Invisible Women: Understanding Female Involvement in Contemporary Political and Revolutionary Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The dominant narrative of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict is that of victimhood. This script has framed both the research and policy paradigms of female involvement in conflict. Hence, women’s participation has typically been perceived as minor or unimportant with highly visible instances (e.g. suicide bombers or belligerents) viewed as isolated and abnormal deviations. Furthermore, female involvement is typically attributed to personal and emotional factors – political/ideological commitment or factors beyond the individual are seldom considered. In this way, female agency, responsibility, and credibility as a belligerent or terrorist are consistently undermined. In practice this has meant that women are often prevented from engaging in post-conflict processes, particularly disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs. In the research context, the predominant focus has been on the personal reasons for women’s violent operations, rather than on developing and refining theory. As such, no overarching theory of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict existed. Methodologically, speculative and anecdotal approaches dominate in the absence of empirical research examining population level trends. Therefore, the purpose of this doctoral research was to empirically develop a theoretical framework of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict that adequately accounted for the spectrum of female participation and the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors that may influence their involvement.

This project consisted of, first, developing the theoretical framework and, second, testing the framework. Three empirical quantitative studies utilising secondary data comprised the theory development stage. Study One consisted of collating a sample of almost 500 women who were involved in a range of political and revolutionary conflicts subsequent to 1960 and systematically documenting the activities they engaged in. This study quantitatively demonstrated that the sample engaged in 45 distinct activities in conflict, thus establishing the breadth and diversity of specific activities performed by women.
Study Two involved quantitatively exploring patterns in associations between these activities, where the result was a statistically derived model consisting of four conceptual roles representing specific patterns of activity. These conceptual roles are: active, representing fighting and leadership activities; caring, representing conventional care-taking tasks; support, representing logistical and operational support tasks, and; ideological, representing activities that propagate the ideology of the group and encourage recruitment. Study Three consisted of quantitatively examining the impact of macro-level (wave of terrorism and world region) and meso-level (group/movement ideology, religious and political orientation, and specific agenda/goals) variables on the model of women’s roles in conflict. The results indicated that female involvement varied significantly across these historical, regional, and organisational/movement contexts, with the active and ideological roles varying substantially compared to the support and caring roles.

Study Four constituted the theory testing stage of the thesis. It consisted of applying the framework (in the form of the model of women’s roles and significant contextual factors) to the conflict in Northern Ireland. This case study assessed the utility of the framework through, first, utilising secondary and archival data to examine the influence of the macro-level and meso-level factors on female involvement in the conflict and, second, collecting systematic primary data to examine the influence of factors specific to the conflict context and individual on women’s involvement. The results of this case study demonstrated the utility of the framework in both research design and analysis. It facilitated an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the nature of female involvement in the conflict, including variation in involvement and the potential macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level reasons for these changes. Thus, as a whole, this project involved empirically building a theoretical framework of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict from the ground up and testing the components of the framework at each level.

This project contributes the first large-scale, empirical, quantitative, and comparative study that is focused on population level trends in female
involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The end result is the first theoretical framework that accounts for the spectrum of female involvement as well as the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors that influence involvement. This framework is empirically based, theoretically relevant, and practically useful. The findings from this doctoral research clearly demonstrate that the dominant narrative of female involvement in conflict is incomplete. Female involvement is diverse, forms coherent roles at the population level, and is influenced by factors beyond the individual. This thesis demonstrates the need for, and potential of, systematic empirical and quantitative research in establishing an evidence base for theoretical development and refinement with regards to women in conflict.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)__________________________

Lauren Katherina Vogel

Date:
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I am grateful to many others who also assisted me in this research: the Law School at Queens University Belfast for hosting me; the ex-prisoner organisation in Belfast for facilitating data collection; the participants who contributed their perspective to my research; David and June Gould for welcoming me to Belfast so warmly and assisting me so generously, and; Kate O’Donnell for her excellent proofreading and feedback in the final stages.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETA</td>
<td>Basque Homeland and Liberty, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Spain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Fuerzas Aramdas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Colombia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMLN</td>
<td>Farabundo Martí Liberation Front (El Salvador)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIA</td>
<td>Groupe Islamique Arme (Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamas</td>
<td>Islamic Resistance Movement, Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Palestine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army (Ireland/Northern Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JI</td>
<td>Jemaah Islamiyyah (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRA</td>
<td>Japanese Red Army (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KKK</td>
<td>Ku Klux Klan (United States of America)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army (Uganda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFLP</td>
<td>Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Palestine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRA</td>
<td>Provisional Irish Republican Army (Northern Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKK</td>
<td>Kurdistan Worker’s Party, Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO</td>
<td>Palestinian Liberation Organisation (Palestine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Red Army Faction, Baader-Meinhof Gang (West Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUC</td>
<td>Royal Ulster Constabulary (Northern Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUF</td>
<td>Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVF</td>
<td>Ulster Volunteer Force (Northern Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCR 1325</td>
<td>Security Council Resolution 1325</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT, RATIONALE, AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

Women have participated in conflict\(^1\) and violence throughout history and across multiple contexts. However, their involvement beyond victim and peacemaker is rarely acknowledged. Prevailing concepts of war and conflict generally depict women as victims and men as aggressors. Recent years have seen resistance lessening within scholarly research to the idea of women participating in proscribed political violence and terrorism (Gentry, 2012), resulting in a three-fold increase in publications on the topic (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). However, stereotypical beliefs about women and men in relation to conflict are still evident. This situation is compounded by predominantly speculative and anecdotal approaches to research that further reinforce these gendered understandings of conflict. Speculative research regarding why particular women – primarily suicide bombers – are involved in conflict is relatively common whilst empirical research examining population-level trends, or research regarding how women are involved, is virtually non-existent (Aoláin, Haynes, & Cahn, 2011; Cunningham, 2003; Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Similarly, within the international peace and security arena – despite public commitments and numerous official United National resolutions and declarations – limited progress has been made regarding the meaningful incorporation of women into

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\(^{1}\) The definition of ‘conflict’ will be discussed in greater detail later in this introductory chapter. Briefly, the terms conflict, political violence, extremism, and political and revolutionary conflict are used inter-changeably throughout this research with the view that these terms encompass those conflicts in which a non-state organisation or movement utilised proscribed violence in order to achieve political or revolutionary objectives. This definition includes violence commonly labelled terrorism as well as political violence and social revolutionary conflict.
peace and security processes (e.g. disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programs and conflict negotiation/resolution/transformation processes) (Charlesworth, 2008; Conaway, 2006; Norville, 2011; Pankhurst, 2003). It is apparent that, on the whole and despite women’s clear involvement in conflict, there remains a steadfast resistance within both the research and policy context to the notion that women willingly and knowingly become involved in political and revolutionary conflict.

Both research and policy consistently demonstrate gendered approaches to understanding and addressing the issue of women in conflict. The picture of women as the disproportionate victims of male-instigated violence – raped, widowed and displaced – is familiar and enduring (Utas, 2005). Indeed, the majority of the official resolutions and declarations related to the incorporation of women into peace and security processes are rooted in this very premise – that women are the primary victims of conflict and the occasionally effective but unofficial peacemakers (Charlesworth, 2008). Women who are visible aggressors within conflict are generally treated with fascination and as abnormalities in both research and policy. They are, on the whole, studied and understood in an individualised manner with a focus on high visibility women perpetrating high impact attacks (Stanski, 2006). The participation of women beyond these isolated but frequently cited examples is usually dismissed as unimportant, and women performing these tasks are portrayed, not as soldiers or combatants, but as filling unofficial auxiliary support positions of little consequence to the overall cause or outcome of the conflict itself (MacKenzie, 2009). Thus, the credibility, or even plausibility, of women’s involvement in conflict beyond being a victim or occasional peacemaker is consistently undermined. Adding to the complexity of women’s experiences of conflict is the blurring of lines that demarcate victim from perpetrator (Berko & Erez, 2008; McKay, 2008). Abduction or experiences of violence can be catalysts for initial mobilisation and, even whilst perpetrating or supporting violence, a woman may experience continued brutality that both entrenches violent behaviour and/or extremist beliefs and further isolates her from society (Denov & Maclure, 2007;
Utas, 2005). As a result of these limitations and complexities, the range of female involvement in conflict is poorly understood (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; von Knop, 2007) and generally poorly researched (Cunningham, 2003; Jacques & Taylor, 2009). There is a distinct lack of empirical research in the area of women in political violence and, as a consequence, the notable absence of a solid theoretical base from which theory development and refinement is possible.

In light of these critiques of the policy and research context regarding women in conflict, the present doctoral research is significant both theoretically and methodologically. At the theoretical level, the overarching objective of this research was to empirically develop and test a theoretical framework for understanding and studying female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict (beyond their commonly-perceived roles of victim and peacemaker) and based upon original, systematic, and empirical research. Specifically, this doctoral research empirically explored the involvement of women in political and revolutionary conflict around the world since 1960. At the methodological level, and in contrast to much of the research in the area, this doctoral research was systematic and empirical with regards to research design, incorporating multiple levels of analysis. The project was designed to consist of two stages. The first stage consisted of: sourcing a large representative sample of women involved in political and revolutionary conflict across different contexts through rigorous secondary data collection; systematically documenting the specific activities that they performed; developing a statistically-derived model of women’s roles in proscribed contemporary conflict, and; quantitatively testing this model for variation according to a variety of macro-level and meso-level factors (e.g. world region, organisational characteristics). The second stage of research comprised the application of the empirically developed model to a specific conflict in an empirical qualitative case study of the conflict in Northern Ireland that consisted of the collection of both primary and secondary data. Thus, this research project is significant to both the research and policy arena regarding
women in conflict as well as to the developing methodological milieu of conflict and terrorism research.

**Contemporary International and Policy Context: Where are the Women?**

By the turn of the millennium, the number of countries involved in conflict was greater than at any other time during the previous five decades (Moser, 2001). Contemporary history has witnessed an increasing salience of women on both ends of this conflict spectrum; three women – Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman – were jointly awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize whilst simultaneously women have become increasingly visible as suicide bombers in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Accordingly, several international initiatives have recognised the importance of women to peace and security, most notably the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Notwithstanding the valid criticisms of SCR 1325 (e.g., see Charlesworth, 2008; Pankhurst, 2003), it was a landmark document that recognised the contribution of women to peace and security both internationally and domestically. SCR 1325 built on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and was followed by Security Council Resolution 1820, amongst others. All these documents, crucially, have acknowledged and reiterated the political and social rights of women, including within conflict. Importantly, however, these documents are largely rooted in the premise that women are the disproportionate victims of conflict or have an inherent peace-making ability; both of these approaches have significant limitations (Charlesworth, 2008; Dharmapuri, 2011; Kouvo & Levine, 2008; Lockett, 2008; Pankhurst, 2003). Thus, these documents have, on the whole, neglected the role of women as perpetrators or supporters of violence and thus their needs, not just as victims, but as current and former participants in violence and conflict (Aoláin et al., 2011).
Consistent with the intent of these documents, several strands of research support the notion that women are essential to international and domestic peace and security. Recent research suggests, for example, that the inclusion of women in formal peace processes is vital in creating positive outcomes; women, in general, promote good governance, place a greater emphasis on peace and reconciliation, reduce corruption, and facilitate accountability and transparency (Conaway, 2006; Pilch, 2006). Research has also demonstrated the importance of women to economic development; a crucial factor in creating state stability and sustainable peace (Conaway, 2006; King, 2001; King & Mason, 2001; Norville, 2011; Robison, 2010). A study by Robison (2010), for instance, found that the annual percent of a state’s labour force that is female contributed to a significant reduction in the number of terrorist attacks within that state. Specifically, terrorist attacks were reduced by approximately .05 for every one percentage point increase in women’s employment. A research program spearheaded by Mary Caprioli (e.g. Caprioli, 2000, 2005; Caprioli, Hudson, McDermott, Emmett, & Ballif-Spanvill, 2007) indicates that women’s rights are crucial in a state’s international relations. Caprioli et al. (2007), for instance, demonstrated that the physical security of women (measured by relevant laws and the extent to which they are regularly and consistently reinforced\(^2\)) was a strong and independent predictor of the likelihood of a country engaging in violent interstate conflict (Caprioli et al., 2007). In fact, this variable alone explained 15 percent of the variance in the likelihood of a state’s engagement in violent militarised interstate action.

Despite these important advances in international initiatives and the support provided by research, women remain largely absent from the international relations and security arena, including as influential figures in practice and as a focus of scholarship (Enloe, 1989, 2004; Nordstrom, 2008;

\(^2\) These were laws regarding domestic violence, rape, marital rape, murder, and honour killings. There were 59 countries out of 172 (34.5%) that received the worst score regarding violence against women, where this represented a lack of proscriptive laws and/or habitually unenforced laws important to women’s domestic security.
Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). In 2008 less than eight percent of peace process participants and less than three percent of peace agreement signatories were women (UNIFEM, 2009). Furthermore, only 16 percent of peace agreements and less than eight percent of proposed post-conflict recovery budgets contained provisions that addressed women’s rights and needs (Dharmapuri, 2011). The conspicuous absence of women from conflict transformation processes and peace-building or peacekeeping initiatives is well-documented, although seldom addressed, by the international community (Anderlini, 2005; Conaway, 2006; de la Rey & McKay, 2006; McKay, 2004; Norville, 2011; Pankhurst, 2003).

Women remain particularly marginalised in the implementation of programs and strategies aimed at combatants within conflict, and are routinely excluded from participation in DDR programs. Problematically, this means that women and girls who have been involved in conflict are often denied access to skills training, education, and rehabilitation programs (McKay, 2008). In many African conflicts, for instance, women are primarily seen as ‘bush wives’ and/or as filling auxiliary support roles, rather than as combatants (Bouta, Frerks, & Bannon, 2005). A common example in the literature is that of Sierra Leone, where from 1998 to 2003 women were prevented from entering DDR programs. The prerequisite for entry – possession of a weapon – did not recognise support tasks as soldiering activities or the unique situation of many women who actively participated. Many women reported that they were ordered by their commanders to relinquish their weapons to male rebels or, alternatively, that they used weapons from a communal source during battles rather than possessing a gun themselves (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004). Women were also not eligible to participate in DDR programs or claim benefits based on their status as a rebel’s ‘wife’, unless their ‘husband’ identified them as such. This stipulation was made regardless of whether women were forced into this position or the range of additional tasks that these women were likely to have performed whilst in the rebel group (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; McKay, 2008). As a result, in Sierra Leone many women chose to remain active supporters of the conflict and, in 2002, many of them instigated and participated in violent
Chapter One: Introduction

Context and Rationale

riots (Dharmapuri, 2011). Alternatively, some female rebels fled Sierra Leone at the culmination of the conflict and joined armed groups in other countries (Dharmapuri, 2011). Whilst the example of Sierra Leone is commonly identified, a similar phenomenon has been noted in several other conflicts, including Angola (Mazurana, McKay, Carlson, & Kasper, 2002), East Timor (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2012), Mozambique (Baden, 1997), and Liberia (Bennett, Bexley, & Warnock, 1995).

This international and policy context regarding women in conflict is at odds with estimates of the prevalence of female participation in political and revolutionary conflict which is generally believed to be increasing (Cunningham, 2003; Sjoberg, 2011; Zedalis, 2008). Early empirical studies argued that women comprised a minority of specific terrorist organisations (Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Russell & Miller, 1977; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). An early profiling study conducted by Russell and Miller (1977) put women’s participation at 20 percent across a sample of 350 terrorists who participated in Middle Eastern, Latin American, West European and Japanese terrorist organisations between 1966 and 1976. Similarly, Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that 18 percent of 2512 participants in left and right wing terrorism in Italy from 1970 to 1984 were women. However, contemporary estimates suggest that women comprise anywhere between 10 and 30 percent of all armed groups worldwide (Bouta et al., 2005), between 30 to 40 percent of combatants in ethno-separatist struggles (Ness, 2007), and up to 50 percent of groups in specific conflicts, such as in Sierra Leone (MacKenzie, 2011) and Peru (Viterna, 2006). Girls alone (those under 18 years of age) were documented in armed forces and groups in 55 countries between 1990 and 2003 (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). Women are increasingly involved in martyrdom operations – a phenomenon that has attracted much international attention in recent years. In the Russian/Chechen conflict, for instance, 43 percent of suicide bombers have been female, with women involved in some manner in the execution of 81 percent of all martyrdom operations in this region (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a). Singh (2008) estimated that women globally have perpetrated 20 to
35 percent of suicide attacks. However, Bloom (2007b) found that just 15 percent of suicide bombers between 1985 and 2006 were women. Similarly, Weinberg and Eubank (2011) found that 10 percent of terrorist attacks worldwide involved women, although information regarding the gender of the perpetrator was unavailable for 89 percent of the cases included in their sample.

Whilst these prevalence figures clearly indicate that women’s involvement in conflict is significant, they are problematic as they usually only represent women’s participation in high impact operations or as active visible combatants. There are a whole range of activities that are necessary for conflict to continue and for operations to be successfully executed, including such activities as smuggling/couriering weapons and ammunition, community support tasks, indoctrination, and intelligence gathering. It is often claimed that these activities are performed by women (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; von Knop, 2008), although they are not commonly considered to constitute ‘soldiering’ when it is a woman performing them (MacKenzie, 2009; McKay, 2008). Purely pragmatically women performing these activities are valuable sources of intelligence, particularly during conflict transition phases. In contrast to many DDR programs, women in the Central African Republic and Kosovo were incorporated more effectively and were able to assist in locating hidden travel routes and weapons caches used by militants (Anderlini & Conaway, 2007; Dharmapuri, 2011). It is possible that women participate to a greater extent in more subversive activities than is commonly reported in research or policy contexts. In recognition of some of these issues, a report published by the World Bank recommended that the definition of ‘combatant’ be expanded to include support activities (Bouta et al., 2005); however it is unclear exactly what these support activities should include.

In summary, despite women’s clear and well-documented involvement in conflicts worldwide, the international community systematically ignores them and governments who continue to overlook the extent of female participation (McKay, 2008; Nordstrom, 2008). Similarly, and specifically regarding the
international policy context, the rationale for the inclusion of women in political peace and security processes (e.g. conflict resolution/transformation, DDR programs) propagated by the majority of documents and relevant stakeholders – that women are victims or natural peacemakers – is in contrast to the rationale for the inclusion of men. Men are usually considered to be the natural participants in official peace and security processes as they are the more visible and stereotypical perpetrators of conflict and violence (Parashar, 2011b). In contrast, women’s active participation in conflict is generally dismissed as isolated and abnormal whilst their participation in support activities is generally not perceived to constitute participation in conflict at all (MacKenzie, 2009). Unfortunately, including women in political peace and security processes because they are victims or inherent peacemakers limits their contribution to that of a stereotypical and often token presence (Charlesworth, 2008; Lockett, 2008; Pankhurst, 2003; West, 2004-2005). Seldom is the argument made that women should be included in political peace and security processes because they are participants in war and conflict. Parashar (2011b) argued that women are often excluded from conflict resolution and peace negotiations because they are not believed to have been participants in conflict whereas male militants are included because they have ‘fought’ for their place at the negotiating table. There is, however, one party in a conflict situation who often recognises the value and contribution of women to a paramilitary, underground, or guerrilla group – the government or security forces of the opposing side. Nordstrom (2008) reported, in relation to the conflict in Sri Lanka in the 1980s:

Women and girls were not allowed military positions or equipment, but they transported messages, munitions, supplies, and food. They were the backbone of the war: running arms, procuring survival necessities, acting as communications systems, doing reconnaissance. This fact was not lost on the government troops. Unarmed, operating without the support of a military
action, and often working alone, girls and women were easy targets. Troops caught, raped, and killed these girls and women with far less risk than they would encounter against an armed Tamil soldier. They left them in public sights as a terror-tactic and a warning (p. 72).

In this context, Nordstrom (2008) argued, women participate in war and conflict regardless of whether they have official status as combatant or not. In modern conflict, the conventional line between official ‘combatant’ and ‘non-combatant’ is blurred and the notion of battlefields or frontlines is increasingly becoming historical artefact. 

**Contemporary Research Context: Scholarly Approaches Towards Women in Conflict**

The issues observed within the international policy arena mirror, and are compounded by, the contemporary research context and the dominant scholarly approaches towards the study of women in conflict. This is seen at both the theoretical and methodological level. The advent of 9/11 resulted in a surge of public attention on terrorism and political violence and a corresponding increase in scholarly publications related to the phenomenon (H organ & Braddock, 2012). Similarly, 9/11 in combination with the increasing visibility and impact of female suicide bombers in specific conflicts resulted in a flurry of media and scholarly interest in women’s involvement in terrorism and political violence (Brunner, 2007). Unfortunately, this increased public attention and scholarly action has not necessarily equated to increased methodological rigour or theoretical progression, in either the field of terrorism and political violence or women’s involvement within this type of conflict

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3 Public discourse related to terrorism often portrays contemporary Islamist-based political violence as a new or separate phenomenon. However, terrorism and political violence have existed in various forms for centuries (Rapoport, 2004; Rasler & Thompson, 2009; Sedgwick, 2006); as has women’s involvement in it (Gentry & Sjoberg, 2011; Herrmann & Palmieri, 2010; Sjoberg, Cooke, & Reiter Neal, 2011).
(Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Silke, 2001; Victoroff, 2005). There is, currently, no universal theory of political violence or terrorism in relation to either men or women (Eager, 2008). Whilst the mainstream study of political and revolutionary conflict has typically focused on men and male-imposed threats, the scholarly work that has focused on women’s involvement has generally reinforced and perpetuated the marginalisation of women that can be observed in the international policy and political approaches towards women in conflict. Thus, whilst women’s participation in political and revolutionary conflict is generally understood to be increasing “ideologically, logistically, and regionally” (Cunningham, 2003, p.171), there is a distinct lack of corresponding scholarly progression in understanding this participation (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; Jacques & Taylor, 2009; von Knop, 2007).

One of the primary issues in the contemporary research context regarding women in conflict, similar to the international policy context, is the perception that women are primarily victims or peacemakers in conflict (Sjoberg, 2009; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; West, 2004-2005) or that the nature of their involvement has primarily been that of peripheral support (Cunningham, 2003). Consequentially, clear instances of female participation as belligerents or combatants are treated, at the theoretical level, as deviations from the norm of female behaviour in conflict. Methodologically, female belligerents have studied in an individualised manner with a focus on high visibility high impact women and operations (Brunner, 2007; Stanski, 2006). Further, as these women are viewed as abnormal, the research is almost exclusively focused on finding explanations for their behaviour; resulting in a plethora of gendered explanations for female involvement. Bloom’s (2011a) model of influences on female suicide bombers exemplifies this individual micro-level approach to understanding women’s involvement. Bloom argued that women commit suicide attacks due to the ‘four R’s plus one’: revenge for the death of a family member; redemption for past sins; because they have been influenced or coerced as a result of a relationship with a man; to gain respect from their communities, or; because they have been raped. Much of the research in the
area that takes this individualised speculative case study approach and
generalises from the specific instance to the normative population; portraying
all female involvement as stemming from a limited set of individual-level factors
garnered from a qualitative examination of a selective sample of female suicide
bombers or high visibility female operatives (O’Rourke, 2009). Problematically,
these gendered approaches implicitly deny female participants in conflict the
ability to act with agency (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; West, 2004-2005), displace
responsibility for their actions onto their communities and/or the men around
them, and refute their credibility as a terrorist by denying their political,
ideological or religious motivations.

Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry have contributed a substantial body
of work that has critiqued the prevalent approaches of much research which
portrays women’s involvement in intrinsically gendered terms (e.g. Gentry &
Sjoberg, 2011; Sjoberg, 2007, 2009, 2011; Sjoberg et al., 2011; Sjoberg &
encapsulate the gendered explanations found in the literature for women’s
involvement in proscribed political violence into three prominent narratives; that
of the mother, monster, or whore. The Mother narrative encapsulates the
portrayal of women who commit political violence as motivated by maternal or
domestic failures whereby they are avenging the loss of a loved one and/or
the destruction of a happy home. The Monster narrative symbolises the
portrayal of women involved in political violence as either insane/pathological
or somehow not a woman (e.g. a lesbian). The Whore narrative is indicative of
the portrayal of women’s involvement as stemming from an insatiable need for
sex with men, male control, or an inability to have sex with men. Commonly
these narratives intertwine in the literature, as seen in the narratives
surrounding the Black Widows of the Chechnya/Russia conflict. In these
narratives, Chechen women are depicted as perpetrating suicide attacks
because they have been widowed as a result of the conflict (Mother narrative),
iccapacitated by grief (Monster narrative) and drugged/manipulated/sold to
Chechen rebels (Whore narrative). Thus, this scholarship portrays these women
as acting out of their private domestic sphere, usually because they cannot function within it or because this sphere has been destroyed. Although Sjoberg and Gentry’s criticisms have been commonly reiterated and echoed by several scholars (e.g. M. Alison, 2004, 2009; Brunner, 2007; Shepherd, 2009; West, 2004-2005) these gendered approaches towards the study of women in political and revolutionary conflict remain as prominent features in the research arena.

With the majority of research focused on these individual-level explanations and taking a descriptive speculative approach, it is impossible to determine with reliability population-level trends in the means, extent and prevalence of women’s participation in conflict. Alison (2009) argued that examining the context of women’s political violence is crucial in addressing the aforementioned gendered perceptions. However, this is a research area in which there is a notable absence of research examining factors beyond the individual (see Cunningham, 2003; Dalton & Asal, 2011; Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992 for notable exceptions). The lack of original empirical research (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Sjoberg et al., 2011) and an over-reliance on case studies of limited rigour based on journalistic sources and impressionistic approaches to interpretation perpetuate stereotypes regarding women in conflict, over-inflate the perceived prevalence of certain types of participation, and obscure the many women who participate in political and revolutionary conflict and the myriad ways in which they do so. Aolain, Haynes and Cahn (2011) noted that women “often create the social and economic networks that support and enable violence to continue” (p. 6) – a point of view that is reiterated by several other scholars in the area (e.g. Cragin & Daly, 2009; Hackett, 2004; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Unfortunately, as much research is focused on explaining why women are involved very little work has focused on establishing exactly how women are involved and what influences their involvement. Thus, there is a distinct lack of understanding regarding the many and varied ways through which women participate in violent conflict. There is also a lack of recognition of the importance of support tasks, often performed by women, in
maintaining a militant organisation or extremist network and of the influence of context on involvement. Research in this area is critical, not only to improve knowledge of how women participate, but also to ensure effective conflict resolution and post-conflict processes as noted in the previous section. Aolain, Haynes and Cahn (2011) argued that the “quantification of and rationale for women’s political violence is grossly under-researched” and that “a nuanced focus on women as benefactors or perpetrators of systematic violence ultimately helps us better address the causes of violence and prevent its recurrence” (pp. 42-43).

**Theoretical and Analytical Approach: Levels of Analysis**

To reiterate, there is no universal theory that adequately explains the involvement of either men or women in political and revolutionary conflict (Eager, 2008). Whilst a range of theories have been applied to involvement in political violence and terrorism – including rational choice theory, the frustration-aggression hypothesis, and various forms of psychopathology – none has been able to provide a theoretically and practically plausible explanation of a phenomenon as complex and multifaceted as conflict, or terrorism and political violence specifically (Eager, 2008; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; Silke, 2001; Victoroff, 2005). Interestingly, there is limited research regarding how either men or women participate and, accordingly, the structure and day-to-day functioning of terrorist organisations and networks. A notable exception in the mainstream terrorism research arena is a review conducted by Victoroff (2005), in which he proposed a hierarchical structure of roles within terrorist organisations, including sponsor/funder; leader; executive committee; middle management; follower, and; lone wolf (see Appendix A). Victoroff argued that each role may attract, or may be more likely to be filled by, individuals with a distinct psychological makeup and who have been influenced by a distinct set of factors (e.g. social, cultural, and political). There is more literature available on why individuals initially mobilise; however, much of this research fails to
distinguish between different roles taken once involved (where involvement is commonly conceptualised as soldiering) and how these roles may be impacted by contextual factors. What is becoming increasingly apparent is that involvement in political violence and terrorism, on the part of either men or women, cannot be explained by reference to any one single factor.

As a result, scholars in the area of mainstream terrorism and political conflict research are beginning to utilise a range of factors – including, but not limited to, individual influences – to understand (male) involvement (e.g. Crenshaw, 2000; della Porta, 2012; Horgan, 2011; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Victoroff, 2005). Such an approach recognises that context is vital in understanding the involvement of individuals in conflict (Crenshaw, 2000; Viterna, 2006). This approach aligns with notions of relational autonomy, where choices “are not independent of the gendered social and political contexts of...local and global worlds” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, p. 17; see also Alison, 2011) and tactic agency, where agency “is something you maintain in relation to a social field inhabited with other actors...dependent on specific social situations” (Utas, 2005, p. 407). Individuals experience varying levels of freedom and constraint within their environments and, thus, can follow very different pathways to mobilisation and, once involved, can perform a number of activities aside from those that are purely soldiering or operational. In this sense, searching for one explanatory factor limits scholarly understanding of the revolutionary process as a whole (Viterna, 2006). In particular, emphasising solely the individual level influences on women’s involvement obscures the reality of their participation, including population level trends in the activities that women perform across multiple conflicts, their broader theoretical roles in conflict, and how specific mobilisation factors as well as broader contextual factors may influence how and why they are involved.

Accordingly, a ‘levels of analysis’ approach, incorporating the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level, was adopted in this research for both theoretical and analytical purposes. The basic proposition inherent within this
approach is that involvement in political and revolutionary conflict cannot be understood by reference to a single factor (or level of analysis), but rather that involvement (and specifically the activities and roles undertaken) is influenced by, and varies according to, a variety of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors. This approach was influenced by the work of some scholars in the area of women in conflict (e.g. Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992) and also in the mainstream area of terrorism and political violence research (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009). This approach facilitates an understanding of involvement both on a case-by-case basis and according to population-level trends across contexts. In this approach, the macro-level factors include structural and historical characteristics, the meso-level factors include organisational/network and community characteristics, and the micro-level factors include individual causes and interpersonal relationships. The levels of analysis approach is similar to the framework for understanding violence and conflict proposed by Moser (2001) specifically in relation to gender considerations in the advent of conflict. Moser’s framework incorporated multiple causal factors with a gender element – individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural (see Figure 1.1). In Moser’s framework there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the causal factors, similar to the levels of analysis approach where no single level determines violence in and of itself – rather it is the combination of all of these levels that may yield a situation in which violence or conflict occurs. However, Moser’s model has not been applied to understanding how and why women become involved in political and revolutionary conflict. Nonetheless, these approaches, on the whole, emphasise that violence and conflict is complex, context-specific and interrelated:

In a more accurately nuanced conceptualisation of the real world, violence exists along a continuum, with important reinforcing linkages between different types [of violence]. This makes it important to clarify the complexity of violence without
oversimplifying the concept, to develop conceptual congruency and to acknowledge the roles and motivations of social actors that employ violence to achieve an end (Moser, 2001, p. 36).
Figure 1.1. Framework for the causal levels of conflict and violence.⁴

⁴ Adapted from Moser (2001, p. 40).
Whilst the scholarly domain of women in conflict is dominated primarily by a focus on the individual micro-level, the analytical approach embodied within the levels of analysis approach and Moser’s gendered framework has been utilised to varying degrees by some scholars in the area of women in conflict, most notably Eager (2008) and Mason (1992); although other scholars have utilised particular aspects of this approach, for example Cunningham (2003), Cragin and Daly (2009), and Viterna (2006). Eager (2008) has been the only scholar, to the author’s knowledge, to utilise multiple levels of analysis to examine female involvement across multiple conflicts, although the methodological approach was a qualitative and selective case study based on secondary data alone rather than systematically empirical. Eager argued that the levels of analysis approach, combined with aspects of the collective action approach (see della Porta, 2012; Oberschall, 2004; Tilly, 2003), was the framework that best facilitated and explained women’s involvement in political violence around the world. However, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from Eager’s research as the case studies were selective and qualitative rather than systematic.

Mason (1992), in contrast, utilised a more systematic – although still qualitative – levels of analysis approach to understanding the involvement of women in Central American revolutions, primarily in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Mason, based on a range of data sources, argued that a combination of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors influenced differential mobilisation pathways for elite and non-elite women in Central America, resulting in distinct roles taken subsequent to mobilisation. He argued, for example, that a variety of macro-level factors (e.g. global historical and economic changes, rapid localised shifts in social and economic structures) resulted in an increase in non-elite female-headed households and urban migration. Many of these non-elite women subsequently became involved in political activism in urban centres as a means to protest their economic plight and, through a combination of personal choice and fears for personal safety from government reprisals, subsequently joined revolutionary groups. These
non-elite women, due to the skills they had gained through their experiences in political activism, demanded and were granted leadership positions. Unfortunately, the extent to which the findings from this study generalise to other contexts and conflicts is unknown as no comparative research has utilised similar factors in examining female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. However, the study conducted by Mason (1992) clearly demonstrates the potential that a levels of analysis approach has with regards to a more robust and nuanced understanding of female involvement in conflict.

As mentioned, several other studies have utilised aspects of the levels of analysis approach. Cunningham (2003), for example, examined how female involvement in terrorism varied according to world region; a macro-level variable. In comparison, Cragin and Daly (2009) focused on meso-level organisational factors in combination with an individual micro-level radicalisation process. They speculated that women’s mobilisation is influenced by a combination of individual, social, political, and organisational factors; however, they attributed the designation of women’s roles to organisational and leadership decision-making based on both strategic and opportunistic considerations. Finally, Viterna (2006) focused on how distinct combinations of micro-level factors influenced differential female mobilisation pathways into the El Salvadoran revolutionary group, the FMLN. Viterna, based on a representative sample of grassroots activists and non-activists, identified three distinct types of female guerrillas based on their differing micro-level pathways to mobilisation – the politicised guerrilla, the reluctant guerrilla, and the recruited guerrilla – where these pathways resulted from a combination of personal histories, networks, and particular situational contexts.

The studies conducted by Eager (2008), Mason (1992), Cunningham (2003), Cragin and Daly (2009), and Viterna (2006) demonstrate the utility of the levels of analysis approach, or aspects of it, for both theory-building and analytical purposes. In theoretical terms, the levels of analysis approach provides a parsimonious framework for understanding female involvement, whilst at the analytical level it provides a method by which to design empirical
research and interpret findings. Importantly, it is a framework that looks beyond the micro-level whilst still incorporating empirically sound individual influences on involvement. Thus, it facilitates research that is deliberate in avoiding stereotypically gendered understandings of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. Therefore, whilst the research domain of women in political and revolutionary conflict offers little in the way of theory at present, there are the beginnings of a more empirically and theoretically sound approach to understanding not only the roles of women in conflict but also the factors that impact upon these roles. It is the objective of this research to contribute to this developing niche within the field and, thus, the levels of analysis approach was adopted for this purpose.

**Mapping the Domain: Problems of Definition**

Contemporary discourses of political and revolutionary conflict are dominated, both in popular imagination and academia, by ideas of terrorism. A commonly accepted definition of terrorism, however, has been notoriously elusive for scholars of international law and for the United Nations (Crenshaw, 2000). Although there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism, there are some common elements across proposed academic, legal, and operationally-utilised definitions, including: actual violence or threat of violence; a political, religious or ideological objective; targeting of civilians and property; lack of an internationally accepted legal justification for the violence, and; provoking fear in a wider audience beyond the immediate victim/s (Cunningham, 2003; Kovarovic, 2011; Schmid & Jongman, 1988; Weinberg, Pedahzur, & Hirsch-Hoeftler, 2004).\(^5\) Despite these common elements, definitions

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\(^5\) Weinberg, Pedahzur, and Hirsch-Hoeftler (2004) found that recent academic definitions referenced fear or terror less frequently compared to definitions of the 1980s as per a survey of academics conducted by Schmid and Jongman (1988). Additionally, the distinctions between combatants/non-combatants and wider audience/immediate threat were mentioned less frequently in recent academic work. However, it was also found that these trends differed according to the region in which the particular scholar advancing the definition was based (Weinberg et al., 2004).
remain difficult to apply consistently in reality for several reasons, not least of which is political (Rapoport, 2002; Weinberg et al., 2004). The cliché ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’, although over-used and disputed (e.g. Ganor, 2003), aptly illustrates the ambiguous and subjective nature of terrorism; what is considered terrorism changes across according to context and perspective (B. Hoffman, 2006). Factors such as political persuasion, cultural context, and strategic interest all influence the application of the term ‘terrorism’ or ‘terrorist’ (Sjoberg et al., 2011). Research often falls back on the approach neatly encapsulated by Richardson (2006) “like pornography, we know terrorism when we see it” (see also Laqueur, 1977). However, such an approach is problematic as it is often prerogative and applied inconsistently, for example usually in relation to non-state actors. These issues of definition may not be resolved in the near future, although there have been promising developments both legally and academically (e.g. Bottomley & Bronitt, 2012; Kovarovic, 2011; Schmid, 2011).

Importantly, for this thesis, terrorism is conceptualised as a strategy utilised by individuals, groups, or movements rather than an end in and of itself (Laqueur, 1977; Rapoport, 2002; Weinberg et al., 2004). Furthermore, it does not form the sole focus of this research project. One of the primary aims of this research was to explore the full range of female involvement, beyond the perpetration of specific acts of violence and encompassing activities performed within the community or network that supports organisations which utilise violence to achieve a political or revolutionary end. Thus, this thesis was not focused on specific acts of violence (of which terrorism is a form), but on the activities that are required to maintain a proscribed movement and organisation in both the short and long term. Given these particularities of the research parameters and the problems of definition of terrorism it was decided to eschew the concept of terrorism in favour of a broader definition intended

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6 This is an approach consistent with the notion of social movement theory whereby specific proscribed organisations are viewed as stemming from a broader political or social movement (della Porta, 2012; Eager, 2008; Oberschall, 2004).
to encompass proscribed violence perpetrated in defiance of a state/s by non-state actors who endorsed political or revolutionary objectives (Moser, 2001; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Utas, 2005) generally occurring within the context of a broader asymmetrical struggle (Rasler & Thompson, 2009). Thus, this research was focused on women who were involved in some way with groups or movements that endorsed and utilised this type of violence to achieve their political or revolutionary objectives. By employing this broad definition, this study deliberately sought to avoid the debate around what constitutes terrorism and intentionally sought to include a broad range of activities performed within a variety of conflicts in the analysis, including political violence, insurgencies, and guerrilla conflict. The terms ‘conflict’, ‘political and revolutionary violence/conflict’, ‘violent conflict’, and ‘extremism’ are used interchangeably throughout this thesis in order to indicate this broad definition. The term ‘terrorism’ is used occasionally, primarily when it is utilised by other researchers and occasionally epistemologically to acknowledge the multiple ways in which conflict is understood and experienced (Hasso, 2005).

Finally, the temporal scope of this doctoral research encompassed 1960 to the present. This particular time period is consistent with Rapoport’s (2004) model of the waves of modern terrorism – discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three – and corresponds to wave three (approximately 1960 to the 1980s) and wave four (1979 to the present). Although, as noted, the focus of this research is broader than just terrorism, Rapoport’s model defines terrorism as a particular communication strategy and includes a range of socio-political and historical factors relevant to how this strategy has been utilised by a range of groups across modern history. Rapoport (2004) proposed that modern terrorism, beginning in the late 1800s, has evolved in distinct waves where each wave is driven by a prevailing ideology and globally significant events (e.g. the World Wars, the Vietnam War, the turn of the Islamic century) – organisations within each wave stem from this prevailing ideology. In this way, the new left ideology dominated the third wave, during the 1960s and 1970s, and Islamism is the dominant ideology of the present wave. Organisations
within particular waves utilised terrorism in different ways, due to distinct conceptualisations of revolution and the influence of the prevalent ideology. Whilst the specific chronology and form of Rapoport’s waves are not universally accepted (e.g. Bergesen & Lizardo, 2004; Sedgwick, 2006), the notion of distinct periods of terrorism is commonly agreed upon. Rapoport’s model is the most commonly utilised method of categorising the development of terrorism and has received empirical support (Rasler & Thompson, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). The time period encompassing the third and fourth waves was chosen in order to facilitate an examination of the influence of two distinct periods of history on female involvement. Thus, the scope of the present thesis is contemporary political and revolutionary conflict that has occurred since 1960. It includes a range of groups and extremist movements such as the socialist revolutionary movements of South and Central America, the nationalist movements in Africa and Northern Ireland, the radical left-wing groups of 1960s and 1970s Europe, and contemporary Islamist movements.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised into four sections. These sections relate to theoretical discussions, framework development, framework testing, and overall discussion and conclusion.

**Part One: Theoretical Discussions**

The aim of this section of the thesis is to provide an overview of the relevant literature in relation to female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and further develop some of the observations identified in this introductory chapter. There are three chapters included in Part One of the thesis. The first chapter addresses the literature available on how women participate in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, noting the theoretical inconsistencies regarding the specific activities that women are believed to perform whilst involved and how these activities relate to form broader conceptual roles. The prominence of anecdotal and speculative
research as well as the lack of empirical, systematic, and representative research that examines the full range of women’s involvement is highlighted throughout, leading to the first two research questions:

What specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict?

Do the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict evidence consistent patterns in associations so as to indicate the existence of a typology or model of broader conceptual roles?

The second chapter of the literature review addresses the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors identified in the literature as important considerations in women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. This chapter highlights the emphasis in scholarly work on gendered micro-level influences on women’s involvement, such as those already introduced in this chapter (e.g. Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007), and the limited attention given to macro-level (e.g. world region, wave of terrorism) and meso-level factors (e.g. ideological basis, specific agenda, and religious orientation of the movement or group). The emphasis in the scholarship on why women are involved, as opposed to how, is highlighted throughout this chapter. Again, the lack of methodological rigour and theory-building is underscored, leading to the third research question:

How does the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict vary according to a levels of analysis framework that includes the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level?

A chapter outlining the overall methodological framework follows the two literature review chapters. This chapter also contains a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods and data common across the
four empirical studies, although each chapter related to the individual studies contains a discussion of the specific methods utilised.

**Part Two: Developing the Theoretical Framework**

As indicated, Part Two contains three of the four empirical studies that comprise this thesis as a whole. These three studies are empirical and quantitative and designed to answer the first two research questions as well as part of the third research question. Overall, these three studies were designed to establish a framework for understanding and studying women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, including the impact of several macro-level and meso-level contextual factors at the population level.

**Study One.** This study involved the collection of a large representative sample of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, identified through reliable secondary sources. The specific activities (role behaviour variables) that that they performed whilst involved, as well as numerous case-related variables were systematically documented. This first study was designed to establish the full range of specific activities performed by a representative sample of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict around the world.

**Study Two.** This study involved the development of a model of women’s roles in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, based on statistical analysis of the patterns of association between the role behaviour variables (activities) that were documented in the first study. This is the first model of women’s roles in contemporary extremism that demonstrates statistically exactly how women participate and how these specific activities relate to form broad conceptual roles. This model clarifies and expands upon the research in the area that has been primarily speculative with regards to the involvement of women in conflict.

**Study Three.** This study consisted of statistically testing the model for variation in the roles of women according to several macro-level factors (world region and wave of terrorism) and meso-level factors (group/movement
ideology, group/movement religious orientation, group/movement political orientation, and group/movement agenda or goals). This study, thus, examined part of the levels of analysis framework in relation to female involvement. It extends and synthesises the research in the area that has, alternatively, argued for the utility of such an approach (Moser, 2001), applied the levels of analysis framework qualitatively (Eager, 2008) or within a specific context (Mason, 1992), or examined the impact of particular factors inherent in the framework (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; Viterna, 2006). Micro-level factors were not examined in this study as these are largely specific to particular conflicts and individuals within these conflicts and are most reliably ascertained through primary research.

**Part Three: Testing the Theoretical Framework**

The final study, comprising Part Three of this doctoral research, involved the application of the framework of women’s involvement to a specific conflict context. This study was designed to test the utility of the model and its constituent contextual macro-level and meso-level factors in understanding women’s involvement in a particular conflict; that in Northern Ireland (approximately 1969 – 1998) as chosen for several important theoretical and methodological reasons (outlined in Chapter Eight). This study consists of phase one, which utilised secondary data in order to examine the involvement of women in the Northern Irish conflict according to the model of roles and the contextual factors demonstrated as important in Part Two of the thesis. Following this analysis, phase two involved the collection of primary qualitative data in order to examine the influence of context-specific micro-level factors on women’s involvement in this conflict. This final study represents an initial test of the utility of the framework in both understanding and studying women’s involvement in conflict.
Part Four: Discussion and Conclusion

The final part of this thesis comprises an overall discussion of the findings of the research project in relation to the three research questions. It outlines the theoretical framework of female involvement in conflict developed in this doctoral research and highlights the implications for theory, research and practice as well as limitations and directions for future research. This section also contains specific discussion of the applicability of this framework in addressing some of the issues outlined in this introductory chapter, including the international and scholarly context regarding women in conflict.
CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT: ACTIVITIES AND CONCEPTUAL ROLES

Scholarly research that examines how women participate in political and revolutionary conflict is rare. Jacques and Taylor (2009), in a systematic review of female-related terrorism and conflict research, found that just 11 percent of publications since 1983 had women’s roles as the primary focus. As identified by Cunningham (2003), a consistent theme within the research domain of women in conflict is the notion that women’s involvement is relatively minor, occurring on a small scale, and primarily taking the form of auxiliary support activities. Some scholars argue, however, that women’s involvement in support positions is not minor nor of a small scale; that, in fact, these activities facilitate the long-term survival of both the group and the conflict (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Unfortunately, as large-scale empirical and comparative research in the area is rare, these claims regarding the involvement of women remain largely unsubstantiated. This is a research arena in which case studies of women who have perpetrated violent attacks or participated in noteworthy operations dominate (Cunningham, 2003; Stanski, 2006). However, case studies are unable to examine or establish population-level trends in female involvement across contexts. As such, there is a relatively large amount of information available on how specific women have participated in political and revolutionary conflict, but little information on how women participate beyond these specific instances, contributing to the phenomenon of the ‘invisible female terrorist’ (Graham, 2008).
Further compounding these issues is the fact that women are often reluctant to detail their experiences of involvement in conflict due to fear of negative repercussions by their communities or society at large (M. Alison, 2009; Aoláin et al., 2011; McKay, 2008) as well as the fact that the topic itself relates to participation in a subversive and illegal phenomenon and is difficult to research (Brannan, Esler, & Anders Strindberg, 2001; Horgan, 2011; Knox & Monaghan, 2003; Lee, 1995). On the whole, there is little research regarding population level trends and patterns in how women participate in political and revolutionary conflict – a serious gap in knowledge in terms of the development of a theoretically valid and operationally useful framework for understanding women’s involvement in conflict. This has important implications not only for theory and research but also, as will be picked up in the following chapter, for strategic and tactical decisions made by extremist groups and movements. The aim of this chapter, then, is to assess the current literature available on how women are involved in political and revolutionary conflict.

