WWP* and the IIS is listed as a partner on the film’s site.25

IIS advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, particularly women, in peace processes, including preventing, resolving, and rebuilding after deadly conflicts. Its organization vision for the inclusion of women in peace processes is based on six core beliefs:26

- Women bridge divides between unlikely groups
- Women have a unique understanding of community needs
- Women have access that men don’t

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21 WomenWarPeace.org; [http://www.womenwarpeace.org/about](http://www.womenwarpeace.org/about).
22 Id.
24 Id.
Women have untapped power
Women increase the operational effectiveness of police and military forces
Women inspire a culture of inclusion for the next generation

To achieve its vision, it has four goals:27

- Strengthening the will and capacity of those who shape peace and security policy
- Providing research on why inclusion matters and guidance on how it can be achieved
- Equipping women to contribute effectively to peace processes
- Building coalitions of diverse leaders who offer practical solutions to intractable conflicts

Since 1999, it claims it has amassed a global network connecting more than 800 experts with over 5000 policy shapers in collaborations on workable solutions to long-standing conflicts.28 The organization has women in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Guatemala, Iraq, Israel & Palestine, Jordan, Liberia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Rwanda, and Sudan.29

**Resolution to Act**

In an effort to further the development of Resolution 1325 and provide nations with the support to implement related “high-impact National Action Plans (NAPs),” the IIS launched Resolution to Act in March of 2012.30 The goal of Resolution to Act “is to create, foster, and measure the impact of NAPs and related strategies.”31 Since then, the IIS estimates about 42 countries developed have NAPs.32

As discussed earlier, with limited data proving impact and no real consequences for inaction, many policy makers do not create or implement NAPs nor do they see the importance of inclusivity in post-conflict resolution. This is something that remains a challenge.

**IIS training services**

The IIS generally works in regions where there is some sort of a recognized peace process, according to Irfana Anwer, the Pakistan team leader. There are exceptions to this if there are established local partners in an area.33 Areas the IIS works in include Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, Pakistan, South Sudan and Sudan, and Syria.34

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29 *Where we work*; Institute for Inclusive Security; [http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/where-we-work/](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/where-we-work/).
32 *Id.*
33 Interview with Irfana Anwer, Pakistan Team Leader, Institute for Inclusive Security, Nov. 8, 2013.
34 *Where we work*; Institute for Inclusive Security; [http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/where-we-work/](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/where-we-work/).
When I spoke with Anwer, she described local partners as women already working on peace building/conflict resolution issues in their homelands or poised to work on such issues. She went on to point out that the IIS considers such women to be the experts. “We are not the experts,” she said and, “we’re not trying to empower them.”

Instead the IIS provides such women activists with tools and skills to achieve their own goals and enable them to overcome obstacles such as “obstructive cultural mores, deep-rooted discrimination, and disparities in educational attainment levels - that impede their participation in peace processes.” A comprehensive curriculum and toolkit are available on the IIS site for interested peace practitioners. The IIS also works towards providing women with training and mentoring, a support network, access to power brokers, in an effort to help them overcome their own insecurities and inhibitions.

The Institute also facilitates workshops and seminars on specific topics such as negotiations, transitional justice, and security-sector reform that emphasize women’s vital contributions to peace processes and practical strategies to increase women’s participation. Workshops combine presentations, discussions, role-play activities, simulations, and group work.

The IIS strives to provide three types of training:

- Training of Trainers (ToT)
- Training of Policymakers
- Training of Practitioners

**Training of Trainers (ToT):** The ToT program was launched in 2009. Through this program, the IIS aims to “create a growing pool of conflict resolution and peacebuilding experts with the knowledge and skills to train and support others in advocating for women’s inclusion. Each ToT program includes an eight-day workshop that guides 15-20 experienced trainers through IIS training methodology and curriculum. Through the ToT program participants are expected to “increase their capacities to train others in advocacy, building coalitions, message management, and strategic planning” – all aimed at facilitating women’s full inclusion in peace and security processes.

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35 Interview with Irfana Anwer.
36 Interview with Irfana Anwer.
37 Training Services; Institute for Inclusive Security; http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/explore-resources/training-services/.
38 Curriculum; Institute for Inclusive Security; http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/explore-resources/curriculum/.
40 Training Services; http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/explore-resources/training-services/.
41 Id.
42 Id.
43 Id.
44 Id.
Additionally, ToT alumni are offered resources and opportunities to continue developing their core competencies as facilitators. The support provided by IIS is dependent on the needs of the individual trainer. The IIS states that most ToT alumni participate in at least one of the following opportunities: 1) they join a resource network, which gives them access to related materials and opportunities; 2) they enter into an apprenticeship with the Institute’s training program; and/or 3) they receive technical support.\(^{45}\)

*Training of Policymakers:* The IIS is also developing a formal training program that focuses specifically on the needs of policymakers. This is said to be in response to requests for training from multi- and bi-lateral organizations such as the U.S. Department of State, the U.N., and NATO. The goals of this new training effort are to: 1) help policymakers understand the positive role women can play in resolving conflicts; and 2) assist policymakers to focus on implementation strategies, that translate rhetorical commitments on issues of women, peace, and security into tangible policies and programs. While the IIS has provided some materials for use already, a formal curriculum is still being developed.\(^{46}\)