This chapter is organised according to two models that have been proposed to represent the range of roles that women have in terrorism (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Mahan & Griset, 2008). After these models have been outlined, the commonalities across both models in terms of the proposed activities and how current literature aligns with these will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the differences between the two models in terms of the range of specific activities included and the particular conceptual roles proposed as well as how the current literature reflects upon these speculations. The following section will highlight the activities that are absent from both models but which particular studies indicate are important aspects of women’s involvement in conflict. The chapter will conclude with an evaluation of both the models, in light of the literature discussed, and the research questions stemming from this scholarship.
Two Models of Women’s Roles in Terrorism

Whilst the majority of the research in the area has focused on specific cases of female involvement in conflict or on specific activities performed by women (commonly suicide bombings), in practice women perform a variety of activities. Che Guevara (1961/1985), in his infamous handbook on guerrilla warfare addressed the role of women in guerrilla conflict specifically, claiming that “the part that the woman can play in the development of a revolutionary process is of extraordinary importance” (p. 132). He subsequently listed a spectrum of activities that women could perform, including fighting, passing messages, traditional domestic tasks, teaching revolutionary theory in schools and within the guerrilla group, providing medical aid, and participating in war industry manufacture. Similarly, the data available on the women and girls who have gone through DDR programs or have accessed conflict-related services provided by the United Nations or non-government organisations (NGOs) indicates that women around the world are involved in conflict in a number of ways (Bennett et al., 1995; Bouta et al., 2005; Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2008; Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Specht, 2006; Verhey, 2004). Unfortunately, recognition and analysis of this spectrum of activities is uncommon in both the research and policy contexts – as identified in the introductory chapter. However, two scholarly works provide rare but important examples of scholarship that promote recognition of the wider range of activities that women undertake in political and revolutionary conflict. Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) provide two distinct conceptualisations of the roles of women in terrorism globally and the specific types of activities that these roles entail. Although neither model is based on systematic empirical research or a representative sample of female participants in conflict, these two models represent the first studies aimed at understanding and qualifying
the broad range of ways through which women are involved in conflict at the population level.\textsuperscript{7}

In the first instance, Mahan and Griset (2008) proposed that women fill four primary roles within modern terrorism; sympathiser, spy, warrior, and dominant force (as depicted in Figure 2.1). Mahan and Griset speculated that these four roles are hierarchically ordered, such that each role represents an increasing level of involvement and activity in the organisation on the part of the women filling the role as well as a reflection of the personal expectations of these women regarding the general status of women in society and their desire for social change as a result of female participation in the conflict. A woman filling the role of dominant force is, for example, highly incorporated and involved in the relevant group and has high expectations for an improvement in the status of women within the particular society in which the conflict occurs; in contrast to a woman filling the role of sympathiser who is peripheral to the organisation itself, harbours more traditional ideas about the status of women in society, and has limited expectations of a change in social status of women as a consequence of participation. However, this particular model, as well as the speculations regarding the organisation of the roles and respective influencing factors, was based on speculation rather than systematic research.

In contrast to the model proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008), Cragin and Daly (2009) proposed a model consisting of six roles that women have filled in 22\textsuperscript{8} terrorist organisations and networks in the last 30 years:

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\textsuperscript{7} See Appendix A for an example of a model of male roles in terrorist organisations.

\textsuperscript{8} These terrorist organisations and broader movements were: al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, al-Qaeda Central, al-Qaeda in Iraq, Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction (RAF), Chechen Separatists, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), Groupe Islamique Arme (GIA), Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Hamas), Hizballah, Jemaah Islamiyyah (JI), Japanese Red Army (JRA), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK), Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Primea Linea (Front Line), Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Red Brigades, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), Sandinista National Liberation Front, Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), and Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (Zapista Revolutionary Army).
logistician, recruiter, martyr, guerrilla, operational leader, and political vanguard (depicted in Figure 2.2). Cragin & Daly proposed no specific relationship between these roles, although they speculated (as outlined briefly in the introductory chapter) that women undergo a gradual radicalisation process resulting in mobilisation and that decision-making at the leadership level largely determines the roles that women have. Again, this model was not based on systematic empirical research but on a qualitative examination of selective secondary data related to 22 terrorist groups or movements worldwide.
Figure 2.1. Pictorial representation of Mahan and Griset’s model of women’s roles in terrorism and proposed activities.

- **Spy**
  - Acting as a decoy or messenger, gathering intelligence, spying

- **Warrior**
  - Fighting in battles

- **Dominant Force**
  - Provision of ideology, leadership, motivation, and strategy

Increasing level of activity and involvement. Increasing expectations of social change.
Figure 2.2 Pictorial representation of Cragin and Daly’s model of women’s roles in terrorism and proposed activities.
Neither model has been widely utilised in the scholarship. Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model has not been utilised at all, to the author’s knowledge.9 Mahan and Griset’s (2008) model has been utilised to varying degrees in three studies.10 Jacques and Taylor (2009), in a systematic review of the female terrorism research, utilised the model with some modifications (inclusion of a role for suicide bomber and warrior leader) in order to assess the involvement of women based on current research.11 Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) utilised the model in a qualitative study examining trends in female participation in various domestic and internationally-orientated terrorist organisations.12 Finally, Sutten (2009) recounted the model as a means by which to understand the involvement of women in terrorist organisations and highlight the need to reform counter-terrorism strategy in recognition of the involvement of women. However, there has been no attempt to empirically test or validate either model in order to accurately understand the full range of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.

As these are the only two models available in the current literature that incorporate a broad range of possible female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, they form the organising framework for this chapter. This chapter is focused, in particular, on exploring the range of activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and the differing theoretical conceptualisations regarding the broader roles that women have in this conflict. As neither Mahan and Griset’s (2008) or Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model has been empirically tested for validity, there was an opportunity to empirically explore the existence of a model of women’s roles – including whether these two models accurately reflect the reality of women’s involvement in conflict beyond terrorism and the application and usefulness of such a

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9 Except in a published article based on this doctoral research (see Vogel, Porter, & Kebbell, 2014).
10 In addition to the above article based on this doctoral research.
11 This study will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.
12 This study will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
model of women’s roles. Before discussing the involvement of women in extremism further, however, the distinction between a role and an activity in relation to women’s participation in political and revolutionary conflict must be explained.

**Definitions: Specific Activities and Conceptual Roles**

When examining women’s participation in political and revolutionary conflict, a distinction must be made between the activities that they perform and the broader conceptual role that they could be said to fill. In the context of this research, an activity is defined as a specific behavioural action performed by a woman whilst involved in an extremist movement, for example fighting in a battle, planting a bomb, or smuggling ammunition and weapons. In contrast, the notion of a role relates to the conceptual position that a woman could be said to fill in a movement based on the type of activities that she performs, for example a specific set of activities may indicate that a woman is filling a leadership role in the movement or group. The notion that observable behavioural activities are indicative of a broad conceptual role (or ‘type’) is a fundamental premise of developing a typology or model of roles. Thus, in the context of this thesis, it is hypothesised that a conceptual role is comprised of identifiable, specific, and related activities.

Additionally, it is important to note, as has been mentioned previously, that this research was interested in the full range of activities performed by women, including within specific groups but also within the wider support network or movement. In contrast to most research in the area which focuses on specific groups, this doctoral research recognises that there are a wide variety of activities that are necessary to sustain an extremist group, beyond the perpetration of specific attacks or leadership activities. These activities take place in the wider support network or community and can relate to perpetuating the conflict itself rather than supporting the specific group per se. Such an approach also incorporates the full range of possible actors within extremism, for example ‘lone wolf terrorists’ who commit an attack for a
political or religious purpose but who are not necessarily affiliated with a particular group or organisation (a relatively common feature regarding modern Islamism for example) and individuals who produce and publicise propaganda or provide material support but who are not official members of an extremist group.

**Similarities in the Models: Support, Combat and Leadership Activities**

The two models proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) are similar in some respects with both models including proposed conceptual roles that encompass the support, soldiering/combat, and leadership activities performed by women involved in political and revolutionary conflict. These specific activities are consistent with anecdotal and primary qualitative research in the area (Bennett et al., 1995; Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2008; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004). Soldiering/combat and leadership activities have received the most attention in the scholarship as they are highly visible activities and generally perceived as unusual for women to perform. In contrast, whilst women’s *en masse* involvement is commonly portrayed as entailing support activities, these activities have received far less attention in the scholarship. These support activities will be discussed first, followed by combat or militant activities and leadership positions.

**Support Activities**

Both models included categories that encompass support activities undertaken by women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Mahan and Griset (2008) proposed the role of sympathiser, entailing traditional and stereotypical feminine duties centred on nurturing and caring, such as cooking and nursing, as well as providing shelter and resources. The role of logistician proposed by Cragin and Daly (2009) encompassed many of these activities as well, including couriering (transporting resources), protecting (providing shelter and protection to group members), and acting as a decoy or lure. The last element of Cragin and Daly’s logistician role – acting as a decoy
or lure – was included within Mahan and Griset’s spy role and will, thus, be discussed in the next section which is focused on differences between the models.

It is a common and long-standing proposition that women most often perform support activities in conflict situations (Bouta et al., 2005; Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Russell & Miller, 1977). Cragin and Daly (2009) did indeed find that the logistician role was the most common role for women in to fill in the groups included in their study – women were found in this role in 21 out of the 22 groups that they examined (the Japanese Red Army was the only group that did not exhibit women performing the activities that comprised Cragin and Daly’s logistician role). Similarly, Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that women most commonly filled the sympathiser role as proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008); in European left-wing groups, the LTTE, domestic Latin American groups, the IRA, the ETA, American right-wing groups, Chechen groups, international Latin American groups, and Irish loyalist groups. Consistent with these findings, anecdotal and descriptive research and sources provide evidence of women performing these support tasks in political and revolutionary conflicts worldwide. Primary interview data from women and girls associated with armed militant groups in Liberia (Specht, 2006), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Verhey, 2004), Sri Lanka (Keairns, 2003c), Colombia (Keairns, 2003a), and the Philippines (Keairns, 2003b) all found that a substantial number of these women and girls performed tasks related to camp maintenance and care, couriering resources and weapons, and provision of resources and shelter. Similarly, Bennett, Bexley and Warnock (1995) collected interview data on the personal experiences of women living through revolutionary conflict occurring in 12 different countries worldwide in the 1980s and 1990s. They found that women commonly engaged in support activities across many of these conflicts, for example many women provided

13 The countries included in the project were El Salvador, Nicaragua, Tigray (Ethiopia), Uganda, Somaliland, Liberia, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam, Lebanon, Bosnia, and Croatia.
shelter to militant guerrilla groups as well as food and medical aid. Women in Western-based extremism have also performed these support activities. Irish women were utilised quite effectively by the IRA as couriers, for example smuggling weapons and ammunition around the country (M. Alison, 2004; Clarke, 2010). Women in other Western extremist groups, for example the Baader-Meinhof Gang, were responsible for tasks such as organising safe houses and securing/providing resources (Becker, 1977; MacDonald, 1991). Lastly, women and girls performing stereotypically feminine activities related to the role of sympathiser, particularly availability for sex (as will be picked up again later in this chapter), is a phenomenon that is well-documented in many contemporary guerrilla groups, particularly in the developing world (Graham, 2008; Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 2008).

Some scholars have also noted that women performing support activities is a particular feature of Islamist extremism (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; Noor, 2007; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Cunningham (2008) noted that women are involved in three primary ways within the global Islamist movement; through provision of support and safe havens, raising future warriors, and as perpetrators of violence. Similarly, Von Knop (2007, 2008) argued that Islamist women are utilised primarily as organisational supporters and operational facilitators. In an empirical study on Islamist women, Von Knop (2008) collected and statistically analysed data from online forums dedicated to radical Islam. She found that the forum topics coalesced around stereotypically feminine duties as endorsed by fundamentalist interpretations of Islam, including advice on how to raise children to be good Shahids (martyrs or warriors); what books to read to children to make them devout Muslims and brave fighters; how Muslim women can be supportive of their male relatives’ decision to become a

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14 This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the section in this chapter regarding recruitment.

15 This aspect will be discussed more extensively in following sections regarding combat activities and suicide operations.
martyr, and; how to provide food, care and shelter to all Shahids.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, the Women’s Information Bureau of Al-Qaeda (sometimes called al-Qaeda’s Arabian Peninsula Women’s Information Bureau) produces an online magazine called \textit{al-Khansaa}, advising women on how to combine a traditional Islamic life with \textit{jihad} (Qazi, 2011). Parashar (2011a) – who conducted fieldwork on Islamist groups in Kashmir – reported that several women she interviewed claimed that women had been instrumental in such activities as providing medical care and shelter, courirering guns and messages, and assisting with kidnappings.

Thus, the support activities performed by women evident in the scholarship are many and varied and appear to cross contexts – women performing support activities are found in different types of extremist movements, conflicts, and countries. Support activities include those within the community, such as providing resources, protection and aid to the extremist group, and may not necessarily indicate an official role within the group. In contrast, the other activities discussed in this section, such as logistical and operational support and courirering resources, may indicate a certain degree of incorporation within the group. Regardless of ‘official’ incorporation in an extremist group, these are important activities in the service of an extremist movement. Whilst these activities may not necessarily be considered militant activities in the conventional sense – and are commonly dismissed as unimportant in the literature – they sustain the extremist groups, protect them from opposing forces and maintain linkages with the broader community. Even some mainstream literature has acknowledged the importance of the support of a group’s constituent community and its ability to recruit successive generations to the cause (e.g. della Porta, 2012; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). However, whether these support activities consistently cluster and are indicative of a broader role (e.g. sympathiser or logistician) within political and revolutionary conflict is unknown.

\textsuperscript{16} The proposed reasons for these gender-specific activities within Islamist extremism will be discussed in the next chapter.
**Combat Activities**

Both Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) included roles in their respective models that encompass combat or soldiering activities performed by women in political and revolutionary conflict. Mahan and Griset labelled these women as warriors, whilst Cragin and Daly preferred the term combatants. Essentially, however, both of these roles represent women who participate in battles, skirmishes, or operations. Cragin and Daly reported that six out of the 22 groups included in their comparative descriptive analysis featured women who participated in combat activities: the LTTE, the PKK, the FARC, the Sandinistas, and the Zapista Revolutionary Army. In contrast, Mahan and Griset referred to specific examples of female combatants: Tatiana Leontiev (who attempted to assassinate the Russian tsar in the late 1800s and successfully assassinated a businessman whom she mistook for the Russian Minister of the Interior), Tamara Burke (or Comrade Tania, well-known companion of Che Guevara, and crucial in the establishment of urban guerrilla warfare in Bolivia), and Patricia Hearst (the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnap-victim-turned-perpetrator who adopted the *nom de guerre* ‘Tania’ in homage to Tamara Burke). Jacques and Taylor (2009) reported that women were found in the warrior role in European left-wing groups, the LTTE, domestic Latin American groups, the IRA, American right-wing groups, and occasionally in the ETA.

Women in combat positions in political and revolutionary conflict have long been regarded with fascination in the scholarship. Prevalence figures regarding women in conflict are generally based on women who form part of the ‘official’ combatant ranks of an armed force or guerrilla group. These women are more visible and more likely to go through DDR programs (in comparison to women in other positions), thus facilitating estimates of their
participation rates. In this regard it has been estimated that female combatants form between 10 and 30 percent of all armed groups worldwide, including regular and irregular armies (Bouta et al., 2005). Figures regarding women in irregular armies, or groups motivated by political and revolutionary causes, vary widely according to country and type of group. Ness (2007) claimed that women make up 30 to 40 percent of combatants in ethno-separatist struggles worldwide. Women reportedly comprised 30 percent of many irregular fighting forces in Latin America, for example in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia (Mason, 1992; Viterna, 2006). It has also been estimated that women’s participation has been as high as 50 percent in particular conflicts, for example in Sierra Leone (MacKenzie, 2011), Peru (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Viterna, 2006), and Sri Lanka (Cunningham, 2003). Furthermore, women have been notable combatants in Western extremism, for example in Italy (e.g. in the Red Brigades and Primea Linea) and in Germany (e.g. in the Baader-Meinhof Gang/Red Army Faction and Red Zora) in the 1960s and 1970s (Becker, 1977; de Cataldo Neuburger & Valentini, 1996; MacDonald, 1991). These figures, whilst varying substantially indicate that women performing soldiering activities are a frequent and enduring feature of many extremist movements, although certainly not all.

In addition to combat or soldiering activities, Cragin and Daly (2009) included a role for operational leader, in contrast to Mahan and Griset (2008) – although Jacques and Taylor (2009) added a role for warrior leader in their utilisation of Mahan and Griset’s (2008) model. The role of operational leader according to Cragin and Daly related to the planning and oversight of specific attacks. Cragin and Daly found that a greater number of groups featured women as operational leaders than as guerrilla fighters – eight of the 22 groups included in their descriptive analysis featured women in this role, including the RAF, the ETA, Japanese Red Army, the PFLP, Primea Linea, the

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17 Some of these prevalence figures have already been noted in the introduction to this thesis.
PIRA, the Red Brigades, and the Shining Path. Similarly, Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that women were warrior leaders\textsuperscript{18} in European left-wing groups, domestic Latin American groups, the Irish Republican Army, American right-wing groups, and occasionally the ETA. Jacques and Taylor (2009) also found women in the role of warrior leaders in the LTTE whilst Cragin and Daly (2009) found no women in the position of operational leader in this particular group in their analysis. Regardless of the specific groups in which women can be found as operational leaders or warrior leaders, it is clear from the work of Cragin and Daly (2009), Jacques and Taylor (2009) and others (Bloom, 2011a; Eager, 2008; Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2008; Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Specht, 2006) that whilst women have been portrayed in much of the literature as primarily filling support positions their participation in active combat duties is also prevalent, particularly in certain contexts. Women’s participation in combat and soldiering activities, as well as leadership within combat, goes beyond a few well-known examples of highly visible women. However, there remain inconsistencies in the literature regarding the particular contexts in which women participate in these types of activities.

\textit{Leadership Activities}

Lastly, in terms of similarity between the two models, both Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) included overall group leadership positions. Mahan and Griset labelled this category dominant force and described it as the overall provision of ideology, motivation, leadership and strategy. Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that women were commonly present as dominant forces in European left-wing groups and occasionally in the LTTE, domestic Latin American groups, and the IRA. In contrast to Mahan and Griset (2008), Cragin and Daly (2009) proposed a role labelled political vanguard that encompassed three elements: strategic visionary (provision of ideology and

\textsuperscript{18} Although not specifically defined, the term warrior leader seems to be indicative of women who occupy leadership positions in battle or operations.
strategy), central committee member (provision of strategic guidance and leadership and allocation of resources), and political official (representative of the group in a political/public arena). Thus, Cragin and Daly delineated the role of leadership into three distinct categories, including an ideological aspect, a practical element, and a political position. Cragin and Daly found that the role of political vanguard was the second most frequent role for women to have in their study, occurring in 12 of the 22 groups included in their analysis; the RAF, the ETA, Hamas, Hizballah, the Japanese Red Army, the PKK, Primea Linea, the PIRA, the Red Brigades, the Sandinistas, the Shining Path, and the Zapatista Revolutionary Army.

The first position of leadership in Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model is that of strategic visionary. These women have “revolutionised the ideology or strategy of a terrorist or insurgent group” (p 87). Cragin and Daly argued that this particular activity is relatively rare for women in extremism, occurring primarily in secular leftist organisations of the 1960s and 1970s where women were founding members of the group and, thus, had greater control over its ideology and direction. The examples they gave were Gudrun Ensslin (the RAF), Susanna Ronconi (Primea Linea), Fusako Shigenobu (the Japanese Red Army), and Kesire Yildirim (the PKK).

The second leadership position that women can fill in Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model is that of central committee member. These women participate in the decision-making bodies of their organisations, and may or may not be strategic visionaries in addition to being central committee members. However, in essence, central committee members act upon the directions provided by the strategic visionaries within the organisation. These central committee members have control over the strategic direction of the group and can sometimes be in charge of specific portfolios, for example social and charitable activities or women’s issues. Examples of women in this role given by Cragin and Daly included: Augusta LaTorre and Elena Iparraguirre of the Shining Path; Commandante Ramona of the Zapistas in Mexico; Maria Soledad Iparraguirre Guenechea of the ETA; Rima Fakhry of Hizbollah, and; Bernadette Sands-
McKeivitt who was initially associated with the PIRA. Cragin and Daly (2009) claimed that many of these women achieved their positions as a result of their familial or marriage ties to a high-ranking male member of the group, rather than through their own merit (discussed in detail in the next chapter).

The last category of leadership included in Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model is that of political official. These women are representatives of their organisations in a legitimate public political forum and may or may not have been leaders within their organisations. Cragin and Daly argued that these women are sometimes elected based on their known relationships with other group male members. Dora Maria Telles Arguello was one example given of a woman who fought for a revolutionary group (the Sandinista National Liberation Front) and, when this group achieved victory, became a minister in the newly formed government. Other examples included women belonging to the Hamas-sponsored ‘Change and Reform Party’ in Palestine and the PIRA-associated Sinn Féin political party in Northern Ireland. In some cases the women in these political parties have been involved in the associated extremist organisation and in other cases they have been solely involved in political activities – illustrating the importance of examining the involvement of women beyond the immediate extremist group or organisation.

As can be seen, the leadership role proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) is relatively narrow in comparison to the leadership role proposed by Cragin and Daly (2009), particularly with regards to politically-based activities. Further, the three specific categories included in Cragin and Daly’s leadership role are themselves comparatively broad and conceivably comprised of several activities. The position of strategic visionary, for instance, appears to include women who have founded groups as well as women who join a group later but who contribute in some way to operational, strategic or ideological shifts. Unfortunately, there is little research available to indicate the factors that influence whether women will ascend to these upper echelons, or even if there is a process akin to promotion for women within extremist groups. Mahan and Griset (2008) suggested that women who are in these leadership positions
possess greater expectations for an improvement in the position of women in the society as a whole, whilst Cragin and Daly (2009) suggested that it is the result of organisational decision-making or marriage ties. Neither factor seems plausible across all contexts (e.g. women in leadership positions in right-wing groups, female leaders who are not married). Only an empirical study utilising a female sample representative of a range contexts will be able to ascertain the causal factors of variation in female leadership of extremist movements.

**Summary: Support, Combat, and Leadership**

This section explored the activities that women have performed in service to contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in terms of the consistencies observed in two models of women’s roles in this conflict, as proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009). In terms of these consistencies, both models included roles that relate broadly to the support, combat and leadership activities that women have performed. However, whilst there was some agreement on the specific activities included in the two models, there were still inconsistencies in terms of the way these activities were conceptualised as clustering to form broader roles; Mahan and Griset proposed that the support activities formed the role of sympathiser whilst Cragin and Daly claimed that they formed a logistician role. Additionally, Cragin and Daly included decoy activities within their logistician role whilst Mahan and Griset included it in their spy role (discussed to a greater extent in the following section). Both sets of scholars consistently identified a combat role; warriors according to Mahan and Griset, combatants according to Cragin and Daly. However, Cragin and Daly also included operational leadership activities within their model whilst Mahan and Griset did not. Finally, both models included a role for leadership; dominant force (Mahan & Griset, 2008) and political vanguard (Cragin & Daly, 2009). In contrast to Mahan and Griset, Cragin and Daly further delineated their leadership role into three specific elements (practical, ideological and political). Overall, the specific activities included within both models with regards to support, combat, and leadership
activities align with the primarily anecdotal and descriptive research in the area. This may be due to the fact that these activities represent those traditionally associated with war and conflict whilst the activities discussed in the following sections are more subversive in nature, harder to detect, and not consistently recognised in either scholarship or practice.

**Differences Between the Models: Recruitment, Spying, and Suicide Bombing**

As outlined, there are consistencies in the two models in terms of commonly identified activities that women perform in extremist movements, although not necessarily in how these activities combine to form broader conceptual roles. However, there are also important differences between the two models with regards to roles for recruitment, spying, and suicide bombing. Cragin and Daly (2009) included activities related to both recruitment and suicide bombing in their model whilst Mahan and Griset (2008) did not. However, Mahan and Griset included activities in their model related to spying whilst Cragin and Daly did not. Recruitment activities and spying in the context of political and revolutionary conflict, especially when these activities are performed by women, are not consistently recognised or researched; most likely due to the secretive nature of these activities and the preferred focus in the scholarship on more conventional and/or high impact activities in connection with war and conflict. However, it is surprising that Mahan and Griset did not include suicide bombing as this perhaps the most common foci of research on women in terrorism and political violence (Brunner, 2007). This section will outline the scholarship on these activities as per the roles proposed in each of the models.

**Recruitment Activities**

Cragin and Daly (2009) proposed that women performed three activities related to recruitment: facilitating or enabling recruitment via personal contact with potential new recruits; creation and distribution of propaganda through
online means or by organising public events, and; acting as a historical conscience (either consciously or unconsciously) by passing along the story of the conflict to younger generations, thus maintaining grassroots support and ensuring future recruits or supporters. Cragin and Daly found that women featured in the recruitment role in seven out of the 22 groups included in their analysis: al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, al-Qaeda Central, Chechen separatists, the LTTE, the PIRA, the FARC, and the Shining Path. Whilst the process of indoctrination and radicalisation has been explored within mainstream terrorism literature (e.g. Bakker, 2006; Borum, 2011; della Porta, 2012; Horgan, 2008; Silke, 2008), the role that women play in facilitating the process of recruitment is seldom examined – particularly in relation to engendering community support through propaganda and re-telling the history and rationale for the conflict. However, Yuval-Davis (1998) theorised that one of women’s primary roles in nationalist conflicts is to reproduce and transmit the nationalist culture to their children, thereby ensuring the survival and reproduction of the ethnic group. Furthermore, simply the visible presence of women in an extremist movement can create the perception of moral legitimacy for the particular cause, engender public attention and community support, and encourage mobilisation (Parashar, 2011a, 2011b).

Women can be involved in the direct personal recruitment of people to a militant organisation or in promoting the cause to a wider audience. In Colombia, the FARC reportedly sends women into villages to build connections with the community, add legitimacy to the FARC’s cause, and encourage recruitment (Keairns, 2003a). The internet has become an important site for recruitment, mobilisation, and discussion of Islamism in relation to and also controlled by women (Cunningham, 2003; von Knop, 2008). Several women have been involved in producing material and maintaining websites that extol the virtues of the Islamist ideology (Cragin & Daly, 2009). In the 2006 election in Palestine, Hamas’ female wing – the Sisterhood – was crucial in mobilising female voters in an election campaign that Hamas went on to win (Cunningham, 2008). Even in White supremacy movements in the United States,
women are currently active in producing propaganda and running public events to encourage interest and greater participation in their cause (Blee, 2008; Mark, 1995). Blee (1996) reported that women are key within the Ku Klux Klan for the stabilising influence that they provide and their recruitment potential:

In order to bring in men, the men will follow the women. If a wife is against the husband’s being involved, you can...forget the husband hanging around for long...The other way, if the wife is into it, she’ll drag the husband along. I’ve seen that too many times to ignore it, so we don’t hold women back from promotions or climbing the ladder. We can’t afford to not let them have whatever positions they want to work for (p. 682 – interview conducted by Blee).

Interestingly, in these interviews conducted by Blee (1996), many of the women felt resigned to their belief in White supremacy, as though their notions regarding racial relations were a burden, and most were opposed to recruiting other family members or current/prospective children to the movement. This finding indicates the importance of comparative research that examines the context of female involvement, rather than generalising across contexts based purely on case studies.

In relation to the historical conscience aspect of the recruitment role proposed by Cragin and Daly (2009) several scholars have underscored the importance of women, and in particular mothers, in the transmission of extremist ideology. Parashar (2011b) maintained that mothers are vital in maintaining the ideology of an extremist movement and establishing public legitimacy. In Kashmir the motherhood role is revered and was particularly important in legitimising the Islamist-infused nationalist conflict beginning in 1989 and encouraging the active participation of the male population. Extremist women’s groups in Kashmir instigated moral policing of women (e.g. burqa campaigns) and actively incited men to participate in the conflict (Parashar, 2011b). Sutten (2009) argued that, as women are the primary caregivers and
teachers in the home, they are principally responsible for imparting extremist ideology to their children. Hate or extremist ideology can be difficult to reverse when a person has been indoctrinated since childhood (Burdman, 2003; Sutten, 2009). Indeed, several researchers (Burdman, 2003) have acknowledged the importance of indoctrinating children in the maintenance of extremism and, in particular, in Islamism. In Palestine, children are indoctrinated with a culture of martyrdom (Burdman, 2003; Coulson, 2004; Peiró, Lopez, & Martinez, 2009; Singer, 2006) and Bloom (2011b) reported that Madrassa schools deliberately target young girls, based on the notion that these girls will eventually educate their own children with Islamist ideology. Similarly, von Knop (2007) reported that in some schools in places such as Herat, Kabul and Peshwar girls are indoctrinated from an early age in anti-Israeli and anti-American ideology. In some schools in Peshwar, for instance, girls start a school day by singing songs that praise the glory of being a martyr and step on Israeli and American flags. They are taught that to have many children and to educate them in the way of the Shahid (martyr) is a religious obligation specifically for women. Parashar (2011a) argued that “motherhood provides greater justification for jihad, as appeals are made to the ‘mothers of Islam’ to sacrifice their sons” (p. 106; see also Parashar, 2011b). Similarly, but in an entirely different context in Northern Ireland, Keenan-Thomson (2010) argued that Cumann na mBan – a nationalist female-only organisation that existed in Northern Ireland until the late 1970s – ensured the continuation of the nationalist/republican cause by actively encouraging women to educate their children about Irish nationalism.

Thus, although recruitment activities have received less attention in the scholarship, particularly in relation to women, they appear to be particularly important to both the short-term and long-term maintenance of extremist ideology and extremist groups. Specific activities include facilitating recruitment via personal contacts (primarily through friends and family) and also producing and distributing propaganda in order to publicise the movement, specific group, or cause/objectives. There may also be a gender-specific aspect to recruitment, including the presence of women as symbols of legitimacy and the
role of women in families and communities in ensuring grassroots support into the future.

**Suicide Bombing**

A notable absence from Mahan and Griset's (2008) model, but inclusion in Cragin and Daly's (2009) model, is the role of suicide bomber. Cragin and Daly found that women acted as suicide bombers in 8 of the 22 groups they examined. These conflicts/groups included: Sri Lanka (LTTE); the global Islamist movement (those groups falling under the broad banner of al Qaeda); Palestine (including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, and the PFLP); Turkey (PKK), and; Chechnya. Ness (2005a) maintained that, given the relatively short time in which women have been participating in suicide attacks, they have carried out a disproportionate number of these operations. However, estimates of prevalence vary across sources. Stone and Pattillo (2011) reported that at least 17 organisations globally have deployed female suicide bombers in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Israel, Iraq, and Jordan. Singh (2008) estimated that women globally have perpetrated 20 to 35 percent of suicide attacks. However, Bloom (2007b) reported that women perpetrated only 15 percent of suicide attacks globally between 1985 and 2006. Female suicide bombers have been common in specific conflicts. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Speckhard and Akhmedova (2005), in a quantitative study of Chechen suicide attacks, found that women comprised 43 percent of suicide bombers in the region and were involved in some manner in the execution of 81 percent of the suicide attacks. Ness (2005b) reported that women have carried out 30 to 40 percent of attacks perpetrated by the LTTE. Regardless of exact prevalence, women have clearly participated in suicide operations in many of the conflicts and groups around the world.

Women who have perpetrated suicide attacks are largely responsible for drawing attention to the phenomenon of female involvement in politically motivated violence (Brunner, 2007; Ness, 2007; West, 2004-2005). Unfortunately, much of this research has been case studies focused on
stereotypically gendered micro-level explanations for why they perpetrated such a violent attack. Female suicide attacks are often treated as an entirely new phenomenon and taken out of the context of terrorism or other forms of female involvement (Brunner, 2007). Furthermore, a focus on the personal histories and tragedies of the women who commit these attacks completely ignores their ideological or political objectives (West, 2004-2005) and fails to take into account broader contextual factors (Dalton & Asal, 2011; O'Rourke, 2009). There is a growing acknowledgement that even suicide attacks – conventionally viewed as abnormal – stem from a broader community that endorses and supports such actions and an organisation that views it an advantageous tactical choice (Pape, 2003; Zedalis, 2008). Case study approaches tend to over-emphasise micro-level context, the occurrence of female suicide attacks, and the particular conflicts in which they occur – at the expense of understanding the full range of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflicts across a range of contexts (these points will be picked up again in the following chapter).

**Spying**

A role for spying or intelligence gathering is a notable absence from Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model of women’s roles in terrorism, although there is some overlap between Mahan and Griset’s (2008) spy role and Cragin and Daly’s logistician role – as noted previously. Mahan and Griset proposed that the spy role included activities such as acting as a decoy, messenger, or intelligence gatherer. Cragin and Daly included the activities of acting as a decoy or lure within their logistician role; however, intelligence gathering and spying are not included as activities in their model at all. Due to the secretive nature of spying it is not surprising that there is little research available, particularly with regards to women’s involvement in these activities. Jacques and Taylor (2009), however, found that women filled the role of spy in European left-wing groups, the LTTE, domestic Latin American groups, the IRA, American right-wing groups, and the ETA. There are some anecdotal instances
of female spies, for example Tamara Burke was reportedly sent to gather intelligence on the strength of Bolivia’s armed forces prior to Che Guevara launching his campaign, and Jenny Vega was revealed as a FARC spy working in a Colombian government department (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b). McKay (2008) also reported that girls in armed groups in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leone were trained as spies. Despite the inherent secrecy of spy activities and limited scholarship available, it would be reasonable to presume that activities such as intelligence gathering and spying provide valuable information to the extremist movement and are important to its overall operational success and longevity.

**Summary: Recruitment, Spying, and Suicide Bombing**

Whilst there are consistencies in the two models proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) regarding commonly acknowledged activities of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, there are also important differences. These differences lie, primarily, in the more secretive activities undertaken by women in conflict situations but also, surprisingly, in the most commonly studied female activity in current conflicts, that of suicide bombing. Cragin and Daly included roles that encompassed recruitment and suicide bombing in their model whilst Mahan and Griset did not. In contrast, Mahan and Griset included an expanded role for spying whilst Cragin and Daly neglected to include activities related to this role in their model (aside from the activities of acting as decoy or lure). The differences between the models with regards to recruitment and spying may be attributable to the limited research available on these types of secretive and subversive activities. However, suicide bombing is one of the most frequently studied phenomena within modern conflict. These inconsistencies demonstrate the need for an empirical analysis based on a large-scale representative sample in order to ascertain exactly how women participate in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.
Absences from the Models: Strategic Marriage and Sexual Relationships

The previous sections outlined activities undertaken by women in political and revolutionary conflict that have been included in either or both of the models of women’s roles proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009). There are, however, some activities that are not included in either of these models although these are activities that have been discussed to a certain extent in the scholarship on women in extremist movements. These are activities related to marriage, including marriage for strategic or tactical purposes, and sexual relationships (usually of a forced or coerced nature).

Marriage

The notion of marriage, in the context of extremism, is related in some ways to the role of recruitment, although it is not mentioned in Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model. However, the creation of family and kinship ties can be used to deliberately construct and maintain a cohesive and loyal network. In Iraq, the leaders of al-Qaeda recruited entire clans to their cause simply by marrying into these families (Sutten, 2009). Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia has also utilised strategic marriage to cement ties within cells and networks and to prevent defection by male members (Bloom, 2011b). Similarly, Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006a, 2006b) reported that many of the primary leaders of the Chechen separatist groups married strategically in Chechnya and Ingushetia in order to ensure the availability of safe houses and support from the wide-ranging kin networks of their wives (Chechen tradition obligates family members to assist one another). In fact, it has been argued that these kinship ties or marital and familial bonds are crucial in holding the organisation together and equally as important as ideology and training (Ismail, 2006; Noor, 2007; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Within the broader terrorism literature, familial ties have been posited as one of the most common methods of making contact with an extremist group, experiencing indoctrination, and eventually joining an extremist group (e.g. della Porta, 2012; Sageman, 2004). Indeed, Sageman (2008) found that three quarters of the *jihadis* he studied were married and, frequently,
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married into these terrorist networks as a means to gain trust and entry. Similarly, Bakker (2006) found that 20 percent of the 242 European al-Qaeda operatives he examined were related to the terrorist cell through kinship.

However, marriage may not just be strategic on the part of the organisation or its male members, but also on the part of the woman. Nivat (2001), a journalist who reported from Chechnya during the second conflict with Russia, reported a conversation she had with a Chechen female fighter where this particular fighter indicated that she had purposely married a male rebel as it was the only way in which she was able to participate in combat, according to traditional gender customs. Similarly, the Australian woman known as Rabiah Hutchinson, who was married at least eight times, appeared to purposely choose husbands who would be considered extremist Wahhabis and who were well connected in this regard (Neighbour, 2009). She was married to, for example, Abdul Rahim Ayub who was sent to Australia to set up the Jemaah Islamiyah cell Mantiqi4, and Abu al Walid al-Masri who was a member of al-Qaeda and confidant of Osama bin Laden. Marriage or relationships may also be utilised by women to gain access to resources or protection offered by male militants (Specht, 2006; Utas, 2005). Thus, marriage can be a specific action utilised for strategic, tactical or operational purposes on the part of either the organisation or the woman involved.

**Sexual Relationships**

The forced recruitment of women for sexual purposes is a phenomenon that has been documented in African revolutionary conflict as well as in some Latin American conflicts (Bouta et al., 2005; Coulter, 2008; Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Specht, 2006). Women are particularly vulnerable to forced or coerced sexual relationships, where extremist groups could view these as a means to maintain group stability and cohesion (Herrera & Porch, 2008). It was an activity that was alluded to in Mahan and Griset’s (2008) model as part of the sympathiser role. Mahan and Griset (2008), however, characterised these sexual relationships in terms of a ‘camp follower’ position, which is a more
accurate historical description (the example that Mahan and Griset gave was that of the women who followed Simon Bolivar’s army around Latin America during the wars of independence in the late 1800s). Whilst some women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict may have originally been abducted or coerced into joining the group, many of them go on to participate in other activities, including smuggling and concealing weapons and ammunition, taking care of base camps, and fighting (Denov & Maclure, 2007; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004). Furthermore, similar to strategic marriage discussed above, sexual relationships can be utilised by women to successfully navigate warzones and gain access to resources and protection that may not ordinarily be available to them (Specht, 2006; Utas, 2005). Thus, sexual relationships are complex aspects of conflict zones that can be utilised by both men and women.

**Summary: Strategic Marriage and Sexual Relationships**

Whilst the models proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) incorporate a broad range of activities, there are several activities that have been identified in some of scholarship that are not included in either model. One activity relates to marriage/partnership for strategic purposes on the part of the group to maintain and build networks or on the part of the woman to facilitate her entry and continued involvement in the movement or group. This is an element of marriage and network cohesion/building, which is not commonly acknowledged within the research arena. The second activity relates to sexual relationships and usually where these have been forced or coerced. Whilst this particular activity does not indicate a choice to become involved, often once incorporated into groups these women participate in many other activities related to group maintenance and operations. Both marriage and sexual relationships may also be utilised by women to navigate conflict zones and gain access to resources and protection. These particular activities are unique to women’s complex experiences in political and revolutionary conflict.
Evaluation and Conclusion: Specific Activities, Conceptual Roles, and Two Models of Female Roles

The activities that women perform whilst involved in political and revolutionary conflict – whether as part of a group or broader extremist movement – are many and varied, as has been detailed throughout this chapter. Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) have proposed two distinct models that categorise these numerous activities into broad conceptual roles that women could be said to fill in terrorism. Whether these models apply to women’s activities and roles in conflict beyond terrorism is unknown. Overall, there are similarities in the two models in terms of support, combat and leadership activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict; although these various activities are conceptualised in different ways across the two models. However, whilst there are similarities in the models, there are also notable differences between them (in terms of roles for recruitment, spying and suicide bombing) and absences from both models (in terms of strategic marriage and sexual relationships). As has been noted throughout this chapter, there is a distinct difference between the specific activities that women perform (where this can be considered to be observable behavioural characteristics) and the role that they fill (where this can be considered to be more conceptually or theoretically relevant, but based upon specific constellations of observable activities). Overall, both models contain a number of activities where each of these specific activities is consistent with research in the area. However, both models also exhibit some notable absences. However, the primary inconsistencies between the models occur at the conceptual level; relating to the way in which these specific activities are proposed to constellate.

This problematic aspect of both models can be attributed to interpretive differences on the part of the researchers as well as to methodological issues in both the construction of the two models and the research in the area. The two models are based upon either impressions garnered from knowledge of the
area (Mahan & Griset, 2008) or selective qualitative research based on secondary sources (Cragin & Daly, 2009). Neither model is based upon on research that is systematic, comparative, or strictly empirical in approach or on a representative sample of women involved in conflict; however, problematically, neither is the majority of research in the area. The lack of systematic empirical research makes it impossible to ascertain the existence or nature of population level trends in female involvement and, thus, the construction of a representative model of conceptual roles is hindered. A qualitative examination of the research in the area – as has been the approach of most previous research – reveals numerous activities that women perform whilst involved in political and revolutionary conflict. However, any hypotheses generated from this type of unsystematic approach regarding the ways in which these activities relate and, thus, form conceptual roles is hypothetical in the absence of verifiable empirical research. Systematic empirical research is needed to assess, first, how women participate in conflict, and, second, if and how these activities constellate.

Such research would be able explore patterns in activities performed by a (representative) sample of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, establish what activities are indicative of a woman filling a particular role within an organisation or movement, whether these roles are mutually exclusive, and, finally, how these roles vary according to a variety of contextual factors. As the roles of women in extremism have not been empirically established, it is impossible to determine the factors that impact on the development of a particular role and if a particular type of woman is more likely to fill a specific role (della Porta, 2012; Eager, 2008; Victoroff, 2005). However, as the majority of the research in the area of women’s participation in conflict has been descriptive and unsystematic, it is impossible to determine with reliability population-level trends in the means, extent and prevalence of women’s participation. The literature on female terrorism in general lacks methodological rigor and strong theoretical hypothesis generation and testing – there is a dearth of quantitative work examining female participation in
extremism (Jacques & Taylor, 2009) and population level data are generally incident-focused rather than participant-focused. Accordingly, in light of these critiques and the scholarship outlined above, the following research questions were posed:

Research question 1: What specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict?

Research question 2: Do the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict evidence consistent patterns in associations so as to indicate the existence of a typology or model of broader conceptual roles?
CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE FEMALE INVOLVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT: A LEVELS OF ANALYSIS APPROACH

Whilst the scholarship on women in political and revolutionary conflict indicates the breadth of activities that women perform, the way in which these activities constellate to form conceptual roles is seldom examined, particularly empirically (as reviewed in the previous chapter). Similarly, there is limited understanding of the range of contextual factors that impact upon these activities and, by extension, the roles that women have in conflict. As outlined in the introductory chapter, much of the research on women in conflict and terrorism has focused on explaining why women have been involved in high profile or high impact attacks, where much of this research has focused on individual micro-level gendered explanations for involvement, for example attributing their involvement to the coercion of men, psychological instability, or traumatic experiences (Brunner, 2007; Ness, 2005b; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Stanski, 2006). This reductionist approach to understanding women in conflict denies them agency and responsibility (West, 2004-2005), and refutes their credibility as a ‘terrorist’. This approach also neglects the broader context of involvement and, thus, limits scholarly understanding of women in conflict (Viterna, 2006). The focus on explaining why women are involved in conflict also negates the questions of how they are involved and what influences this involvement. In contrast to these approaches, the levels of analysis approach outlined in the introductory chapter suggests that there are a range of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors that are important considerations in involvement in extremism. However, factors beyond a limited set of...
stereotypical individual influences are rarely examined in the research on women in conflict – although there have been some notable exceptions (Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992; Viterna, 2006).\(^{19}\)

Problematically, much of the research in the area of women in conflict tends to generalise individual-level explanations from the specific instance to the normative population of female participants, with no evidence-base to suggest that this is valid (O'Rourke, 2009; Qazi, 2011). There is little evidence to suggest, for example, that the specific experiences of a small number of female suicide bombers in the Middle East are applicable to female suicide bombers in Sri Lanka or female combatants in Northern Ireland. As highlighted throughout this thesis, the limited number of comparative empirical studies that focus on population level trends means that generalisations or comparisons regarding factors that influence female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict are difficult to make with validity or reliability. Studies by Dalton and Asal (2011), Jacques and Taylor (2008; 2009; 2013), and O'Rourke (2009) are notable and recent occurrences within the field. In addition to the problems outlined above, current research exhibits little delineation between factors that influence initial mobilisation and those that influence subsequent activities (and, thus, roles); a point that will be addressed in some detail throughout this chapter.

The focus on micro-level influences on only particular types of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict means that the complexity of conflict and women’s participation is obscured by research based on conjecture rather than illuminated by empirical contributions to evidence-based theory. Clearly approaches that focus on individual women, whilst a good starting point for generating research questions and interest, are no longer adequate in terms of generating quality research that addresses the

\(^{19}\) The mainstream literature includes a much larger variety of factors in a levels of analysis approach to understanding terrorism and political violence (e.g. LaFree & Ackerman, 2009). This thesis was primarily interested in those factors which have been proposed to influence the involvement in women in political and revolutionary conflict in some way, as will be outlined throughout this chapter.
fundamental questions required to build a theory of female involvement in contemporary conflict (Sjoberg et al., 2011). The aim of this chapter, then, is to explore the current state of research regarding the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors suggested as important considerations in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Important macro-level factors are examined first and are related to the particular era in which the extremist movement occurred (as defined by the wave of terrorism, representing temporal trends in socio-historical and political extremist ideologies) and world region (representing particular cultural and social contexts). Meso-level factors will be outlined subsequently and include ideological basis of the movement/group, global and religious orientation of the group/movement, the specific goals and aims of the movement/group, and the broader strategic and tactical advantages inherent in the use of female operatives and members. Lastly, the micro-level factors identified in the literature will be discussed, including personal relationships, psychological characteristics and experiences of trauma, exploitation, particular biographical and demographical characteristics, and ideological or political commitment. Within this context the notion of involvement includes motivations and recruitment patterns, but the primary intent is to explore how these elements influence the subsequent activities that women engage in and, thus, the roles that they could be said to perform in the organisation or movement. The chapter will conclude with an integrated discussion of the multiple levels of analysis and the research question stemming from this scholarship.

**Macro-level Factors Influencing Women’s Involvement in Political and Revolutionary Conflict**

Macro-level factors are seldom examined in relation to women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. However, these broader influences are crucial in providing a context for the conflict itself and for examining population-level trends in the nature of involvement across time and
context. In the levels of analysis approach, the political and social milieu is vital in understanding the development of extremist movements and organisations (Eager, 2008; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009). Thus, world region and socio-political and historical context are important – but often neglected – considerations in the study of political and revolutionary conflict and women’s participation within it. In this thesis, Rapoport’s (2004) model of the waves of terrorism is utilised to examine women’s involvement across time according to an established theory whilst the possible influence of social, political, economic, and cultural factors in particular world regions is examined based on Cunningham’s (2003) analysis, with some important additions.

**Historical and Socio-political Context: The Waves of Modern Terrorism**

In order to understand trends in women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, it is important to examine historical patterns in the influence of global social, economic and political contexts on the development of extremist movements and organisations. An understanding of the way in which these socio-historical forces shape the extremist movements of particular generations is vital in understanding women’s participation in these movements (Braungart & Braungart, 1992). A part of this is an understanding of cohort effects, or the shared socialisation experiences of an age group within a particular society and time period (Eager, 2008). In this regard, Rapoport (2004) introduced a useful and well-known model of modern terrorism incorporating the notion of terrorism evolving in four waves influenced by both a prevailing ideology and major global events. The notion of terrorism evolving in waves is commonly accepted, although the exact form of these waves is somewhat disputed (e.g. see Bergesen and Lizardo (2004) and Sedgwick (2006) for alternative identification and chronology of waves). Rapoport’s model of terrorism waves is utilised in the present thesis, however, as it is the most commonly utilised and has received empirical support (Rasler & Thompson, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). Although the focus of this thesis is broader
than terrorism, Rapoport’s model is equally broad and includes a range of political and revolutionary conflicts. Rapoport’s model offers the most parsimonious manner by which to examine temporal/historical patterns in female involvement in terrorism.

In the waves of terrorism model, terrorism is viewed as having evolved across time according to various historical, socio-political and economic factors as well as globally significant events. Each of the four waves in Rapoport’s model is driven by a dominant idea; thus, a wave is:

A cycle of activity in a given time period...characterised by expansion and contraction phases. A crucial feature is its international character; similar activities occur in several countries, driven by a common predominant energy that shapes the participating groups’ characteristics and mutual relationships (Rapoport, 2004, p. 47).

Although each wave begins in a particular locale, the rebel groups and organisations involved in a wave will exhibit similar tactics and goals that distinguish them from groups in other waves (Rapoport, 2002). Whilst goals are specific to locale, several states experience similar extremist activity in any given wave (Rapoport, 2002; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). In this way, there is an international element to most extremist organisations or groups. Terror itself, in Rapoport’s view (2002) is a form of modern communication, utilised when old forms of communicating discontent (e.g. producing pamphlets, organising demonstrations) are no longer effective at encouraging and sustaining revolutions. Thus, terrorism is a strategy or tactic rather than a goal (see also Weinberg et al., 2004). Rapoport claimed that there have been four waves of modern terrorism thus far, beginning in the 1880s and continuing into the present day, where the name of each wave indicates the dominant energy of the period. The four waves are: the anarchist wave (1880s to the 1920s); the anticolonial or national independence wave (1920s to the 1960s); the New Left wave (1960s to the 1980s), and; the religious wave (1980s to the present).
Each wave of terrorism is comprised of specific extremist organisations; however, each organisation has a different life cycle. An organisation seldom lasts for the length of the wave’s cycle, or beyond the end of the wave (organisations like the IRA and the PLO are exceptions). A wave ends when its energy no longer inspires the creation of new organisations, although there is not a strict temporal demarcation between waves. The first three waves lasted about a generation whilst the fourth wave is on-going (although Rapoport (2004) predicted that it will disappear by 2025, at which point a new fifth wave may emerge). Revolution is the ultimate aim in each wave but it is understood and conceptualised differently. The focus of the present thesis was contemporary political and revolutionary conflict occurring from 1960 to the present, deliberately chosen as it coincided with the third and fourth waves of modern terrorism in Rapoport’s model. This approach facilitated the examination of women’s involvement according to an established theory regarding distinct historical periods in both terrorism and global socio-political context.

The 1960s has been called ‘the age of terrorism’ due to the increasingly widespread nature of politically motivated revolutionary movements and associated violence (Laqueur, 1977). The third wave was triggered by the political and social milieu of the 1960s, and Weinberg and Eubank (2010) identified three distinct regional centres for this wave; Western Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. The Vietnam War, in combination with issues related to the exploitative nature of capitalism, prompted enormous ambivalence in the Western world, particularly among the youth (Rapoport, 2002, 2004; Weinberg & Eubank, 2011). In some instances, the fascist legacy of WWII facilitated the rise of a new left ideology (Eager, 2008). The results can be seen in the massive protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the alternative lifestyle movement, and the founding of many ‘New Left’ extremist groups who viewed themselves as vanguards for the third world masses. Many of these New Left terrorist groups in the West stemmed from an increasing disillusionment with official left-wing political parties and organisations as well
as the increase in university attendance with these academic institutions becoming common sites for the New Left movement (Eager, 2008).

International hijackings, hostage crises, kidappings, and assassination of prominent figures were all popular tactics employed by third wave groups and occurred in the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. Rapoport (2004) argued that women, who had generally been in support roles in the second wave emerged as prominent visible leaders and fighters in the third wave. Rapoport linked this rise to the prominence of women’s rights in the time period, although he does not posit a causal link. The formation of these third wave terrorist groups did, however, correspond to a general period of social change and an increased focus on civil rights and social issues of particular relevance to women, such as divorce, abortion, education, and employment, particularly in the West (Cunningham, 2003; Weinberg & Eubank, 2011). The feminist movement gained momentum throughout much of the world and a particular brand of feminism – radical militant feminism – was endorsed by some feminists leading to the formation of several women’s-only violent extremist groups (e.g. the Society for Cutting Up Men, or SCUM). Much of the feminist movement, similar to the wider New Left movement, was centred on academic institutions (Eager, 2008). Women were prominent figures, and even founders, of many New Left groups in the West, including the Red Brigades and Primea Linea (the Front Line) in Italy, the RAF or Baader-Meinhof Gang in West Germany, and the Weather Underground in the United States.

The success of the Viet Cong against the technologically superior United States was a particularly significant event of the third wave era, and it infused other third-world revolutionary groups with hope for their own success. After the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) replaced the Viet Cong as the heroic model (Rapoport, 2002, 2004). The PLO emerged as the umbrella organisation for the various groups committed to the continuing – but now subversive – struggle against
Israel in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War.\textsuperscript{20} Although the groups included under the umbrella of the PLO differed markedly in ideology (e.g. some groups espoused Marxist/Leninist ideas as well as nationalist goals and Islamist ideology) they were all committed to the overthrow of Israel. Fatah, headed by Yassir Arafat, was the largest organisation; however, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) rose to prominence as they led the initial change in tactic from Fedayeen raids (‘people’s war’) on newly Israeli-captured West Bank to conventional terrorist tactics perpetrated largely in Western Europe (Weinberg & Eubank, 2011). Leila Khaled, involved in the first skyjacking in 1968, became one of the most infamous PFLP members. However, Palestinian women also participated as underground fighters and in support and logistical positions (Cragin & Daly, 2009; MacDonald, 1991).

Latin America also witnessed the rise of several revolutionary movements in the third wave. Rural guerrilla warfare modelled on Castro’s successful revolution in Cuba failed to achieve the same success in other countries in this region (Weinberg & Eubank, 2011). The urban guerrilla movement grew out of these failed revolutions and campaigns utilising this tactic were waged across the continent (Rapoport, 2002). Women participated in large numbers in these left-wing guerrilla movements including in Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Peru (Viterna, 2006) and have been especially prominent in specific groups, particularly the FARC and Shining Path (Cunningham, 2003). Women in these groups have been combatants and leaders in addition to filling support positions (Bennett et al., 1995). In some cases prominent women who had participated in the armed struggle were given ministerial positions in the case of successful revolutions, for example Dora Maria Telles Arguello (identified in the previous chapter). Ultimately, although some notable groups persisted (in Nepal, Spain, the United Kingdom, Peru, and Colombia), the third wave diminished as international police cooperation

\textsuperscript{20} The Six Day War was a short-lived conflict in which Israel decisively defeated a coalition of Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The war resulted in the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the West Bank falling under Israeli control.
became increasingly effective at combating international terrorism (Rapoport, 2002, 2004). The world grew less interested in New Left ideology with the conclusion of the Cold War and attention turned towards developments in the Middle East.

The fourth wave of modern terrorism, the religious wave, can be traced to developments in the Islamic world beginning in 1979. Elements of religion have always been present in modern terrorism, primarily because religious and ethnic identities often overlap. The struggles in Armenia, Macedonia, Ireland, Cyprus, French Canada, Israel, and Palestine all had religious elements; however, the goal in these cases was to create a separate secular state rather than a religious one. In contrast, in the fourth wave, religion supplies the justifications and organising principles for a new state (Rapoport, 2004). Islamist groups have perpetrated “the most significant, deadly, and profoundly international attacks” in this wave (Rapoport, 2004, p. 61). Furthermore, Islam itself has underscored the political events that were crucial in instigating the fourth wave and the success achieved as a result of Islamist terrorism has had a significant impact on other groups and conflicts of the wave (Rapoport, 2004). However, extreme forms of other religious ideology have become prevalent in the fourth wave, including Christianity, Sikhism, and Judaism (Rapoport, 2002; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). Additionally, some previously secular conflicts have become fused with a religious ideology, for example the Chechen separatist struggle with Russia that became fused with Islamism (Weinberg & Eubank, 2011).

There were three events that triggered the fourth wave, all occurring in the Islamic world. In 1979 a new Islamic century began, the Iranian Revolution occurred and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan (Rapoport, 2002, 2004). Although there were undoubtedly localised causes, it is noteworthy that Islamist terrorism appeared almost simultaneously at the turn of the Islamic century – in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The successful Iranian Revolution demonstrated that religion now held more political appeal than did the third wave ‘New Left’ secular ethos. The Iranian Revolution
inspired Islamist movements in other countries, and Iran also provided practical support to some of these movements, notably in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Lebanon. It was in Lebanon that suicide bombing or martyrdom operations were introduced with success (Rapoport, 2004). Suicide bombings became the tactical innovation of religious terrorism (Rapoport, 2002). Interestingly, however, it was the LTTE in Sri Lanka, a secular organisation, which most successfully utilised suicide bombings. Between 1983 and 2000 they utilised suicide bombers more than all Islamist groups combined (Rapoport, 2004), with women carrying out 30 – 40 percent of these suicide operations (Ness, 2005b). Palestinian and Chechen groups have also increasingly utilised suicide attacks, including several instances of female-perpetrated attacks. Female suicide bombers in Chechnya – a region in which a largely secular nationalist conflict became fused with Islamist ideology – paved the way for female suicide operations in other parts of the Islamic world, most notably in Palestine (Ness, 2005b).

Also occurring in 1979 was the Soviet Union’s unprovoked invasion of Afghanistan. Resistance in Afghanistan was strengthened by volunteers from all over the Sunni world and by the United States who hoped to bring the cold war to a decisive end. The Soviets were pushed out of Afghanistan by 1989, precipitating the collapse of the Soviet Union. The third wave, although it had been petering out since the late 1970s, was conclusively ended as religion succeeded in eliminating a secular communist superpower. Soviet-controlled lands such as Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Bosnia, and Azerbaijan became an important focus for Islamist rebels and the influx of Islamist veterans of the Afghan war strengthened these conflicts.

Whilst Rapoport (2004) implied that women have rarely participated in the fourth wave of terrorism, particularly in comparison to the third wave, there is a developing argument in the scholarship that women participate in more covert activities in Islamist extremism in line with strict gender demarcations regarding activities performed by men and women in traditional interpretations of Islamic texts (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007,
2008) (as identified in the previous chapter and picked up in more detail later in this chapter). Thus, it may not be that women participate less, as Rapoport (2004) proposed, but that they participate in different and less visible capacities (von Knop, 2007, 2008). This highlights the need to examine the range of participation in extremism, beyond operational or combat involvement.

In summary, it can be seen that the historical development of extremism may be an important consideration in female involvement, as encapsulated by Rapoport’s model of the waves of modern terrorism. However, the involvement of women according to waves of terrorism has received only a cursory examination in the scholarship. Rapoport (2004) briefly outlined some important ways in which the waves of terrorism and, thus, the development of extremism and associated socio-political context, may have impacted upon the ways in which women have participated. Rapoport (2004) suggested that women participated quite extensively in extremist groups and movements of the third wave whilst their participation has been less evident in the fourth wave. In contrast, research in the area of women in conflict suggests that female participation is on the rise (Cunningham, 2003; Sjoberg et al., 2011; Zedalis, 2008). Some scholars (e.g. Cunningham, 2008; von Knop, 2007, 2008) have noted that women may not necessarily be less important to the committal of terrorism in the fourth wave, but that the dominant Islamist ideology may dictate their involvement in different less visible capacities. Furthermore, whilst Islamism is the dominant extremist movement of the present wave, there are other movements or groups in which women, and occasionally girls, feature in a variety of positions, for example in Sri Lanka in the LTTE (M. Alison, 2009, 2011; Keairns, 2003c; O'Rourke, 2009), in several African revolutionary groups (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; McKay, 2008; McKay & Mazurana, 2004) and in numerous Latin American groups (Keairns, 2003a; Mason, 1992; Stanski, 2006; Viterna, 2006). However, as no research has examined the involvement of women according to the waves of terrorism – except for Weinberg and Eubank’s (2011) brief qualitative description referenced throughout this section.
- it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions based on the current scholarship.

**World Region**

The concept of world region, in the context of this thesis, is related to how the cultural, social, and political traditions inherent within specific regions of the world may influence the involvement of women in political and revolutionary conflict. Any understanding of political violence and terrorism must take into account the context of the country in which it occurs in addition to global factors (Sedgwick, 2006). Exploring the regional involvement of women facilitates an assessment of global patterns in female involvement in conflict. Unfortunately, very little comparative research has been conducted examining systematic regional differences in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict—Cunningham’s (2003) descriptive comparative study on female involvement in multiple world regions is an exception. Whilst some factors within regions, such as states in democratic transition or failed states, have been demonstrated in the mainstream literature to influence the emergence of terrorism itself (LaFree & Ackerman, 2009) the effect on the involvement of women has not been adequately explored. Dalton and Asal (2011) found, in a quantitative study, that the level of democracy within a country did not predict the involvement of women in violent attacks but that a higher level of economic development and a lower level of women’s social rights did. However, the effect of such variables on other types of female involvement beyond violent operations is unknown. Overall, Cunningham (2003) concluded that female involvement in terrorism was “widening ideologically, logistically, and regionally” (p. 171) in line with other scholars in the area (Bloom, 2011a; Ness, 2007; Zedalis, 2008). The present section regarding regional female involvement will take Cunningham’s (2003) study as a starting point and expand upon her findings as appropriate utilising region-specific research that has focused on how the cultural,
economic, social and/or political context has impacted the involvement of women in conflict.

The European region has a long history of terrorism and political violence. Modern terrorism began here in the late 1800s (Rapoport, 2004) and there is a history of fascism and separatist movements in specific states within the region (Eager, 2008). In both North America and Europe there is a recent history of social change, particularly regarding women’s status in these societies, and both regions were significantly impacted by the leftist political and social milieu of the 1960s and 1970s, including the civil rights movement (as outlined in the previous section). Much of the political violence in this time period in Europe occurred in states that had recently undergone democratic transition post WWII (e.g. West Germany, Italy); a factor that has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the emergence of terrorism (LaFree & Ackerman, 2009) although not necessarily on the militant involvement of women (Dalton & Asal, 2011). Generally countries in Europe have higher economic development – a factor that Dalton and Asal (2011) found had a positive relationship with women’s violent involvement in conflict. In general, Europe, like North America, tends towards a liberal social and cultural tradition (Cunningham, 2003). Perhaps as a result of all these factors, there exists large variability in female involvement in European extremist movements. Women have featured in both left-wing and right-wing extremism with goals ranging from separatism to socialism and they have performed a large range of activities whilst involved, including support and logistical functions, recruitment, operational tasks, and leadership (Cunningham, 2003).

Eastern Europe, however, has a distinct social and cultural milieu to Western Europe. This was the specific region in which modern terrorism began, according to Rapoport’s (2004) analysis, with the emergence of anarchism in Russia in the late 1800s. It also features states in various stages of democratic transition or failed states, both in present times and historically, which may have influenced the emergence of terrorism (LaFree & Ackerman, 2009), as well as a lower level of women’s social rights which may have
influenced the presence of women in violent militant capacities (Dalton & Asal, 2011). There has been a long history of female engagement in extremism in the region, from anarchism to the present day and most notably in Russia (A. Knight, 1979; Weinberg & Eubank, 2011). Of particular note, in terms of the temporal focus of this thesis, is women’s involvement in the two recent Chechen/Russian conflicts. It was a female-perpetrated suicide attack in this conflict in 2000 that sparked an upsurge in scholarly interest in women in extremist conflict and a re-assessment of the role of women in religious terrorism by both Islamist clerics and the academic world (Cunningham, 2008). Since then there has been a plethora of publications – of varying quality – related to female suicide bombers in this region, or Black Widows as they have come to be known (e.g. Banner, 2008; Conley, 2004; W. A. Knight & Narazhna, 2005; Koyuncu, 2011; Mostov, 1995; Nivat, 2001; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a, 2006b; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008; Stack, 2011; West, 2004-2005). However, women have been involved in other ways in this conflict, despite the almost singular attention paid to suicide operations, for example in support positions and recruitment (Cunningham, 2008; Nivat, 2001). The Chechen conflict is a nationalist/separatist conflict that has become fused with Islamist ideology over time (Murphy, 2010). Furthermore, prior to the conflicts, Chechen women were reasonably modernised, in large part due to the former Soviet policies that emphasised female education and employment (Cunningham, 2008; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008). However, elements of a conservative traditional society were prevalent, particularly regarding gender relations. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2008) argued that this is replicated in suicide operations where men take the lead and the women follow their orders. Furthermore, they argued that women might be more likely than men to perpetrate a suicide attack as, due to restrictive cultural and social norms, there are fewer options available to women in terms of active violent participation (i.e. in combat activities).

Female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict in North America exhibits similar trends to Western Europe in terms of the variability
and range of activities that women have been observed to perform; however, there are also several distinguishing features with regards to this region. The first is the existence of quite defined and distinct strands of international and domestic terrorism where these strands appear to influence the activities that women perform (Cunningham, 2003). Cunningham (2003) argued that in international terrorism in Northern America women tend to be affiliated with a particular expatriate or immigrant community that, in turn, has links to terrorist groups or movements abroad. In this form of terrorism, Northern America, and particularly the United States, is important for financial, logistical and ideological support and women can be found performing activities related to these purposes, such as fundraising and recruiting (Cunningham, 2003). In contrast, domestic terrorism in the United States is comprised of three distinct strands: right-wing extremism, comprised of the White supremacy and patriot movements; leftist extremism, currently linked primarily to Puerto Rican nationalism but in recent history to socialist/New Left ideology, and; special interest groups, such as extremist environmental and anti-abortion movements (Cunningham, 2003). On the whole, these domestic extremist movements are increasingly targeting women, resulting in a diverse occupational and generational group (Cunningham, 2003). In general, in right-wing groups women tend to have limited leadership roles whilst in leftist groups they tend to fill a large variety of positions (Cunningham, 2003) – the White supremacist movement, however, appears to an exception (Blee, 1996, 2002, 2008). The extent and type of female involvement in special interest groups remains largely unknown. In addition to these distinctive strands of terrorism, also unique to the North American region is the prevalence of social and political freedoms that facilitate travel, communications, and the advancement of an extremist agenda (Cunningham, 2003). Finally, the region has high economic development, which Dalton and Asal (2011) found predicted the deployment of women in violent attacks.

Latin America is a region that features a substantial ‘youth bulge’, generalised poverty, and a lower level of women’s social rights. Women have
been involved in numerous revolutionary movements in this region despite a
dominant culture of 'machismo' (Cunningham, 2003). Whilst the continuing
domination of men in the top leadership positions of revolutionary groups in
Latin America has been attributed to this culture of 'machismo' (Cunningham,
2003; Lobao, 1990; Reif, 1986) women have formed 30 percent of several left-
wing guerrilla movements since 1960, for example, in El Salvador, Nicaragua,
Mexico, and Guatemala (Cunningham, 2003; Mason, 1992; Viterna, 2006). Mason
(1992), in a unique study that explicitly utilised and linked the three levels of
analysis, found that after WWII there was a fundamental shift in global and
state economic conditions that impacted upon rural farming and social
structures in many Latin American countries in unique ways. Lucrative
economic markets in North America and Europe emerged after World War II
and resulted in a changed opportunity structure for the landed elite in Central
America whereby crop production for external international markets became
more profitable than participating in local commerce and food production.21
This led to the forced displacement of large numbers of peasant subsistence
farmers and their families as land ownership became increasingly concentrated
into large commercial estates. Cheaper seasonal workers replaced permanent
rural workers and smallholders were forced into financial insolvency through
the manipulation of credit and other services that bound them to the local
landed patron. The forced displacement of large numbers of peasant families
into the landless or land-poor segment of the rural work force dramatically
reduced employment opportunities and many men who had formerly been
breadwinners abandoned their families.

Women subsequently became the sole income earners and heads of
household, with many moving their families to urban areas in search of
employment. These non-elite women gradually became involved in grassroots
political activism as a means to address their immediate economic

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21 This is a phenomenon termed dependent development whereby a country's economy
becomes centralised around the production of goods and commodities for, and thus
dependent upon, more developed Western countries.
disadvantage and, simultaneously, activist organisations increasingly mobilised these women in support of economic and political reform. As a result, these women increasingly became the targets of government repression and violence and many of these non-elite women joined guerrilla forces as much for the cause advocated by the groups as the relative protection they offered against government brutality (see also Lobao, 1990). Due to the individual and interpersonal skills that these women had developed as a result of their political activism, they pushed for and were given increasing responsibility and leadership roles within these groups. Thus, Mason explicitly linked the three levels of analysis together and demonstrated how each level contributed to female involvement in conflict in Central America. In addition to these region-specific factors proposed by Mason (1992), Lobao (1990) attributed women’s involvement in left-wing guerrilla movements in Uruguay, Nicaragua, and El Salvador to an increased organisational and individual awareness of feminism, women’s historical involvement in previous struggles in these countries, and a revolutionary strategy that was based on mass mobilisation of the population and protracted struggle. However, the applicability of these factors beyond Latin America is unknown as comparative regional research is lacking.

The region of South Asia exhibits some similarity in context to Latin America; Cunningham (2003) observed a similar ‘youth bulge’ and generalised poverty in South Asia. However, conflict in South Asia has not generated nearly the same amount or type of research that Latin America has so it is difficult to ascertain if these similar regional characteristics have led to similar patterns in women’s involvement. In contrast to Latin America, women are notable as suicide bombers in South Asian conflicts, as in the Middle East/North Africa and parts of Eastern Europe (Cunningham, 2003; Zedalis, 2008). Indeed, as already noted, the LTTE of Sri Lanka is the organisation that most successfully utilised suicide attacks as part of their strategy (Rapoport, 2004). Women performed a substantial number of these attacks – one of the most infamous being Dhanu, a female suicide bomber who successfully assassinated Rajiv Gandhi, the ex-prime minister of India. Some estimates put female suicide
bombers in Sri Lanka as high as 40 percent (Ness, 2005a). They were incorporated into the suicide division known as the Black Tigers with their male counterparts (Eager, 2008; Stack-O’Connor, 2007). A lower level of women’s social rights, in general, in this region is consistent with the involvement of women in violent militant capacities (Dalton & Asal, 2011). Although female suicide bombers comprise the main focus of study in this region, women have also been active in combat and support positions (Eager, 2008; Fair, 2004) and, in some cases, in propaganda and recruitment (M. Alison, 2009, 2011; Parashar, 2011a, 2011b).

Several countries in the region of South Asia suffer from the long-term consequences of colonisation by European countries, for example Sri Lanka, India, and Vietnam (Eager, 2008). In South Asia, like in Africa, the common colonisation policy of creating, entrenching, and/or exacerbating ethnic divisions fostered enmities that have survived into the present (Eager, 2008) and planted the seeds for contemporary conflicts (M. Alison, 2011). As a result, freedom and liberation have become important goals for many of the political and revolutionary movements in the region of South Asia. In South Asia, women have often been portrayed as the core symbols of national identity (Cunningham, 2003). In Sri Lanka, for instance, women are encouraged to be the bearers of Tamil honour and identity (Eager, 2008). Female LTTE cadres commonly featured on recruitment posters, evoking the notion of women as symbols of nationalism (Eager, 2008; Fair, 2004). Eager (2008) proposed that these posters represented multiple intentions: to overcome resistance towards female fighters rooted in traditional gender norms; to publicise the LTTE’s gender platform by emphasising women’s ability to participate in combat, and; to incite the male population to participate, given the obvious involvement of women in traditional ‘men’s work’. Parashar (2011b) noted similar trends in the Kashmir region in terms of how women are represented, although the infiltration of Islamist militants from Pakistan has also had a unique effect on this conflict. Traditional Islamist beliefs regarding gender roles have rendered women’s participation largely invisible and silent in the dominant Kashmir
conflict narrative despite the fact that their involvement has been substantial, including in support, protests and encouragement, leading extremist women’s groups, and some participation in fighting (Parashar, 2011a). In addition to the symbolism associated with women and nationalism, the traditional notion of maternal and female sacrifice is a common cultural norm in South Asia and has been extended to the ideology surrounding suicide bombing (Cunningham, 2003). A final notable trend regarding research on South Asian conflict is the personalisation of women’s motives and an undermining of their capacity and agency to perpetrate political violence, particularly in relation to suicide bombers and similar to the Middle East/North Africa region (Cunningham, 2003).

There has been a sustained but varied history of women’s involvement in conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. Both religion and nationalism feature in conflicts in this region; although women have been observed to feature more prominently in the secular-based movements of the region (Cunningham, 2003, 2008; Ness, 2005a). Similar to South Asia, the level of women’s social rights is low in this region which may influence their involvement in violent operations (Dalton & Asal, 2011). Women in this region are seldom visible in combat positions, but they do feature as suicide bombers and in support functions (Cunningham, 2003). Like South Asia, women as suicide bombers have received much attention in the Middle East/North Africa, and are responsible (along with their counterparts in South Asia and Eastern Europe) for the surge in interest in female involvement in extremism (Brunner, 2007). Cunningham (2003) argued that movements in the Middle East/North Africa have been influenced by increased security, operational constraints, and the potential for increased publicity in their selection of women for suicide operations. In contrast to South Asia where the ideology for suicide bombing is bound up in traditional notions of female sacrifice, the ideology regarding suicide bombing in the Middle East/North Africa is more religiously focused although, in this context, religion is used in an instrumental manner (Cunningham, 2008). Regional attitudinal changes towards women – in the
Middle East, Eastern Europe and to some extent in South Asia – have influenced changes in the global Islamist movement regarding the appropriate roles for women in Islamism, and particularly in jihad (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008). As a result, several scholars have predicted that, as the religious scope for women’s participation in Islamism increases, their involvement in the Middle East/North Africa will continue to increase into the future (Ness, 2005a; Zedalis, 2008).

The Palestinian/Israeli conflict has received substantial attention in the scholarship with regards to women’s involvement, particularly as female suicide bombers are a prominent feature (e.g. Berko & Erez, 2005, 2006; Berko, Erez, & Globokar, 2010; Burdman, 2003; Cunningham, 2008; Erez & Berko, 2007; Grinshpan, 2009; Hasso, 2005; Israeli, 2004; Ness, 2005a; Schweitzer, 2006). However, women’s involvement in the Palestinian conflict has a long history, including involvement during the 1967 conflict, and the first and second intifada in a range of support, community, and occasionally combat positions (Cunningham, 2008; Ness, 2005a). As noted with regards to South Asia, scholarship on female participants in political and revolutionary conflict in the Middle East/North Africa has consistently focused on female suicide bombers and their personal reasons for involvement, such as rape, coercion, and family loss or tragedy – despite a developing body of work which suggests that women’s involvement in suicide operations is complex, multifaceted, and not solely the result of personal factors (Cunningham, 2003; Nacos, 2008; Patkin, 2004; Zedalis, 2008). Berko and Erez (2008) argued that Palestinian culture is a crucial factor in women’s suicide attacks; “the collectivist nature of Palestinian/Arab society, its gender relations, male privilege, and female expected behaviour illuminate Palestinian women’s pathways to suicide terrorism” (p. 150). Whether this culture affects the involvement of women in other ways has received less attention in the scholarship. It has been proposed

22 This issue will be discussed at greater length in the following section detailing meso-level factors relevant to female involvement.
that conflicts with an element of Islamism – applicable to many conflicts in the Middle East/North Africa – are restricted with regards to the activities that women can undertake, although the specific use and instrumental interpretation of Islamism may vary according to specific conflict or regional context (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; von Knop, 2007, 2008).

Finally, the region of sub-Saharan Africa, although not included in Cunningham’s (2003) analysis, exhibits some similar trends to both South Asia and Latin America, including generalised poverty and low levels of women’s social rights. Similar to South Asia, the after-effects of European colonisation have contributed substantially to the development of political and revolutionary conflict in Africa, as have the policies of international financial institutions, and the interests of transnational corporations; “many of these conflicts, and almost all the weapons, are the legacy of colonial powers, superpower rivals, or commercial interests” (Turshen, 1998, p. 6). Violent conflict – including wars of liberation, civil wars, and political violence – has characterised much of the recent history of the continent of Africa with the result that African societies are persistently militarised (Turshen, 1998; Volman, 1998). Cock (1989) defined this type of militarisation as “mobilisation for war through the penetration of the military, its power and influence, into more and more social arenas, until the military have a primacy in state and society” (p. 51; see also Turshen, 1998). This type of militarisation is all-pervasive; violence and terror are entrenched and become the everyday norm (Turshen, 1998; Volman, 1998).

23 See McKay (2008) for a rationale for the inclusion of particular African revolutions in the present study of political and revolutionary conflict. McKay argued, with regards to conflict in Africa, that “targeting civilians for horrific and capricious acts of terror conveys powerful political and psychological messages and creates widespread fear that is characteristic of terrorism” (p. 167) and, furthermore, that “terrorism as it occurs during civil wars is directed against people and also occurs indirectly by targeting their community infrastructures and those who work in humanitarian relief operations to make continued civilian existence possible” (p. 168). This particular study by McKay (2008) examined the participation of girl soldiers in the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone; however, see also Mazurana, McKay, Carlson and Kasper (2002) and Graham (2008) for additional studies that have conceptualised particular African revolutions in a similar manner.
Abductions, torture, and rape are common occurrences in conflict in Africa, and the presence of child soldiers is also notable (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2008; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 2008; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Specht, 2006; Turshen, 1998). Abduction of women and forced sexual servitude are not features unique to the region of Africa, occurring also in some Latin American and Asian conflicts (Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 2008). However, as was noted in the previous chapter, this phenomenon does not mean that women are not participants in the movement (Denov & Maclure, 2007; Utas, 2005). In fact, it can mean that women have engaged in the more hidden aspects of a guerrilla movement such as weapons smuggling and logistical activities (Anderlini & Conaway, 2007; Dharmapuri, 2011). There is often less focus on these additional activities at the expense of the inclusion of women in political peace and security processes, as was observed in the introduction to this thesis.

In summary, both similarities and differences can be observed with regards to the regional involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. These regional trends may be indicative of the social, cultural, economic, and political milieu particular to regions of the world. Thus, Europe and North America, with comparable liberal traditions and high economic development, feature women in a range of positions from support to leadership. Eastern Europe, however, does not appear to fit this regional trend and is perhaps more akin to the Middle East/North Africa. Latin America, South Asia, and the Middle East/North Africa all feature ‘youth bulges’, generalised poverty, states in various stages of democratic transition or that have failed, and – at a broad level – traditional notions regarding appropriate gender roles and activities. Some research on Latin American has explored how these factors may influence the involvement of women, including initial mobilisation and subsequent roles, in guerrilla groups (Lobao, 1990; Mason, 1992). However, whether these findings apply to South Asia and the Middle East/North Africa is unknown, as no systematic empirical research has been conducted examining regional female involvement. Observationally, though,
there are significant differences in female involvement between all these three regions, particularly in the use of female suicide bombers, the different ideological framing of female suicide operations, and the prevalence of female combatants and leaders. Similar colonisation histories for Africa and South Asia have also been noted, which may have resulted in comparable liberatory revolutionary groups and movements (M. Alison, 2009; Eager, 2008). However, again observationally, women appear to be involved differently in these regions, particularly with regards to the prevalence of abduction as a recruitment tactic and subsequent forced sexual servitude. Problematically, the trends outlined above are based on observational or descriptive data, and there is little empirically-based systematic data regarding the specific population-level regional trends in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and, thus, how the particular societies and cultural norms of regions may influence female involvement.

**Summary of Macro-level Factors**

Macro-level factors, although seldom examined in relation to female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict are nonetheless important factors for consideration, as highlighted throughout this section. Two macro-level factors – wave of terrorism and world region – have been proposed as important variables by which female involvement in conflict may vary, although empirical research is scarce and the findings from qualitative research are mixed and generally inconclusive. Rapoport (2004) suggested that women were involved to a greater extent in the first wave of terrorism (1960s-1980s) compared to the fourth wave of terrorism (1979-present); however other scholars (e.g. Cunningham, 2003; Ness, 2005a, 2007; Zedalis, 2008) have proposed that women’s involvement is increasing in present terrorism and political violence. The research that has been conducted on women’s regional involvement in political violence, particularly that of Cunningham (2003), has suggested that it may vary according to the particular social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. Similarly, Dalton and Asal’s (2011) study indicated that
whilst the level of democracy in a country did not predict the deployment of women in violent attacks, the level of economic development and women’s social rights did. Further empirical comparative research is required to clarify the exact nature of these trends regarding the regional involvement of women. As much of the available research is observational and/or descriptive it is difficult to ascertain exactly if, and how, women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict differs according to these two macro-level factors. Such an analysis is also hindered by the lack of a framework by which to systematically examine temporal/historical and regional trends in female involvement.

**Meso-level Factors in Women’s Involvement in Political and Revolutionary Conflict**

Recent research has begun to explore how women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict may be influenced by meso-level characteristics. However, like much of the research in the area of women in conflict, most of the research that has examined meso-level factors relevant to female involvement has been based on speculations or impressions rather than on empirical research; although there have been some notable exceptions (e.g. Dalton & Asal, 2011; O’Rourke, 2009). Meso-level factors that have been identified in the scholarship – and that are discussed in this section – as important considerations in female involvement are the strategic and tactical advantages that female operatives and members offer to extremist organisations/movements and various characteristics specific to the group or movement such as ideology, religious orientation, and explicit goals or agenda of the movement.

**Strategic and Tactical Advantages of Female Participants**

The strategic and tactical advantages of having women involved in an extremist movement are related to the characteristics of the contemporary conflict and security environment and the way in which gender stereotypes and
relationships interact with this environment. A common proposition found in the scholarship is that women in operational roles, particularly as suicide bombers but also as covert operatives, are advantageous for a variety of strategic and tactical reasons. Beyond these operational roles, it has been argued that women offer several advantages as participants in the broader movement, particularly in relation to propaganda and recruitment. Less commonly examined in the literature is the potential advantage to the women themselves of being involved in, or affiliated with, an extremist movement, given the nature of contemporary conflict (i.e. it's intrusion into civilian life and increasingly harsh government reprisals for proscribed violence). These factors coalesce into the argument that women’s involvement in conflict will increase into the future.

Jacques and Taylor (2009), in their systematic review of the literature on female terrorism, found that strategic advantages to terrorist attacks and terrorist groups were the most frequently cited environmental enablers in the scholarship for female participation in extremist activity, and were particularly salient in the literature on female suicide bombers. Such environmental enablers could include a combination of contextual pressures – related to security efforts, characteristics of contemporary conflict, and social dislocation – and operational imperatives (Cunningham, 2003). Cunningham (2003) argued that these contextual pressures create a reciprocal process whereby terrorist organisations are forced to widen their recruitment net to include women whilst, simultaneously, women are becoming increasingly motivated to join these groups; in an interplay of both micro-level factors and meso-level processes. These contextual pressures also act to dismantle the social controls that may have traditionally prevented women from joining extremist groups in the past. Hence, contextual pressures facilitate, and at times necessitate, the more overt political participation of women, including in violent activities.

These contextual pressures in combination with operational imperatives in increasingly controlled contemporary security environments make women attractive operatives and group members (Cunningham, 2003; Zedalis, 2008). There is consistent speculation in the literature regarding the strategic and
tactical value of women in extremist movements. Practically, for the movement or group as a whole, the use of women increases the size of the recruitment pool, particularly when original male members are killed or arrested (Herrera & Porch, 2008; O’Rourke, 2009; Zedalis, 2008). Women’s skills and expertise in care-giving and auxiliary support may be crucial to the group, especially as men may be unwilling to participate in these activities or as the availability of men for these positions decreases through causalities, arrests or unsuccessful recruitment (Dalton & Asal, 2011; Mahan & Griset, 2008). Thus, the quality and quantity of recruits are increased with the inclusion of women, allowing more efficient use of the population (a factor particularly relevant to guerrilla groups that rely on mass mobilisation to achieve their objectives) and diluting the resources of security forces (Stone & Pattillo, 2011). Furthermore, Dalton and Asal (2011) claimed that women provide physical, emotional, and psychological support to male group members and often give birth to a new generation of fighters. In this way, female group members may enhance stability and security within an organisation through stereotypically feminine tasks, including nurturing, care, sexual relationships, and parenting (Herrera & Porch, 2008).

Aside from these stereotypical elements of female involvement, it has also been argued that women offer important operational advantages, primarily because they are not considered credible threats (Cunningham, 2003). Women attract less suspicion and attention from security officials and the general public, allowing them greater freedom of movement and facilitating their operational effectiveness (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; Mahan & Griset, 2008). Women are generally perceived as inherently non-violent and less dangerous and can gain access to places that men cannot (Dalton & Asal, 2011). Particularly in traditional societies, women can avoid security searches due to cultural taboos and can more easily conceal contraband on their person due to traditional forms of dress (Bloom, 2011b; O’Rourke, 2009; Qazi, 2011). However, even in Western societies, women are treated with less suspicion and are able to smuggle contraband successfully, for example in Northern Ireland women hid weapons in prams or smuggled explosives on their
person (Bloom, 2011a; Clarke, 2010). Finally, the reprisals instigated by security officials against women in general for the participation of a few – for example, increased targeting or intrusive body searches – may further radicalise (male) observers (Stone & Pattillo, 2011). Thus, women may be employed by politically violent organisations due to their enhanced strategic and tactical effectiveness, rather than solely due to a shortage of men (Cook, 2008).

Whilst this operational value remains conjecture, the manifestations of these hypothetical advantages can be seen in the handful of quantitative studies that have examined the effectiveness of female suicide bombers. Davis (2006) reported that women killed, on average, four times more people than male suicide bombers. Similarly, O'Rourke (2009) found that attacks perpetrated by women killed an average of 8.4 people compared to only 5.3 people for male-perpetrated attacks. O'Rourke (2009) also found that teams of female suicide bombers inflicted higher causality rates than male teams (4.7 causalities per individual for female teams compared to 3.7 for male teams) and that women failed in their operations less often than men (in only 16.9 percent of cases compared to 33.3 percent for men). Finally, O'Rourke (2009) found that female suicide operations were usually introduced after the initial stages of a conflict and after the state had implemented counter-measures. Thus, the superior effectiveness of female suicide operations was achieved under more unfavourable conditions; where increased security measures and level of awareness meant a decreased probability of success and lethality potential. Thus, women offer clear quantifiable advantages to extremist organisations and movements, particularly regarding suicide operations but potentially in relation to other operational activities as well.

There is also some argument in the scholarship that there are broader strategic advantages to incorporating women in extremist movements, related to propaganda and public relations and based on gendered notions of motherhood, maternal sacrifice, and women being inherently peaceful. Female operatives generate greater media attention (Bloom, 2011b; O'Rourke, 2009; Zedalis, 2008). Bloom (2011b) reported that the ratio of media coverage of
female to male operatives was eight to one. Several scholars have also argued that the use of women both as visible operatives and as suicide bombers can shame the male population into participating (Bloom, 2011b; Eager, 2008; Ness, 2005a). The use of female operatives can have a greater psychological impact on the direct target and on the broader audience (O’Rourke, 2009; Zedalis, 2008) and can demoralise and discredit the opposition by forcing them to fire upon a group of people normally considered to be non-combatants (Bloom, 2011b; Herrera & Porch, 2008). Furthermore, women can help to ‘soften’ the image of the extremist group and the presence of women can provide moral legitimacy for the cause (Herrera & Porch, 2008; Parashar, 2011b). The female members of FARC, for instance, are often used for photography opportunities and for propaganda purposes where they interact with the civilian population – overseeing the welfare of women and children in the community, mediating domestic and community disputes, and looking after orphaned or displaced children (Herrera & Porch, 2008). In this way, women within the extremist group can evoke feelings of sympathy for the cause – either directly with the societal base of the group or indirectly through the invocation of gender stereotypes in an audience inexperienced with female violence (O’Rourke, 2009). In this way, the “sacrificial symbolism associated with women can often be manipulated into an integral component of the construction of nationalism and patriotism” (Dalton & Asal, 2011, p. 805).

Whilst there is consensus in the scholarship regarding the strategic and tactical advantages to extremist groups and movements of having women involved, there has been comparatively little speculation or research regarding the possible advantages to the women themselves of being involved. Although this is related to individual micro-level influences on involvement, it occurs within the context of contemporary conflict and the effect of government/security force reprisals. Cunningham (2003) alluded to this relationship when she speculated that the involvement of women in contemporary terrorism was the result of an interaction between environmental enablers in the form of contextual pressures/operational imperatives and
women’s personal desire to be involved. Both Mason (1992) and Lobao (1990) concurred that increasingly harsh and violent reprisals on the part of government and security forces impacted on the decision of women to join Central American guerrilla organisations, as much for personal safety as for political belief. In mainstream research, government reprisals have often been identified as an essential factor in the escalation of conflict and in individuals’ decisions to join militant groups (della Porta, 2012; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009). Eager (2008) also included this element in her levels of analysis approach to exploring the involvement of women in a range of conflicts and found that it re-occurred consistently across conflicts as a both a micro-level motivating force and an element that led to escalation in violence and conflict.

Thus, it has been argued that female operatives and members offer a range of strategic and tactical advantages to extremist movements, including increased effectiveness and lethality when deployed on operations and more efficient and effective use of the population. Whilst research has not explicitly addressed the advantages of women undertaking more covert activities, similar advantages inherent in combat operations may also apply to these support and logistical activities. If women attract less suspicion and can thereby gain access to more secure areas as well as evade security searches, then they would be highly effective smugglers, spies and intelligence gatherers. Furthermore, some research suggests that women are important to the movement more broadly in terms of creating cohesion, stability, positive propaganda, and public relations. Beyond direct participation in an extremist group, the presence of women within the extremist movement can create moral legitimacy for the cause. Finally, whilst there is general consensus regarding the advantages of women to extremist groups or movements, comparatively little research has examined the advantages to the women themselves in being involved in these groups and movements.
Ideological Basis, Religious and Political Orientation, and Agenda of the Movement

Various characteristics of the group or movement have been discussed in the scholarship as important influences on women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. In one of the only empirical quantitative studies in this particular area, Dalton and Asal (2011) found that organisations that were larger and had been in existence for longer significantly predicted the deployment of women in violent attacks. However, other characteristics of the group or movement – including its ideology, orientation and aims – have been speculated as factors that influence the range of female involvement as well as initial mobilisation. The discussion has generally been of a fragmented nature, seldom comparatively based, and related to specific groups rather than the broader extremist movement. It is commonly asserted that women participate to a greater extent and in more prominent positions in left-wing and/or secular movements or groups compared to those that are right-wing and/or religious. Within these broad dichotomous distinctions, female involvement has also been proposed to vary according to the specific aims or agenda of the extremist movement. Movements with nationalist/separatist, White supremacist, and Islamist agendas have received the most attention in the scholarship, although other goals or agendas may also be important in relation to female involvement, for example movements with communist or socialist goals. Finally, it has also been argued that women participate to a greater extent in groups that are domestically-orientated as opposed to groups that are internationally-orientated (Gonzalez-Perez, 2006, 2008b).

A common observation in the literature is that left-wing extremist groups, in comparison to right-wing extremist groups, exhibit greater numbers of women, or at least women in more prominent positions, both historically and contemporaneously (Cunningham, 2003; Ness, 2005a; Russell & Miller, 1977; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987, 2011). In this regard, left-wing groups, such as the Italian Red Brigades, American Weather Underground and the German
RAF, appear to offer women greater opportunities for advancement within the group, including to positions of combatant and leader. Women also feature prominently as founders of several of these left-wing groups, particularly throughout the 1960s and 1970s. It is generally argued that left-wing groups feature women in more prominent positions as these groups pose a direct challenge to society; the ideological premise of these groups is that fundamental problems exist in the dominant political institutions of the day (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Ness, 2005a). Furthermore, many of these left-wing groups are also Marxist or socialist in orientation – encouraging the overthrow of an oppressive capitalist system and usually the inclusion of all members of society in protracted conflict in order to achieve this aim – which may be significant in their higher rates of female participation (Eager, 2008; Georges-Abeyie, 1983). Thus, it is argued that left-wing groups are more attractive to women due to their progressive and revolutionary outlook, potential for gender equality, and promise of a better quality of life in the future (Jacques & Taylor, 2009).