*Training of Practitioners:* Through this program, women peace builders in conflict-affected areas convene to generate comprehensive strategies that promote women’s inclusion in their own context. The primary goal of such consultations is to provide women practitioners with the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise leadership at all levels. The aim is to increase the capacity of women as decision makers by providing them with both both peace and security knowledge and skills. These specific consultations encourage women peace practitioners to advocate, build coalitions, craft messages, plan strategically, and generate comprehensive strategies for change.\(^{47}\)

**Pakistan case-study: IIS at work, from activist training to policy recommendations**

In 2010, the IIS held its annual Colloquium, which brought together twenty women activists from around the world.\(^{48}\) During the event, Pakistani participant Mossarat Qadeem brought up the need for advancing women’s efforts to counter extremism in her homeland. The IIS partnered with Qadeem’s organization, PAIMAN Alumni Trust to build and support a coalition of Pakistani women peacebuilders dedicated to CVE. IIS and the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) matched funds to ensure two years of support for the coalition.\(^{49}\)

Over the two-year program IIS staff travelled to Pakistan four times to convene a group of Pakistani women for trust, capacity and coalition building workshops. IIS designed three specific five-day workshops and one two-day meeting to provide members with the ability to form

\(^{45}\) Id.
\(^{46}\) Id.
\(^{47}\) Id.
\(^{49}\) Id.
relationships and increase their substantive knowledge regarding women, peace and security, as well as their leadership and advocacy skills. The result of the program was the formation of a group called the “Amn-o-Nisa” that functions on two levels: 1) advocacy for policies at the national and international level to address the drivers and consequences of extremism, and 2) peacebuilding activities at the local level to promote tolerance and curb radicalization within their communities. Examples of the latter include members advocating for curriculum reform to replace primary and secondary level education materials that reinforce extremist values with ones that promote tolerance and diversity; members speaking with religious leaders and scholars to promote better understandings of Islamic teachings; members formed political alliances; members facilitated over twenty dialogue groups with local community members to talk about extremism and its impact on their communities; members also met with U.S. policymakers, including then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. The Amn-o-Nisa coalition also provided a set of policy recommendations for both U.S. and Pakistani policymakers to provide greater inclusivity of women in all aspects of governance and CVE efforts in Pakistan.

In its report, the IIS provides what seems to be a fair assessment of the program’s successes and challenges. For example, despite efforts to include a diverse set of women in its workshops, it needed to rely on PAIMAN to coordinate search efforts in Pakistan, which presented the risk of IIS not seeming neutral. Furthermore, the only women who could participate had to speak English, which automatically limited the number of women who could even be considered. Building trust among participants also seemed to be a challenge at times, interpersonal tensions became an issue that required more attention than anticipated. Not having IIS staff with actual presence in Pakistan presented a challenge, too, as they were not necessarily familiar with the sociopolitical context that the women participating were operating within.

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50 Id.
51 Id.
52 Id.
56 Id.
57 Id.
58 Id.
Recommendations

Measuring CT/CVE success through gender inclusivity. Overall, it seems the Amn-o-Nisa in Pakistan provided a lesson in experiential learning for both the participants and the IIS. With limited comprehensive studies available in this subject area, it seems persuading governments to focus on nonviolent strategies over traditional violent approaches will rest on proving not only the practicality, as Sharp and others have, but in also providing tangible results. An important question I see arising is how do we measure success of these programs?

Effective engagement of women. Also, given the lessons learned from case studies like Amn-o-Nisa in Pakistan and the challenges faced by the IIS, what are the strategies that can be implemented to train women who want to counter violent extremism in their communities? Even more broadly, how can governments begin to implement such strategies to uphold Resolution 1325?

Rethinking what we mean by “violent extremism.” Is there a possible connection between violent extremism and, for example, gang violence? Are there strategies that can be shared from those who counter gang violence and those who counter violent extremism? For instance, what could Ameena Matthews, a “violence interrupter” in south-side Chicago, teach Mossarat Qadeem in her efforts with Amn-o-Nisa in Pakistan? What could sociologists who study gang violence teach political scientists who study violent extremism?

Reforming anti-terrorism finance rules. Existing gender equity organizations find it difficult to continue operating as anti-terrorism financing rules end up making it difficult for organizations working on gender equality to secure funding. These rules often support only large long organizations that are capable of handling extensive auditing and reporting procedures. Women’s and LGBTI rights organizations tend to be smaller and more recently established working “under the radar” for security concerns. Such groups usually also cannot accept government funding as doing so may make it seem they are supportive of an oppressive regime or espouse Western values, which can endanger or undermine their work.

59 James, Steve and Kotlowitz, Alex; The Interrupters; http://interrupters.kartemquin.com/.
Additional Resources

The Institute for Inclusive Security

The United States Institute of Peace: Gender and Peacebuilding Division

*Women, War and Peace*, documentary series, PBS

Abdelkader, Deina Ali; *Islamic Activists: The Anti-Enlightenment Democrats*; April 2011

Abu-Lughod, Lila; *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*; October 2013

Bloom, Mia; *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism*; September 2011

Horgan, John; *The Psychology of Terrorism*; September 2005

Horgan, John; *Walking Away from Terrorism: Accounts of Disengagement from Radical and Extremist Movements*; May 2009

Huckerby, Jayne; *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism*, September 2011

Kurzman, Charles; *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists*; July 2011

Satterthwaite, Margaret; *Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives*; February 2013

CeaseFire Illinois

United Teen Equality Center-Lowell

*The Interrupters*, documentary film by Steve James and Alex Kotlowitz