In contrast, right-wing groups feature a more conservative ideology characterised by either restrictive cultural or religious norms or goals centred on maintaining these norms. These groups, it is argued, offer less opportunity for female participation due to their emphasis on maintaining traditional social and gender roles (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Ness, 2005a). These groups include those that are religiously-based with common examples being the Islamist or racist Christian movement. In general, it has been argued that women participate to a lesser extent in these groups. However, as noted by some scholars (Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; von Knop, 2007, 2008) this does not mean that women do not participate in political and revolutionary violence that is right-wing in nature, but that women may participate in less visible ways. Women in these movements, for example, may operate extensively in support positions or in other activities that are seldom acknowledged or studied but are nonetheless essential to the long-term survival of the movement (Cragin & Daly, 2009). Additionally, some scholars have argued that the role of women in
religious terrorism is actually expanding, particularly with regards to suicide operations (Bloom, 2007a; Zedalis, 2008).

The quantitative, empirical, or review studies that have been conducted offer mixed findings regarding the claim that women are found most commonly and/or in more prominent positions in secular left-wing movements rather than religious right-wing movements. In their comprehensive review of the literature on female terrorism, Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that the roles that women played within a group or movement (according to Mahan and Griset’s (2008) typology) differed according to ideology or goals. Left-wing groups and left-wing groups that were fighting for state independence or liberatory nationalism exhibited women in all roles of Mahan and Griset’s (2008) typology – sympathiser, spy, warrior, dominant force, and warrior leaders. In contrast, women participated to a far lesser degree, primarily as sympathisers and occasionally as spies, in groups that were categorised as right-wing.

Similarly, in the quantitative study conducted by Weinberg and Eubank (1987), female participation in Italian terrorism was skewed overwhelmingly towards the left, with less than 10 percent of their sample affiliated with the Italian neo-fascist groups. The only role that did not appear to exhibit any identifiable trend in Jacques and Taylor’s (2009) study was that of suicide bomber, with women utilised as suicide bombers across a range of different extremist movements, including the LTTE, Palestinian and Chechen rebel groups, and al Qaeda. Interestingly, O’Rourke (2009), in a quantitative analysis of female suicide terrorism, found that secular groups were more likely to utilise women in suicide operations whilst religiously-based groups did not begin to utilise

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24 These groups were European left-wing organisations.
25 These groups included the LTTE, the IRA, and domestic Latin American groups.
26 ‘Warrior leader’ was an additional role added by Jacques and Taylor, presumably (as discussed previously) indicating women involved in combat or battalion leadership positions but not overall group leadership.
27 These groups included international Latin American groups, Irish Loyalists, al Qaeda, and groups in Palestine and Chechnya.
28 Note, as per the previous chapter, the role of suicide bomber was an addition to Mahan and Griset’s model of roles.
female suicide attacks until 21 years after its inception. Finally, Dalton and Asal (2011), in a quantitative analysis of female participation in violent attacks (including but not limited to suicide attacks) found that neither ideology (left vs. right wing) nor religious orientation were significant predictors of women participating in these types of operations.

To further complicate these mixed empirical findings, whilst the left-wing/right-wing distinction is common in the literature, it is by no means universal in reality. There are several examples of women in right-wing and/or religious movements acting as warriors/combatants or even leaders. Although seldom studied, women in conservative loyalist groups in Northern Ireland were quite active in politics and in the committal of violence (R. Ward, 2006). In the White supremacist movement and particularly in the United States, women have been prominent in violent attacks. Indeed women in right-wing extremism in the United States are reported to perform a breadth of activities unusual for the common right/left wing division (Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008). It has been argued that women involved in right wing extremism may find it more difficult to talk about their experiences due to conservative social norms present in their communities, leading to an underestimation of both the prevalence of women and the types of activities that they perform in these right-wing movements (M. Alison, 2009). Furthermore, subversive less visible activities performed by women are seldom studied which may lead to an under-estimation of their prevalence.

In light of these apparent exceptions to the common distinction of left/right wing and religious/secular posited in the scholarship, and the mixed findings from empirical quantitative or review studies, it is impossible to come to any definite conclusion on the topic. Unfortunately, as no study has systematically documented the range of activities that women perform in political and revolutionary conflict, it is impossible to determine population level variation according to factors such as the type of ideology endorsed by the movement. Furthermore, whilst these dichotomous distinctions offer some understanding in the way of general trends, there are a variety of
groups/movements included within these broad distinctions (Eager, 2008; Sedgwick, 2006; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010; Weinberg et al., 2004). Accordingly, some scholarship has examined variation in female involvement with regards to the specific aims or agenda of the movement or group.

Within right-wing religious extremism, movements that have commonly been studied in relation to women include the Islamist movement and the Christian-based White supremacy movement primarily in the United States. Within the Christian-based extremist movement in the United States women are reported to be involved in an unusual range of activities given its right-wing religious ideology and the inherent emphasis on conservative gender norms (Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008). This type of religiously-based extremism, usually associated with White supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, White power skinheads and neo-Nazis, is perpetrated in order to advance a racial and religiously-based agenda. Kathleen Blee (1996, 2002, 2008) has studied women’s participation in these movements extensively over several decades (see also Ferber, 2004; Jetter, Orleck, & Taylor, 1997). The criticisms noted by Blee (1996) regarding scholarly approaches towards women in these White supremacist movements mirror those made of women in extremism and conflict in general:

Women are seen as apolitical in their own right, attached to the racist movement only through the political affiliations of their husbands, boyfriends, or fathers. The logic is circular: Organised racism is a male province. Women who join must be the ideological appendages of men. Thus, women’s attitudes, actions, and motivations are derivative, incidental, and not worthy of scholarly consideration (pp. 680-681).29

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29 Christian-based racial extremism has not been extensively studied as a form of terrorism in the scholarship, although Blee (2008) noted that the White supremacist movement is increasingly adopting the organisational structures, agendas, and strategies of other movements conventionally considered as terrorist. As noted
The attribution of women’s motivations to psychological instability or personal relationships (as is often seen in the scholarship on women in other extremist movements) is unable to account for historical fluctuations and/or variability in female involvement in racial extremism (Blee, 1996). In this way, according to the Blee (1996), the lack of scholarly attention given to women’s involvement in the White supremacist movement has led to an underestimation of the dangerous potential of the movement and a distorted understanding of the process by which individuals become radicalised.

Blee (2008) argued that the extent and method of women’s participation in the racist movement is dependent upon two meso-level factors: the way in which the movement has defined its enemy and the type of violence committed by the organisation within the movement (see Figure 3.1). Given that the location of most of Blee’s research has been the United States and that she has focused on the historical evolution of this type of extremism, both the cultural and social context and wave of terrorism may also be important considerations, as outlined in the macro-level section. Blee does not explicitly address these factors in her research; however, their influence is acknowledged (see, for example, Blee (2008)).

The first meso-level factor proposed by Blee (2008) is the designation of the enemy by the racist movement as either the state or specific racial minorities. This designation has fluctuated over time with women more likely to be involved in periods where the enemy was defined as specific racial minorities and less likely to be involved when the enemy was designated as the state. Accordingly, women played no direct role in the racial terrorism perpetrated after the civil war where the enemy was seen to be the state.

previously, racist Christian-based extremism increased in the religious fourth wave of terrorism, although it has been overshadowed by Islamism (Rapoport, 2002), and there is some argument that the racist Christian movement may represent a backlash against the dominant left-wing ideology of wave three (Weinberg & Eubank, 2010) in the same way that women’s involvement in anti-feminist movements, including anti-abortion movements, has been argued to be the result of a backlash against progressive feminist social gains (Luker, 1984; Petchesky, 1981).
However, they became active in all forms of racial terrorism in the early twentieth century where violence was directed against racial minorities, including participation in violent lynchings (Blee, 2008). In this era, women added more than half a million members to the ranks of the second incarnation of the KKK – female-led chapters were created and women participated actively and avidly in all aspects of the KKK campaigns (Blee, 1991, 2008). However, the latter decades of the twentieth century saw the nationalist allegiances of many White supremacist groups begin to crumble and the state once again came to the fore as the enemy of the racist movement. Throughout this period female involvement in the movement waned. However, several racist groups have recently begun to make considerable efforts to recruit women to their cause (Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003). This recruitment drive was primarily undertaken by those groups wanting to create a durable and intergenerational racist movement or those aiming to create a more benign image of White supremacism (Blee, 2002, 2008). In recent years, women have come to constitute 25 percent of racist groups and up to 50 percent of new recruits (Blee, 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of violence</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Racial minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative; usually perpetrated by loosely organised groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No female involvement.</td>
<td>Example: Cases are rare, especially contemporaneously; first incarnation of the KKK where women had no direct involvement as members or participants.</td>
<td>Some female involvement, increasing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Racist skinheads where women’s involvement has been on the increase in recent years especially in street-level violence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic; usually perpetrated by hierarchically structured organisations</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Some female involvement, increasing.</td>
<td>Example: Current racist groups, especially those that target the state as an agent of Jewish domination. Women’s participation has been on the increase, such as in the bombing campaigns of ZOG-focused groups.</td>
<td>Substantial female involvement, steady.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: KKK in the 1920s, some Klans and other White supremacist groups today. Women facilitate and promote violence, recruit and cultivate new members, and participate in low-level indirect violence, such as painting swastikas and burning crosses.</td>
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*Figure 3.1. Female involvement in organised racial extremism in the United States according to two meso-level factors.*

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30 Adapted from Blee (2008).
The second meso-level factor proposed by Blee (2008) was the type of violence endorsed by the different strands of the racist movement (strategic or narrative) as influenced by the two distinct organisational structures (hierarchical or loosely-organised) that exist within the movement. Hierarchically structured groups, such as the contemporary KKK and WWII-era Nazi groups, usually perpetrate strategic racial terrorism. In these groups, women play an indirect role, primarily that of providing legitimacy, promoting group cohesion and providing support where needed (Blee, 2008). Hierarchically structured organisations may have less operational freedom and are, to a greater extent, bound by the rules and ideology imposed by the leadership regarding gender roles and how women should participate in the movement. In contrast, narrative racial terrorism\(^{31}\) is usually perpetrated by loosely organised groups or gangs (e.g. ‘skinheads’) and women participate more directly in all levels of these types of organisations, including in violent attacks (Blee, 2008). Perhaps loosely structured groups with no higher-order obligations have greater operational freedom and, hence, offer greater opportunity for female participation.

In summary, then, as argued by Blee (2008);

Although women’s participation in racist terrorism has increased over time in the United States, it is not the case that there is a simple temporal pattern in women’s involvement in such violence. Rather, the conditions under which women are likely to become involved in racist terrorism reflect not only broader societal changes in the acceptability of women’s involvement in politics and in violence, but also the strategic directions and tactical choices of organised White supremacist groups (p. 213).

\(^{31}\) Narrative racial violence, as defined by Blee (2008) is racially-based violence that is spontaneous, committed against victims who are selected impulsively and often without a clear purpose, and where the consequences are seldom calculated in advance (e.g. street assaults of gay men or Jewish people).
This argument – that social change, strategic direction and organisational tactics influence female involvement – also applies to how women are involved; indeed this is illustrated quite clearly in Figure 3.1. Blee’s analysis, in general, illustrates the importance of examining multiple explanatory factors when studying variations in women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, in particular the agenda or type of movement. No such analysis has been consistently applied to the involvement of women in other forms of political and revolutionary conflict.

Another right-wing extremist movement that has received a substantial amount of scholarly attention, particularly in recent times, is the global Islamist movement. Islamism is the religious ideology that dominates the current and fourth wave of terrorism (Rapoport, 2004). Throughout this research, the term Islamism is used to designate the movement based on specific interpretations of Islamic texts commonly labelled extreme or fundamentalist and, in this context, encompasses the militant Islamic movement. The central tenants of the Islamist movement are politically-focused and include the implementation of Sharia or Islamic law, political unity for all Muslim people regardless of nation states, and the removal of non-Muslim – and, in particular, Western – influences that are believed to be incompatible with Islam (Eikmeier, 2007). An important element of the Islamist movement is the notion of jihad. The term jihad, whilst evoking associations with war and violence in the West, actually means “to strive, exert oneself, or take extraordinary pains” (Firestone, 1999, p. 16) where this can take the form of a struggle against a visible enemy, aspects of oneself, or the devil – for example, there exists ‘jihad of the heart’ and ‘jihad of the tongue’ as well as ‘jihad of the sword’ (Firestone, 1999). ‘Jihad of the sword’ is commonly referred to as an activity that furthers the kingdom of God on earth through the defence of Islam and propagation of the faith, and is equivalent to some extent to the Western view of jihad or holy
The term *jihad* is utilised throughout this thesis to indicate ‘*jihad of the sword*’ or conventional Western notions of holy war. The notion of *jihad* is interpreted according to gender; *jihad* is connected to public fighting for men but to private suffering for women (Cook, 2008). According to this view, violence committed by women would signify a form of cultural fragmentation; thus, women have traditionally been excluded from militant participation (Ness, 2005a). A Muslim woman traditionally obtained the honour associated with *jihad* through her male relatives and through her own religiously appropriate behaviour (e.g. obedience to male family members, keeping house) (Cook, 2008; Ness, 2005a). In contrast, men received honour through martyrdom on the battlefield (Cook, 2008). Thus, although there exist several examples of female fighters during the time of Mohamed (Qazi, 2011), the active militant participation of Muslim women is rare.

Women were involved in the Iranian revolution in 1979; however, their roles in Islamism had not received substantial attention until 2000 with the advent of Islamist female suicide bombers (Cunningham, 2008). Contemporary Muslim legal literature has discussed the issue of gender with regards to *jihad* in a more in-depth manner, although a definite conclusion on the topic is still lacking. In this regard, it is important whether *jihad* is interpreted as *fard’ayn* (an obligation that falls upon every member of the Muslim community) or *fard kifaya* (an obligation that only falls on specific members of the Muslim community) (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008). Cook (2008) analysed the contemporary legal literature regarding the involvement of women in *jihad* and concluded that there were several strands of thought on the topic. He noted a particularly significant text published by Muhammad Khayr Haykal, *Jihad and Fighting According to the Shar’i Policy*, where it was observed that if *jihad* was defined as *fard’ayn*, women had the option to fight if they wished and, indeed, should be trained for the possibility of regular army participation in a future

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32 The term *jihad*, and indeed Islamism itself, is obviously much more complex than this short overview allows. The primary points that are relevant to this thesis in terms of the involvement of women are outlined here.
Islamic state.\textsuperscript{33} No texts where \textit{jihad} was viewed as \textit{fard’ayn} prescribed female participation in fighting as an obligation; most offered peaceful options for women to fulfil their religious obligations. A significant document published by Yusuf al-Ayyiri (n.d.) – an ideological leader of the Saudi Arabian branch of al-Qaeda prior to his death in 2003 – whilst not explicitly calling for women to fight, laid the intellectual groundwork for women’s full participation in \textit{jihad} by conceptualising \textit{jihad} as \textit{fard’ayn} and claiming that this obligation superseded other religious obligations that had conventionally prevented women from full militant participation in \textit{jihad}, including gaining permission from parents. Similarly, a letter published by the wife of al-Qaeda’s number two leader emphasised women’s support role in \textit{jihad} but also conceptualised \textit{jihad} as \textit{fard’ayn} and gave permission for women to fight and carry out martyrdom operations:

\begin{quote}
Jihad [today] is an individual duty incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman, but the path of fighting is not easy for women, for it requires a male companion with whom it is lawful for a woman to be...We put ourselves in the service of the jihadis, we carry out what they ask, whether in supporting them financially, serving their [practical] needs, supplying them with information, opinions, partaking in fighting or even [volunteering to carry out] a martyrdom operation...Our principal role...is to protect the jihadis [through] bringing up their children, [managing] their homes, and [keeping] their secrets (Lahoud, 2010, para. 6).
\end{quote}

Other sources, in contrast, appeared to conceptualise \textit{jihad} as \textit{fard kifaya}, where women’s primary role is that of support unless the leader of \textit{jihad} explicitly calls upon them to fight. A document published by radical Chechen Islamists, whilst not denying that \textit{jihad} was an obligation on all

\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately this text was unable to be accessed in English; hence, Cook’s (2008) interpretation is relied upon.
Muslim’s, advised women not to participate in fighting:

The situation in the Ummah [Muslim community] is not that desperate yet, that sisters are called to fight. Those sisters who voluntarily want to join the fighting for reward from Allah, are advised to not go unless the leader of Jihad in that place calls sisters to fight. As for other help, they can go if the Mujahideen are able to accommodate and protect them (Sister Al, n.d., “Participation in the Actual Fighting”).

This document listed a range of other activities that women could perform as a means to participate in jihad, including supporting fighters on the battlefield, participating in guard duty, raising mujahid children, encouraging others to go for jihad, training in medicine and first-aid, on an intellectual or academic level, and fundraising. Cook (2008) also noted that some sources offered no conclusion on the topic of religiously-appropriate female participation in jihad, particularly in relation to martyrdom operations, including a Martyrdom Operations in the Legal Balance authored by Nawaf al-Takruri who accepted the permissibility of women fighting in jihad but decided that he could not bring himself to advise on the involvement of women in suicide operations as they would probably have to dress immodestly.34

In its essence, Islamism is a conservative right-wing religiously-based ideology that endorses a strict gender demarcation of the public and private sphere where women are confined to the home and family whilst men participate in public affairs (Jansen, 1997; Ness, 2005a). However, women are undeniably participating in the conventional male jihad by perpetrating suicide attacks. Significantly, the locations in which these suicide bombings originated are Palestine and Chechnya – both of these conflicts have secular nationalist roots that have fused over time with Islamism (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008).

34 Again, this text was unable to be accessed in English; thus, Cook’s (2008) interpretation is relied upon.
They are also conflicts that have persisted in specific locales for some time, leading to significant operational constraints that may have influenced the increasing use of women in suicide operations (Cunningham, 2003, 2008; Dalton & Asal, 2011). As argued by Cunningham (2008), “while the use of Islam in this context is a potent symbolic and ideological tool, it is more instrumental and ideological than truly religious” (p. 86). However, as identified in the previous section, these regional changes have led to shifts in the Islamist religious literature framing the global movement (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008), such that women’s involvement in a militant capacity is re-imagined in a manner consistent with religious strictures, although often on a post hoc basis (Cunningham, 2008; Ness, 2005a; Shalinsky, 1993). Hence, there is a reciprocal relationship between specific secular nationalist conflicts in the Muslim world and the broader global Islamist movement which impacts on the role of women. The general consensus in the scholarship regarding women’s participation in Islamism appears to be that the cultural and religious prohibitions against militant female involvement are lessening, leading to the increasing visibility of women in the Islamist movement and the prediction that their presence will increase in the future (Ness, 2005a; Zedalis, 2008).

Whilst there is ambiguity in the Islamist literature regarding the permissibility of female combatants or suicide bombers, the role of women in supporting *jihad* is commonly espoused – but has received little attention in the scholarship. Cunningham (2008) argued that there are three primary roles of women in the global Salafi movement; raising future warriors, providing support and safe havens, and participating in actual violence. Similarly, Von Knop (2007, 2008) argued that, rather than excluding women from any form of participation in *jihad*, fundamentalist interpretations encourage women to act as operational facilitators and organisational supporters. In this gender-specific interpretation, the female *jihad* involves a variety of non-violent activities within Islamism that propagate the ideology and encourage community support and participation, such as running women’s organisations, supporting families of martyrs, distributing the Qur’an in prisons and schools, political campaigning or
activism, creating Islamist non-governmental organisations and charities, participating in Muslim Students Associations, encouraging martyrdom, teaching children the Islamist ideology, and engaging in fundraising (Bloom, 2011a; Cragin & Daly, 2009; Cunningham, 2008; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Finally, as discussed in the previous chapter, marriage within Islamist networks may constitute a poorly understood but crucial strategic element of the Islamist movement in terms of building and maintaining networks and mobilising new recruits (Ismail, 2006; Noor, 2007). Such activities as these are in line with the traditional duties endorsed as appropriate for women in Islamism (Jansen, 1997).

In summary, with regards to the religious Islamist movement, classical sources are fairly negative about the militant role of women in jihad and historical evidence indicates that women on the whole did not participate in fighting in pre-modern times, although some notable exceptions exist (Cook, 2008; Qazi, 2011). Accordingly, women’s visibility within the Islamist movement has been limited historically. However, women may have participated, and probably continue to do so, in the essential logistical and support activities of the movement (Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Furthermore, contemporary legal literature indicates a growing permissibility of female participation in both fighting and martyrdom operations, although this is by no means universal or pervasive at this stage. A particularity with regards to Islamism as a global movement is that women’s mobilisation and involvement must be construed as acceptable in both a specific social/cultural context and in the broader religious context and, furthermore, there must be a certain degree of alignment or consistency between these contexts (Cunningham, 2008). This characteristic can be seen in relation to the conflicts in Chechnya and Palestine – both nationalist-separatist conflicts with a tradition of female involvement that have, over time, fused with, and become increasingly influenced by, Islamist ideology. However, the involvement of women in these conflicts has created tension and, in some cases, refinement of the Islamist literature. Cunningham (2008) argued that there is greater potential for women involved in the global Islamist
movement to achieve some kind of political equality, as the global Islamist movement conceptualises *fard’ayn* “in its fullest religious meaning” (p. 95) – as opposed to the Palestinian and Chechen conflicts where the conceptualisation of *fard’ayn* is perhaps more symbolic. As a result, Cunningham (2008) anticipated that women’s involvement in global Islamism will continue to grow.

A final extremist agenda that has received some attention in the scholarship with regards to female involvement is ethno-separatist or nationalist violence. This thesis focused on those particular nationalist movements that utilised violence to achieve their political objectives. In this sense, the aim of these particular movements is generally secession from a governing nation state or a majority population. Left-wing groups with nationalist or ethno-separatist goals, in particular, have been noted to exhibit women in prominent and visible positions. Usually it is posited that these groups offer an enhanced space for women as their basic goal is freedom from state constraints (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Thus, groups such as the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the IRA in Northern Ireland have traditionally incorporated women in prominent and visible positions, including as combatants, couriers, intelligence gatherers, and bomb makers (M. Alison, 2009; Eager, 2008). Eager (2008) also found that women participated extensively in national liberation movements in Kenya (against the British), and in Algeria and Vietnam (both against the French). However, the involvement of women in nationalist/separatist movements is by no means universal, for example women have been noted to participate to a lesser degree in the ETA in the Basque region of Spain (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). There is a significant argument in the scholarship that the way in which a nationalist movement is constructed will inevitably determine the role and representation of women within that movement (M. Alison, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1998).

Yuval-Davis (1998) proposed that women fill five primary roles in nationalist movements: as the biological reproducers of new members of the ethnic group; as reproducers of the boundaries of the ethnic or national group; as central participants in ideological reproduction and transmitters of the
culture of the ethnic/national group; as a focal point and symbol of ethnic/national differences, and; as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles. However, Yuval-Davis (1997) also argued that there are three dimensions of nationalism: Volknation, where constructions of the nation are rooted in genealogical and biological notions of origin; Kulturnation, where constructions of the nation are based on cultural and symbolic heritage, and; Staatnation, where citizenship is determined by national boundaries. Alison (2009) proposed that these three dimensions of nationalism determine the way in which women are involved, although primarily related to combative involvement. Thus, in movements with an element of Volknation, women are usually dissuaded from participating in fighting; in those with a Kulturnation element, the acceptability of female combatants depends on cultural traditions, and; nationalist movements with an element of Staatnation may be more likely to be receptive of female combatants, although this depends on the type of citizenship envisaged by the movement.

Hence, nationalism is by no means homogeneous and it has been suggested that various aspects of the movement determine the involvement and role of women. However, in general, liberatory or anti-state nationalist movements may be more likely to be receptive to women’s involvement whilst institutionalised state nationalist movements may be less so (M. Alison, 2009). Accordingly, Alison (2009) found that women were involved to a greater extent in the anti-state ethno-separatist movement in Northern Ireland (the IRA or PIRA) in comparison to the loyalist state nationalist movement that was dedicated to ensuring that Northern Ireland remained within the United Kingdom. Whilst these trends are evident in specific contexts observationally and in qualitative research, the lack of large-scale quantitative and comparative research makes it difficult to apply these findings or theoretical propositions to the involvement of women in nationalist/separatist conflicts across contexts. Finally, although women around the world have been crucial in ensuring eventual national liberation, they have – almost without exception – been expected to return to their traditional gendered roles in the home and
community post-conflict (M. Alison, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1997). This is a characteristic of many nations where there has been an armed struggle for liberation; women are utilised when needed in the struggle but relegated to the private sphere after liberation has been achieved with little acknowledgement of their contribution or improved status with regards to gender equality and opportunities (Bouta et al., 2005; Halim, 1998; Qazi, 2011). This alludes to some of the issues highlighted in the introductory chapter regarding the limitations evident in the international policy arena.

A final meso-level factor in women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, albeit one that does not receive much scholarly support, is the political or global orientation of the group/movement. This factor was proposed by Gonzalez-Perez (2006, 2008a, 2008b) based on a series of qualitative case studies. Gonzalez-Perez claimed that women participate to a greater extent in domestic terrorist organisations as these types of groups are focused on the perceived forces of oppression within their own state, economy or social structure and are, as a result, more likely to challenge traditional gender norms. Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) argued that “women choose to become active and involved in domestic terrorist organisations because they anticipate a greater potential for change in their hierarchical status” (P. 1). In contrast, women participate less in international terrorist organisations as these groups typically oppose imperialism, capitalism, globalisation, and/or Western culture. These organisations have little interest in, or effect upon, domestic policies and, in particular, those pertaining to women. In these groups, women participate primarily in support positions (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b). Thus, Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) argued that it is primarily self-interest on the part of women – their calculated assessment of the organisations most likely to offer them improved status in the future – that drives their participation.

There are, however, several flaws in the theoretical framework proposed by Gonzalez-Perez. First, it assumes that all women participate in terrorism and political violence because they wish to challenge the status of women in their society. Whilst primary data from other research indicates that some women’s
personal motivations for enlistment include a desire to challenge traditional gender notions, this is by no means universal (see the following section where this is discussed in more detail). In fact, a study conducted by Berko, Erez and Globokar (2010) revealed that Palestinian female suicide bombers actually held distinctly anti-feminist views; endorsing the traditional role of women and indicating no desire to challenge these norms. Second, the definition of international and domestic terrorism is applied inconsistently in Gonzalez-Perez’s (2008b) analysis. The IRA, for instance, is categorised as an international terrorist organisation whilst the ETA in Spain and Chechen rebel groups are categorised as domestic terrorist organisations; despite the fact that in all cases separatism from a ruling state is the goal. Furthermore, some of Gonzalez-Perez’s analysis is factually incorrect. With regards to the Baader-Meinhof Gang, for instance, Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) argued that women were involved in only a minor role and that Ulrike Meinhof (one of two female leaders of the group, with the other being Gudrun Ensslin) was involved solely due to her romantic association with Andreas Baader (the sole male leader of the group). In fact, it was Gudrun Ensslin who was romantically involved with Andreas Baader (Becker, 1977; Eager, 2008), women formed up to 50 percent of the group and around 80 percent of its supporters (Eager, 2008; MacDonald, 1991), and Ulrike Meinhof (an experienced journalist) was crucial in creating and communicating the ideology of the group (Gentry & Sjoberg, 2011). Gonzalez-Perez’s theoretical proposition has not been utilised in other studies to examine women’s involvement in conflict systematically so it is impossible to definitively refute or confirm her hypothesis.

Summary of Meso-level Factors

This discussion of meso-level factors highlights how the involvement of women may be influenced by the nature of contemporary conflict and a variety of group/movement characteristics. Ideological basis, religious and political orientation, and the aims or objectives of the movement have all been identified in the scholarship as potentially important factors in the involvement
of women in conflict. Again, the lack of large-scale empirical research regarding these factors and their specific impact on the type of women’s involvement, as well as the lack of a theoretical framework, means that definitive conclusions are hard to reach. There is general theoretical consensus in the scholarship that women participate less in right-wing religious movements in comparison to left-wing secular movements. However, support for this theoretical distinction based on empirical quantitative findings has been somewhat mixed, although it tends to provide some support, on the whole, for the proposition (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; O’Rourke, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). Gonzalez-Perez (2006, 2008b) argued that the domestic/international distinction is more important in determining women’s involvement. Some scholarship has also examined how specific group/movement agendas influence the involvement of women, for example the right-wing White supremacist movement in the United States, the Islamist movement, and nationalist/separatist-based movements. Blee (1996, 2002, 2008) examined the involvement of women in US-based White Supremacist movements according to a model that incorporates type of violence and designated enemy of the movement. The strict gender roles and divisions endorsed in Islamist ideology and their application to women’s involvement in groups stemming from or influenced by this broader movement has been debated in the literature (e.g. Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; Ness, 2005a; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007). Similarly, the involvement of women, particularly as combatants, in nationalist/separatist movements has been discussed in the scholarship, particularly regarding liberatory movements and different conceptualisations of nationalism (e.g. M. Alison, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 1998). Clearly empirical quantitative and comparative research that examines women’s involvement and how it varies according to these meso-level factors would be invaluable in clarifying and adding to the trends observed in the scholarship.
Micro-level Factors in Women’s Involvement in Political and Revolutionary Conflict

Despite the scholarship outlined above regarding the macro-level and meso-level factors that have been proposed as factors in female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, research on women in conflict that incorporates these two levels of analysis is relatively rare. The majority of research on women in political and revolutionary conflict focuses on individual factors relevant to women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, where the biased or gendered approaches have been noted and discussed at length (e.g. Brunner, 2007; Hasso, 2005; Nacos, 2008; Patkin, 2004; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; West, 2004-2005). Additionally, the tendency to generalise from specific examples of female involvement to the normative population of women involved in political and revolutionary conflict has been noted (O’Rourke, 2009). In particular, the majority of this research focuses on a limited number of micro-level factors usually ascertained from a speculative examination of the personal histories of specific women found in journalist or secondary sources, and primarily in relation to women who commit high profile attacks such as suicide bombing. There is little discussion of other forms of involvement or broader contextual factors. Furthermore, there is little delineation of motivations for enlistment and influences on subsequent roles. Notwithstanding the valid criticisms of the scholarship (as will be discussed in greater depth throughout this section), micro-level factors that have been discussed in some form in the scholarship can be grouped into personal relationships, psychological abnormalities and experiences of trauma, exploitation, biographical and demographical characteristics, ideological or political commitment, and feminist belief.

Personal Relationships

Many scholars have argued that women's personal relationships are crucial in understanding female mobilisation in political and revolutionary conflict, with much of the scholarship emphasising the (real or imagined)
coercive element of sexual or romantic relationships. The notion that women are forced or led into political and revolutionary conflict primarily as the result of an intimate relationship with a man has its roots in early work on the topic. Galvin (1983) claimed, for instance, that women’s participation in terrorism was most frequently the result of a male lover where “it is hard not to see the female terrorist as just another victim of a variation on the classic male con” (Galvin, 1983, p. 31). Similarly, Robin Morgan (1989), a radical feminist, claimed that all women who were involved in terrorism were manipulated either overtly by a man or unconsciously by patriarchy. Relying on aspects of Jungian psychology, Morgan claimed that the ideal of the terrorist was the result of a patriarchal society dominated by masculine ideals of violence and aggression, where women exist only as victims or tokens. She argued that all women who participated in terrorism were “token terrorists” who denied their natural peaceful feminine nature and bought into masculine ideals of violence. Similarly, much modern work propagates the notion that women participate in terrorism and political violence because men have forced them to. A coercive, failed, inappropriate, or lack of a relationship with a man is a central tenant of the model for female mobilisation proposed by Bloom (2011a; see also Schweitzer, 2006). Sjoberg and Gentry (2007) labelled this particular framing of women’s involvement in terrorism as the ‘whore narrative’, critiquing the scholarship that reduces women’s involvement to coercion and sexual/romantic relationships.

Whilst the predominant framing of the personal relationships of female extremists is questionable, there is some empirical quantitative evidence that relational networks are important factors in the involvement of both men and women in political and revolutionary conflict (Bakker, 2006; della Porta, 2012; Sageman, 2004, 2008). However, rather than coercing women into participation as some work suggests, these personal relationships provide an entrée mechanism and vetting process – and, importantly, they are not limited to romantic relationships. Eager (2008), for example, found that many women were recruited or became active through personal relational networks that included
universities (common for left-wing groups), illegal political parties (common for national liberation movements) or family networks (common in right-wing and ethno-nationalist cases). The impact of personal relationships on type of activities performed is less clear, although Cragin and Daly (2009) suggested that personal relationships are influential for women gaining a position of leadership, particularly as a central committee member; whether this is true empirically is unknown.

Some quantitative work also suggests that personal relationships are important considerations in female involvement in extremist networks and groups. Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that 27 percent of Italian female terrorists (and 10 percent of Italian male terrorists) were related by family to other members of the terrorist group, where 17 percent were marriage ties (compared to 3 percent for men). Weinberg and Eubank (1987) also reported that the majority of women performed support activities, although no causal link between method of recruitment and type of involvement was posited. Jacques and Taylor (2013) have conducted a more comprehensive study, collecting biographical data on 222 female and 269 male terrorists belonging to 13 different types of groups worldwide (ranging from nationalist-separatist and social revolutionary groups to religiously-based groups). They found that women were just as likely to be married as they were to be single and, in contrast to Weinberg and Eubank (1987), that there were no significant differences between the men and women with regards to marital status. Whether they were married to other group members or to people outside the group was not specified. Of the cases on whom data was available, 37 percent were single (39 women and 35 men) and 38 percent were married (42 women and 35 men). In general, the different types of groups followed the trend of single/married equivalence except for Latin American and Nepalese groups in which there was a slightly higher number of married women. The only gender difference in marital status that existed in this sample was regarding divorce and widowhood whereby women were more likely to exhibit these characteristics.
Aside from marriage, broader relational networks are claimed to be important in the involvement of individuals in terrorism and extremism (Bakker, 2006; della Porta, 2012; Sageman, 2004). Bloom (2011b) claimed that "the best predictor that a woman will engage in terrorist violence is if she is related to a known insurgent or Jihadi" (p. 12). Jacques and Taylor (2013) found some evidence that activism in families was important, although the relationship was not straightforward. Whilst 80 cases in their sample of 491 (32 percent), on whom information was available, were raised in activist families, only 49 were found to have cited this as a motivating factor. The results also suggested that the number of activist connections decreased with shorter conflict lengths. Specifically, the IRA and Latin American groups\(^\text{35}\) had the highest proportion of activist families whilst Aum Shinrikyo and European groups,\(^\text{36}\) which were all short-lived groups, had low numbers of activist families.

Alison (2009), who collected original qualitative data regarding female motivations for enlistment in both the IRA and the LTTE, found that only three women from the entire sample of 38 mentioned that their involvement stemmed from their personal relationships. Interestingly, all three of these women came from unionist/loyalist communities (the majority state-aligned community) in Northern Ireland. Two of these women became involved through their husband’s participation in particular loyalist groups; however, both women emphasised that they were not coerced or persuaded to participate by their husbands and that they personally believed in the loyalist cause. The third loyalist woman was single, but had significant family connections to the movement that aided her entry. Elements of her story, as recounted by Alison indicated that her choice was both independent and dependent on her family; “it’s a decision you make for yourself. It’s what’s goin’ on around you, what

\(^{35}\) This category included Socialist Renewal Current, Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army), Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), Puerto Rican Independistas.

\(^{36}\) This category included the Baader-Meinhof group, Movement Second June, Potere Operaio (Worker Power), Primea Linea, and the Red Brigades.
way it affects you personally...If you feel you can maybe do somethin’ about it well then that’s fine. And we obviously did as a family” (pp. 160-161). This finding is consistent with that of Blee (1996) who found that most of the White supremacist women she interviewed became involved initially in the movement through personal associations, primarily through friends, acquaintances, parents, siblings, cousins, or children. Only a very small minority, however, were recruited by a husband or boyfriend.

Specifically with regards to female suicide bombers findings regarding personal relationships have been mixed. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006a) conducted a quantitative analysis of a sample of 26 Chechen female suicide bombers based on news reports and data collected from interviews with family members and close associates of the suicide bomber as well as with hostages and Russian security officials. They found that 27 percent of their sample had familial links with Whabbists prior to their involvement in terrorism, including sibling, parental and marital ties. However, they argued that this proximity to active terrorists facilitated recruitment to the organisation, rather than coerced it. They claimed that, in fact, all the women in their sample were motivated by another micro-level factor – revenge for personal experiences of trauma in combination with a permissive religious ideology that provided a justification for their actions (discussed more fully in the next section). In contrast, in Palestine, a larger proportion of female suicide bombers appear to be married. Schweitzer (2006) found that 42 percent of a sample of 67 failed Palestinian female suicide bombers were married. However, Schweitzer (2006) argued that it is, in fact, being unmarried – where this contravenes the

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37 Speckhard and Akhmedova’s (2006a) sample included the 19 women involved in the Dubrovka Theatre hostage situation. On the 23 October 2002, a group of Chechen rebels – reportedly including 19 women – stormed a Dubrovka Theatre performance in Moscow and held the audience, cast, and staff hostage. After several days the Russian Special Forces used a sedative gas to storm the building and rescue the hostages. This operation resulted in the deaths of 130 people, including most of the Chechen rebels. Speckhard and Akhmedova interviewed several of the hostages who survived the incident.
traditional gendered role ascribed to women – that is a crucial factor driving women to perpetrate suicide terrorism in Palestine (i.e. to regain honour).

Undoubtedly there are specific cases where men have deceived or manipulated women into committing acts of terrorism or supporting terrorism. However, the extent to which this phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the female terrorist population, as some scholars would suggest (e.g. Bloom, 2011a; Galvin, 1983; Morgan, 1989), is questionable. The empirical work conducted on the topic indicates that relational networks, including but not limited to marital ties, are important. However, the majority of women included in the various studies were actually not married or had no relational ties to the movement or group to which they were affiliated (i.e. statistically, most women who are involved in political and revolutionary conflict are not married to other group members). Additionally, and as already noted in the previous chapter, marriage within terrorist networks is complex. In some contexts, particularly where fundamentalist Islam is concerned, marriage can be a method to ensure support and aid from wider kinship networks or negotiating and strengthening links with new members (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a; Sutten, 2009). Marriage could also be utilised strategically by the woman herself, in order that she may be able to participate more actively in the conflict (Neighbour, 2009; Nivat, 2001). In conclusion, based on these empirical studies, it seems that personal ties – including marital, familial, and peer – are important in facilitating recruitment. The extent to which these ties influence type of involvement, however, is difficult to ascertain and has rarely been examined, although Cragin and Daly (2009) suggested that personal relationships, particularly marriage, may be important for women in gaining access to leadership positions.

38 For example, the pregnant Anne-Marie Murphy who was detained at Heathrow airport when she attempted to check in a suitcase that had been given to her by her fiancé Nezar Hindawi and, unbeknownst to her, was packed with explosives that were timed to detonate during the flight to Israel.
Psychological Characteristics and Experiences of Trauma

Whilst the notion that only psychologically abnormal women participated in terrorism and political violence was common in earlier work, an experience of violence resulting in psychological trauma and participation in a violent attack is a more common proposition in current scholarship. This concept is particularly prevalent in relation to violent militant participation and suicide attacks – labelled the ‘monster’ narrative by Sjoberg and Gentry (2007). Sjoberg and Gentry critiqued the literature framing female involvement in terrorism as the result of mental instability, psychosis, or deviance. They argued that this approach propagated the notion that ‘true’ women would not participate in violence typically reserved for men. Georges-Abeyie (1983), for example, claimed that women’s extremist motivations were often expressive rather than instrumental. Expressive violence, according to Georges-Abeyie, is “violence that does not appear to be conducive to goal achievement” (p. 83). Georges-Abeyie (1983) also claimed that contemporary female terrorists would increasingly exhibit masculine characteristics;

Women who lack the characteristics and traits that society considers appropriate – gentleness, passivity, non-violent personalities, seductiveness, physically attractive faces and figures – may seek success in some non-feminine realm, by displaying aggression, unadorned faces and bodies, toughness, or other masculine qualities (p. 62).

Thus, according to Georges-Abeyie, women participate in political and revolutionary conflict because they are psychologically and physically unable to fulfil their ‘natural’ feminine role in society and, as a result, their violence is irrational, rather than goal-orientated.

In contrast, de Cataldo Neuburger and Valentini (1996), who examined the participation of women in Italian left-wing terrorism, argued that women viewed the group as a surrogate family. Contrary to Weinberg and Eubank (1987) who attributed Italian women’s involvement largely to familial and marital
relationships, de Cataldo Neuburger and Valentini (1996) attributed their participation to a maternal sacrificial code. The maternal sacrificial code is a concept rooted in psychoanalytical psychology whereby “women tend to develop their experience in accordance with an affective model based on sacrifice, on caring for others, on responding to others’ needs and on protection” (de Cataldo Neuburger & Valentini, 1996, p. 81). Thus, de Cataldo Neuburger and Valentini (1996) claimed that a variation on the feminine need to belong drove Italian women to join terrorist organisations. Once incorporated into the group they became more invested and committed than their male counterparts, as the group became a surrogate family.

A variation on the monster theme is the notion of experiences of trauma leading to temporary mental incapacity or irrationality – a commonly posited motivation with regards to female suicide bombers. Bloom (2011b), for example, included revenge for the death of a family member as central tenant in her model of female motivations for involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. Bloom maintained that revenge for the death of a close family member is the most common factor in the personal histories of women involved in a violent capacity in terrorism. Similarly, Koyuncu (2011) claimed, with regards to Chechen female suicide bombers, that “the most common basic feature of these Chechen women, the so-called ‘Black Widows’ is that most have lost a husband, father, brother or son during the Russian attacks” (p. 184) and that “these women were left with great psychological damage, feelings of loss and emptiness, severe emotional problems” (p. 185). Nivat (2005) claimed, specifically with regards to the Dubrovka Theatre hostage situation that “most [women who were involved in the attack] were widows of rebel combatants who had been killed by Russian soldiers. They felt they did not have any more to lose, having already lost a husband, a brother, a father, a son – a life” (p. 415). Nivat attributed the Chechen female suicide attacks to a mass psychosis; “such is the level of desperation and the degree of decimation of the male Chechen population, and the determination of some Chechen women to join their men in ‘paradise’” (p. 419).
Similar claims regarding trauma have been made regarding female suicide bombers in Sri Lanka and Palestine. These female suicide bombers are often portrayed as psychologically traumatised and unstable as a result of the loss of a family member. Bloom (2011a) claimed, for instance, with regards to a particular female member of the LTTE in Sri Lanka that she “did not seek to kill the man who had killed her father – which would be a normal vengeful response. Rather, she joined an organisation that sought to bring down the corrupt and evil government that was responsible for Tamil oppression” (p. 160). However, a more common element in Sri Lankan and Palestinian female suicide bombing is an experience of rape instigating involvement. Bloom (2005), in particular, emphasised the role of sexual abuse and rape with regard female suicide bombers; “what is incredibly compelling about delving into how and why women become suicide bombers is that so many of these women have been raped or sexually abused in the previous conflict either by the representatives of the state or by the insurgents themselves” (p. 125). O’Rourke (2009) found that reports of rape among LTTE female suicide bombers are common, including the purposeful recruitment of Tamil women who have been raped by Sinhalese men. Bloom (2011a) reported that in some cases organisations in the Middle East organised the rape of women in order to ensure more recruits. She claimed that;

Either these women are unaware of who is ultimately to blame or they are suffering from such a deep sense of traumatic shock that they are willing to work for the organisation that has victimised them, These women are victims of the conflict, victims of their attackers, and victims of the situation in which they find themselves (p. 237).

Yet at some point these women made the decision to commit a suicide attack; a decision that could hardly be said to be made by the majority of women who have been raped in a conflict zone.
Speckhard and Akhmedova have contributed a relatively substantial body of work on Chechen suicide terrorism, with a focus on women’s involvement in these operations (e.g. Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a, 2006b; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008). In contrast to the above work (Bloom, 2011a; Koyuncu, 2011; Nivat, 2005), Speckhard and Akhmedova, in general, argue that both Chechen male and female suicide bombers follow a similar radicalisation pathway and that a combination of factors is important in influencing involvement as suicide bombers in Chechnya. They primarily attribute (both male and female) participation in suicide attacks to a revenge mindset triggered by a traumatic and often violent event, usually the death, torture or disappearance of a family member and often the witnessing of violence directed towards a family member (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a, 2006b; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008). The manifestation of this revenge mindset is crucial within the context of a nationalist conflict and self-recruitment to militant Islamism which features an ideology encouraging martyrdom as a method to deal with trauma and the resources to equip and facilitate an attack (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008). Interestingly, these researchers found that relatively few of the female suicide bombers they studied were married and, thus, argued that the ‘Black Widow’ label is a misnomer (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008).

Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006a) found in one study, for example, that nearly all of the 26 suicide bombers they examined in depth had lost close family members in air raids, bombings, landmine explosions, ‘cleansing’ operations carried out by Russian forces, or battle. Many had also witnessed violence directed at a family member, for example actual death, beating, or other mistreatment instigated by Russian forces. Speckhard and Akhmedova reported that family and close associates observed the following characteristics in the female suicide bombers subsequent to their traumatic experiences: social

39 Female Chechen suicide bombers are commonly referred to as Black Widows in reference to the notion that they commit a suicide attack in revenge for the death of their husbands.
alienation and isolation (92 percent); depression (73 percent); repetitive talking about a strong desire for revenge (31 percent), and; aggression (23 percent). In 73 percent of the cases examined the individuals sought a connection to Wahhabist groups soon after the traumatic event/s. In some cases (27 percent) they were already affiliated with the Wahhabist groups by marriage or family ties but became more entrenched with the violent aspects of the group. The family members and close associates interviewed reported that they had noticed that the traumatic experience had a deep personal impact where the soon-to-be suicide bomber appeared to undergo a psychological crisis where unresolved grief, anger, depression, psychological trauma, and guilt became apparent. Further, 54 percent of the women apparently spontaneously stated that they would seek revenge.

There have been two quantitative studies that have examined women’s motivations for participating in a suicide attack more thoroughly and empirically (Jacques & Taylor, 2008; O’Rourke, 2009). Both of these studies found that there was some support for the notion that women perpetrate these attacks for personal or revenge motivations. Jacques and Taylor (2008) collected biographical data from open-source media and scholarly publications related to 60 suicide terrorists (30 female and 30 male). Results indicated that female suicide terrorism was associated with personal and revenge motivations whilst male suicide terrorism was associated with religious/nationalistic motivations. However, there were no significant gender differences regarding most recruitment methods – both men and women were equally likely to mobilise due to exploitation, peer pressure or proactive seeking, although the male suicide bombers included in the sample were more often recruited through religious or group persuasion. Another quantitative study conducted by O’Rourke (2009), based on a database of both female and male suicide attacks, found that female perpetrators were more likely than male perpetrators to have experienced the death of a family member. O’Rourke suggested that this experience is used as a form of recruitment by extremist groups as it not only increases the number of suicide bombers available to them but also
highlights the victimisation and suffering of women in order to garner public sympathy.

With regards to female involvement beyond suicide terrorism, the work of Alison (2009, 2011) suggests that broader traumatic experiences in conflict situations and the antecedent conditions – such as oppression, discrimination, and violence – are important considerations in women’s self-mobilisation. Alison (2009) found that personal and communal experiences of violence and discrimination were cited as important reasons for enlistment in both the LTTE and Irish republican paramilitary groups. In the Northern Ireland sub-sample, nine out of the total of 11 interviewees had either witnessed or personally experienced discrimination, injustice, harassment or violence. For these women, this experience led them to believe that the armed struggle was the only solution; “from when you were a child you seen it all happenin’ and I just naturally progressed into the republican movement” (p. 147). Alison’s (2009) findings concur with other research on, or first-hand accounts of, women’s involvement in conflict in Northern Ireland (e.g. Aretxaga, 1997; Brady, Patterson, Mc Kinney, Hamill, & Jackson, 2011; Fairweather, McDonough, & McFadyean, 1984; Talbot, 2004).

Within the Sri Lankan sub-sample, Alison (2009, 2011) noted several different forms of suffering and oppression experienced by the interviewees, including family loss, displacement and communal trauma. These experiences could be of either a personal nature (i.e. direct personal or family experiences of suffering, oppression or injustice) or perceived “as part of the Tamil narrative of oppression and suffering, borne out by the experiences of one’s friends and neighbours” (M. Alison, 2009, p. 131). Ten of the Sri Lankan interviewees related stories of military attacks during the war and witnessing violence and they all expressed anger over the suffering of their people and communities. Four women had experienced the death of an immediate family member as a direct result of the conflict and six had experienced displacement. Alison (2009, 2011) observed that within this sample, the sense of communal Tamil suffering experienced by the interviewees seemed a more
significant reason for enlistment than a direct personal or family loss during the conflict. In contrast to the Northern Ireland sub-sample of Alison’s study (2009), instances of sexual violence as motivation for enlistment were noted within the Sri Lankan sub-sample. There were 10 women within the Sri Lankan sub-sample who discussed either fear of, or anger about, sexual violence as part of their motivation for joining the LTTE. Although none of the interviewees disclosed any personal experiences of sexual violence, it appeared to be an important consideration for them nonetheless. Interestingly, Alison (2009) claimed that although Sri Lankan society traditionally blamed women for instances of sexual violence, the LTTE viewed it as an accident, meaning that the victim was absolved of blame. Thus, it would seem unlikely that the LTTE would pressure women into committing a suicide attack based on the fact that she had been raped.

On the basis of the scholarship in the area it appears that a desire for revenge over the death of a family member or rape may be important in women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, particularly when this involvement takes the form of suicide attacks. However, it is questionable the extent to which this factor applies beyond suicide terrorism or even the utility of the factor itself in distinguishing those who will participate in a suicide attack and those who will not. This body of work fails to account for the fact that only a very small minority of the female population perpetrate a suicide attack compared to the much larger proportion of women who have experienced the loss of a relative in conflict or rape. For instance, considering estimates put Chechen causalities since 1999 at 150,000, with a conservative pro-Russian source estimating that there were 1314 Chechens murdered in 2002 alone (Conley, 2004) 61 cases (W. A. Knight & Narazhna, 2005) or 42 cases (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008) of female suicide attacks hardly constitutes the endemic proportions one would expect if loss of relatives was the primary motivating factor in female suicide terrorism. Clearly most Chechen women who lose a relative as a result of the conflict do not go on to commit suicide terrorism and, similarly, most women who are raped do not go on to
commit a suicide attack (Skjelsbæk, 2006; Stack, 2011; West, 2004-2005). This body of work does little to explain why only a small proportion of women who have experienced loss or rape go on to commit a suicide attack, and it rarely examines female participation beyond suicide bombing. Of the work that has been conducted in this regard, it would appear that personal and communal experiences of violence (and in some cases violence of a sexual nature), discrimination, injustice, oppression, and suffering may be important factors in women’s militant or combat involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. These mixed findings highlight the context and individual specific nature of micro-level factors and the problems inherent in generalising across conflicts based on qualitative findings.

**Exploitation**

Related to the above micro-level factors of personal relationships and experiences of trauma, is the proposition that vulnerable women are exploited and forced into involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. This exploitation takes many forms, commonly that a woman is drugged, abducted, or the victim of planned rape. Subsequent to entry into the extremist organisation, she is brainwashed or coerced into committing a terrorist offence or forced to participate in the organisation in other ways, usually through sexual servitude. This narrative of exploitation occurs commonly in relation to female suicide bombers, particularly in Chechnya where the term ‘zombies’ for female suicide bombers is not uncommon (Stack, 2011), although the abduction of women in conflict situations is also prevalent, particularly in Africa and Latin America. Whilst women are undoubtedly vulnerable members of the community and in many cases are disproportionately affected by war and conflict (Anderlini, 2005), it is inaccurate to portray all women who are involved in political and revolutionary conflict as exploited. However, this is a common perception. Stack (2011), for example, cited research conducted by
the Public Opinion Foundation\textsuperscript{40} which found that 84 percent of Russians believed that female suicide bombers were controlled by someone else in contrast to just 3 percent who believed that these women acted independently.

There is evidence in the scholarship that some women in particular contexts are involved in extremism because they have been exploited, most commonly where abduction of women and children occurs. Certain regions are well known for this – most prominently Africa and Latin America, but also some Asian countries (Keairns, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 2008). McKay and Mazurana (2004) reported, for instance, that girls (under 18 years of age) were abducted into rebel groups in 12 African countries, four countries in the Americas, eight Asian countries, three European countries, and two Middle Eastern countries. These women were often abducted to fill positions of sexual servitude; however, as was noted in the previous chapter, it is not uncommon for these women to become involved in other aspects of the organisation, for example in couriering weapons, looking after the camp and even participating in combat training and fighting (see also Denov & Maclure, 2007; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Mazurana et al., 2002; McKay, 2008). This highlights the difficulty in demarcating victims from perpetrators in conflict situations and the importance of delineating initial recruitment/mobilisation factors from subsequent methods of involvement or activities performed.

Whilst abduction has received much attention in the scholarship, there are other less reliable reports of women being forced to participate in suicide attacks through forced drug use and sexual exploitation. With regards to the Chechen conflict with Russia, for example, there have been several reports that have characterised Chechen female suicide bombers as ‘zombies’ – vulnerable

\textsuperscript{40} The reference Stack (2011) gives is: Yakusheva, T. (2003, July 15). The terrorist attack in Tushino – they want to face us down. Public Opinion Foundation Database, http://bd.english.fom.ru/report/map/edo32826 (accessed March 11, 2011). However, this source was unable to be accessed in English and, thus, Stack’s interpretation is relied upon.
women who have been drugged or otherwise brainwashed into committing attacks (W. A. Knight & Narazhna, 2005). Several scholars are critical of these explanations of women’s involvement in Chechen suicide attacks (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Stack, 2011; West, 2004-2005) arguing that it negates women’s agency and is primarily the result of propaganda on the part of both the Russian government and the Chechen rebels. Stack (2011), for instance, argued that “the Russian government...has relied on the zombie image to discredit Chechen men and the Chechen cause” (p. 88). Again, the criticism regarding generalising from specific cases to the normative population is relevant here (O’Rourke, 2009) – whilst there may be specific instances in which this has occurred, it is difficult to generalise to the normative population of female suicide bombers.

**Biographical and Demographical Characteristics**

Although profiling has largely been debunked as a useful means to identify people who participate in terrorism, some research has found that ‘biographical availability’ can affect involvement in activism and political violence (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Viterna, 2006). It may be, for example, that people with fewer family and work responsibilities are more likely to participate in extremist groups (Viterna, 2006), and this may be a particularly salient consideration for women when they are considering militant activities (M. Alison, 2009). Some research, however, has questioned the importance of biographical availability, finding that many activists participated despite biographical barriers (e.g. Nepstad & Smith, 1999). Whilst the influence of these biographical characteristics is unclear, they may be important considerations in understanding how micro-level factors could impact on variation in female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. There are several biographical and demographic characteristics that may be considered risk factors for participation in political and revolutionary conflict, including age, education, place of birth and/or residence, immigrant status, existence of family/children and personal history and background. Unfortunately the
research on biographical and demographical characteristics is, by necessity, focused on visible women within the movement on whom data is available. Thus, in general, biographical data primarily relates to identifiable combatants and suicide bombers, and not to those women who may participate in other ways.

Jacques and Taylor (2013) conducted the only known quantitative study comparing the biographical and demographical data on a broad sample of women and men who have perpetrated terrorist offences. Their sample included 222 female terrorists and 269 male terrorists. They found that the majority of female perpetrators were single, younger than 35 years of age, native to their country, employed, educated to at least secondary level, and were seldom involved in previous criminality. In comparison to the men included in the sample, the women were more likely to possess a higher educational qualification, less likely to be employed and less likely to have prior activist associations. However, the male and female terrorists in the sample were equivalent in terms of age, immigration profile and role played. Jacques and Taylor found remarkably little variation across the 13 different types of groups included in their analysis, including nationalist/separatist, social revolutionary, and religiously based groups. Quantitative research on specific conflicts or samples of women exhibits similar findings on the whole.

Similar to the male terrorist population, it seems that primarily young women participate in political and revolutionary conflict. The mean age of the women included in Jacques and Taylor’s (2013) study was 22.6 (compared to 22.2 for the men in the sample). In Northern Ireland the mean age of women at first known PIRA-related activity was 26.56; 18 months older than their male counterparts (Bloom, Gill, & Horgan, 2012). In Italian terrorism of the 1970s and early 1980s, almost 70 percent of the women involved were aged between 20 and 29 at time of arrest or identification (Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). In Chechnya, female suicide bombers have ranged in age from 15 to 38 (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2008) where the majority of female suicide bombers were young women in their teens or
twenties (W. A. Knight & Narazhna, 2005). Similarly, most Palestinian female suicide bombers were aged under 35 (Schweitzer, 2006). In Turkey, the average age of female suicide bombers was 21.5 and in Lebanon it was 23 (Zedalis, 2004). Pape (2005) found, however, that female suicide bombers were older than their male counterparts (although still comparatively young); 40 percent of female suicide bombers in his study were aged 19-23 and almost half were older than 24, in contrast to 60 percent of men who were aged 19-23 and approximately 25 percent who were older than 24. However, most research suggests that it is young women who participate in militant activities or suicide attacks, with some research suggesting that they may be slightly older than men.

Where information on place of birth and residence is available, it appears that the majority of women who are involved in militant activities are native to the country in which they are involved in the conflict. Jacques and Taylor (2013) found that only 4 percent of women and 9 percent of men in their sample were immigrants. Similar results have been found regarding specific conflicts. Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that just 6 percent of their sample were foreign to Italy. Bloom, Gill and Horgan (2012) found that almost 80 percent of the PIRA women in their sample were born in Northern Ireland and just over 10 percent were born in the Republic of Ireland; only 10 percent were born in either England or the United States. These findings were relatively equivalent for both male and female PIRA members. Interestingly, however, despite being overwhelmingly native to the island of Ireland, female PIRA recruits were almost three times as likely as male recruits to be operational outside of it, generally in England.

Quantitative studies examining education and work history have found that the women involved in political and revolutionary conflict are, in general, well-educated and, in many cases, employed. Jacques and Taylor (2013) found that the majority of women on whom data was available had completed secondary and tertiary studies and did not differ significantly from their male counterparts in this regard. However, the male sample exhibited significantly
higher employment rates compared to the female sample (72 percent compared to 58 percent). Bloom, Gill and Horgan (2012) found that there was a relatively low unemployment rate across their entire sample (9.1 percent) and that PIRA women were more likely than their male counterparts to be either students or professionals. Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that most of the Italian women included in their sample were students (35 percent), in white-collar occupations (clerks, secretaries, technicians, or nurses; 23 percent), or were teachers (20 percent). Dalton and Asal (2011) found that a higher level of education was a significant predictor of the likelihood of women’s deployment in violent attacks (including, but not limited to, suicide bombing).

Palestinian female suicide bombers also exhibited reasonably high education rates; 22 percent had more than a high school education and 26 percent had a high school education and were qualified for non-skilled labour (Schweitzer, 2006). Knight and Narozhna (2005) reported that most of the Chechen suicide bombers in their sample had a high school education and several had tertiary qualifications. In fact, Knight and Narozhna (2005) concluded that “not only were these young women bright and accomplished, they also came from relatively well-off and well-respected families that were far from socially or economically marginalised” (p. 155). Similarly, Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006a; 2008) reported that 65 percent of their sample of Chechen female suicide bombers had completed high school, 11.5 percent were currently studying in college, 4 percent had finished college, and 19.2 percent had completed university; in short these women exhibited at least a similar level of educational achievement to their peers. Thus, it appears that higher educational attainment is common in women who are involved in extremist militant activity and suicide operations.

Other considerations, in terms of biographical and demographic characteristics, are the personal histories of the women in question, including their criminal, activist and religious backgrounds. Both Jacques and Taylor (2013) and Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found little evidence of any criminal history in their female samples. However, several studies have found that many
women were involved in other political movements or the broader social movement prior to becoming involved militantly; consistent with findings from the mainstream literature (della Porta, 2012; Oberschall, 2004). Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that 18 percent of the women in their Italian sample had been members of extra-paramilitary organisations prior to becoming involved in terrorism. Similarly, Bloom, Gill and Horgan (2012) found that most of their volunteers were members of the broader republican movement long before they became involved in PIRA. In other words, in many cases of militant participation, a gradual progression to prohibited violence was exhibited, suggesting that other activities may have been carried out in service to the extremist movement prior to involvement in its violent activities. This trend indicates the importance of examining female involvement beyond high impact high visibility participation. With regards to religious background, Jacques and Taylor (2013) found that few women in their sample had converted to a religion; just 2 percent evidenced direct conversions whilst 1 percent evidenced conversion to a different strain of a religion already practiced. Knight and Narozhna (2005) found little evidence of fundamentalist religious backgrounds or genuine religious motivations in their sample of female Chechen suicide bombers. However, Speckhard and Akhmedova (2008) found that all of the Chechen female suicide bombers that they examined had taken on militant jihadist views prior to their attacks, although only a minority came from traditionally religious families.

Specific location of birth and/or residence also appears to be an important consideration in women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. Bloom, Gill and Horgan (2012) and Weinberg and Eubank (1987) found that the women included in their respective studies were born and resided in particular locations within the country of their involvement. Weinberg and Eubank (1987) reported that most of the women in their sample were born in the north of Italy in medium to large cities and also that they tended to reside in a big city directly prior to involvement in terrorism. Bloom, Gill and Horgan (2012) found that the geographic recruitment and operational pattern
of the PIRA women in their sample tended to cluster around the two largest cities of Northern Ireland (Belfast and Derry) as well as England (the ‘enemy’ state). Of course, urban areas also contain a greater concentration of people so it would be expected that these areas would exhibit a higher proportion of female involvement. Whether these statistics are disproportionate (i.e. whether a disproportionate number of women come from these locations compared to the general population) is unknown.

Thus, in terms of the biographical and demographical characteristics of women who are involved in an operational capacity in political and revolutionary conflict, it appears that the majority are young, native to the country where they are involved in extremism, well or at least adequately educated, with no history of prior criminality, and, in many instances, a limited religious background. It has also been found that women may have been involved in the broader extremist movement in a variety of ways prior to becoming involved in its more violent activities. Finally, the women involved may have been born and/or resided in particular geographic areas of the country in which they were involved in the extremist movement. The scholarship also suggests that some of these factors may vary according to type of involvement, for example involvement in the broader extremist movement may be particularly relevant to women’s later militant or combat involvement. Whilst these are interesting trends, they shed little light on how these characteristics may influence involvement, although Viterna (2006) suggested that biographical and demographical characteristics – in combination with network and situational contexts – influenced differential mobilisation pathways in Central America, in terms of both internal mobilisation decisions as well as external role pressures to participate. She found, for example, that young childless women were pressured to join guerrilla groups whilst older women with families and children were insulated from these pressures. The generalisability of such findings, however, is unknown.
Ideological and/or Political Commitment

Despite the widely accepted ideological and/or political nature of terrorism, surprisingly little research has been conducted examining the political, religious, or ideological motivations of the women who participate (Brunner, 2007; Sjoberg et al., 2011; West, 2004-2005). This may be due to the focus of most research on the exceptional cases of female involvement rather than the normative population (O’Rourke, 2009; Stanski, 2006) and on the micro-level circumstances that ‘force’ women to commit terrorist offences (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Commonly, even when female participants express political or ideological motivations, they are ignored, dismissed, or viewed to be the result of brainwashing. Patkin (2004) argued with regards to female suicide bombers, that;

Media coverage, particularly in the West, appears to actively search for alternative explanations behind women’s participation in terror in a way that does not seem paralleled in the coverage of male suicide bombers, whose official ideological statements appear to be taken at face value (p. 79).

However, in many contexts, ideological, political, or religious convictions are essential components of involvement in political and revolutionary conflict (Zedalis, 2008).

Bloom (2005) claimed, “when men conduct suicide missions, they are motivated by religious or nationalist fanaticism whereas women appear more often motivated by very personal reasons” (p. 145). As mentioned previously, Jacques and Taylor (2013), in a quantitative study that compared male and female suicide bombers, found that female suicide terrorism was associated with personal and revenge motivations whilst male suicide terrorism was associated with religious/nationalistic motivations. Similarly, Schweitzer (2006) claimed that the Palestinian female (attempted) suicide bombers he interviewed only developed religious or political explanations for their offence after imprisonment with other failed suicide bombers. However, prisons have been
noted as sites of politicisation and radicalisation (della Porta, 2012; Talbot, 2004) and, often in the case of female political prisoners, imprisonment offers women with previously limited political or public experience the opportunity to learn a vocabulary that adequately expresses their political or ideological sentiments (Aretxaga, 1997).

Furthermore, other research has found that women’s motivations for committing a suicide attack are complex. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2008) argued that, whilst a personal revenge motivation was the primary motivation for Chechen suicide bombers, a conversion to militant Islamist ideology was present in all cases of suicide terrorism in combination with nationalist sentiment. Hasso (2005) examined four female suicide bombers who committed successful attacks in Palestine in 2002 and argued that these suicide bombers purposefully “situated their bodies and explained their actions in ways that both reproduced and undermined gender-sexual norms with respect to violence, politics, and community” (p. 44). The three female operatives who left messages represented their attacks as “explosive and embodied action” (p. 29). They recognised that their actions were more dramatic and dangerous due to their gender. One of the operatives, Andaleeb Takatkeh, stated, “I’ve chosen to say with my body what Arab leaders have failed to say...my body is a barrel of gunpowder that burns the enemy”(p. 29). Another operative, Ayat Akhras, stated, “I say to the Arab leaders, stop sleeping. Stop failing to fulfil your duty. Shame on the Arab armies who are sitting and watching the girls of Palestine fighting while they are asleep. It is intifada until victory” (p. 29). Whilst these female operatives represented their attacks as political, nationalistic and religious statements, they recognised that their gender rendered their attacks symbolically powerful because they subverted gender norms.

Hasso (2005) reported that two of the female suicide bombers were long-time political activists and she specifically refuted theories that attribute Palestinian women suicide bombers’ motivations to psychological instability, coercion by men and/or escape from patriarchal misery or rape. Hasso argued, for example, that the props and pose seen in Dareen Abu Aisheh’s
photo taken prior to her attack illustrate her nationalist-religious motivation. She is pictured aiming a knife at her own body and raising her index finger; symbolising one God. She is wearing a white headscarf and Palestinian flag images and she is standing in front of a banner depicting the Al-Aqsa mosque; a significant religious site in Islam as well as the site of the riot which sparked the al-Aqsa intifada. These in-depth studies indicate the complex and often overlapping motivations of female suicide bombers, although as they are case studies the generalisability of the findings is unknown.

Some research has examined the political or ideological motivations of women involved in specific conflicts in ways other than suicide attacks. Alison (2009) found that of the 16 LTTE women she interviewed who had joined voluntarily, 9 explicitly referred to nationalist ideas as a primary motivating force. These ideas included freedom for the Tamil nation, self-determination, and land and other rights for the Tamil people (not always expressed as the notion of a fully independent Tamil state). Additionally, two women expressed nationalist ideas that they had formed subsequent to enlistment in the LTTE. Alison claimed that, with regards to the Sri Lankan sub-sample, “nationalism or nationalist ideology was a meta-reason for enlistment, beneath which there are other reasons, many of which intersect with or feed into nationalism and some of which are more personal or specific to the individual” (p. 128). With regards to Alison’s republican sub-sample from Northern Ireland, four out of the 11 women interviewed asserted that political nationalist motivations were important in their decision to enlist. One woman stated; “It was not personal experience and it was not emotion. I joined the [IRA] to further what I believed in, and it was purely for political reasons and for the principles of it and the way that I thought it was best to achieve what I believed in” (p. 146). Interestingly, Alison also related a conversation she had with a male republican ex-prisoner who asserted that the women who enlisted in the IRA were more politically aware than many of the men who joined; a variation on a common theme within the literature on women in terrorism which asserts that women who are involved in
Part One, Chapter Three: Literature Review

Theoretical Discussions

a particular movement or cause are more committed than their male counterparts (de Cataldo Neuburger & Valentini, 1996; MacDonald, 1991).

Interestingly, Blee (1996) found, in interviews with women from White supremacist movements, that:

It is not a sense of ideological passion or the desire to spread racist ideas and thereby change the world that characterises the ways in which women understand their role in organised racism. Rather, a sense of hopelessness pervades both descriptions of the ‘degenerate’ society that surrounds them and the possibilities for changing that situation. For them, racism is a politic of despair (p. 696).

In this way, Blee (1996) found that women involved in the White supremacist movement were motivated politically and ideologically; however, this motivation was expressed differently to that of male members of the racist movement. For men in the movement, racial knowledge and activism was empowering and their connections to violence something to boast about. For women racial activism was a defensive action taken against a society perceived as unjust and immoral, with racial activism offering them little in the way of personal fulfilment aside from protection against outside social forces (Blee, 1996). These women believed in the ideals espoused by the White supremacist ideology but found little personal gratification or fulfilment in working towards those goals (Blee, 1996).

Thus, whilst the ideological and political motivations of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict are seldom studied, the work that has been conducted has resulted in contradictory findings. Some findings suggest that female suicide bombers are motivated less by politics or ideology and more by personal reasons (Bloom, 2005; Jacques & Taylor, 2008; Schweitzer, 2006) whilst other research has found that their political and ideological motivations are present (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a), although perhaps expressed in gendered ways (Hasso, 2005). Research on women
involved in a militant or activist capacity indicates that women are politically and/or ideologically motivated (M. Alison, 2009; Blee, 1996). These mixed findings indicate the importance of delineating motivations according to role taken or activities performed – potentially female suicide bombers (where involvement may be one-off) are motivated less by political or ideological reasons whilst female combatants (where involvement may take place over a longer time span) may be more politically or ideologically motivated.

The Feminist Warrior

There has been some argument that women participate in extremism due to a feminist belief or because they are striving for the emancipation or betterment of women (e.g. Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Mahan & Griset, 2008). There is also some argument that women participate in extremism as a result of the feminist movement (e.g. Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Hasso, 2005; Lobao, 1990). There is also a related discussion regarding the extent to which female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict advances the feminist agenda or improves the status of women in society (M. Alison, 2009). This section, however, is focused on the scholarship that discusses the influence of personal feminist beliefs on involvement in political and revolutionary conflict.

The proposition or belief that women become involved in terrorism due to feminist ideals or beliefs in women’s emancipation is relatively common, both in contemporary research (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Lobao, 1990; Mahan & Griset, 2008b) and in scholarship of the past several decades (e.g. Galvin, 1983; Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Vetter & Perlstein, 1991). These ideas stem from the notion that women’s criminal behaviour is caused by female emancipation or the masculinisation of female behaviour where these attitudes can be traced back to the work of Lombroso in the late 1800s (e.g. Lombroso, 1897). Early approaches to women in extremism, in particular, emphasised the desire for emancipation or, alternatively, the masculinisation of female behaviour as the primary influences on women’s involvement in extremism. As already
mentioned in this chapter, Georges-Abeyie (1983) claimed that women who could not fulfil conventional gender roles would participate in terrorism.

Indeed, Georges-Abeyie (1983) proposed a theory for explaining women’s involvement in terrorism based on the classic model of factors conducive to terrorism originally proposed by Burton (1975) and Laqueur (1977). According to these scholars, a self-conscious and segregated minority group perceives itself to be economically deprived and/or politically repressed due to their minority status in an environment of poor job opportunities, a lack of voting rights, and/or inflation. They are encouraged to believe that change is approaching but then find these hopes consistently thwarted. They also experience external encouragement to participate in terrorism or violence, a historical ‘other’ to blame for their present situation, and a group of frustrated elites to provide leadership and ideological justification for violence. Finally, this minority must be situated within a society that endorses at least a minimal ideal of democracy and upward mobility. Burton (1975) originally proposed that this minority was of ethnic, religious or cultural origin. However, Georges-Abeyie (1983) proposed that women’s participation in terrorism can be understood within this framework as women perceive themselves to be an oppressed social group simply because they are women. Accordingly he incorporates feminist demands, “both logical and irrational”, (p. 84) into this classic framework in order to explain women’s participation in terrorism;

If we are to comprehend more fully the role of women as terrorists, we must recognise that women comprise a self-conscious, dynamic sector of our society which often perceives itself to be an oppressed majority – a majority oppressed not only because of race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin but also because of sex. The oppression mirrors all of the factors that Burton and Laqueur have listed as classic conditions conducive of terrorist violence (Georges-Abeyie, 1983, p. 84).
Thus, the implication is that women, rather than participating in terrorism for reasons similar to men (e.g. ideological, political or religious belief), participate primarily due to gendered oppression.

In a more recent theoretical proposition, Gonzalez-Perez’s (2008b) argument regarding the greater involvement of women in combat and leadership positions in domestic terrorist groups rests upon the assumption that “women in domestic terrorist groups oppose the internal structures of their own state and defy the discrimination and disadvantage therein” (Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b p. 122). Furthermore, Gonzalez-Perez claimed (2008a) that women had little to gain from international struggles as these would simply overthrow an external power but would do little to address repression and discrimination by an internal state government. Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) argued, for example, that women were only minimally involved in the Baader-Meinhof Gang or RAF, stating, “in the thriving economy and egalitarian environment of post-war West Germany, women who sought to advance their position in society would undoubtedly choose to join other organisations” (p. 117). This type of argument equates women’s involvement in political violence with their in/ability to achieve success in other avenues in life whereby involvement is a last resort to achieve feminist and personal advancement. However, it seems unlikely that women would join a terrorist organisation solely to advance a feminist agenda, especially given that there are very few extremist groups that endorse any kind of feminist agenda – exceptions are the LTTE and the FARC (Sjoberg et al., 2011).\(^{41}\) Additionally, the lack of improvement of the status of women in society, despite their participation in nationalist or other types of conflict, is a well-documented phenomenon (Halim, 1998; Qazi, 2011).

Empirical findings regarding feminist belief influencing female involvement have been mixed. Alison (2009) found indications that women in the ethno-
nationalist conflicts in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland had personal beliefs regarding women’s liberation; however, these were not expressed as the only, or even the most important, motivations for mobilisation. In some cases these beliefs developed subsequent to mobilisation. None of the former LTTE combatants, for instance, had been aware of feminist concerns or women’s issues prior to joining the movement, although several reported that they learnt about these gender-specific issues from the organisation itself and from their own subsequent experiences and observations after mobilisation. Indeed, Eager (2008) argued that feminist concerns – even in left-wing groups which would be generally more receptive of feminism – appear as somewhat of an after-thought on the part of the women involved. Aretxaga (1997) reported similar findings in her ethnographic study of nationalist women in Belfast: “there was no thought about women or feminism then; the idea then was the unity of Ireland. I never thought of myself then as being unequal with men” (p. 76). Berko and Erez (2008) found, in interviews with would-be Palestinian suicide bombers, that resisting gender oppression was one reason to volunteer for a suicide operation, where these motivations included revenge for restrictions placed upon them or a means to gain excitement or escape a monotonous life. However, in another study, Berko, Erez and Globokar (2010) compared interview data from women imprisoned in Israel for security offences with those imprisoned for conventional crimes. They found that neither population of women pursued subversive or criminal activity due to notions of women’s liberation and in neither case did participation in these traditionally masculine activities (particularly considered so within the Arab/Palestinian context) indicate rebellion against gender oppression. An examination of the lives of the women included in this sample, whether imprisoned for security or conventional criminal activity, did not reveal indications of empowerment or liberation through their participation in traditional masculine activities.

Thus, whilst some scholarship has posited that women’s involvement in conflict can be attributed to feminism, the empirical findings have been mixed. On the whole, however, they appear to suggest that feminist beliefs, if present,
developed subsequent to mobilisation. Furthermore, there are actually very few extremist groups (aside from specific radical feminist groups) that have an explicit feminist agenda and female involvement in conflict has rarely led to improvement in the overall status of women in society. It must be noted that not all women who participate in public life, politics, or activist movements harbour feminist beliefs or are striving for the emancipation or betterment of all women. In fact, female involvement in religious and right-wing extremism attests to this fact. Perhaps a more useful line of enquiry would be to examine if the presence of feminist beliefs influences the activities performed and role played.

**Summary of Micro-level Factors**

As this discussion of possible micro-level factors in women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict demonstrates, there are several factors that have received attention in the scholarship. These factors include personal and relational networks, certain psychological characteristics, experiences of trauma, exploitation, biographical and demographical characteristics, and personal feminist beliefs. Notably research on women’s political and ideological motivations – in a phenomenon that is distinctly political or religious in nature – is lacking, although some recent research has begun to focus on this area. Problematically, whilst these micro-level factors have received the majority of attention in the literature, little of this research has been systematic, comparative, or focused on the range of micro-level factors that may be important in different types of involvement. In fact, most research is focused on initial mobilisation rather than variation in involvement. Often the research has focused on one particular factor or on one particular type of activity engaged in, primarily suicide bombing and occasionally combat. The lack of a framework by which to systematically assess female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict is apparent. Furthermore, very little of the research conducted is based on the collection of primary data which is problematic with regards to micro-level factors; as this section
illustrated, micro-level factors are primarily individual and context specific variables and difficult to ascertain accurately and reliability from secondary sources. Finally, much of the scholarship portrays a gendered account of these micro-level influences, for example trauma and loss of a family member are events that are equally likely to occur in the lives of both men and women in conflict zones; however, they are often unduly stressed in accounts of female participation and rarely mentioned in accounts of male involvement (Ness, 2005b).

The majority of research that focuses on women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict focuses on these individual micro-level factors. However, factors beyond this level are important considerations in women’s involvement. Micro-level explanations cannot, for instance, explain changes in female participation across time (e.g. many scholars have claimed that women’s participation has increased across time and will continue to do so into the future), or differences in female involvement according to different types of politically violent groups (e.g. some scholars have contended that women participate to a greater extent and in combat and leadership positions in left-wing movements compared to right-wing movements). Furthermore, most of the research on micro-level factors focuses on specific cases – not a problem in and of itself except that much of this research generalises from these specific cases to the normative population of female participants in extremism with little evidence to suggest that this is a valid approach. Thus, empirical research that collects primary data related to a range of methods of involvement is needed to assess individual and context specific influences on female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict.

Conclusion: Drawing the Micro-level, Meso-level and Macro-level Together

It is clear from the preceding literature review that the majority of research on the involvement of women in political and revolutionary conflict has focused on individual micro-level factors. Comparatively little research has examined macro-level or meso-level factors that may be important in women’s
involvement. The literature review also highlighted the lack of an empirically verified framework of women’s roles with which to systematically examine women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict and the potential influence of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors in combination. Commonly, micro-level factors are utilised to explain why women are involved with little attention given to how women are involved. Much of the research has also focused on suicide bombers and combatants or leaders with little known about the factors that are important in other forms of female involvement in extremism. Focusing on particular types of involvement and on relatively few factors limits any examination of population-level patterns in female involvement or the interaction between a variety of factors (macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level) influencing variation in female involvement. This is not to say that micro-level factors are not important in women’s involvement; the primary critique contained in this thesis in this regard relates to the emphasis placed on these factors, at the expense of other possible factors, and the way in which they are framed in a gendered manner and generalised, without evidential basis, to the wider population of female participants in extremism. This notion that involvement in extremism is triggered by a single event or factor simply does not align with current scholarship in the mainstream area of political violence and terrorism, where research is increasingly moving towards a paradigm that is multifaceted and acknowledges the influence of a range of factors in radicalisation, recruitment, and involvement (e.g. della Porta, 2012; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Victoroff, 2005). However, comparatively little research has applied such approaches to studying the involvement of women in political and revolutionary conflict; although there are some notable exceptions which, as outlined in the introductory and current chapter, form the theoretical and analytical approach taken in this thesis (see, for example, Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992; Viterna, 2006).

As highlighted in this literature review, the levels of analysis approach is vital in facilitating a more complete understanding of women’s involvement in
political and revolutionary conflict as well as identifying those factors that may be important considerations in a theoretical framework. At the context-specific micro-level these factors may include: personal relational networks; psychological characteristics and experiences of trauma; exploitation; biographical and demographical characteristics of age, education and employment, place of birth and residence, and personal history of activism; ideological and/or political commitment, and; personal feminist beliefs. At the meso-level these factors may include the strategic and tactical advantages of female group members as well as the ideological basis, religious or political orientation, and goals of the group. Finally, at the macro-level, these factors may include the historical context in the form of the evolution of terrorism and the particular world region in which the conflict exists. The levels of analysis approach provides an appropriately nuanced and theoretically sound approach for examining the influence of contextual factors upon female involvement; however, first a framework by which to ascertain and compare methods of female involvement must be developed. These multiple levels in isolation as well as the interaction between them are important considerations in a theoretical framework, for instance the micro-level factors may distinguish between women who are potential recruits and those who are not, the meso-level factors may indicate which types of groups are most likely to feature women and in what positions, and the macro-level factors may indicate where and when revolutions are likely to occur and differences in population trends in female participation across time and context.

Whilst some studies (Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992) illustrate the utility of an approach that includes a variety of contextual factors in an analysis of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict, no study has synthesised all the contextual factors and tested their effect quantitatively on the spectrum of female involvement at the population level. Thus, an understanding of the specific macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors that are important in the different types of women’s involvement (as highlighted
in the previous literature review chapter) remains incomplete. Therefore, the final research question of this doctoral project is:

Research question 3: How does the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict vary according to a levels of analysis framework that includes the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level?
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND STUDY DESCRIPTION

The theoretical and methodological context of extremism research that is more mainstream and that which focuses on women demonstrates some similarities in the fundamental issues that plague both domains – although there is often little overt linkage between the two domains. Mainstream research rarely examines female involvement in political violence in any systematic or in-depth manner and research that is focused on women seldom links to theoretical or methodological developments in the broader domain of terrorism studies. This doctoral project took an empirical mixed-methods approach to examining female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict within a theoretical and analytical paradigm that recognised the importance of contextual factors in influencing this involvement. This approach was guided by some notable research in the area of women in terrorism and revolutions (Eager, 2008; Mason, 1992; Moser, 2001) and developments in the broader research area (e.g. Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Victoroff, 2005). This chapter provides: first; an outline of the methodological context and framework; second, a summary of the research problem and reiteration of the research questions, and; third, an overview of the research design and methods employed as well as an introduction to the four studies that comprise this thesis.42

42 Note that each of the subsequent four chapters contain a discussion of specific methods utilised in each of the studies.
Methodological Context: The Problem of Methodology and the Problem of Women

Prior to 2001 the community of scholars studying the phenomenon of terrorism, particularly those who were consistent or long-term contributors, was relatively small. However, the advent of 9/11 irrevocably changed the field of terrorism studies. Many self-identified experts joined the terrorism research arena; unfortunately the research they contributed was primarily second-hand accounts and speculation based on limited or no empirical research or valid data (Horgan & Braddock, 2012). Furthermore, many of these commentators subsequently left the field when media interest waned, along with several established academics who were seconded to newly created government positions. In the words of Horgan and Braddock (2012);

The universe of terrorism research in the years following 9/11 was a tumultuous one, characterised by high turnover among researchers and a relative underrepresentation of sound methodological practice. As a result, a major proportion of the literature produced on terrorism and political violence following 9/11 yielded an abundance of atheoretical speculation under the guise of expertise and insight (p. ix).

In fact, many commentators within the field of terrorism studies claim that speculation, description and commentary dominate in the absence of strong empirical research (della Porta, 2012; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Silke, 2001; Victoroff, 2005). In a comprehensive review of the behavioural science literature regarding terrorism, Victoroff (2005) concluded, “the field is largely characterised by theoretical speculation based on subjective interpretation of anecdotal observations” (p. 3).

A similar trend can be observed within the research arena of female involvement in terrorism and political violence. The combination of 9/11 and the increasing visibility and impact of female suicide bombers have resulted in a flurry of media and scholarly interest in the phenomenon of female participation in conflict (Brunner, 2007). However, whilst there has been a
threefold increase in publications since 2002 related to women’s involvement in terrorism, there is scant evidence of increased methodological rigour or theoretical development (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). In fact, research regarding women in extremism exhibits a clear lack of progression and a diverse range of foci in the absence of theoretical progression and empirical approaches to research (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). This contemporary criticism echoes an observation made over twenty years ago in relation to this same research area (Perlstein & Vetter, 1990).

The research field of women in terrorism and political violence is dominated by descriptive and impressionistic research that has generally not been adequately inclusive or specific. Most research takes a case study approach with a focus on specific women or groups (Dalton & Asal, 2011; Jacques & Taylor, 2013). Empirical, and in particular quantitative, approaches to research on women in conflict are rare. Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that 78 percent \( (n = 42) \) of published research utilised secondary data whilst only 23 percent \( (n = 12) \) reported primary research. Problematically, much of the reported primary research in the area uncritically relied upon data found in the media sources despite the fact that media reports of female involvement in terrorism and political violence has been strongly criticised for gender bias (see, in particular, Nacos, 2008; Patkin, 2004). Furthermore, Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that only 39 percent \( (n = 21) \) of research published since 1983 reported numerical data of some kind: 28 percent \( (n = 15) \) utilised frequency-based descriptive statistics in relation to the prevalence of women in specific groups or operations; 9 percent \( (n = 5) \) utilised descriptive statistics to present demographic data, and; only one paper employed inferential statistics. Thus, large-scale comparative research is rare (Dalton & Asal, 2011) and established empirical trends few (Sjoberg et al., 2011).

In an update to Jacques and Taylor (2009), it was found that an additional 22 pieces of empirical research on female terrorism were published in the period 2009 to 2014. Of these additional research outputs, 68 percent \( (n = 15) \) relied on secondary data and 36 percent \( (n = 8) \) relied on primary
data. The vast majority (18, 82%) utilised qualitative analysis, 32 percent \( (n = 7) \) utilised basic numerical analysis in the form of frequencies or descriptives, and just 18 percent \( (n = 4) \) utilised inferential statistics.\(^{43}\) Thus, although there are indications that the quality of research is increasing, there are continuing problems with regards to the type of analysis undertaken in research and the lack of unique data upon which research is based.

Furthermore, research examining the most important aspects of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict from the point of view of theory construction and testing is lacking. Only 25 percent \( (n = 14) \) of papers published since 1983 have examined women’s roles, motivations and recruitment patterns or environmental enablers for female participation (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). In contrast, over 70 percent \( (n = 39) \) of published research has focused on providing a general overview of women’s involvement in terrorism where much of this recounted existing knowledge, perceptions of female terrorists and feminist considerations in relation to women’s involvement in political violence (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). This is not to say that these focal areas are not valid lines of enquiry, however in terms of developing a holistic and empirically-supported theoretical framework for understanding women’s participation in political and revolutionary conflict, empirical research regarding how and why women participate is crucial.

In broader terms, and further compounding the issues outlined above, there is a discord between mainstream terrorism and political violence research and women’s involvement in this conflict. Research on women in conflict tends to take place in isolation, with the majority of research carried out by feminist or specialised scholars with little attention from, or collaboration with, scholars from the mainstream field of terrorism and political violence research. Feminist scholarship tends to focus on the experiences of individual women and has been critical of the conventional empiricist paradigm (Reinharz, 1992). In

\(^{43}\) Note that these percentages do not equal 100 as some research outputs utilised a combination of methodologies. See Appendix B for further information.
contrast the empiricist paradigm tends to aim for larger sample sizes and many observations in order to draw inferences about trends in the population of interest ("International Encyclopedia", 2008). Both approaches are useful when examining women’s participation; feminist scholarship for drawing attention to the value of focusing on women and the empiricist standpoint for advocating a focus on population trends in developing a theoretical framework. Indeed, Sjoberg (2009) acknowledged that mixed methods approaches to research are frequently required in order to answer research questions related to women and feminism within the field of international relations and security studies. However, there appears to be a lack of recognition of the value that each discipline (empirical and feminist) can add to a holistic model of violence and conflict (Tickner, 1997). Particularly within the mainstream study of terrorism and political violence, understanding gender in relation to conflict and violence is rarely considered important (Moser, 2001). This thesis, as a whole, attempts to incorporate the empirical findings, theoretical propositions, and analytical approaches from both fields of research in order to understand women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.

**Summary of the Research Problem and Questions**

Current scholarship on women in political and revolutionary conflict focuses primarily on prominent women, usually female suicide bombers or women who have perpetrated other violent offences (Brunner, 2007; Stanski, 2006). Thus, we know little about the involvement of women beyond these prominent cases, although some research suggests that women participate in a myriad other ways in extremism and conflict, as was outlined in Chapter Two. Furthermore, in terms of the factors that influence this involvement (i.e. the nature and extent of activities performed in extremism), the research field has been unduly influenced by the individual factors that influence involvement – again primarily involvement in suicide attacks or other violent operations (Dalton & Asal, 2011). The scholarship has, on the whole, neglected other contextual factors that may be important in female involvement in political and
revolutionary conflict, as was outlined in Chapter Three. Furthermore, the focus of much research has been on explaining why women are involved at the expense of how they are involved and if this varies systematically across contexts. Methodologically, the vast majority of research has been speculative and anecdotal with a focus on case studies (Dalton & Asal, 2011; Jacques & Taylor, 2009). The lack of systematic, empirical, and comparative research examining female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict according to a valid framework and across a range of contexts has been consistently noted throughout this thesis thus far. In summary, contemporary understandings of how women are involved in conflict are incomplete (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; von Knop, 2007) as is knowledge regarding if and how this involvement varies systematically according to a variety of contextual factors beyond the individual (Eager, 2008).

In recognition of this problem, the aim of this doctoral research was to establish an evidence-based theoretical framework for understanding and studying women’s roles in conflict and the contextual factors that influence these roles – in terms of the specific instance as well as population level trends. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed, as specified in the previous two chapters:

1) What specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict?

2) Do the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict evidence consistent patterns in associations so as to indicate the existence of a typology or model of broader conceptual roles?

3) How does the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict vary according to a levels of analysis?
framework that includes the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level?

Methodological Approach and Summary of Studies

This research sits within the empirical paradigm and was mixed methods in design. Although it is focused on women, it is not feminist in either theoretical or methodological approach. The research process consisted of four studies that were designed to establish the activities that women have performed in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, develop a model that accurately represented these activities in the form of conceptual roles, examine how the model varied according to several contextual factors, and assess the utility of the model in studying and understanding women’s involvement in a specific conflict. Whilst the methods and process specific to each individual study will be described in detail in the relevant chapters, an outline is provided here in order to illustrate the research process as a whole and provide an introduction to the second (Study One, Two, and Three) and third (Study Four) part of this thesis. The second part of the thesis that consisted of studies one, two, and three formed the theoretical development phase where this process is based on quantitative analysis of secondary data. The third part of the thesis, or study four, takes the form of a qualitative case study to both test and further refine the model based on both primary and secondary data.

Part Two: Study One

Study One was designed to answer the first research question regarding the specific ways in which women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. In order to do this, 482 cases of individual women identified in secondary sources who were involved in various capacities in political and revolutionary conflict were systematically sourced from the regions
of the world. These were cases that met the broad definition of the world. These were cases that met the broad definition outlined in the introductory chapter where involvement occurred subsequent to 1960. These cases were systematically coded for objective case and role behaviour variables based on a coding dictionary. The role behaviour variables, or the specific activities engaged in, were initially developed based on the literature discussed in Chapter Two and refined throughout the data coding process. The case variables were related to the primary macro-level and meso-level contextual factors outlined in Chapter Three, including world region and wave of terrorism as well as ideological basis, religious orientation, specific goals or aims, and political orientation of the group/movement. This study provides a descriptive analysis of these case and role behaviour variables in order to provide a fundamental understanding of the dataset, assess the representativeness of the sample of women included in this research, and examine the overall prevalence of specific activities.

Part Two: Study Two

This study was designed to answer the second research question regarding the possible presence of consistent patterns in associations between activities that may indicate the existence of a typology or model of conceptual roles of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Exploring the existence of such a model or typology was achieved through a particular statistical technique called Smallest Space Analysis which has been utilised to develop typologies of behaviour in various sub-fields within forensic psychology and criminology (e.g. L. Alison, Kebbell, & Leung, 2008; Almond, Canter, & Salfati, 2006; Canter, Bennell, Alison, & Reddy, 2003; Canter & Heritage, 1990; Canter, Hughes, & Kirby, 1998; Porter & Alison, 2004, 2006; Salfati & Canter, 1999; Santtila, Häkkänen, Alison, & Whyte, 2003). Smallest Space Analysis was used to examine patterns in associations between the activities performed by

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44 Where this conflict consisted of a non-state movement/organisation that endorsed and utilised proscribed violence in defiance of a state in the advancement of a political or revolutionary agenda (Moser, 2001; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Utas, 2005).
the women who comprised the sample collated in Study One and, thus, establish a model of conceptual roles based on statistical associations between known female activities in extremism.

**Part Two: Study Three**

Study Three was designed to answer part of the third research question regarding how the contextual factors indicated by a levels of analysis framework influence the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. This study statistically examined variations in the model developed in Study Two according to two macro-level factors (wave of terrorism and world region) and four meso-level (ideological basis, religious orientation, political orientation, and specific aims or goals of the group/movement) variables using a series of non-parametric Mann-Whitney U tests. These particular macro-level and meso-level variables were chosen as they were of primary importance in the scholarship, the most reliably ascertained in secondary data, and facilitated the most holistic comparative approach to understanding variation in female involvement in conflict. Thus, this study examined systematic variation in female involvement – including in broad conceptual roles and the specific activities that comprise these roles – in conflict according to the macro-level and meso-level.

**Part Three: Study Four**

The aim of Study four was two-fold: first, to explore the utility of the model of women’s roles in contemporary conflict and the established contextual factors in understanding female involvement in a specific conflict, and; second, to examine the utility of the framework in the elucidation of the context and individual specific micro-level factors, thus, providing a fuller answer to the third research question. In order to achieve these aims a case study of the conflict in Northern Ireland (late 1960s – 1998) was conducted in two phases. The first phase of the case study involved utilising secondary data in order to test the utility of the model and relevant contextual factors for
understanding and studying female involvement in the conflict. The second phase of the case study involved the collection of primary data in order to elucidate the micro-level factors relevant to women’s involvement in this particular conflict context (according to the model of roles). For the purpose of primary data collection, the repertory grid technique was utilised. This is an interview technique originally developed in clinical psychology (Kelly, 1955) but since utilised more widely (Bannister, 1965; Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2011; Marsden, 2000; Pollock & Kear-Colwell, 1994; Westera, Kebbell, Milne, & Green, 2014). Using the repertory grid technique, interviewees’ personal constructs regarding individual micro-level influences on a range of female involvement (as classified according to the model) were systematically elicited. Thus, this study explores the application of the model of female roles and relevant contextual factors to understanding and studying female involvement in a specific conflict.

**A Note on Secondary and Primary Data**

The reliance on secondary data is a commonly acknowledged problem in the field of female political and revolutionary violence (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Perlstein & Vetter, 1990) as in the broader area of terrorism and conflict research (Brannan et al., 2001; D. Hoffman, 2003; Horgan, 2011; Silke, 2001). Jacques and Taylor (2009) identified a decreasing trend in the use of primary data in research on women in conflict, with much research simply reworking old material. Taken in combination with the lack of statistical analysis, Jacques and Taylor questioned the reliability of results and conclusions drawn from research in the area. Similarly, Silke (2001) found that in mainstream terrorism research only about 20 percent of published work made new contributions to the field with most research relying on secondary and recycled data and only 3 percent of papers utilising statistical analysis. Problematically, such approaches mean that accuracy is difficult to verify, most research is subject to the biases inherent in the sources that form their data, and the use of statistical analysis to control for some of these issues is rare. As noted throughout this thesis, these issues are particularly relevant to research on
women in conflict as both academic and media sources exhibit a gender-biased approach to the study and reporting of female involvement. Horgan (2011) and Brannan (2001) also question the validity of drawing conclusions about terrorists when one has never spoken with someone who belongs to the population under study. Thus, in general, the over-reliance on secondary and media sources and the lack of statistical analysis serve to undermine the reliability and accuracy of research and limit the possibility of sound theoretical development.

However, secondary data was utilised for the majority of the research for several reasons. First, the primary objective of Part Two was to establish the various activities that women have undertaken in extremism and develop a parsimonious and useful typology/model of their roles at the population level (rather than at the conflict or individual level) including the factors that impact on their involvement. In light of this objective, the maximum number of cases was needed in order to ensure a large representative sample – a difficult and time-consuming task if one was to collect only primary data. Secondary data that was collected from reliable sources (where the majority of these reported primary data) and cross-referenced with other sources was considered justified. In contrast to much of the research in the area, the data collection and coding procedure employed was extremely rigorous and coding itself involved identification of relatively objective behaviours or activities from the sources gathered, rather than making subjective judgements about internal dynamics or causes of behaviour, such as extrapolating about motivations. There was limited use of media sources gathered through internet searches with key words; most secondary sources were those that reported primary interview data, often in full, that was collected by scholars, non-government organisations, or United Nations bodies. Inferential statistical analyses appropriate to the type of data collected were employed throughout the research process as a means to provide verifiable and reliable findings. Thus, although secondary data was utilised in this research, it was collected rigorously, related to more objective behaviours, and analysed appropriately –

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thus, the findings from this research are new and original and contribute substantially to theoretical development. Finally, in consideration of the criticisms of secondary data, and particularly as these criticisms relate to personal individual influences on involvement, primary data was collected regarding micro-level process important to women’s involvement in extremism in a specific context. This primary data also functioned to test the reliability of the secondary data collected in the previous studies by testing the validity and utility of the model developed in Part Two of the thesis.

**Conclusion: Methodological Framework and Approach**

Both the mainstream political violence/terrorism research arena and the scholarship that focuses on women’s involvement in these phenomena lack theoretical progression based on sound empirical research (Horgan & Braddock, 2012; Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Silke, 2001; Victoroff, 2005). The aim of this doctoral research was to establish an evidence-based theoretical framework for understanding and studying women’s roles in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and the contextual factors that influence these roles. In recognition of current limitations in the research arena, this research took an empirical approach with a mixed-methods research design. The first three studies of this thesis are quantitative studies that use secondary data. These studies involve developing a model of women’s involvement that describes both the broad conceptual roles and the specific activities that associate statistically within these roles. These studies also assess the influence of contextual factors on population level trends in female involvement in conflict. The final study utilised both primary and secondary data to validate the findings from the first three studies regarding women’s roles and explore the relevant context and individual specific influences on female involvement in a specific conflict.
CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY ONE: WHAT ACTIVITIES DO WOMEN PERFORM IN POLITICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT?

To reiterate points made in Chapter Two, research that has examined the full range of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict is rare, and the majority of research has been descriptive and at the case or role level, for example examining the personal histories of female suicide bombers. Thus, it is impossible to determine with reliability population-level trends in the means, extent and prevalence of women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. As discussed in Chapter Four, the scholarship on female terrorism in general lacks methodological rigour and strong theoretical hypothesis generation and testing; there is a dearth of empirical or quantitative research examining female participation in extremism (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Furthermore, data on population-level trends are usually incident-focused rather than participant-focused. Large databases from which population-level trends can be extracted are focused on incidents of terrorism rather than on the participants (e.g. the Global Terrorism Database maintained by START) or data regarding gender is missing (e.g. the ITERATE database in which the gender of the participant is most often missing – see Weinberg and Eubank (2011)).

The lack of quality empirical work in the area has resulted in speculation about women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict that cannot be adequately examined with reference to an evidence base. In both the policy and research arena women are commonly portrayed as having only a minor role in conflict and primarily participating in support positions. However, this claim has seldom been empirically examined, particularly in relation to extremism or at the population level. A claim such as this, though, has ramifications beyond the research arena, as was outlined in the
introductory chapter. The designation of women as only filling support positions has limited their admissibility to DDR programs as well as to political peace and security negotiations due to the perception that they have not participated as ‘true combatants’ in the conflict (MacKenzie, 2009, 2011; Parashar, 2011b).

Whilst empirical, and particularly quantitative, research in the area of women and terrorism is rare, the collation of anecdotal and descriptive research in Chapter Two suggests that women do, in fact, engage in a variety of activities in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. These activities included, but were not limited to, the following: support tasks such as performing household-type chores, providing resources to the group, collecting intelligence, couriering resources, and acting as a decoy; combat activities in rural and urban settings; leadership activities; recruitment and propaganda activities; indoctrinating children; suicide bombing, and; network-building and maintenance through strategic marriage ties. Problematically, whilst these activities have been suggested by descriptive or qualitative research, the full range of activities performed by women has never been empirically established or tested at the population level. Thus, the first study in this doctoral research project was developed to answer the first research question: What specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict? This first study aimed to empirically develop a comprehensive picture of the activities performed by women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict from 1960 to the present. In order to achieve this aim, a large and varied sample of women involved in political and revolutionary conflict was gathered and the range of activities that they engaged in was systematically documented. The results of this study are the first step in understanding exactly how women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and, thus, forms the basis for the development of a framework for considering the role of women in conflict.
Method

Sample Cases and Data Sources

The sample consisted of 482 cases of individual women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, where this met the definition outlined in Chapter One. The data on these individual cases of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict were collected from various secondary sources. As this study was focused on gaining a large varied sample for the purposes of establishing global population trends, the cases were sourced systematically from all world regions based on the United Nations division of world (United Nations Statistics Division, 2011). The Oceania region was excluded, as there were few sources that reported cases of individual women involved in conflict that met the definition employed by this research and in sufficient detail. Within each world region cases were sourced from a variety of different movements and groups. At least 30 cases were identified in each region so as to ensure an adequate sample size for comparative purposes.

The process of data collection involved two approaches. One approach involved the identification of sources that reported primary data (generally interviews) at the case level. These sources were found through internet searches using keywords that related to the specific conflict, country, and organisation known to produce quality reports of this nature (primarily the United Nations and associated bodies, relevant non-governmental organisations, and scholarly documents). The second approach to data collection focused on the identification of specific cases within secondary sources, such as academic books or articles. The woman’s name was then entered into various internet search engines in order to identify potential sources (preferably of a primary nature). Both of these approaches to data collection led to the identification of

45 The woman must have been involved in a non-state movement/organisation that endorsed and utilised proscribed violence in defiance of a state in order to advance a political or revolutionary agenda (Moser, 2001; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Utas, 2005) subsequent to 1960
further potential sources and cases. In all instances, the identification of a valid and reliable source that reported primary data regarding the specific case/s was the ultimate goal, although this was not always achievable. The majority of sources were those that reported rigorous and reliable primary data, with a minority of sources including quality media reports and academic work. This two-pronged approach to data collection was continued until saturation was achieved (where at least 30 cases were included in each collapsed sub-region of the world and where these cases exhibited a variety of activities).

**Data Coding**

Features of each case were extracted through the use of a coding dictionary. The coding dictionary was both literature-based and data-driven. It included six macro-level and meso-level variables that described the case and 45 variables that described the role-related tasks or activities performed. The coding dictionary allowed the systematic quantitative recording of features evident within the qualitative data for each case; thus, the coding process involved, in essence, converting qualitative data into quantitative. The full coding dictionary with relevant definitions can be found in Appendix B.

*Case variables.* There were six variables that described aspects of the meso-level and macro-level. In terms of macro-level factors, cases were coded as belonging to a particular *world region* and *wave of terrorism*. The *world region* variable was based on the United Nations-endorsed world regions and related to where the group was based or, in specific cases where the group/movement was transnational in nature (e.g. al-Qaeda) where the woman joined the group/movement. Thus, cases could be coded as belonging to Europe (including Northern, Southern and Western Europe); South Asia

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46 Additionally, the source had to be available in English and online, in an accessible library, or able to be purchased.
(including Southern and South-Eastern Asia); Africa (including Eastern, Middle, Northern, and Western Africa); Latin America (including South and Central America); the Middle East; Eastern Europe, and; Northern America (including the United States and Canada). The wave of terrorism variable had two categories: wave three (including cases that belonged to groups that formed between 1960 and 1979) and wave four (including cases that belonged to groups that formed after 1979). In line with the theoretical basis of the waves of terrorism model, coding was based on the wave itself rather than a strict time period per se. Hence, for the minority of instances where a third wave group persisted into the fourth wave and a woman participated after 1979, she was coded as belonging to a third wave terrorist group rather than a fourth wave terrorist group.47

In terms of the meso-level, cases were coded according to four different variables that described the groups/movements to which they were affiliated. These four variables were: ideological basis; religious orientation; political orientation, and; goals. The variable of ideological basis refers to whether the group/movement to which the case belonged was left-wing or right-wing. Religious orientation refers to whether the group/movement to which the case was affiliated was based on a religious ideology or whether it was secular in nature. Political orientation was a code based on the theory proposed by Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) and referred to whether the political agenda and focus of the group was orientated internationally or domestically. Cases were also coded according to the goals of the group/movement to which they were affiliated. The categories included in this variable were:

- Nationalist/separatist (where the goal was freedom from a particular state or majority population by way of separation and either the creation of a new community/state or joining with a different community/state, e.g. the LTTE and IRA);

47 This theoretical basis is examined in some detail in Study Four which explores female involvement in the Troubles in Northern Ireland; a conflict spanning both the third and fourth wave.
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- Communist/socialist (where the primary goals were aligned with Marxism/Leninism, such as the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a socialist system, e.g. the Weather Underground);
- Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist (where groups evidenced both of the aforementioned goals in fairly equal emphasis such as separation from a particular state and the creation of a new state based on socialism or communism, e.g. the PKK in Turkey);
- Racist/Christian-based (where the goals were Christian-based or racially-based, e.g. the KKK, the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda);
- Islamist (where the primary goals are based on extremist Islamist interpretations of Islam such as the creation of an Islamic state and the eradication of non-believers, e.g. al-Qaeda);
- Nationalist/separatist and Islamist (where groups evidenced separatist and/or nationalist goals in combination with an Islamist ideology, e.g. some Chechen rebel groups or Palestinian groups), and;
- Non-specific revolutionary (where the goals included overthrowing an existing government through use of violence but with no clear ideological alignment or basis that would dictate a specific agenda according to the above categories, e.g. the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone).

This coding was based on common categorisations found in the scholarship as well as the categorisations employed by the Terrorist Organisation Profiles database maintained by START (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and the Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence and the University of Maryland, 2010-2013).

These particular macro-level and meso-level variables were selected as they were identified as being of primary importance in the literature review. Micro-level factors were not coded at this stage as this doctoral research was focused, in the first instance, on establishing reliable and valid population level
trends rather than individual-specific trends. Furthermore, as noted previously, micro-level variables are less reliably ascertained from secondary sources.

**Role behaviour.** There were 45 variables that described the involvement of the case in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Each individual code represented a task or activity performed by the case, hypothesised to be indicative of a broader conceptual role. The development of these variables was both literature-based and data driven. The variables were first derived from the literature, primarily from the work of Mahan and Griset (2008), Cragin and Daly (2009), and with additional activities suggested by von Knop (2007, 2008), Jacques and Taylor (2009), Ismail (2006) and Noor (2007) – see Appendix C. A Grounded Theory approach was also utilised such that additional activities identified in data sources were added to the coding dictionary throughout the entire coding process. This yielded a total of 45 variables, 32 derived from the literature and 13 identified throughout the coding process. All codes were reductionist in nature such that each code was a specific behaviour exhibited or task or activity performed. The variables represented a range of activities, including militant activities (e.g. fighting, leadership), support tasks (e.g. spying, providing resources), and activities not typically examined in literature on conflict and terrorism (e.g. indoctrinating children, producing and distributing propaganda). All cases were coded as to whether these role behaviour variables were present or absent. Each variable/activity in each case, if it was not identified in a primary data source, required corroboration from another independent and reliable secondary source before it was included in the final dataset. Thus, the coding process was rigorous and involved triangulation with multiple reliable sources where necessary. Role behaviour variables were not mutually exclusive; the women included in the sample could perform any number of tasks/activities.

Whilst the coding process was extremely rigorous and involved relatively objective judgements regarding behaviour and activity, coding still relied upon the judgement of the researcher. Thus, as is convention and as recommended
by Porter (2008) particularly in relation to the development of a valid and reliable coding dictionary, tests of inter-rater reliability of the coding dictionary were conducted. An independent rater was engaged to code 10 percent of the sample (48 cases) using the coding dictionary. Cohen’s Kappa ranged from .643 to 1 across the role behaviour variables indicating substantial to almost perfect agreement (see Appendix C).

**Results**

The final sample was comprised of 482 cases of individual women involved in political and revolutionary conflict from 1960 to the present on whom there was sufficient information available to enable coding. These cases exhibited a range of descriptive variables at the case and role behaviour level. Descriptive data regarding the sample according to these case and role behaviour variables is outlined below.

**Case Variables**

In terms of the two macro-level case variables, the final sample included 482 cases drawn from 39 different countries, representing seven of the world regions: Europe \(n = 127; 26.3\%\); South Asia \(n = 80; 16.6\%\); Africa \(n = 78; 16.2\%\); Latin America \(n = 61; 12.7\%\); the Middle East \(n = 63; 13.1\%\); Eastern Europe \(n = 41; 8.5\%\), and; Northern America \(n = 32; 6.6\%\). Of these cases, 245 (50.8%) were affiliated with groups from the third wave of terrorism and 237 (49.2%) were affiliated with groups from the fourth wave.

Of the 39 countries represented in the database, six countries contributed 50 percent of the cases: Northern Ireland \(n = 52\); Palestine \(n = 44\); Russia/Chechnya \(n = 41\); Germany \(n = 36\); India \(n = 35\) and; Colombia \(n = 30\). Although a small number of countries contributed half the sample, the remaining 50 percent comprised cases drawn from an additional 33 countries. Thus, the sample represents a comprehensive range of countries.
within each world region with an almost equal number of cases belonging to each wave of terrorism.

In addition, the 482 cases included in the final sample belonged to over 65 different extremist groups or movements where there were four meso-level variables coded in each instance: ideological basis, religious orientation, political orientation, and specific goals/aims. In terms of ideological basis, 215 (44.6%) were affiliated with left-wing movements and 167 (34.6%) were affiliated with right-wing movements (100, or 20.7%, were unable to be coded according to group ideological basis). There were 140 (29.0%) cases affiliated with religiously-based movements whilst 300 (62.2%) were affiliated with secular movements (42, or 8.7%, were unable to be coded according to the religious orientation of the group). There were 205 (42.5%) cases in the sample affiliated with groups/movements that were internationally-orientated and 150 (31.1%) cases affiliated with domestically-orientated groups/movements (127, or 26.3%, were unable to be coded according to group orientation). The sample also represented a broad range of specific goals or agendas: nationalist/separatist groups (n = 109; 22.6%); communist/socialist groups (n = 105; 21.8%); Islamist groups with nationalist/separatist goals (n = 63; 13.1%); nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist groups (n = 59; 12.2%); Islamist

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48 There were 42 cases for whom affiliation was not specified within the source. These cases were still included as it was clear in the source that the women had participated in conflict that met the definition employed by this research. These cases came from sources where a specific conflict was the focus and these women were recorded as having been involved in an unidentified non-state group or movement. This feature accounts for the discrepancies in case frequencies between macro-level and meso-level variables.

49 Where specific affiliation was unknown or the ideological basis of the group/movement was unclear.

50 These were cases for which the group to which the woman belonged was not specified in the data source.

51 This was due to either the group remaining unspecified in the data source or, as discussed in chapter three, the inconsistencies in the way in which the definition of international and domestic terrorist groups was applied throughout Gonzalez-Perez’s research. Thus, only groups that Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) included in her analysis were coded in this study, aside from al-Qaeda and affiliated groups which were coded as international in political focus.
groups (n = 53; 11.0%); Christian-based extremist groups (n = 21; 4.4%); non-specific revolutionary groups (n = 17; 3.5%), and; unknown/other (n = 56; 11.4%).

The case frequency variables are presented as nested data in the following tables and figures. Table 5.1 presents the case frequency within world region, ideological basis, religious orientation, political orientation, and specific goals/aims nested within the broadest macro-level variable; wave of terrorism. Thus, this table represents descriptive historical or temporal patterns in case frequency. The shift from secular and left-wing extremism in wave three of terrorism (the New Left wave, approximately the 1960s-1980s) to religious and right-wing extremism in wave four of terrorism (the religious wave, 1979-present) can clearly be seen. Also presented in this table is the composition of case frequencies within the seven world regions that comprise each wave of terrorism. In wave three of terrorism, the majority of cases were involved in extremism in Europe, and none were involved in extremism in South Asia or Eastern Europe. However, by wave four of terrorism, the number of cases involved in European extremism had declined substantially whilst South Asia and Eastern Europe featured a large increase in cases involved in extremism. The number of cases involved in extremism in the Middle East also increased substantially from wave three to wave four. There was some increase in cases involved in extremism in Latin America and Africa from wave three to wave four whilst the case frequency across waves remained fairly stable in Northern America. These trends in case frequency within world region and across waves of terrorism are depicted in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2. In order to illustrate the ideological composition of the waves, these figures depict the case frequencies according to the goals of the group/movement nested within world region and wave of terrorism.

52 Where the group or movement remained unspecified in the data source.
53 Even accounting for the minority of cases who were involved in wave three terrorism subsequent to 1979, this notable trend still held.
### Table 5.1

*Case frequency (%) across waves of terrorism according to the case variables.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave Three ((n = 245))</th>
<th>Wave Four ((n = 237))</th>
<th>Total ((N = 482))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>25 (10.2)</td>
<td>53 (22.4)</td>
<td>78 (16.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>41 (17.3)</td>
<td>41 (8.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>114 (46.5)</td>
<td>13 (5.5)</td>
<td>127 (26.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>61 (24.9)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>61 (12.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>29 (11.8)</td>
<td>34 (14.3)</td>
<td>63 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>16 (6.5)</td>
<td>16 (6.8)</td>
<td>32 (6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>80 (33.8)</td>
<td>80 (16.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological basis of movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>201 (82.0)</td>
<td>14 (5.9)</td>
<td>215 (44.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>16 (6.5)</td>
<td>151 (63.7)</td>
<td>167 (34.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious orientation of movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>3 (1.2)</td>
<td>137 (57.8)</td>
<td>140 (29.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>236 (96.3)</td>
<td>64 (27.0)</td>
<td>300 (62.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global orientation of movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>88 (35.9)</td>
<td>62 (26.2)</td>
<td>127 (26.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>133 (54.3)</td>
<td>72 (30.4)</td>
<td>205 (42.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific goals/aims</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
<td>105 (42.9)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>105 (21.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>2 (0.8)</td>
<td>51 (21.5)</td>
<td>53 (11.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
<td>75 (30.6)</td>
<td>34 (14.3)</td>
<td>109 (22.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
<td>53 (21.6)</td>
<td>6 (2.5)</td>
<td>59 (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with communist/socialist</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>63 (26.6)</td>
<td>63 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>63 (26.6)</td>
<td>63 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Islamist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
<td>16 (6.8)</td>
<td>17 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist/Christian-based</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
<td>20 (8.4)</td>
<td>21 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* There is missing/unknown data on the religious orientation, specific goals/aims, and political orientation variables. The percentages in the table are calculated based on the exclusion of missing data.
Figure 5.1 clearly illustrates the ideological composition of the waves of terrorism in terms of the specific agendas endorsed by groups/movements and female involvement in these groups/movements. In this way, female involvement appears to mirror the broader trends in terrorism and political violence across time. The prevalence of female involvement in European and Latin American communist/socialist extremism in wave three is clearly depicted. By wave four, female involvement in communist/socialist extremism and Latin American extremism was non-existent and had also declined substantially in Europe. Importantly, this does not mean that women do not participate in Latin American extremism currently, but that they are involved in groups/movements that were formed as a result of third wave terrorism (e.g. the FARC, the Shining Path). Similarly, cases were involved fairly frequently in groups/movements with a nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist agenda in wave three, in Europe, the Middle East and Africa but with far less frequency in these contexts in wave four. The rise in religiously based extremism in wave four is depicted with the prevalence of women’s involvement in Islamist groups/movements, including where Islamist ideology combined with nationalist/separatist goals, and Christian-based extremism. Similarly, the increasing prevalence of conflict in South Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe, and female involvement within it, is illustrated. Interestingly, female involvement in Northern American extremism remained fairly constant across both waves; however, women were involved in groups/movements with very different agendas across the waves in Northern America – primarily those that were communist/socialist in nature in wave three and those that were either Christian-based or Islamist-based in wave four. A similar trend can be observed regarding female involvement in extremism in the Middle East whereby it was fairly constant across both waves but was more prominent in groups/movements with a nationalist/separatist agenda in wave three and in groups/movements with an Islamist or Islamist combined with nationalist/separatist agenda in wave four.
Figure 5.1. Case frequency composition of wave three ($n = 192$) and wave four of terrorism ($n = 235$) according to goals of the group/movement nested with world region.
Table 5.2 also presents case frequency data, this time nested within world region (rather than wave of terrorism). The trends identified previously are also depicted to some extent in this table; however as the data has been grouped by world region these trends relate specifically to regional variation in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. These regional patterns are also depicted in Figure 5.2 where group/movement ideological basis, religious orientation, and political ideology are grouped according to world region in order to examine population level trends in female involvement more effectively. Women in South Asia were involved with fairly equal frequency in international/domestic and religious/secular conflict and slightly more in right-wing extremism. In Northern America, women were involved more frequently in internationally-focused extremist groups/movements, but with comparable frequency in religious/secular and left-wing/right-wing extremism. In the Middle East, women were involved more often in internationally-focused, secular, and left-wing extremism. Women in Latin American extremism were only found in domestic, secular, and left-wing extremist groups/movements. In Europe women were found more frequently in internationally-focused, secular, and left-wing extremism. In Eastern Europe, in contrast, women were only found in domestic, religious, and right-wing extremist groups/movements. Finally, in Africa, women were found with fairly equivalent frequency in domestic/internationally-focused and left-wing/right-wing extremism, but more often in secular extremist movements/groups.
Table 5.2  
*Case frequency (%) across world region according to meso-level case variables.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Africa</th>
<th>Eastern Europe</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Middle East</th>
<th>Northern America</th>
<th>South Asia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological basis of movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>23 (54.8)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>101 (79.5)</td>
<td>54 (100.0)</td>
<td>32 (78.0)</td>
<td>14 (43.8)</td>
<td>14 (31.1)</td>
<td>215 (44.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>19 (45.2)</td>
<td>41 (100.0)</td>
<td>26 (20.5)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9 (22.0)</td>
<td>18 (56.3)</td>
<td>31 (68.9)</td>
<td>167 (34.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Religious orientation of movement</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>20 (29.0)</td>
<td>41 (100.0)</td>
<td>13 (10.2)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>22 (36.9)</td>
<td>15 (46.9)</td>
<td>29 (36.3)</td>
<td>140 (29.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>49 (71.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>114 (89.9)</td>
<td>55 (100.0)</td>
<td>39 (63.9)</td>
<td>17 (53.1)</td>
<td>26 (32.5)</td>
<td>300 (62.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Political orientation of movement</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>14 (50.0)</td>
<td>41 (100.0)</td>
<td>23 (18.4)</td>
<td>53 (100.0)</td>
<td>3 (5.1)</td>
<td>2 (11.1)</td>
<td>14 (45.2)</td>
<td>127 (26.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>14 (50.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>102 (81.6)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>56 (94.9)</td>
<td>16 (88.9)</td>
<td>17 (54.8)</td>
<td>205 (42.5)</td>
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<td><strong>Specific goals/aims</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>39 (30.7)</td>
<td>53 (100.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13 (41.9)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>105 (21.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>7 (9.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11 (8.7)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11 (18.0)</td>
<td>6 (19.4)</td>
<td>18 (32.7)</td>
<td>53 (11.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
<td>2 (3.4)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>52 (40.9)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>29 (47.5)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>26 (47.3)</td>
<td>109 (22.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist with</td>
<td>23 (39.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>23 (18.1)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10 (16.4)</td>
<td>3 (9.7)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>59 (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communist/socialist</td>
<td></td>
<td>41 (100.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11 (18.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11 (20.0)</td>
<td>63 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist/separatist with</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>17 (28.8)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11 (18.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racist/Christian-based</td>
<td>10 (16.9)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9 (29.0)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.2. Case frequency composition of each world region according to political orientation, religious orientation, and ideological basis of the group/movement.
Role Behaviour Variables

There were 45 role behaviour variables that were coded across the sample. Figure 5.3 displays these variables in order of the decreasing frequency with which they occurred in the sample. All variables occurred in less than 25 percent of the total number of cases included in the database. However, low to moderate frequencies were expected. As the aim of the study was to provide a detailed and comprehensive quantitative account of women's involvement in several different types of political and revolutionary conflict across different contexts, the variables relate to a large variety of very specific activities. Thus, the frequency of occurrence across the sample is limited.

There were no clear descriptive patterns regarding the frequency with which particular activities occurred across the sample. The high frequency variables, for instance, occurring in the lower third of Figure 5.3 and indicated in green, included an array of violent activities (e.g. fighting, murder), leadership positions (e.g. provide leadership, warrior leader), support-type tasks (e.g. courier) and traditionally feminine activities (e.g. household chores, marriage, sexual partner). Furthermore, some of the variables occurring with high frequency include tasks or activities not typically examined in the literature on conflict and terrorism (e.g. producing propaganda, providing resources). The mid-frequency variables, occurring in the middle third of Figure 5.3 and indicated in blue, also represented a variety of activities that can be considered to be militant (e.g. kidnapping, hostage-taking) as well as tasks associated with leadership positions (e.g. providing long-term group strategy) and traditional feminine tasks typically assigned to women in conflict (e.g. nursing). Again, included in this mid-frequency range were activities not commonly examined in the literature or acknowledged in practice, such as indoctrinating children and facilitating recruitment of resources and people. Included in the low-frequency range, indicated by orange and occurring in the top third of Figure 5.3, were variables associated with leadership positions (e.g. providing ideology and motivation) and clandestine activities (e.g. spy, lure, and messenger). Again activities important in the maintenance of an extremist group
but not conventionally examined in research (e.g. fundraising, administration) were included. The lowest frequency variables occurring in less than one percent of cases and indicated in purple were communications, arson, spiritual duties, and historical conscience.
Figure 5.3. Frequency of the role behaviour variables across the sample.
Discussion

This initial study aimed to provide an answer to the first research question; what specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict? To this end, a sample of 482 cases of individual women involved in political and revolutionary conflict around the world from 1960 to the present was sourced. The cases included in the sample came from a variety of contexts representing a range of countries and regions, historical and socio-political contexts, and types of extremist groups and movements. The database itself represents the largest database currently available that is both inclusive and specific in terms of participants and involvement. This first study was designed so as to provide a descriptive analysis of the range of activities performed by the women included in the sample and to examine some initial patterns in macro-level regional and temporal trends and meso-level group/movement characteristics.

Characteristics of the Sample: Case Variables

The sample of female participants in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict represented a comprehensive range of macro-level and meso-level characteristics. At the macro-level, seven world regions and two waves of terrorism were represented in the sample. The broadest variable included in the study was wave of terrorism, where this variable was comprised of wave three (1960s-1980s) and wave four (1979-present). Rapoport (2004) claimed that women are involved to a lesser extent in the fourth wave of terrorism compared to the third wave of terrorism. However, the initial descriptive analysis of case frequencies across these two waves indicates that women are equally prevalent in both. The finding of relative equivalence across the two waves of terrorism provides some initial support for one of the primary arguments of this thesis – that women are frequently involved in political and revolutionary conflict when a wide range of activities, beyond those that are high impact high visibility, are considered. Thus, it is not necessarily the case
that women are involved less in current religious terrorism, but rather that they are involved in different and less visible ways (Blee, 2008; von Knop, 2007, 2008).

Also represented in the sample were 39 different countries, comprising seven world regions (Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America, Northern America and Africa) where these denoted several distinct contexts, not only geographically, but also culturally, socially, and politically. Half the sample came from six countries that are well-known for female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict – Northern Ireland, Palestine, Russia/Chechnya, Germany, India, and Colombia – representing five of the seven world regions. Interestingly, although all these countries are well-known for female involvement, and are prominent within this sample, they all represent very different cultural and socio-political contexts. The remaining half of the sample came from an additional 33 countries in all seven world regions included in this research.

At the meso-level the sample represented a comprehensive range of different groups and movements. The majority of cases included in the sample (62%) were affiliated to groups or movements that were secular in nature rather than religiously-based (29%). This finding is consistent with common arguments in the literature regarding the prevalence of women in secular groups/movements compared to religiously-based groups/movements (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Ness, 2005a). The majority of women in the sample were affiliated to internationally-orientated groups rather than domestically-orientated groups (43% vs. 31%), in contrast to Gonzalez-Perez’s (2006, 2008b) theoretical proposition where more women should be affiliated with domestic groups. Cases were also more frequently associated with left-wing groups/movements (45%) as opposed to right-wing groups/movements (35%), consistent with some arguments found in the literature regarding the conduciveness of left-wing ideology to female involvement (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). Almost half the sample were affiliated with groups/movements espousing nationalist/separatist or communist/socialist
goals; a finding that is consistent with arguments in the literature where it has been noted that liberatory nationalist movements and groups with a socialist agenda generally feature larger numbers of women (M. Alison, 2009; Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Lobao, 1990). Interestingly, however, nationalist/separatist groups based on a communist or socialist ideology exhibited relatively few female participants in this sample (12%). Finally, approximately a quarter of the sample was affiliated with Islamist groups and nationalist/separatist groups with an Islamist ideology. In comparison, few cases in the sample were affiliated to either extremist Christian movements (4%) or non-specific revolutionary groups (3.5%).

Whilst overall trends were examined, nested data with regards to temporal/historical and regional patterns in female involvement were also explored. Temporal/historical patterns in female involvement in conflict were examined by grouping case frequencies according to the case variables nested within wave of terrorism. This facilitated an examination of female involvement according to the theoretical basis of the waves of terrorism model, a central tenant of which claims that the dominant ideology of the wave inspires the formation of specific groups endorsing the primary elements of that ideology within their locale-specific agendas (Rapoport, 2004; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). In general, patterns of female involvement followed the trends in the evolution of terrorism according to Rapoport’s model. The third wave of terrorism represents the New Left period where radicalism and nationalism combined and many groups/movements featured an ideology and goals based on communism and socialism (Rapoport, 2004). This could be seen in the results where female involvement was frequent in left-wing secular movements in this wave, and in groups/movements with communist/socialist goals, and communist/socialist goals in combination with nationalist/separatist objectives. Furthermore, Weinberg and Eubank (2010) identified three regional centres for third wave terrorism, based on a quantitative analysis of terrorist incidents; the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. The results of this study indicated that
women were also involved more frequently in political and revolutionary conflict in these three regions in wave three.

In contrast to the third wave, the fourth wave represents a period of terrorism based on religious ideology (Rapoport, 2004). This shift from third wave to fourth wave terrorism is also illustrated in the distinct change in female involvement. The women in the sample who were involved in wave four were more frequently affiliated with religious, right-wing groups as well as with groups/movements with an agenda based on religion, including Islamist, Islamism in combination with nationalism/separatism, and racist/Christian-based. Female involvement in communist/socialist and nationalist/separatist extremism was either non-existent or minor in the fourth wave. The infusion of many nationalist/separatist conflicts with Islamist ideology is also illustrated in the results of this study with the increase in female involvement in these types of groups. Women were also involved more frequently (compared to third wave terrorism) in conflict in regions currently well-known for political and revolutionary conflict, including the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Whilst the majority of current scholarship is focused on Islamism, the distinct rise in female participation in Christian-based movements found in this study indicates that other religious ideologies may also be important considerations in the fourth wave, particularly in relation to female involvement. It should be noted that the political orientation of the groups/movements (Gonzalez-Perez, 2006, 2008b) to which the women included in the sample were aligned did not appear to differ substantially across waves of terrorism, although there were slightly more women aligned with international terrorism in the third wave.

This descriptive regional analysis revealed that there were quite distinct trends in female involvement within world regions. Europe with a liberal social and cultural context (Cunningham, 2003), a high level of economic development (Dalton & Asal, 2011), and a history of the civil rights and New Left ideology (Rapoport, 2004) featured the most cases of female involvement (26%), primarily in international, secular and left-wing groups/movements. As noted in
Chapter Three, Eastern Europe is distinct from the rest of Europe in terms of social and cultural context and history. As might be expected, female involvement in this region was distinctly different to Europe; it was far less frequent (8.5%) and women were found only in domestic, religious, and right-wing extremist groups/movements. Despite similar cultural and social contexts between Europe and Northern America (Cunningham, 2003) as well as level of economic development and civil rights history, Northern America featured the least frequent female involvement (7%). However, in line with Cunningham’s (2003) observations of the structure of terrorism in Northern America, women in Northern America were involved with equal frequency in religious/secular and left-wing/right-wing extremism (but more often in international as opposed to domestic extremism).

Latin America, South Asia, and the Middle East are all regions that feature generalised poverty and ‘youth bulges’ (Cunningham, 2003) and a low level of women’s social rights – a factor that Dalton and Asal (2011) found predicted women’s deployment in violent operations. Women were found with comparable frequency across these three regions (13-16%); however – despite some similarity in context – the types of groups/movements to which they were affiliated varied. In South Asia, women were associated with fairly equal frequency with domestic/internationally-focused and religious/secular, and slightly more with right-wing extremism than left-wing. In the Middle East, women were involved more often in internationally-focused, secular, and left-wing extremism. Women in Latin American extremism were only found in domestic, secular, and left-wing extremist groups/movements.

In the literature review, South Asia and Africa were also noted to have similar histories of European colonisation, where this planted the seeds for future conflict (M. Alison, 2009; Turshen, 1998; Volman, 1998). Women were found in both regions with almost exactly the same frequency (16%); however, there were differences in types of group/movement to which women were affiliated. In Africa, women were found with fairly equivalent frequency in domestic/internationally-focused and left-wing/right-wing extremism, but more
often in secular extremist movements/groups (compared to South Asia identified above). It is important to note that whilst this descriptive analysis gives an indication of the historical and regional trends in female involvement, it is related to overall frequency of involvement rather than type of involvement. Furthermore, the validity of examining prevalence of involvement is questionable as the extent to which these frequency figures represent real trends, as opposed to data availability on female involvement is unknown. Additionally, these descriptive trends are purely observational and give no indication of systematic differences across these macro-level and meso-level variables.

Activities Undertaken by Women: Role Behaviour Variables

Whilst the first part of this study gave some indication of the representativeness and initial trends in regional, temporal, and organisational involvement of women, the second part of the study involved the documentation of exactly how women were involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Accordingly, in addition to the case variables outlined above, role behaviour variables were systematically extracted from the data sources and documented quantitatively. There were 45 variables that represented possible activities performed whilst involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. These variables were based on both the available literature and the data itself as the coding process was continually refined. This section will only briefly discuss some of the primary findings with regards to these role behaviour variables as a more in-depth discussion is contained in the following chapter.

An initial descriptive analysis of these role behaviour variables revealed some interesting findings regarding the frequency distributions of activities performed by women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Overall, the broad range of activities performed by women included in the sample is notable, especially given the common proposition in the scholarship that women primarily perform support activities in conflict. The role behaviour
variables included support, militant and leadership tasks as well as recruitment, logistical and network-building activities – a range of activities not consistently examined in the scholarship or attributed to women involved in conflict or extremism. Furthermore, the frequency distribution of the role behaviour variables does not indicate any clear patterns in type of activity performed, for example activities that would generally be considered as support (e.g. provision of resources, nursing, couriering) occur with varying frequency throughout the sample and are interspersed among all the other types of activities. Thus, the findings from this initial study indicate that women do indeed perform a wide variety of activities in political and revolutionary conflict and confirms the need for a systematic empirical examination of population-level trends in order to test the claims made in the scholarship regarding how and why women are involved.

Just focusing on the high frequency variables, for instance, illustrates the range of activities performed by women and reveals that women, across time and context, frequently perform a number of activities that are seldom examined in the scholarship on women in terrorism. Women in the sample frequently undertook militant activities, including fighting in combat, planting explosives, participating in organised murder or assassination, and participating in a suicide attack. Some of these violent militant activities would be expected, particularly suicide bombing, given the focus in the scholarship. However, women were also frequently found in leadership positions, including as leader of a specific group, as a warrior leader responsible for operational coordination, and as a political representative. These type of militant and leadership activities are less commonly ascribed to women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and certainly not as high frequency activities at the population level. Women who perform these militant and leadership activities are viewed in the scholarship as exceptional cases rather than as representing the general population of female extremists; however, these descriptive results suggest that women frequently perform these types of activities.
In the scholarship women are more commonly posited to perform support activities in political and revolutionary conflict. Support activities were indeed performed frequently by women in this sample; although the most common support activity – provision of resources – was just the fifth most common activity after fighting, use of explosives, murder, and marriage. The other support activities performed most frequently by women were producing and distributing propaganda, performing household-type chores (e.g. cooking and cleaning) and couriering money and weapons. Thus, it appears that whilst women do frequently perform support activities in political and revolutionary conflict, it is not confined to stereotypically feminine tasks and they are not the most common form of activities, overall, undertaken by women in conflict. Thus, the results from this study illustrate the utility of the approach of this doctoral research project to understanding the full spectrum of women’s involvement in conflict and the importance of systematic empirical research in countering dominant (inaccurate) portrayals of women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.

**Strengths and Limitations**

At the descriptive level, the results of this study demonstrate the comprehensive range of specific activities that women perform in political and revolutionary conflict. Whilst other research in the area has focused on a particular type of activity, particular women, or particular conflicts, this study established the full range of specific ways in which a large and representative sample of women participated in extremism across a variety of different types of conflict, groups and contexts (i.e. at the global population level, rather than at a context-specific level). Hence, this research has demonstrated, descriptively, exactly how women participate in political and revolutionary conflict around the world. The findings from the study demonstrate that women participate in a broad range of ways in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict; from support and logistical tasks to militant and leadership positions and including several activities that are not usually
examined in the scholarship such as producing propaganda, recruiting new members, indoctrinating children and acting as a political representative. In addition, the findings illustrate how women’s involvement varies according to several macro-level and meso-level factors. These findings confirm that women participate in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict beyond a limited set of high profile cases and that the nature of their involvement should not be dismissed as filling unimportant support positions.

Methodologically, the strengths of this study include the large broadly representative sample of individual women involved in a range of political and revolutionary conflicts and groups/movements from almost all regions of the world. Of course, gaining a truly random or representative sample in research where the phenomenon under study is subversive and illegal is highly unlikely. Thus, as recommended by Porter (2008) a large number of cases from a variety of sources was collected in order to reduce the likelihood of selective differences between the cases available for inclusion in the sample and those cases that were not included due to unavailability. Whilst the use of secondary sources was crucial for this research – in that it allowed the systematic collection of the large amounts of data needed for empirical and quantitative theory development and testing – not all information that could be useful to this research is necessarily reported within the source. It is impossible to say definitively whether the absence of an activity is a true absence, as in it did not occur, or if it is simply an unknown, as in it was not reported. The descriptive frequency patterns should be interpreted in the context of this limitation, particularly given the criticisms of the scholarship in the area, as outlined in the literature review chapters (i.e. the focus of much of the scholarship on high impact activities means that their prevalence may be over-represented in this sample compared to more hidden activities which are harder to ascertain and inconsistently reported in secondary sources).

54 Although note that the sources utilised for data collection were, in the majority, sources that reported primary data rather than those that reported recycled data from
At this stage, the findings from this study simply demonstrate the range and separate activities performed by the women included in the sample. These role behaviour variables are not mutually exclusive and women perform more than one of these activities whilst involved in political and revolutionary conflict. It is important (especially in consideration of the relevant limitations outlined above) to examine the patterns in associations between activities, rather than rely on prevalence to inform theory about women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. As outlined in Chapter Two, the activities that women perform in conflict situations could combine in specific ways so as to form broader conceptual roles, although the research conducted thus far has been qualitative or impressionistic in nature, rather than empirical and quantitative, and has resulted in two different models of women’s roles in political and revolutionary conflict (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Mahan & Griset, 2008a). Accordingly, as the specific activities performed by women has been systematically documented and quantitatively coded in this study, the next study will examine patterns in the relationships between these variables in order explore the existence of a behavioural structure, or model, of women’s roles on contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.

**Conclusion**

In relation to the first research question of this thesis, this study has developed a comprehensive picture of the specific ways in which women participate in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict through the systematic documentation and coding of secondary data related to almost 500 female participants in conflict from around the world. The database constructed for the purposes of the study is the largest to date that documents the methods of participation of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Furthermore, the large-scale empirical and other sources. However, even in primary sources it is unlikely that women would specify every activity undertaken whilst involved in extremism.
quantitative approach taken in this study is unique in a field where most of the research takes a selective case study approach.

The findings from this study indicated that women have been involved in conflict across different historical and regional contexts as well as affiliated to groups and movements with various ideologies, religious and political orientations, and goals/agendas. The results also confirmed that women were involved in a broad range of activities, including but not limited to support activities, in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The activities that women were found to perform covered the full spectrum of possible involvement in conflict, including militant activities, leadership positions, support and logistical tasks, recruitment, political activity, and stereotypically feminine tasks. The frequency distribution of these activities demonstrated that the dominant script about women primarily performing support tasks in conflict situations is incomplete; women were found to engage in a variety of militant, leadership, political, support, and propaganda activities with high frequency. However, whilst this study empirically established the full range of activities performed by women in conflict, if (and how) these activities combine to form broader conceptual roles is yet to be examined.
CHAPTER SIX

STUDY TWO: A THEMATIC MODEL OF WOMEN’S ROLES IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT

Women perform a range of activities in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, as demonstrated in the previous study where women were found to perform a total of 45 different activities in this type of conflict. The two models (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Mahan & Griset, 2008) outlined in the literature review in chapter two are based on the assumption that the activities performed by women in political and revolutionary conflict coalesce to form broader conceptual roles. Mahan and Griset (2008) proposed that the activities that they observed women to perform in terrorism formed the four roles of sympathiser, spy, warrior and dominant force. In contrast, Cragin and Daly (2009) proposed that the activities that they garnered from a selective qualitative study formed the six roles of logistician, recruiter, martyr, guerrilla, operational leader, and political vanguard. Whilst the specific activities included in each of these models was consistent with the primarily anecdotal and descriptive qualitative research in the area (and with the results of Study One), there were significant differences between the two models (in terms of activities included in particular roles and the inclusion of roles for recruitment and suicide bombing in Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model and for spy in Mahan and Griset’s (2008) model). Both models neglected to include activities related to strategic marriage and sexual relationships. Problematically, neither model was

based on systematic empirical research nor empirically or statistically tested for validity and reliably.

Furthermore, the activities that women perform in contemporary extremism established in the first study of this thesis—based on the systematic documentation of the specific activities performed by a broadly representative sample of women involved in conflict—were both broader in range and more specific in nature than those included in these two models. However, Study One focused on examining the descriptive patterns in the database in terms of frequency rather than association. Whilst Study One empirically established the type and range of activities performed by women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, it did not address the possibility of patterns in the correlation of activities that would be indicative of the existence of a typology or model of women’s roles. Indeed, systematic empirical research of this nature is a notable absence from the field of women’s involvement in political violence or terrorism (Jacques & Taylor, 2009).

Thus, Study Two was developed in order to answer the second research question; do the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict combine to form meaningful patterns so as to indicate the existence of a typology or model of broader conceptual roles?

The aim of Study Two, then, was to utilise the database constructed in Study One to statistically test for both distinctiveness and co-occurrence of these established activities with the view of examining the possible existence of a typology or underlying model of women’s roles. A typology or model developed as a result of this process illustrates not only exactly how women participate in conflict (i.e. the range of activities engaged in) but also how these activities are related to one another. A model such as this is crucial in developing a theoretically relevant and practically useful framework for understanding and studying women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.
Method

**Sample Cases**

The sample consisted of the same 482 cases of individual women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict collected for Study One. In summary, this sample was broadly representative of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.\(^{56}\) Cases were affiliated to groups formed in wave three, 1960s-1980s \((n = 245)\) and wave four \((n = 237)\). Cases were involved across seven world regions: Europe \((n = 127)\); South Asia \((n = 80)\); Africa \((n = 78)\); Latin America \((n = 61)\); the Middle East \((n = 63)\); Eastern Europe \((n = 41)\), and; Northern America \((n = 32)\). The cases also represented a variety of groups or causes: nationalist/separatist \((n = 109)\); communist/socialist \((n = 105)\); Islamist groups with nationalist/separatist goals \((n = 63)\); nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist groups \((n = 59)\); Islamist groups \((n = 53)\); Christian-based extremist groups \((n = 20)\); non-specific revolutionary groups \((n = 17)\), and; unknown/other \((n = 56)\). Ideologically, the cases were affiliated with both left-wing \((n = 215)\) and right-wing movements \((n = 167)\). Cases belonged to both religious \((n = 140)\) and secular \((n = 300)\) groups/movements. Politically, cases were affiliated with internationally-orientated \((n = 205)\) and domestically-orientated \((n = 150)\) groups/movements.

**Data Coding**

Features of each individual case were extracted by use of the coding dictionary, as outlined in detail in Study One. There were a total of 45 role behaviour variables, 32 derived from the literature and 13 identified throughout the coding process (see Appendix C). Each case was individually coded as to whether these variables were present or absent. The comprehensive range of these activities and their frequencies in the sample were outlined in Study One.

\(^{56}\) See Chapter Five/Study One and Appendix C for a detailed explanation regarding data sources and data coding, including the case and role behavior variables that were systematically documented in each individual case.
The variables that occurred in less than 1 percent of cases – including historical conscience, arson, communications, and spiritual duties\textsuperscript{57} – were excluded from the current analysis due to their low frequencies. Low frequency variables can have a less robust relationship with the other variables included in the Smallest Space Analysis (Kebbell, Porter, & Milne, 2012), potentially providing unreliable associations and reducing the explanatory power of the typology or model. Overall, the coding and data cleaning process yielded a data matrix of 482 cases by 41 dichotomous variables. The data coding process was undertaken without placing any dimensions upon the process (i.e. the women included in the sample could perform any number of activities). The overall process, then, involved building the model from the ground up and testing the components of the model at each level.

**Data Analysis: Smallest Space Analysis**

Whilst Study One in this project provided an analysis of the range and frequency of activities performed by female participants in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, the aim of this study was to examine these role behaviour variables for broad conceptual themes. Smallest Space Analysis, or SSA, was employed for this purpose (L. Guttman, 1968; Shye, Elizur, & Hoffman, 1994). SSA is a multidimensional scaling technique that is particularly well-suited to analysing quantitative data that has been produced from qualitative sources. SSA, as developed from Facet Theory, is ideal for both hypothesis testing and hypothesis generation as no dimensions are placed upon the data\textsuperscript{58} (Porter & Alison, 2006). This method of data analysis has

\textsuperscript{57} It may be that these activities occur with greater frequency in reality, but are reported infrequently in secondary sources. It is also possible that qualitative and case study approaches have resulted in an over-estimation of the frequency with which these variables occur at the population level.

\textsuperscript{58} This means that pre-determined hypotheses or restrictions are not placed upon the data through analysis – the analysis technique simply looks for the simultaneous relationships between all variables rather than hypothesising, for example, that one variable is related in a certain way to another variable and then testing if this relationship exists within the data.
been utilised previously in the development of several different typologies or thematic models in a forensic context, including police interviewing strategies (L. Alison et al., 2008); crime scene actions and offender characteristics of juvenile fire-setters (Santtila et al., 2003); offence behaviour in child sexual abuse (Canter & Heritage, 1990; Canter et al., 1998); characteristics of youths who sexually harm (Almond et al., 2006); offender and victim characteristics in group robbery (Porter & Alison, 2006) and sexually violent gang behaviour (Porter & Alison, 2004); offender characteristics in relation to stranger homicide (Salfati & Canter, 1999), and; leadership styles in group crime (Porter, 2008).

Details of the process are discussed by Guttman and Greenbaum (1998) and Shye, Elizur and Hoffman (1994). Briefly, however, SSA is based upon the assumption that the underlying structure or behavioural system of a phenomenon is more readily understood if the relationships between all the variables are examined simultaneously. The first step in the analysis involves computing the association coefficients between all the variables and then rank ordering these, producing a triangular matrix comprised of the association coefficients for each variable with every other variable. Jaccard’s coefficient of association was used in this analysis to derive the correlations as this coefficient ignores joint non-occurrences, thus taking account of the fact that the absence of a behaviour does not necessarily mean that this behaviour did not occur (Porter & Alison, 2004; Santtila et al., 2003).

Given the difficulties in interpretation of raw mathematical relationships, a geometric plot is produced that visually displays these statistical associations in the smallest dimensionality. This plot visually displays each variable as a point in space and the relationships between these variables as distances within this space. The closer together two points are in this plot the more likely they are to co-occur within a case. Hence, variables sharing commonalities within the data appear in a similar region of the plot. This plot allows the partitioning of variables into similar groups, or facets, thus facilitating the construction of a typology or model of behaviour.
Results

The SSA of the 482 cases of women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict was run with 41 variables. The SSA produced a two-dimensional solution (see Figure 6.1) with a coefficient of alienation of .19 in 40 iterations, which implies an adequate fit between the association matrix and the representation (Porter & Alison, 2004; Santtila et al., 2003; Shye et al., 1994). In keeping with the smallest space principle inherent in facet theory, the two-dimensional space was selected as this was the most compact representation, thus restricting theoretical parameters and enhancing parsimony (Shye et al., 1994).59

59 The three-dimensional representation was also examined; however, it could not be partitioned into meaningful partitions as the majority of the variables formed a central constellation in this plot. According to Shye et al. (1994), in this case the preceding dimensionality should be used.
Figure 6.1. Two-dimensional SSA of women’s participation in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in 482 cases of involvement. Coefficient of alienation = .19 in 40 iterations. Note that whilst the positioning of the variables is based on statistical associations, the partitioning of the plot is a theoretical proposition.
Examination of the plot revealed that, whilst there were certain similarities in the profiles of activity represented and the models proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009), the plot could not be entirely partitioned in a manner consistent with either of these models. As an example, there did not appear to be a distinct ‘leadership’ category corresponding to the dominant force role suggested by Mahan and Griset (2008). Whilst the dominant force variables suggested by Mahan and Griset (2008) (ideology, motivation, leadership, strategy) were positioned closely in the plot, other variables not included in Mahan and Griset’s (2008) dominant force role were also positioned closely (e.g. administration tasks, logistics, marriage of own accord) indicating that they also occurred with high frequency with these dominant force variables. Additionally, there were no clear frequency patterns as is sometimes found in SSA (Almond et al., 2006).

The plot was subsequently examined for profiles of activity (or facets) based on conceptual similarity between closely-positioned variables, and refined through further statistical analysis based on the internal consistency of each proposed theme (Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficients). Based on this process, it is proposed that the structure conforms broadly to four themes which are labelled: ‘active’, ‘caring’, ‘support’, and ‘ideological’. The KR-20 values range from .29 to .61. Lower KR-20 values are to be expected with this kind of data (Porter & Alison, 2004); however, these lower KR-20 values could also reflect the relatively low frequencies of the role behaviour variables in the sample overall – as noted in Study One. The variables in each theme, and their relative frequencies, are provided in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1. 
Proposed theme (Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficients) and constituent role behaviour variable frequencies within the theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring (KR-20 = .40)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex partner</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>Courier</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household chores</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>Intelligence gatherer</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>Smuggler</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookout</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>Decoy</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage by family</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>Skilled work</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp manager</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>Lure</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology (KR-20 = .28/.42)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Active (KR-20 = .61)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide bomber</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>Fighter</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>Marriage own</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political official</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>IED</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostage</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage male relations</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>Provider resources</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoctrinate children</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>Warrior leader</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>Recruit resources forcefully</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraiser</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijack</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>Recruit resources legitimately</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jailbreak</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The caring theme contained six variables with a KR-20 coefficient of .40, representing a moderate level of structural coherence. This theme is comprised of tasks that are stereotypically feminine, such as nursing, performing household-type chores (e.g. cooking) and forced or consensual sexual relations. It also included duties related to guerrilla camps such as managing the camp and acting as a lookout or guard. The variable marriage to another group member arranged for strategic or tactical purposes was also included in this theme.
The support theme contained seven variables with a KR-20 coefficient of .29. The low KR-20 coefficient suggests that this theme has less structural coherence. This theme can be considered as representing the conventional idea of support tasks that women could perform in a militant group. It included tasks such as couriering, smuggling, or acting as a lure. It also included skilled work; an activity that represented tasks for which specialist skills were required (e.g. bomb construction, vehicle maintenance and repair).

The ideological theme contained variables related to propagating the ideology and rationale of the group or cause, including creating and distributing propaganda, acting as a political official, and indoctrinating children. This theme included 11 variables with a KR-20 coefficient of .28. If the variable ‘suicide bombing’ was removed from this theme the KR-20 coefficient increased to .42. However suicide bombing does not fit, either conceptually or statistically, with the caring theme – the only alternative option in the SSA plot. If it is included in the caring theme the KR-20 value for this theme decreases substantially from .40 to .21. Thus, it is included within the ideological partition of the plot, for both statistical and conceptual reasons.

Finally, the active theme contained 17 variables with a KR-20 coefficient of .61 representing a fairly high level of structural coherence. This theme can be considered to be a combination of leadership roles (e.g. founding a group, providing long-term group strategy), violent activities (e.g. kidnapping, murder, planting explosives) and fighting (e.g. guerrilla fighter, warrior leader). This theme also contained the activities of performing administrative tasks, marrying or partnering a group member of own accord, and providing the group with resources.

**Testing the Model**

Although the purpose of this study was not to produce a typology that was able to classify individual women, it is still important to test whether the proposed partitioning is consistent with the data upon which it is based and, thus, whether the proposed behavioural themes are valid. In order to
operationally test the thematic model, the 482 cases in the sample were examined to see how many cases the proposed partitioning could classify into a theme. Each case was assigned a theme score based on the number of activities performed in each theme. In order for a case to be classified as belonging to a particular theme, the standardised score (number of activities performed divided by total activities in the theme) on that theme had to be greater than double the standardised scores on the other three themes. Using this conservative classification method, 82 percent of the cases in the sample could be classified. There were 179 (37.1%) cases that were classified as having a dominant active theme, 112 (23.2%) cases that were classified as having a dominant ideological theme, 52 (10.8%) cases that were classified as having a dominant support and 52 (10.8%) cases that were classified as having a dominant caring theme. Only 87 (18%) cases out of the total sample of 482 were unable to be definitively classified as having a dominant theme. Hence, it is concluded that the thematic model is a valid representation of the sample and, furthermore, that the themes are quite distinct.

Discussion

This study sought to empirically explore the existence of a typology or thematic structure of female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. Based on the statistical analysis of a database comprised of almost 500 cases of women involved in varying capacities in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, a structure partitioned into four themes – labelled active, caring, support and ideological – was derived. These themes, comprised of the co-occurrence of activities, represent the four broad roles that women play in contemporary political and revolutionary violence. This section will consider each proposed theme in turn in relation to current research, particularly the two models previously proposed by Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and

60 This conservative measure of classification took account of the relatively low overall frequencies of the role behavior variables.
Daly (2009) and then discuss the model as a whole in terms of its validity and reliability.

**The Active Theme**

The active theme contained a combination of conventional soldiering and leadership activities. Both Mahan and Griset (2008) and Cragin and Daly (2009) included categories in their typologies that encompassed these activities, although not necessarily as related roles, and both proposed separate roles for fighting and leadership. The fact that these fighting and leadership tasks are positioned closely in the SSA plot suggests that they co-occur in cases in the sample with high frequency (i.e. women who were in positions of leadership were also likely to have been involved in combat activity). The combat activities included several violent activities, such as participation in kidnapping, murder/assassination, and bombing operations (not suicide attacks). The findings from this study suggest that both combat activities and leadership activities form a distinct single role in political and revolutionary conflict with women in this role unlikely to perform the activities of another role.

Interestingly, the active theme also included several activities that have not been conceived of as activities associated with fighting and leadership in the literature – provision of resources, logistical support, performing administrative tasks, recruiting resources legitimately. However, the SSA showed that these activities frequently co-occurred with fighting and fulfilling leadership activities. Theoretically, this co-occurrence is consistent with findings from the mainstream literature, where pathways into an underground group can be precipitated through low-level activities (della Porta, 2012; Eager, 2008). Thus, providing and sourcing resources for the movement, performing logistical activities, and participating in administrative aspects of the group/movement may have been performed by women prior to their official entry to the underground or proscribed group. A temporal dimension specific to individual women was not included in this model; thus, this proposition remains
hypothetical at this stage. It may also be that the active theme represents a high level of incorporation into the group (Mahan & Griset, 2008), as well as a degree of trust bestowed upon the person performing the task. A woman who recruits resources and/or performs logistical or administrative tasks would be given access to vital group resources and knowledge, such as funds, operational details, or account information. Hence, they would need to be a trusted member of the group, such as a combatant or a leader. Finally, these types of activities represent a high-risk activity that may be targeted by opposition or security forces (Cragin & Daly, 2009). Thus, consistent with findings in the scholarship women may have joined the group in a militant capacity as a means to gain protection from government reprisals (della Porta, 2012; Eager, 2008; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Mason, 1992).

The active theme also included marrying or partnering a male member of the extremist group. It has been suggested that women participate in political and revolutionary conflict primarily due to their associations with male members of the organisation (Bloom, 2011a; Hamilton, 2007; Morgan, 1989; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). Cragin and Daly (2009) also argued that women are more likely to gain access to leadership positions based on marital relationships. The finding that an intimate relationship frequently co-occurred with combat and leadership activities could be taken to support these propositions found in the scholarship. However, this analysis did not include biographical information related to specific women and, thus, did not distinguish between relationships formed prior to joining the militant group and those formed subsequent to joining. Due to the closed and secretive nature of extremist groups, it would be expected that most intimate relationships would form within the organisation, and given that the active theme may represent a high level of incorporation into the group, it is possible that this organisational factor explains the high frequency of marriage/partnering to a male member of the group. In some groups, particularly guerrilla groups, members are only allowed to marry each other (M. Alison, 2011). Furthermore, a shared interest in the cause advocated by the group would facilitate the formation of
relationships between group members, but does not necessarily indicate a coercive element. Finally, in some instances marriage may be utilised strategically by the woman in order to gain access to the group’s violent operations (Nivat, 2001), or resources otherwise unavailable (Specht, 2006), and/or to increase the probability of successfully navigating a conflict zone (Specht, 2006; Utas, 2005). Taken in context with the other activities included in the active theme, it is possible to say that an intimate romantic relationship with a male member of an extremist group is an observable characteristic that may indicate an active and possibly violent role on the part of the woman but that does not necessarily initiate recruitment to, or motivation for joining, the cause.

**The Ideological Theme**

The ideological theme in the typology included a variety of activities related to propagating the ideology of the group and justifying the cause. Mahan and Griset (2008) do not address these ideological-related tasks in their model; however, the results are consistent with aspects of the model proposed by Cragin and Daly (2009), research examining women’s role in Islamist extremism (e.g. Burdman, 2003; Cunningham, 2008; Parashar, 2011a; von Knop, 2007, 2008), and secular extremism (M. Alison, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1998). Some of the activities are consistent with Cragin and Daly’s (2009) recruiter role (facilitating recruitment, producing propaganda, and indoctrinating children). Some of the other activities included in the ideological theme could also be related to recruitment, such as encouraging family and friends to participate. However, other activities in the theme, such as acting as a political official and fundraising, extend beyond recruitment of new members to spreading the rationale for the conflict and representing the group to the wider community. As suggested by some scholars (Bloom, 2011b; Cunningham, 2008; Parashar, 2011b; Sutten, 2009; von Knop, 2007) women are particularly well-placed to perform these activities, given their status in families and communities and the gender roles dictated by traditional societies and/or interpretations of religious
texts. This role ensures grassroots community support for the conflict and could result in resistance to measures aimed at resolving the conflict if this particular role of women is not taken into account (Aoláin et al., 2011; O’Rourke, 2009). That these activities coalesced in the model to form a separate and quite distinct partition suggests that this is an important aspect of contemporary political and revolutionary conflict that requires greater attention by scholars, consistent with observations made in the literature review.

The results of the SSA indicate that suicide bombing co-occurred with other ideologically-based activities, although the low internal consistency of the theme, and the increased KR-20 value when suicide bombing was removed from the analysis should be noted. These results suggest that suicide bombing, although co-occurring less frequently with other activities, most often co-occurred with ideologically-based activates. This finding is in contrast to the prevailing scholarship on female suicide attacks where the focus is generally on the personal context and one-off nature of this activity. Although this finding does not necessarily reflect mobilisation pathways or motivations (e.g. see Jacques and Taylor (2008) who found in a quantitative study that women were motivated significantly more by personal reasons) it does suggest that female suicide operations should be examined in a context of broader involvement in the extremist group or movement (see also Brunner, 2007). This finding directly challenges dominant notions found in the literature that women’s decisions to participate in a suicide attack are made quickly and irrationally and primarily as the result of a personal trauma or mental instability (e.g. Bloom, 2011a; Koyuncu, 2011; Nivat, 2005). It also suggests that the ideological aspects of female suicide operations may be overlooked (Hasso, 2005; Patkin, 2004; West, 2004-2005). All in all, there are important implications for the way in which female suicide bombers are portrayed and studied in the scholarship based on this finding.

Finally, there are several activities included in the ideological theme that may initially appear counter-intuitive; political official, hijack, and hostage-taking.
The inclusion of political official in the ideological theme is contradictory to Cragin and Daly’s (2009) model where it is included in the political vanguard leadership role. However, whilst acting in a political capacity indicates a commitment to the ideology of the group, in many instances it would preclude active participation in the violent activities of an extremist organisation. It is primarily related to representing the group in a legitimate political forum, hence representing an ideological behaviour rather than an active or militant behaviour. The variables of hijack and hostage-taking may initially appear conceptually inconsistent with the ideological theme. However, these variables could be viewed as acts with the specific intention of publicising the group and/or its ideology and cause. Hijacking and hostage-taking are usually undertaken to bring attention to the group’s grievances and ideology, for example the hijackings in which Leila Khaled participated, rather than indiscriminate violent attacks, were committed in order to publicise the plight of the Palestinian people (Gentry, 2011; MacDonald, 1991). This finding may speak to the different motivations or objectives behind specific terrorist actions.

The Support Theme

The support theme is conceptually consistent with current literature regarding the role of women in political and revolutionary violence which suggests that women are commonly found in these support positions (e.g. Bouta et al., 2005; Cragin & Daly, 2009). This finding in no way diminishes the importance of this support role to the committal and maintenance of extremism. Indeed, the results of this study clarify the specific activities that women perform in a support role and illustrate their importance to extremism. These support activities were related to the operational capacity of the group/movement, rather than to the everyday functioning of the group (as is the caring role discussed below). The activities that comprised this role included many of the activities suggested by Mahan and Griset’s (2008) spy role and some of Cragin and Daly’s (2009) logistician role as well as two activities – smuggling and skilled work – suggested by the data. An extremist
group would find it difficult to exist or perpetrate attacks without accurate intelligence, smugglers, and operational support. The support theme is in line with research which suggests that women are utilised in more clandestine activities due to their gendered ability to deflect suspicion and attention or alternatively attract and deceive members of the opposition or security forces (Bloom, 2011b; Cragin & Daly, 2009; Cunningham, 2003; O’Rourke, 2009; Qazi, 2011; Sutten, 2009).

**The Caring Theme**

The caring theme is conceptually consistent with the current literature on women in political and revolutionary violence, although it includes a wider variety of behaviours than this literature generally acknowledges. Much literature in the area tends to focus on the sexual relationships of the women involved – particularly where this is of a coerced or non-consensual nature – however the findings from this study indicate that whilst acting as a sex partner is the most frequent activity in this caring theme, it also co-occurred frequently with other activities such as performing household chores, acting as a camp lookout and/or manager, and providing medical aid. This finding supports the argument made throughout this thesis that research and policy should examine the way in which women are involved in conflict despite their method of mobilisation or dominant themes of gendered roles in conflict. The caring theme is consistent with aspects of Mahan and Griset’s (2008) category of sympathiser and with research that suggests that women participate in conflict in traditionally feminine ways (Bennett et al., 1995; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Specht, 2006). However, it also included additional tasks that were suggested by the data and related to camp maintenance, primarily seen in guerrilla warfare, such as acting as a guard or managing the camp. These caring activities related primarily to the daily functions of a militant group or organisation.

Interestingly, the variable of marriage to a group member for strategic or tactical purposes was also included in this theme. This was a variable
suggested by research on the role of women in Islamist extremist organisations (e.g. Bloom, 2011b; Ismail, 2006; Noor, 2007; Sutten, 2009), although it was a difficult variable to code with frequency as it was not often reported in secondary sources. It is likely that marriage organised by a family member occurs more often than is represented in this sample, particularly in the context of Islamist-based groups. At this stage, the SSA results situated thus type of marriage with other caring behaviours which is conceptually consistent with current understandings of this phenomenon – it is an activity that generally serves the needs of the male members of the organisation, it is stereotypically feminine, and it may not be consensual or of the volition of the woman in question. Research in the mainstream terrorism and political violence area is beginning to acknowledge the importance of strategic marriage, particularly in the maintenance of Islamist networks (Sageman, 2008; Silke, 2008) although more work needs to be done in this area. The findings from this study indicate that marriage by family may occur in the context of involvement in other caring-based tasks.

**Considering the Framework: Typology vs. Thematic Model**

The behavioural structure is proposed as a thematic model of women’s roles in conflict, rather than as a strict typology. Although the high classification rate of the model (whereby over 80 percent of the sample were able to be definitively classified as having a dominant theme) indicates that the model can effectively categorise individual cases of women, there are several methodological and theoretical factors that support the designation of a thematic model of population trends rather than a definitive model of types.

First, whilst a high classification rate was achieved, the model was tested on the same sample from which it was developed. Thus, the classification rate in this instance is not a true test with regards to the ability of the model to categorise individual cases, but rather a test of whether the behavioural structure was a valid representation of the sample. In this regard, the classification rate of 82 percent compares favourably with other research
utilising an SSA in the development of a typology or thematic structure, for example Salfati and Canter’s (1999) framework of homicide crime scene behaviours classified 65 percent of their sample utilising the criteria that the dominant theme had to have a greater number of variables present than the sum of the variables on the other themes. Using this same criteria, Almond, Salfati, and Canter’s (2006) model of youths who sexually harm successfully classified 71 percent of their cases whilst Canter, Hughes and Kirby’s (1998) model of offence behaviour in child sexual abuse was able to classify 77 percent of their sample. In terms of group-level trends, the high classification rate could indicate that the roles are mutually exclusive such that a woman performing the activities of one role is unlikely to perform the activities of another role.

However, of further consideration is the low frequencies of the role behaviour variables identified in the previous study and the low Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficients which, together, may indicate some issues with the data. As discussed in the previous chapter, low frequencies are to be expected given the size of the sample, the nature of the data, and the number and variety of variables included in the coding dictionary. Low frequencies indicate that a low number of variables occurred in each individual case (i.e. women tended to perform a small number of activities). Additionally, the low Kuder-Richardson 20 values for the support, caring and ideological themes (ranging from .28 to .42) indicate that these themes have a relatively low internal consistency or structural coherence. Again, these values reflect the nature of the data where a large number of variables are coded in a large sample collected from secondary sources not necessarily focused on detailing the specific activities that women undertook whilst involved in the conflict.61 This

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61 The possibility of conceptual incompatibilities between the activities was considered in order to explain the low KR values; however, the only incompatibility would be with regard to suicide bombing (i.e. if a woman was killed she would be unable to participate in any other activity). A woman could feasibly perform any of the remaining activities whilst involved and, indeed, coding was performed with placing restrictions on
observation highlights the issues pertinent to relying on secondary data outlined in both Chapter Four and Chapter Five. However, collecting primary data of the nature required for this doctoral research (i.e. asking several hundred women to specify all the activities that they performed in service to their respective groups or movements) is unrealistic. The use of quality secondary data was the best option available, especially given the amount of data required to establish a representative model of women’s roles in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict at the population level. However, given these issues with the data as well as the limitation outlined in Study One, it would be unwise to suggest that the model proposed was a definitive typology with the ability to classify individual women.

Of primary consideration at the theoretical level is that this research was interested in population-level trends rather than in cases of individual women involved in conflict. Most of the previous research in the area has examined specific instances of women involved or specific activities undertaken, with the result being the lack of an evidence base useful for generating a theoretical framework for understanding women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict globally. In recognition of these limitations, this doctoral research was specifically focused on developing a model from which population-level trends could be derived, rather than a model that was solely useful at the individual level. Accordingly, this research has, thus far, established the exact activities that a large comprehensive sample of women performed in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and statistically examined patterns in how these activities are related so as to produce a model of the roles that women could be said to have in this type of conflict as a whole. To reduce the model, at this stage, to the individual level would defeat the overall purpose of the research, which is to develop a valid
theoretical framework for understanding and studying women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict across a variety of contexts.

Conclusion

Whilst the results of Study One demonstrated the broad range of activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, the aim of this study was to statistically examine patterns in the data collected in Study One for profiles of activity that may indicate the existence of an underlying behavioural structure. The activities that were established in Study One were empirically examined for both distinctiveness and co-occurrence in order to empirically develop a thematic model indicative of women’s roles in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The behavioural structure that resulted from the analysis is proposed to consist of four themes or roles that women have in this type of conflict; active militant and leadership activities (the active role), ideological activities that primarily occur in the wider extremist movement (the ideological role), caring and typically feminine tasks related to the daily functioning of the group (the caring role), and logistically-based support functions related to the operational capacity of the group (the support role). Whilst this is a theoretical partitioning of the behavioural structure, the structure itself is based on the statistical associations between all of the variables. Practically, then, this model also demonstrates exactly how each activity that women perform in political and revolutionary conflict is simultaneously related to every other activity. Furthermore, the findings from this study lend credence to the claim that women are particularly important in the maintenance of extremism and extremist networks (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009) – as only one theme in the model related to fighting or leadership activities; the remaining three themes were all related to wider practical and ideological support for extremism. The findings specifically refute the dominant scripts of female victimhood or peacemaking in conflict, outlined in the introductory chapter.
At this stage the thematic model is a broad one that accounts for women’s roles (and activities) at the global population-level. It is important to ascertain whether and how the model varies according to the macro-level and meso-level factors outlined in Chapter Three, such as the region of the world in which the conflict occurs or the type of group to which the women are affiliated. Analyses such as these are crucial in determining the factors that impact on variation in women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Thus far, this research has demonstrated that women participate in conflict in a variety of ways beyond well-known but isolated examples, exactly how they do so, and how these activities are related to form broad conceptual roles (in answer to research question 1 and 2). How these roles vary according to macro-level and meso-level factors is yet to be examined; however, this framework of women’s roles in conflict is crucial to this endeavour as it illustrates exactly how women are involved and, thus, allows systematic examination of variation in involvement.
CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY THREE: EXPLORING MACRO-LEVEL AND MESO-LEVEL TRENDS IN THE THEMATIC MODEL OF WOMEN’S ROLES

The scholarship has seldom examined systematically or empirically if or how female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict varies according to different contexts. Comparative studies are rare and scholars in the area seldom take empirical approaches to large-scale research. The literature review in Chapter Three attested to this fact, with few empirical trends able to be systematically ascertained for population-level variation in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. However, through compiling and analysing the disparate research available on the topic, and based on the few studies that have been empirical and/or broad in scope (e.g. Cunningham, 2003; Dalton & Asal, 2011; Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Jacques & Taylor, 2013; O’Rourke, 2009) some initial trends could be ascertained.

Macro-level factors refer to the broader political and social milieu in which politically violent groups and movements form and exist. In this regard, world region and socio-political and historical context are important considerations with regards to the emergence of political violence and terrorism, the groups that use violent methods to advance their agenda, and the individuals who choose to participate in these groups and movements. Although very little research has examined trends in women’s participation according to these factors, the few studies that have been conducted have indicated that women’s participation in political and revolutionary conflict has fluctuated over time and across world regions and types of groups. However, the available scholarship comprises different, and at times contrary, points of view regarding how (and why) women’s participation fluctuates according to these factors. With regards to historical and socio-political context, Rapoport (2002, 2004) suggested that women participated to a greater extent in wave
three of terrorism (approximately 1960-1980s) compared to wave four of terrorism (1979 to the present). Whilst Rapoport’s model of the waves of terrorism has empirical and theoretical support (Rasler & Thompson, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010), no research has systematically or empirically examined women’s involvement across time according to this model, although Weinberg and Eubank (2011) provided a descriptive summary in this regard. In contrast to Rapoport’s claim, many scholars have contended that women’s participation is in fact increasing in contemporary times, and predict that it will continue to increase into the future (Cunningham, 2003; Sjoberg, 2011; Zedalis, 2008). Similarly, little regional comparative research has been conducted regarding women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Cunningham (2003) has conducted the only study available that specifically takes a comparative approach to women’s involvement in conflict within different regions of the world. Cunningham found regional differences in women’s involvement (as outlined in Chapter Three) although, overall, women’s participation was increasing “ideologically, logistically, and regionally” (p. 171). Dalton and Asal (2011), in a quantitative study, found that a high level of economic development and a low level of women’s social rights within a country predicted the deployment of women in violent terrorist operations; however, this is the only study of its kind available and it did not include other types of involvement in the analysis.

In addition to these macro-level factors, some scholars contend that women’s involvement varies according to several meso-level factors. Meso-level factors have received relatively more attention than macro-level factors with regards to women’s involvement in extremism, although micro-level factors dominate overwhelmingly as the focus of research. Common distinctions made in the literature with regards to meso-level factors include the ideological basis and religious orientation of the group. It is commonly claimed that women are involved to a greater extent in left-wing and/or secular groups in comparison to right-wing and/or religious groups (Cunningham, 2003; Ness, 2005a; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987) and in secular groups as opposed to religiously-
based groups (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Ness, 2005a). These propositions were supported by the descriptive results of Study One. However, as noted by some scholars (Blee, 2008; Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008; Ness, 2005a; von Knop, 2007, 2008) women may be involved in different and less visible ways in right-wing or religious groups/movements. Some scholars have also explored how women’s involvement may be influenced by the goals or objectives of different groups or movements, for example Blee (2008) proposed a model of women’s involvement in the US-based organised racist movement based on two meso-level factors (fluctuations in organisational designation of the enemy and type of violence employed by the group). Several other scholars (e.g. Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; Ness, 2005a; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007, 2008) have examined the way in which ideological aspects of Islamism influence the involvement of women in this movement. Some scholars have examined how different conceptualisations of nationalism influence the involvement of women in violent nationalist groups (M. Alison, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 1998). Lastly, Gonzalez-Perez (2008b) proposed that women participate to a greater extent in groups that are domestically-orientated as opposed to groups that are international in nature. However, as noted in Chapter Three, there are several problematic aspects to this theoretical proposition, including inconsistent application of the domestic/international categorisation and factually incorrect analysis.

This chapter is focused on the macro-level and meso-level factors that have been proposed in the scholarship as relevant to women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The macro-level and meso-level variables included in this study were those that could be ascertained reliably, and for the majority of the sample, from secondary sources. In contrast, micro-level factors are harder to ascertain reliably from secondary sources and are specific to the individual and context; thus, they are not included in this study, but will be addressed in Study Four. As the thematic model developed in Study Two comprised four distinct themes that in turn consisted of several different activities that women perform in contemporary
political and revolutionary conflict, this model can be utilised to empirically and systematically examine population trends in women’s involvement in conflict according to the meso-level (ideological basis, religious orientation, political orientation, and goals/aims of the movement or group) and macro-level (wave of terrorism and world region) factors identified in the scholarship. As such, Study Three was designed to answer part of research question three; how does the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict vary according to a levels of analysis framework that includes the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level?

**Method**

**Sample**

The total sample was, as in Study One and Study Two, 482 cases of individual women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. For the purposes of this study there were six grouping variables (wave of terrorism, world region, group/movement ideology, group/movement religious orientation, group/movement political orientation, and group/movement goals). The sub-samples varied accordingly, as described in detail in Chapter Five and reiterated below.

For both macro-level variables - world region and wave of terrorism - the total sample size was 482. Within the world region variable there were seven values according to where the extremist group was based or, for transnational groups, where the woman joined the group: Europe \((n = 127)\); South Asia \((n = 80)\); Africa \((n = 78)\); Latin America \((n = 61)\); the Middle East \((n = 63)\); Eastern Europe \((n = 41)\), and; Northern America \((n = 32)\). Within the wave of terrorism variable there were two values according to the historical period of terrorism in which the extremist group to which the case was affiliated formed: wave three, representing the New Left movement dominant from 1960 to the early 1980s \((n = 245)\), and; wave four, representing the religious period from 1979 to the present \((n = 237)\).
In contrast to the macro-level variables, the sub-sample sizes for the four meso-level variables varied considerably, representing difficulties in coding some group characteristics with the information available in secondary sources, for example in some sources the exact non-state group to which the woman was affiliated was unclear. The sub-sample for the group ideology variable, defined according to the primary ideological basis on which the extremist group was based, was 382 where there were two values: left-wing \((n = 215)\) or right-wing \((n = 167)\). The sub-sample for the group religious orientation variable, defined according to the extent to which the group endorsed a religious ideology, was 440 where there were two values: secular \((n = 300)\) or religious \((n = 140)\). The sub-sample for the group political orientation variable was 355, where there two values: internationally-orientated \((n = 205)\) or domestically-orientated \((n = 150)\). This variable was defined according to where the political focus and agenda of the extremist group lay and – due to problems of definition outlined in Chapter Three – included primarily those groups already classified by Gonzalez-Perez (2008b). Finally, the sub-sample for the group goals variable, defined according to the specific goals or agenda espoused by the extremist group, was 426 where there were seven values: nationalist/separatist \((n = 109)\); communist/socialist \((n = 105)\); Islamist with nationalist/separatist goals \((n = 63)\); nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist \((n = 59)\); Islamist \((n = 53)\); Christian-based \((n = 20)\), and; non-specific revolutionary \((n = 17)\). Across all analyses, cases with missing data were excluded.

Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, the independent variables were the two macro-level variables \((\text{world region and wave of terrorism})\) and the four meso-level variables \((\text{group ideology, group religious ideology, group political orientation, and group goals})\). The dependent variables were the four theme scores as calculated in the previous study – the standardised theme scores, or the number of variables within a theme displayed by a case divided by the
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Framework Development

The total number of variables included within that particular theme. As it is a thematic model, rather than a typology, each case contributed one continuous score for each theme (ideological, active, caring, and support; herein referred to as theme scores).

Preliminary data checking (see Appendix D for detailed results) was conducted for all data as grouped by the six independent variables prior to confirming a data analysis plan. This included examination of outliers and assessing normality and homogeneity, as required for parametric procedures. As recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) when testing for normality in large sample sizes, conventional statistical tests (the Shapiro Wilk test statistic and calculation of z scores for skewness and kurtosis) were utilized in combination with distribution plots (frequency histograms, expected normal probability plots and detrended expected normal probability plots). The Shapiro Wilk statistic and the z scores confirmed that the vast majority of the grouped data was significantly non-normal, with a few minor exceptions for the data when grouped by the independent variable of group goals (e.g. the caring and active theme scores were normally distributed for groups that had Christian-based or non-specific revolutionary goals). Examination of the frequency histograms revealed that all grouped data exhibited positive skew and kurtosis with the distribution tapering off towards the maximum possible score on each of the themes. The expected normal probability plots and the detrended expected normal probability plots evidenced this trend in the distributions of the grouped variables; however, visual inspection confirmed that

62 Calculation of z scores allows comparison of the skew and kurtosis of the obtained distributions to that expected in a normal distribution. In a z score distribution, a score greater than ± 2.58 standard deviations from the mean of 0 equates to a conservative significance level of \( p < .01 \), meaning that the value for skew/kurtosis is significant.

63 As outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), in this plot the scores are firstly ranked and sorted and then for each case the expected normal value is computed and compared with the actual value. The expected normal value is the z score that a case with that particular rank holds in a normal distribution.

64 Again as outlined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), these plots are similar to expected normal probability plots (see footnote above) except that the linear trend has been removed; thus, deviations are plotted rather than values.
Despite the distributions being non-normal, the grouped variables exhibited comparable distribution patterns in terms of skew and kurtosis.

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was assessed by way of Levene’s test, as this statistic is not typically sensitive to departures from normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Results indicated that the Levene statistic, with few exceptions, was significant for all of the grouped variables where $p < .001$. The exceptions were the ideological theme scores when grouped by group orientation, group ideology, wave of terrorism and, additionally, the caring and support theme scores when grouped by group ideology. In addition to utilising conventional tests of variance, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend assessing homogeneity of variance by way of $F_{\text{MAX}}$ in combination with the sample size ratios, where $F_{\text{MAX}}$ is the ratio of the largest cell variance to the smallest. As stipulated by Tabachnick and Fidell, an $F_{\text{MAX}}$ to a maximum of 10 is acceptable if sample sizes are relatively equal (within a ratio of 4:1, largest cell size to smallest). However, Howell (2013) maintains that the ratio of largest to smallest variance should be no more than four, given symmetric, or at least similarly shaped, populations. The theme scores when grouped by wave of terrorism, group ideology, group religious orientation, and group political orientation – and according to both criterion – exhibited homogeneity of variance. However, the theme scores exhibited heterogeneity of variance when grouped by world region and some heterogeneity when grouped by group goals depending upon the criteria used.

In summary, then, the preliminary data checking identified several issues with the data in relation to parametric procedures. With a few minor exceptions, all of the grouped data exhibited significant non-normal distributions, violating the assumption of normality required for parametric procedures. Whilst the robustness of parametric procedures to violations of normality has been demonstrated (Howell, 2013), the non-normality present in the data for this study was both significant and substantial. Positive skew and kurtosis were evident in all grouped variables to varying degrees. Lastly, heterogeneity of variance was evident in some of the grouped data.
Close inspection of the frequency histograms revealed that the non-normality of the distributions could be attributed to the presence of univariate outliers where these were cases with very high theme scores. The presence of these outliers stemmed from the characteristics of the sample whereby the bulk of the sample exhibited low theme scores (indicating that most of the sample exhibited relatively few variables included in each of the themes, as identified in the previous two studies). Thus, those cases that exhibited high scores were identified as statistical outliers, although their scores were valid and within the reasonable confines of the measure.

Upon consideration of the population under study, and in light of the frequencies of the role behaviour variables in Study One and the structural coherence statistics in Study Two, it was concluded that a normal distribution of theme scores of the population (of female participants in extremism) could not be assumed to be true. Given that each theme in the thematic model represents a number of variables, the theme scores measure the ‘amount’ of each theme present in each case in the sample based on the number of variables observed in that case. In reality, most cases would exhibit few variables (meaning that they may, for example, participate in a few of the activities included in the theme but rarely participate in all or most of the activities). Thus, it would not be unusual for many cases to exhibit lower theme scores. Comparatively fewer cases would exhibit high theme scores as this would indicate that many variables included in the theme had been observed in the case; an unlikely proposition given the range of activities included in each theme and (specific to this sample) the nature of the data upon which the sample is based.\(^65\) Thus, this sample may, in fact, be a valid approximation or approximation of the general population of female extremists. For this

\(^{65}\) Thus, whilst the distributional patterns likely reflect imperfect data – as has been discussed throughout this thesis – it would also be unlikely that a woman, in reality, would perform all or even many of the activities included within each theme.
reason, it was not considered appropriate to transform the data to approximate a normal distribution.\textsuperscript{66}

For this study, rather than transforming the variables, and taking into account the non-normality of the grouped data distributions, a nonparametric approach was considered appropriate. Nonparametric approaches do not assume normality and are generally more robust to outliers (Conover, 1971; Zimmerman, 1994). As the focus of this study was on differences between independent variables on the dependent variables of the caring, ideological, active and support theme scores, a series of Kruskal-Wallis or Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted; Kruskal-Wallis tests where there were more than two levels to the independent variables (i.e. for world region and group goals) and Mann-Whitney U tests where there were only two levels to the independent variable (i.e. wave of terrorism, group religious orientation, group political orientation, and group ideology).\textsuperscript{67} Both these nonparametric procedures utilise the same approach whereby the grouped data are combined into a single ordered sample and each score assigned a rank from smallest to largest, regardless of which original group the score came from. The data is then regrouped and the test statistic is based on the ranks rather than measures of central tendency (as for parametric tests). The null hypothesis of no difference between groups/samples is rejected if the ranks associated with one group or sample tend to be different (larger or smaller) than those of the other sample/s (Conover, 1971; Howell, 2013). Where heterogeneity of variance was noted in the preliminary analyses (i.e. for world region and some of the data when grouped by group goals), a more stringent $\alpha$ level was employed; .025 for moderate violations or .01 for severe violations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

\textsuperscript{66} Additionally, transformation of variables can often render the results difficult to interpret (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007); an issue that is a particularly relevant consideration with regards to the type of data used in this study where the theme scores are already scores based on quantitative coding of qualitative data.

\textsuperscript{67} Consultation with a professional statistician provided support for this approach.
As the Kruskal-Wallis test incorporates multiple levels of the independent variables, follow up pairwise comparisons were conducted in order to determine where the difference/s lay, if the test statistic was significant. All possible pairwise comparisons were conducted as this study was exploratory in nature and no clear hypotheses were determined by the literature. The procedure for conducting these multiple comparisons was the approach proposed by Dunn (1964) based on the joint ranks in the sample. A Bonferroni correction was applied in order to correct for multiple comparisons whereby the conventional p-value of $\alpha = .05$ was divided by the total number of pairwise comparisons.

**Results**

Descriptive statistics and comparisons of grouped data are presented for the two macro-level (*world region* and *wave of terrorism*) variables first, followed by the four meso-level (*group ideology, group religious ideology, group orientation*, and *group goals*) variables. As nonparametric procedures were employed the mean rank and medians are reported with means included only for comparative, rather than for analytical/inferential, purposes.

**Macro-level Variable: Wave of Terrorism**

Descriptive statistics regarding the four theme scores grouped by the independent variable wave of terrorism can be found in Table 7.1. Four Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted in order to evaluate differences in the theme scores (caring, ideological, active, and support) according to wave of terrorism (wave three vs. wave four). The significance of the test statistics were evaluated using the conventional $\alpha < .05$ as there was homogeneity of variance across the grouped data.
Table 7.1.
*Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of caring, ideological, active and support themes according to wave of terrorism.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Wave of terrorism</th>
<th>Cell size (n)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Wave Three</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>228.74</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave Four</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>254.69</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Wave Three</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>216.67</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave Four</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>267.17</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Wave Three</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>277.97</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave Four</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>203.80</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Wave Three</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>245.20</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave Four</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>237.68</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mann-Whitney U tests revealed that there was a significant difference between the two waves of terrorism in mean ranks for the caring ($U = 32,158.50$, $z = 3.23$, $p = .001$), ideological ($U = 35,115.50$, $z = 4.63$, $p < .001$), and active theme ($U = 19,717.50$, $z = -6.14$, $p < .001$). For both the caring and ideological theme, wave four exhibited a significantly higher mean rank when compared to wave three. In contrast, wave three exhibited a significantly higher mean rank for the active theme scores in comparison to wave four. There was no significant difference between wave three and wave four with regards to the support theme scores, $U = 28,358.50$, $z = -1.32$, $p = .525$.

The trends in the thematic model according to the wave of terrorism are illustrated in Figure 7.1. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test, as illustrated in this figure, indicate that women were involved to a greater extent in the active role throughout wave three and to a greater extent in both the caring and ideological roles in wave four. Women participated in the support role to a similar extent across both time periods.
Figure 7.1. Variation in the thematic model or roles according to wave of terrorism.
Macro-level Variable: World Region

Descriptive statistics regarding the active, caring, support and ideological theme scores grouped by the world region variable can be found in Table 7.2. Four Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted in order to evaluate differences in the distribution of each of the theme scores (caring, ideological, active, and support) according to the seven world regions (Africa vs. Latin America vs. Northern America vs. South Asia vs. Middle East vs. Eastern Europe vs. Europe). The test statistic was evaluated using $\alpha < .01$ in recognition of the presence of heterogeneity of variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and the significance of each pairwise comparison was evaluated using the criteria $\alpha < .002$ (according to the Bonferroni adjustment).
Table 7.2.  
*Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of caring, ideological, active and support themes according to world region.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>World region</th>
<th>Cell size (n)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>208.89</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>243.85</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>324.59</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>221.60</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>254.89</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>220.18</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>203.50</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>197.30</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>250.39</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>338.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>163.37</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>295.70</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>346.44</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>251.23</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>296.11</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>206.78</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>235.55</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>163.37</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>295.70</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>134.94</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>313.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>251.49</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>277.31</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>250.71</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>224.44</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>210.34</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>210.51</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>222.56</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kruskal-Wallis test statistic was significant for the caring theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 482) = 99.55$, $p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference in mean ranks for the caring theme scores between Africa and all other world regions, where Africa exhibited a significantly higher mean rank. There was also a significant difference between Europe and Latin America whereby Latin America exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the caring theme. These results indicate that women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in the region of Africa participated more often found in the caring role in comparison to women involved in conflict in all other world regions. In addition, women involved in conflict in Latin America were found in the caring role more often than women involved in conflict in Europe.

The Kruskal-Wallis test statistic was significant for the ideological theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 482) = 113.12$, $p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed a significant difference between the two world regions with the highest mean ranks on the ideological theme – Eastern Europe and the Middle East – when compared to the mean ranks of all other world regions. In addition, South Asia with the middle mean rank on the ideological theme was significantly different to the two groups that had the lowest mean ranks, Europe and Africa. These results indicate that women involved in conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East were more often found in the ideological role compared to women involved in conflict in all other world regions. Furthermore, women involved in conflict in South Asia were found in the ideological role more often than women involved in conflict in Europe and Africa.

The Kruskal-Wallis test statistic was significant for the active theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 482) = 95.34$, $p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed several significant differences, although the trends were less clear compared to the previous analyses. Northern America, Europe, and Latin America were the three highest ranked groups on the active theme and there were no significant differences between these three groups. These three world regions – Northern

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Note that the caring theme was not present in Northern America.
America, Europe and Latin America – all exhibited significantly higher mean ranks on the active theme than South Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Africa exhibited a significantly higher mean rank than both the Middle East and Eastern Europe, but a significantly lower mean rank than Europe. These results indicate that women involved in conflict in Northern America, Europe and Latin America were more often found in the active role in comparison to women involved in conflict in South Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Africa, the world region with the middle rank, exhibited women in the active role more often than conflict in the Middle East and Eastern Europe but less often than conflict in Europe.

Finally, the Kruskal-Wallis test was significant for the support theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 482) = 26.77, p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed that the mean rank for South Asia on the support theme was significantly higher than the mean ranks of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. These results indicate that women involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in the South Asian region featured women in the support role more often than conflicts in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

The group level trends in the thematic model across the seven world regions according to mean ranks are depicted in Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3. These two figures delineate these regional trends according to similarity. Thus, Figure 7.2 depicts the three regions of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and South Asia and Figure 7.3 depicts the four regions of Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Northern America. Of particular note in Figure 7.2 is the almost identical pattern of female involvement in conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In both regions women were found most often in the ideological role (where the respective mean ranks were significantly higher than all other regions) and least often in the active role (where the respective mean ranks were significantly lower than all regions except South Asia). Female involvement in South Asian conflict exhibited a similar general trend to both the Middle East and Eastern Europe, although there were some differences. Similar to the Middle East and Eastern Europe, women were found significantly
less often in the active role. Women in South Asia were involved most often in the support role (significantly more than the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Latin America).

The remaining four regions of the world – Europe, Latin America, Northern America, and Africa – exhibited broad similarities in patterns of involvement, although with some significant variation as well. Women in all these regions, except for Africa, were found significantly more often in the active role. Although women in African conflicts were not most commonly found in the active role, the frequency with which women were in this role did not differ significantly to Europe, Latin America, or Northern America. Women in Africa were involved significantly more often in the caring role. Women in Latin America significantly more often in the caring role compared to Europe. In all four regions, women were found significantly less in the ideological role.
Figure 7.2. Comparison of variation in the model of roles according to the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and South Asian world regions.

Figure 7.3. Comparison of variation in the thematic model of roles according to the European, African, Latin American, and Northern American world regions.
**Meso-level Variable: Group Ideology**

Descriptive statistics regarding the four theme scores grouped by the independent variable of group/movement ideology can be found in Table 7.3. Four Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted in order to evaluate differences in the theme scores (caring, ideological, active, and support) according to the ideology endorsed by the group/movement (left-wing vs. right-wing). The significance of the test statistics were evaluated using the conventional $\alpha < .05$ as there was homogeneity of variance across the grouped data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Group Ideology</th>
<th>Cell size (n)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>188.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>195.81</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>164.66</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>226.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>217.67</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>157.81</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>194.66</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>187.43</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mann-Whitney U tests revealed that there was a significant difference between left-wing and right-wing ideological basis in mean ranks for the ideological ($U = 23,722.50$, $z = 6.20$, $p < .001$) and active theme ($U = 12,326.50$, $z = -5.50$, $p < .001$). Groups or movements that endorsed a right-wing ideology exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the ideological theme when compared to groups or movements that endorsed a left-wing ideology. In contrast, groups/movements with a left-wing ideological basis exhibited a higher mean rank with regards to the active theme scores in comparison to groups/movements with a right-wing ideology. There was no significant difference between right-wing and left-wing ideology with regards to the caring ($U = 18,673.00$, $z = 1.31$, $p = .189$) or support theme scores ($U = 17,273.00$, $z = -0.92$, $p = .355$).
The group level trends in the thematic model according to the group ideological basis are illustrated in Figure 7.4. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate that women in left-wing groups/movements participated significantly more often in the active role whilst women in right-wing groups/movements participated significantly more often in the ideological role. The caring and support roles did not differ significantly between left-wing and right-wing groups or movements.

![Figure 7.4. Variation in the thematic model of roles according to group/movement ideology.](image)
Meso-level Variable: Group Religious Orientation

Descriptive statistics for the four themes grouped by religious orientation of the group/movement can be found in Table 7.4. Four Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted in order to evaluate differences in each of the themes (caring, ideological, active, and support) according to the religious orientation of the group/movement (religious vs. secular). The significance of the test statistics were evaluated using the conventional $\alpha < .05$ as there was homogeneity of variance across the grouped data.

Table 7.4. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of caring, ideological, active and support themes according to group/movement religious orientation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Group type</th>
<th>Cell size ($n$)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>219.55</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>222.54</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>200.34</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>263.70</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>239.31</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>180.19</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>224.23</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>212.50</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mann-Whitney U tests revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ranks for the ideological ($U = 27,047.50, z = 5.66, p < .001$) and active ($U = 15,356, z = -4.78, p < .001$) theme scores when grouped by religious orientation. The results indicated that groups or movements endorsing a religious ideology exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the ideological theme than groups that were secular in nature. In contrast, secular groups exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the active theme compared to religiously-based groups. There were no significant differences in mean ranks according to the religious orientation of the group/movement for the caring theme scores ($U = 21,286, z = .38, p = .701$) or the support theme scores ($U = 19,880.50, z = -1.32, p = .187$).
The group level trends in the thematic model according to the group/movement religious orientation are illustrated in Figure 7.5. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicate that women were involved in the ideological role significantly more often in religiously-based groups and in the active role significantly more often in secular groups. The caring and support roles did not differ significantly according to whether the group was religious or secular.

Figure 7.5. Variation in the thematic model of roles according to the religious orientation of the group or movement.
**Meso-level Variable: Group Political Orientation**

Descriptive statistics for the four themes in relation to the political orientation of the group can be found in Table 7.5. Four Mann-Whitney U tests revealed no significant differences in the distribution of theme scores according to whether the group was internationally or domestically orientated: caring ($U = 16,138, z = 1.71, p = .087$); ideological ($U = 16,186.50, z = .96, p = .335$); active ($U = 14,611, z = -.84, p = .401$), and support ($U = 14,267.50, z = 1.69, p = .092$).

Table 7.5.

*Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of caring, ideological, active and support themes according to group political orientation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Group type</th>
<th>Cell size (n)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>217.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>229.19</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>247.84</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>260.97</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>248.23</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>236.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>247.79</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>230.39</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meso-level Variable: Group Goals

Descriptive statistics for the four themes grouped according to the independent variable of group/movement goals can be found in Table 7.6. Four Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted in order to evaluate differences in the theme scores (caring, ideological, active, and support) according to the group goals (nationalist/separatist, communist/socialist, nationalist/separatist and Islamist, nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist, Islamist, Christian-based, and non-specific revolutionary). The significance of the test statistics for the dependent variables of the caring, ideological, and support theme scores were evaluated using $\alpha < .025$, whilst the significance of the test statistic for the active theme scores was evaluated using $\alpha < .01$, in recognition of the presence of heterogeneity of variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The significance level used to evaluate each follow up pairwise comparison was $\alpha < .002$ (Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons).
Table 7.6.  
Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables of caring, ideological, active and caring themes according to group goals/aims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Group goals/aims</th>
<th>Cell size (n)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean rank</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>205.74</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>199.35</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and Islamist</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>199.48</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>214.76</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamist</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>210.31</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian-based</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>268.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>353.59</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological</td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>212.50</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>176.64</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and Islamist</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>288.97</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>207.61</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamist</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
<td>252.60</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian-based</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>172.21</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>130.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>181.46</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
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<td>0.16</td>
<td>292.50</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and Islamist</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>126.17</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>233.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>193.34</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian-based</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>276.45</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>183.38</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>256.32</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>228.57</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and Islamist</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>228.26</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>262.00</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Islamist</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>241.75</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Christian-based</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>215.64</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>220.85</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kruskal-Wallis test was significant for the caring theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 427) = 84.82, p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed that groups with non-specific revolutionary goals exhibited a mean rank on the caring theme that was significantly higher than all other types of groups. Groups with Christian-based goals, as the group with the second highest mean rank on the caring theme, were significantly different to the four groups with the lowest mean ranks: Islamist; nationalist/separatist; nationalist/separatist combined with Islamist, and; communist/socialist.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was also significant for the ideological theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 427) = 65.11, p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed that groups with nationalist/separatist and Islamist goals – with the highest mean rank on the ideological theme – were significantly different to all other groups except for those groups with Islamist goals (with the second highest mean rank).\(^{69}\) Interestingly, however, groups with Islamist goals were only significantly different to groups with communist/socialist goals and non-specific revolutionary goals with regards to ideological theme scores.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was significant for the active theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 427) = 100.86, p < .001$. Follow up pairwise comparisons revealed that groups with communist/socialist goals with the highest mean rank for the active theme were significantly different to all other groups except those with Christian-based goals. Interestingly, groups with Christian-based goals exhibited the second highest mean rank on the active theme, although this mean rank was only significantly greater than that of groups/movements endorsing nationalist/separatist goals and nationalist separatist goals in combination with Islamist goals. Groups with nationalist/separatist goals in combination with Islamist goals had a mean rank on the active theme that was significantly lower than the groups that comprised the top four mean ranks: communist/socialist; Christian-based; nationalist/separatist in combination with communist/socialist, and; Islamist.

\(^{69}\) Note that non-specific revolutionary groups did not exhibit the ideological theme.
Finally, the Kruskal-Wallis test was not significant for the support theme, $\chi^2(6, N = 427) = 10.62, p = .101). This result indicates that the support theme scores did not vary significantly according to the goals endorsed by the groups included in this sample.

The group level trends in the thematic model according to the goals or aims endorsed by the extremist group are depicted in Figure 7.6 and Figure 7.7, where these figures delineate the trends according to commonality in group/movement goals. Thus, Figure 7.6 depicts the group/movement agendas that were more secular in nature (nationalist/separatist, communist/socialist, nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist, and non-specific revolutionary) and Figure 7.7 depicts those groups where there was an element of religion present in their agendas (Islamist, nationalist/separatist with Islamist, and Christian-based) respectively. These two figures represent one interesting interpretative comparison of female involvement.

Figure 7.6 depicts variation in the thematic model according to groups or movements that have a relatively secular agenda. The comparable patterns in female involvement in groups with a nationalist/separatist, communist/socialist, or nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist agenda across the caring, ideological, and support roles is clearly depicted – these theme scores did not differ significantly between these three groups. However, female involvement in the active role is different across these three secular groups. Women affiliated with groups with communist/socialist goals participated significantly more in the active role. Groups with nationalist/separatist goals or with nationalist/separatist goals combined with communist/socialist aims did not differ significantly in terms of female involvement in the active role. Non-specific revolutionary groups, despite being secular in nature, did not appear to exhibit a similar pattern to the other secular groups included in the study – indeed they featured significantly more female involvement in the caring role.

Figure 7.7 depicts trends in female involvement according to the three group agendas with a religious element. Islamist groups and
nationalist/separatist groups with an element of Islamism exhibit similar patterns in female involvement, although nationalist/separatist groups with an element of Islamism exhibit higher mean ranks on the ideological and active themes than groups that are solely based on Islamism. Indeed, nationalist/separatist groups with an element of Islamism incorporated into their agenda exhibit both the highest proportion of women in the ideological role and the lowest proportion of women in the active role across the entire sample. Groups with a Christian-based agenda exhibit a markedly different trend to the other two group types with a religious element to their ideology. Christian-based groups evidence a low proportion of women in the ideological role and a high proportion of women in the caring and active roles. In fact, Christian-based groups exhibit a pattern of female involvement that is more akin to communist/socialist groups (see Figure 7.6) than to other groups with a right-wing religious agenda.
Figure 7.6. Comparison of variation in the thematic model of roles according to groups or movements that endorse nationalist/separatist, communist/socialist, nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist, or non-specific revolutionary goals.

Figure 7.7. Comparison of variation in the thematic model of roles according to groups or movements that endorse Islamist, nationalist/separatist and Islamist, or Christian-based goals.
Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine population level variance in the thematic model of women’s roles in extremism developed in Study Two according to several important macro-level and meso-level variables. In this way, patterns in female involvement in conflict according to these macro-level and meso-level variables – seldom examined systematically, empirically, or comparatively in the scholarship – were able to be ascertained. The macro-level factors included in the study were wave of terrorism and world region whilst the meso-level variables were group/movement ideology, religious orientation, political orientation, and specific goals/aims. It should be noted that the results of this study are comparative across the values within the independent variables, rather than across the theme scores (e.g. the analysis compared world regions rather than theme scores within specific world regions). In general, the results indicated that the active and ideological role varied substantially according the macro-level and meso-level variables whilst the support and caring roles exhibited less variation across contexts. These macro-level and meso-level variables will be discussed individually below in relation to the research whilst the conclusion will focus on summarising trends according to the model as a whole.

Macro-level Factors: Wave of Terrorism and World Region

The results from the analysis indicated that the model of women’s roles in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict varied significantly according to both wave of terrorism and world region. First, with regards to wave of terrorism, the results indicated that women participated to a greater extent in the active role in wave three (1960s-1980s) and in the ideological and caring roles in wave four (1979-present). These results clarify the

70 This would be an interesting future analysis; however, at this stage it was of interest to take a broader comparative approach across the levels of analysis.
propositions of Rapoport (2004) – who suggested that women participated to a greater extent in wave three of terrorism – and other scholars in the area (e.g. Cunningham, 2003; Sjoberg, 2011; Zedalis, 2008) who suggested that women’s involvement is increasing in contemporary times and predict that it will continue to increase into the future. The findings from this study indicate that it is not necessarily a question of prevalence but of method of involvement. Women participated to a greater extent in combat and leadership positions in wave three, which meant that they were more visible; however, in wave four women participate to a greater extent in the more subversive or hidden caring and ideological roles. This trend means that women are not necessarily participating less, but in more hidden capacities consistent with the arguments put forth by scholars such as Cunningham (2003) and von Knop (2007, 2008). This also means that women’s involvement in present conflict is more difficult to research and establish, not least because the type of activities encompassed by the caring and ideological roles are not conventionally considered to constitute soldiering or even participation in the conflict (Bouta et al., 2005; MacKenzie, 2009).

Rapoport (2004) noted that the third wave encompassed the rise in the feminist movement and women’s increasing role in militant activities, although he did not necessarily posit a causal link between the phenomena. Other scholars have also linked women’s increasing involvement in militant and leadership activities to the feminist movement or to an increasing awareness of gender inequality or women’s issues (e.g. Galvin, 1983; Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Lobao, 1990; Mahan & Griset, 2008; Vetter & Perlstein, 1991). Undoubtedly the time period of the third wave encompassed the rise of the civil rights movement and rapid social change particularly relevant to women including divorce, abortion, education, and employment (Cunningham, 2003; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987, 2011). However, whether the prominence of women in the active role can be solely attributed to the feminist or civil rights movement is questionable. The third wave of terrorism stemmed from the general political and social milieu of the time – the growing awareness of the
oppression of civil rights, the perception of capitalism as an exploitative system, the anger felt towards the Vietnam War, the emergence of the alternative lifestyle and protest movements, and the burgeoning communist/socialist/New Left ideology that was particularly prominent among the youth. There was a general and rapid increase in activism in general, which may have contributed to the rise of militant groups dedicated to similar causes and agendas (della Porta, 2012; Eager, 2008). It seems likely, then, that the increase in female involvement in the active role during the third wave reflected the general increase in activism across many sections of society, perhaps in combination with the feminist movement. As pointed out and discussed in some detail in the literature review in Chapter Three, the link between feminism and militancy has been questioned in the scholarship, with some research finding, for example, that female extremists do not harbour feminist beliefs (Berko et al., 2010) and that where feminist ideals were present they were often the result of participation in extremism rather than a precursor to it (M. Alison, 2009). Significantly, the third wave era witnessed a rise in extremist communist/socialist movements and groups – and, as the results of this study demonstrated, women were found significantly more often in the active role in groups/movements that endorsed this ideology, irrespective of whether there was a feminist agenda present as well (indeed, as pointed out by Sjoberg, Cooke, and Reiter Neal (2011), very few extremist groups incorporate an explicit feminist agenda or commitment to women’s issues).

The results also indicated that women were found more often in the ideological and caring roles in the fourth wave of terrorism. The ideological role included suicide bombing; an activity that has received much attention in the scholarship. However, it also included activities such as propaganda production, recruitment, and indoctrination – consistent with research that has examined the comparatively more hidden aspects of women’s involvement in extremist, and particularly Islamist, movements (Cunningham, 2008; Parashar, 2011a, 2011b; Sutten, 2009; von Knop, 2007, 2008). The caring role was also prominent in the fourth wave and included sexual relationships and servitude –
another topic often researched, particularly in African conflicts – but also marriage for strategic or tactical purposes and aspects of camp maintenance and practical care. Notably, whilst the fourth wave of terrorism is dominated by Islamist ideology, there are other movements in existence in this present wave as well, including a variety of African revolutionary conflicts and White supremacy movements. The results of this study indicated that despite these groups or movements not endorsing an Islamist ideology, they still exhibited women in these hidden or subversive roles within the broader movement or related to the daily functioning of the extremist group (although note that Christian-based extremist groups featured a low level of women in the ideological role compared to other groups). This illustrates how a wave influences those movements that are not directly linked to the dominant ideology but are nonetheless involved within the wave.

The second macro-level variable examined in this study was world region, including Europe, Northern America, Latin America, Eastern Europe, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The results indicated that whilst there were similarities in the patterns of female involvement across world regions, there were also quite distinct variations in the thematic model. Africa – a region with a history of colonisation (Turshen, 1998), militarisation of society (Volman, 1998), and a low level of women’s social rights (Dalton & Asal, 2011) – exhibited significantly higher rates of the caring role compared to the other world regions, where this role encompassed sexual relationships, camp maintenance, nursing, and household-type chores. This finding is consistent with the literature that has noted the high frequency of forced sexual servitude in African women in political and revolutionary conflict (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2008; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Specht, 2006). However, women in Africa were also found fairly frequently in the active role (consistent with Dalton and Asal (2011)) and occasionally in the support role. This finding could provide an empirical evidential basis for the more effective inclusion of women in DDR programs in Africa based on the fact that they have participated in combat despite the scholarly and policy focus on abduction and sexual violence.
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Framework Development

(Mackenzie, 2009) and for their strategic and intelligence value (Anderlini & Conaway, 2007; Dharmapuri, 2011).

Despite having some similar historical experiences of colonisation and a generally low level of women’s social rights, South Asia and Africa shared only limited similarity with regards to trends in female involvement in conflict. Women in South Asia were found significantly more often in the support role compared to the other world regions, where this role included activities such as spying, intelligence gathering, couriering, smuggling, and deflecting suspicion during operations. This finding is consistent with the work of Parashar (2011a, 2011b) who found that women were crucial in conducting these types of support activities in this region. These results suggest that research on this region – which is typically focused on suicide bombing – should include an examination of how women participate in the support role in South Asian conflict. Women were also found fairly often in the ideological role; perhaps reflecting the frequency with which women in this region participate in suicide attacks (Bloom, 2011a; Stack-O’Connor, 2007). However, this finding may also reflect the involvement of women in other types of ideologically-based activities. Some research (e.g. M. Alison, 2009; Eager, 2008; Fair, 2004; Parashar, 2011a; Parashar, 2011b) has found that women in this region are vital to the commission of the ideological activities that sustain extremist movements and provide legitimacy for their existence. As noted by Cunningham (2003) women in this region are often portrayed as the core symbols of national identity. Finally, the reasonably high mean rank for the ideological role in this region could also reflect the infusion of some conflicts in this region with Islamist ideology (Parashar, 2011a).

Cunningham (2003) noted the variability, observationally, in female involvement in Northern America and the distinct strands of international and domestic terrorism. Domestic terrorism was in turn comprised of the three strands of right-wing/racist extremism, leftist extremism, and special interest extremism. She also noted the liberal social and political context of this region. The results indicated that Northern America featured the highest mean rank for
the active role, significantly higher than most other world regions. This is consistent with Dalton and Asal’s (2011) findings where a high level of economic development predicted the deployment of women in violent attacks. This finding also suggests that social and cultural context is an important consideration in female participation, as Northern America had several right-wing religious groups featuring women in the active role (in contrast to right-wing religious groups in other regions).

Cunningham (2003) noted some similarities, observationally, between Northern American and Europe, particularly with regards to the liberal social and cultural context and the variability of female involvement in terrorism. The results of this study indicate that women involved in European conflict exhibit some similarities in patterns of involvement to their Northern American counterparts particularly with regards to female involvement in the active role. Again, these results concur with those of Dalton and Asal (2011) where a high level of economic development was found to predict women’s involvement in violent operations. Further, both regions also experienced similar manifestations of terrorism and extremism as it evolved across both waves, for instance both regions experienced an outbreak of New Left extremism in the third wave in which women were highly visible in the active role, and both regions have similar experiences with regards to fourth wave terrorism, including high profile attacks, and a decrease in visible female involvement in extremism.

Women in Latin America also exhibited some similarities in pattern of involvement compared to women in European and Northern American conflicts – again, particularly with regards to the high frequency of the active role. Weinberg and Eubank (2010) found that Europe and Latin America were two of the three regional centres of third wave terrorism, which may have resulted in similarities in female involvement. Cunningham (2003) also noted the presence of a ‘youth bulge’ in Latin America – where younger people are more likely to be involved in militancy (LaFree & Ackerman, 2009) – and generalised poverty. Similarly, Mason (1992) examined the unique effect on poverty on women in Central America in terms of the increase in female-headed households and
subsequent female activism leading to militant involvement. Consistent with these studies, women in Latin America were involved most often in the active role, on par with Northern America and Europe. In contrast to both Europe and Northern America, however, women were often involved in the caring role (they had the highest frequency of women in the caring role after Africa but this was only significantly different to Europe. The finding may reflect the different cultural and social contexts between Northern America/Europe and Latin America. In contrast to the relatively liberal culture of Northern America and Europe, a patriarchal culture of ‘machismo’, where women are assigned a subservient role in looking after the home and family, still prevails in Latin America (Cunningham, 2003; Lobao, 1990; Reif, 1986). Thus, whilst women often participate in the active role in Latin American conflict – possibly due to limited social rights, poverty, and a prevalence of younger people – women may still be bound by traditional gender norms in a way that may not apply to Western countries.

The two world regions that exhibited the most similarity in terms of trends in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict were the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Women in both these regions were involved significantly more in the ideological role (and the least often in the active role). Cunningham (2003) noted the generalised poverty and ‘youth bulge’ again in relation to the Middle East, and the same observations could apply to Eastern Europe. Furthermore, both regions exhibit a fairly low level of women’s social rights (Dalton & Asal, 2011), which may be particularly important in influencing the prevalence of female suicide bombers in these two regions. The findings from this study also concur with the scholarship which argues that the involvement of women in conflict in these regions is influenced by Islamist ideology and its strict gender role demarcations (Cunningham, 2008; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007, 2008). Despite the presence of nationalist/separatist movements in these regions, it appears that women’s involvement is still dictated by the cultural and religious context of their countries (Cunningham, 2008). This finding confirms, however, that women do
participate in a range of activities apart from suicide bombing in these regions as the ideological role included a variety of activities, such as propaganda, recruitment, and political participation.

Thus, this macro-level analysis of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict clarifies and refines the primarily observational trends in the scholarship regarding wave of terrorism and world region. The results overall indicate that women’s involvement varies significantly – in terms of roles and specific activities performed within these roles – according to these two macro-level factors and illustrates the importance of comparative empirical research on female involvement. The results indicated that the active role is primarily associated with the third wave, Northern America, Europe, Latin America, and sometimes Africa. The ideological role is primarily associated with the fourth wave, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and sometimes South Asia. The caring role is primarily associated with the fourth wave, Africa, and sometimes Latin America. The support role is primarily associated with South Asia.

**Meso-level Factors: Ideology, Religious and Political orientation, and Specific Goals**

The results of the analysis indicated that, as expected, movements that were either left-wing or secular in nature exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the active theme compared to right-wing or religious movements. In contrast, right-wing and religious movements exhibited a significantly higher mean rank on the ideological theme. These results indicate, again, that it is not necessarily a question of prevalence but of nature of involvement (i.e. women participate in more prominent/visible positions in secular and left-wing movements in contrast to religious or right-wing movements where women participate in more covert ways). The findings are perhaps in contrast to Dalton and Asal’s (2011) study where it was found that ideology and religion did not predict when women would be deployed on violent operations – although the results of this third study are not causal or predictive.
Interestingly, women participated to equal extents in both the caring and support roles across left-wing, secular, right-wing, and religious movements, indicating that women are generally involved in these activities regardless of the ideological and religious orientation endorsed by their particular group/movement. The four primary roles of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict did not vary significantly according to political orientation of the movement (whether it was international or domestic in focus and operations). This finding indicates that, contrary to the proposition of Gonzalez-Perez (2006, 2008b), the political orientation of the group does not influence the way in which women are involved.

The final meso-level factor examined in this study was the specific goals or aims of the group or movement in question. The results indicated that there were fairly distinct patterns in female involvement according to this variable. The available scholarship in relation to women’s involvement in specific types of groups primarily focused on Christian-based movements (Blee, 1996, 2002, 2008), Islamism (Cook, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; Qazi, 2011; von Knop, 2007, 2008), and nationalist/separatist groups (M. Alison, 2009, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 1997, 1998). The results of this study indicated that women in Christian-based or racist movements were involved significantly more often in the active and caring roles. This finding clarifies the scholarship in the area which portrays women in these groups as primarily as subordinates of men and as participating primarily in support functions (Eager, 2008; Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). These results are consistent with Blee’s research, which has indicated that women’s involvement in the White supremacist movement is not clear-cut and has fluctuated over time (e.g. Blee, 2008). Blee (2008) proposed that women’s involvement in White supremacy was influenced by the movement’s definition of the enemy and type of violence employed. Whilst this study did not contain Blee’s level of specificity, the findings do indicate that women in these Christian-based movements have played an unusual breadth of roles compared to women involved in other right-wing movements (see also Cunningham, 2003). However, it should be noted that the Christian-
based extremist movements included in this study were not confined to the United States, as Blee’s research is. Perhaps surprisingly – particularly given the findings regarding other religiously-based groups – women affiliated with Christian-based groups/movements were not involved significantly more often in the ideological role.

Women in the Islamist movement – including Islamist movements with a nationalist/separatist agenda – were found significantly more often in the ideological role. This finding concurs with the research of von Knop (2007, 2008), Cook (2008), and Parashar (2011a, 2011b), which has highlighted the involvement of women in various Islamist-based movements in more covert and subversive ways. The results of this study in combination with this scholarship suggests that women participate in the Islamist movement in ideological activities primarily, rather than in prominent and high profile activities – with suicide bombing being an exception rather than a norm of participation for women in Islamism.

The findings regarding nationalist/separatist groups fail to elucidate the contradictions found in the literature with regards to female involvement. Some researchers have claimed that women are found in combat positions in these movements (M. Alison, 2009, 2011; Eager, 2008), particularly if they are liberatory or anti-state movements (M. Alison, 2009; Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Yuval-Davis (1997, 1998) argued that there is a range of activities that women perform in nationalist movements, including reproducing the nation’s children, supporting the involvement of others, and fighting – amongst other more symbolic roles. The findings from this study indicate that women affiliated with nationalist/separatist movements are involved least often in the active role, most often in the support role, and reasonably frequently in the caring and ideological role; however, not with a frequency that was significantly different to any other group. Thus, groups/movements with nationalist or separatist goals did not display exceptional patterns of female involvement (in terms of significant differences from other groups); however, groups that had
nationalist/separatist goals in combination with other aims did display some interesting patterns of female involvement.

Groups or movements that endorsed nationalist/separatist goals in combination with an Islamist ideology evidenced the lowest frequency of women in the active role and the highest frequency of women in the ideological role (as already noted). Thus it may be that these particular nationalist/separatist movements have taken on the strict gender norms found in the broader Islamist movement. In contrast, nationalist/socialist movements that also endorsed a communist or socialist ideology evidenced significantly more of the active theme than Islamist groups with nationalist/separatist goals. Given that women who were affiliated with solely communist/socialist movements exhibited the highest frequency of women in the active role (significantly higher than any other group), the results of this study may indicate that it is the communist/socialist element that is important in determining women’s active militant involvement in some contexts. This finding concurs with both observations regarding third wave terrorism (Becker, 1977; Eager, 2008; MacDonald, 1991; Russell & Miller, 1977) and the findings from this study regarding wave of terrorism. Elements of the communist/socialist ideology may be conducive to female involvement, for example the emphasis on protracted struggle involving mass mobilisation (Lobao, 1990) and the prominence of the civil rights movement and general activism during periods when the communist/socialist ideology was prevalent (Cunningham, 2003; Eager, 2008; Rapoport, 2004).

Thus, this meso-level analysis of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict illuminates and clarifies some of the trends identified in the scholarship; although greater specificity may be required in order to further understand and clarify women’s involvement according to these meso-level factors. This could include an analysis that focuses on within-group variation (e.g. statistically comparing the theme scores within the different levels of the case variables). This type of analysis would, in conjunction with the results from this study, provide greater clarity regarding
population trends. However, overall, the results indicate that women’s involvement varies significantly – in terms of roles and specific activities performed within these roles – according to the three meso-level factors of religious orientation, ideological basis, and group/movement agenda. The active role was primarily associated with secular left-wing groups with a racist or communist/socialist agenda. The ideological role was primarily associated with right-wing religious groups/movements focused on an Islamist agenda, including where this was fused with nationalist/separatist goals. The caring role was associated with racist movements and non-specific revolutionary groups. The support role did not vary significantly according to meso-level factors.

**Conclusion: Variation in Female Involvement Across Macro-level and Meso-level Contexts**

This study examined population macro-level and meso-level trends in women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. Variance in the four roles that comprised the thematic model developed in Study Two was statistically examined according to two macro-level factors (wave of terrorism and world region) and four meso-level group factors (group/movement ideology, religious orientation, political orientation, and goals/aims) that were identified in the scholarship as important considerations in female involvement. The results indicated that the four roles indicative of women’s involvement in extremist movements varied according to all of these factors, except for the political orientation of the group/movement. The results indicated that the active role was primarily associated with terrorism in the third wave, occurring in Northern America, Europe, and Latin America (occasionally in Africa), and where the women were affiliated with left-wing secular groups/movements that were focused on either racist or communist/socialist goals. The ideological role was associated with terrorism in the fourth wave, occurring in the Middle East and Eastern Europe (occasionally in South Asia), and where the women were affiliated with right-wing religious
groups/movements that were specifically focused on an Islamist agenda, including where this was fused with nationalist/separatist goals. The caring role was associated with fourth wave terrorism, occurring in Africa (occasionally in Latin America), and where the women were affiliated with racist movements and non-specific revolutionary groups. Finally, women in the support role were found significantly more often in South Asia. The active role and ideological role evidenced the most variability according to the macro-level and meso-level variables included in this study. In contrast, the caring role evidenced minimal variation and the support role the least variation – meaning that women were involved in these two roles largely regardless of context, whilst the active and ideological role varied significantly according to context.

The results of this study are important in terms of clarifying the factors that influence the roles that women have in an extremist movements. The findings also support the argument made throughout this thesis that women are involved in a variety of ways in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict – particularly apparent when method of involvement rather than prevalence is examined – and that their involvement is complex and multifaceted. This research has, thus far, established exactly how women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, how these activities are associated in terms of conceptual roles, and how these roles vary systematically according to several macro-level and meso-level factors.

Whilst this facilitates a theoretical understanding of women’s involvement, it is important to assess the utility of these findings (in terms of forming a theoretical framework) in studying and understanding female involvement in particular contexts. Furthermore, whilst female involvement cannot be reduced to micro-level influences – as demonstrated by the results of this study – the scholarship indicates that micro-level processes are still important elements of an individual’s decision to participate in extremism and in the type of activities performed once involved.
CHAPTER EIGHT

STUDY FOUR: APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK TO A SPECIFIC CONFLICT – THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Part Two of this thesis focused on quantitatively developing a theoretical and practical model of women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, based on the specific activities that women perform in this conflict. The thematic model of women’s roles consisted of the four conceptual roles of caring, ideological, active, and support; where each of these roles represented a specific constellation of activities. Variation in this model according to wave of terrorism, world region, and group or movement ideological basis, religious orientation, political orientation, and specific agenda or goals was statistically examined; resulting in a series of empirically and quantitatively based population trends in female involvement regionally, historically, and organisationally. However, the utility of the model in examining female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict is yet to be tested. Furthermore, whilst the previous study established distinct patterns in female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict according to important macro-level and meso-level factors, the influence of micro-level factors on female involvement has yet to be examined in this thesis (i.e. the final part of research question three).

As reiterated throughout this thesis, the tendency of much research to generalise from specific instances of female involvement to the normative population of female extremists has resulted in women’s participation being reduced, on the whole, to a series of gender-specific micro-level factors (O’Rourke, 2009; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). Whilst macro-level and meso-level factors are more reliably elicited from secondary sources, micro-level factors
are individual-specific, harder to ascertain reliably from secondary sources, and manifest differently in across contexts (Qazi, 2011; Viterna, 2006). This research has already established that the way in which women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict varies significantly according to several macro-level and meso-level factors seldom considered in scholarship in the area; however, micro-level factors should ideally be examined within specific contexts and through the collection of primary data.

This fourth study was designed to take the form of an empirical case study of a particular conflict; the Troubles in Northern Ireland, running from the late 1960s to 1998. The purpose of this study was two-fold: first, to test the framework developed in Part Two (the thematic model of women’s roles and the trends in female involvement) in the context of a specific conflict, and; second, to test the utility of the framework in elucidating the micro-level factors important to women’s involvement in this particular context. Thus, the case study was designed to consist of two phases. The first phase aimed to examine female involvement in the Troubles at both the macro-level and meso-level, utilising secondary and archival primary sources, in light of the findings reported in Part Two of this thesis. The second phase of the study applied the model of women’s roles developed in Study Two to primary data as a framework for exploring the micro-level factors important to women’s involvement in the Troubles. Each phase is reported separately below, including discussion of specific methods employed. The chapter will conclude with an

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71 It is accepted that the term ‘the Troubles’ as used in relation to the conflict that forms the focus of this study is somewhat informal and could be viewed as minimising language. It is used intentionally throughout this thesis for several reasons. First, this is the terminology employed by the people who experienced and were involved in the conflict itself, for example throughout many of the interviews conducted as part of this study, participants utilised the term ‘the Troubles’ to describe the conflict and the term is regularly employed in archival and contemporary material produced by all parties involved in the conflict. Thus, usage of the term in this thesis replicates the descriptions employed by the participants in this study and the material utilised. Second, the conflict in Northern Ireland has been on-going for several hundred years and continues in sparodic forms today. The term ‘the Troubles’ is commonly accepted as identifying the period under study in this chapter, namely the specific period of conflict occurring from the 1960s to the late 1990s.
overall discussion incorporating the findings from both phases of the case study.

**Rationale for the Troubles as a Case Study**

The conflict known as ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland was selected as the focus of this case study for several theoretical, methodological and practical reasons. With regards to the theoretical rationale, the Troubles was a conflict that began in the 1960s and continued for three decades; thus, it existed across both wave three and wave four of terrorism (which are the focus of this thesis). Situated in Europe, the republican movement – the non-state movement that is the sole focus of this study – was a secular left-wing movement with a nationalist/separatist agenda. These factors were the most prevalent among the cases in the sample utilised in Part Two of this thesis (see Chapter Five, Study One). Northern Ireland contributed the greatest number of cases (52; 10.8%) to the sample. Methodologically, then, the selection of the Troubles as the focus of this case study facilitated an examination of patterns in female involvement according to the most prominent macro-level and meso-level variables represented in Part Two of this thesis. Practically, Northern Ireland was a safe country to travel to, where English was spoken, and where people were available and willing to talk about the conflict. The interest in the Troubles has also generated a large specialised body of work – including a scholarship focused on female involvement – and a significant collection of archival material.

As the focus of this thesis was on female involvement in non-state extremist movements employing or sanctioning violence in defiance of the state, the focus of this case study is solely on women involved in the republican movement in Northern Ireland, where this movement desired secession from the United Kingdom and unification with the Republic of Ireland.

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72 The data for both phases of this case study were collected during a fieldtrip to Northern Ireland.
However, it is not limited to women involved in the IRA/PIRA (the primary republican paramilitary organisation) but to the broader republican movement so as to encompass the full spectrum of involvement established in Part Two of this thesis. The intent of this case study is not to give an exhaustive account of the Troubles – this would be too ambitious for this study – but rather to: first, explore through the case study the particular manifestation and influence of the macro-level and meso-level variables demonstrated to affect variation in women’s involvement at the population level in Part Two of this thesis, and; second, to elucidate the micro-level factors specific to the conflict that affected women’s involvement. Thus, this case study, in order to test the framework developed in Part Two, is focused on a specific set of variables, how these may interact in a specific conflict context and, overall, influence the involvement of women.

**Phase One: Macro-level and Meso-level Factors in Women’s Involvement in the Troubles**

The Troubles was an ethno-separatist conflict igniting in the late 1960s and generally considered to have ended in 1998 with the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, although episodes of both generalised and targeted violence have continued into the present day. Irish nationalism has a long history dating back to British colonisation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Cannavan, 1999; Ruane & Todd, 1996). Women’s historical involvement in the Irish nationalist movement and the various uprisings it has produced has been notable, although often not recognised in contemporary accounts (Cannavan, 1999, 2004; M. Ward, 1983). In relation to the Troubles, the primary issues of dispute were the constitutional status of Northern Ireland73 and the relationship

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73 Northern Ireland was originally formed in 1921 with signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which brought an end to the Irish War of Independence. This treaty partitioned the island of Ireland into the Irish Free State (later the Republic of Ireland) and Northern Ireland, a state with its own parliament and devolved government under the control of the United Kingdom.
between the two primary constituents of the Northern Ireland community; unionists/loyalists who generally identify as Protestant and want to remain as part of the United Kingdom and nationalists/republicans who generally identify as Catholic and want to secede from the United Kingdom and unify with the Republic of Ireland.\textsuperscript{74} To reiterate, the aim of this first phase of the case study was to examine how the macro-level and meso-level factors examined at the population-level manifested in the reality of a conflict situation in terms of different methods of female involvement (as indicated by the model of women’s roles). The specific methods utilised to achieve this will be outlined below, followed by the findings in the form of a qualitative analytical narrative of the Troubles and women’s involvement in this conflict.

\textbf{Method}

The model of women’s roles developed in Study Two and the contextual factors found to be significant in Study Three formed the analytical and interpretative framework. Figure 8.1 illustrates the trends in women’s involvement that would be predicted based on Part Two of this thesis. Overall, they are remarkably similar across all aspects of the variables relevant to the Troubles. The fact that the Troubles occurred in Europe and the republican movement and the PIRA were generally secular and left-wing in nature indicates that women should be particularly prominent in the active role and less prominent in the ideological role. They should also be fairly prominent in the support and caring roles. However, note that the previous study did not

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{74} The primary republican paramilitary organisation involved in the Troubles was the Provisional Irish Republican Army, known variously as the PIRA, IRA, and/or the ‘Provos’, although the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) was also a significant republican paramilitary group for a period of time. The dominant loyalist paramilitary groups involved in the conflict were the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). These organisations stemmed from and were supported by broader movements within their respective communities, although this case study only focused on the republican/nationalist movement. Two state security forces were also involved in the conflict – the British army and the police service of Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).}
statistically examine differences in the model within variables (i.e. it did not indicate whether women were involved significantly more often in the active role compared to other roles within, for instance, Europe). Thus, in terms of prevalence, these trends are descriptive; however, the trends in Figure 8.1 do provide a framework for examining types of female involvement and an indication of how several factors may influence variation in involvement. The exception to the general trend of female involvement is with regards to the specific agenda of the group, which – being nationalist/separatist – suggests that women should be found less frequently in the active role. Furthermore, as indicated by the dotted line in Figure 8.1, female involvement at the population level changed significantly from wave three to wave four. Hence, this case study will explore qualitatively how these particular temporal/historical, regional, and organisational/movement trends – as guided by the framework – manifested in the reality of the Troubles.

*Figure 8.1. Proposed macro-level and meso-level trends in female involvement in the Troubles, based on findings from Part Two of this thesis.*
Data Sources and Analysis

The data for the first phase of the case study came from both secondary and archival primary sources. Primarily archival sources and accounts contemporary to the conflict period were utilised for this analysis, supplemented by scholarly secondary accounts produced subsequent to the conflict. The majority of these sources were collected from the Linen Hall Library Political Collection. This collection began in 1969 and has amassed over a quarter of a million items related to all aspects of the Troubles, with many of the items only available through the onsite collection. The types of material available include books, pamphlets, manifestos, photographs, periodicals, press cuttings, and journals. In addition, other sources were accessed through the library at Queens University Belfast, or purchased through a republican bookshop in Belfast. These included accounts of the conflict produced during the Troubles (e.g. various ethnographic studies or collections, accounts of personal experiences in the Troubles), memoirs/autobiographies, and scholarly historical accounts utilising primary source data. The material included in the analysis was accessed subsequent to the data collection undertaken for Part Two of this thesis (as much of it was only available in Belfast) and is, thus, new and unique data collected for the purposes of testing the framework.

The relevant criticisms of secondary data as they relate to the study of women in conflict have been consistently noted throughout this thesis. These criticisms include, predominantly, the gendered explanations present for women’s involvement and the focus on women in highly visible militant positions at the expense of the range of activities that women actually engage in whilst involved in conflict. These criticisms also apply to some extent to the data utilised in this phase of the case study. Additionally, the archival data utilised is subject to bias as much of it was produced with a certain audience in mind and for a particular purpose, usually to propagate a point of view (see

75 See: https://www.linenhall.com/pages/ni-political-collection
Silke, 2001). These issues were addressed to some extent by the collection of a large amount of data as a means to cross-reference and validate. In this phase of the case study, the macro-level and meso-level factors that are more objectively and reliably ascertained from secondary data were the focus. However, the limitations of utilising secondary data to examine the more hidden aspects of female involvement (i.e. in the caring and support roles) were underscored. This aspect was partially addressed through the collection of primary data related to different types of female involvement in phase two of the case study. Unfortunately, however, it remained difficult to assess women’s involvement in these more covert activities, particularly in caring-based activities, throughout this case study. This highlights the need for more primary research specifically focused on these more hidden and subversive activities.

The model of female involvement and relevant contextual factors developed in Part Two of the thesis were utilised as the analytical framework. All secondary and archival sources were collected and read individually and a chronological narrative of the Troubles constructed. This narrative was stratified according to the macro-level and meso-level contextual factors identified in Study Three and in reference to the literature in Chapter Three. Thus, in terms of the macro-level, the chronological development of the Troubles was examined with reference to the socio-political and conflict milieu relevant to each of the waves of terrorism as well as the regional social and cultural context. In terms of the meso-level, key movement/organisational, government, and state security events as well as the nature of the republican movement and the PIRA were analysed. Women’s involvement – as garnered through the collected sources and conceptualised according to the model of roles – was analysed according to this narrative containing key macro-level and meso-level developments and characteristics. As such, women’s context-specific involvement was examined according to those factors quantitatively demonstrated to influence female involvement at the population level. Context-specific factors were also elucidated in this systematic approach.
Phase One Results

The results for phase one of the case study are organised according to, first, the macro-level factors (waves of terrorism and European context) and, second, the meso-level factors (strategic and tactical developments and characteristics of the republican movement and Provisional IRA). The narrative, whilst analytical, is also broadly chronological with links between the macro-level and meso-level made where relevant.

Macro-level Factors: Waves of Terrorism and the European Context

The 1960s in Northern Ireland (as in other parts of Europe and the Western world) saw the rise of the civil rights movement. This movement combined with significant events of the era (e.g. the Vietnam War) triggered the third wave of terrorism globally (Rapoport, 2002, 2004). In most instances the civil rights movement took the form of civil resistance; however, in some situations it was accompanied by civil unrest and armed rebellion. Weinberg and Eubank (2010) found that Western Europe was one of three regional centres of third wave terrorism. This global context combined with the history of colonialism and rebellion in the island of Ireland triggered the violence that accompanied the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. Other countries in Western Europe were also affected by violence sparked by the civil rights movement, most notably West Germany and Italy (Becker, 1977; de Cataldo Neuburger & Valentini, 1996; Eager, 2008). Within Northern Ireland the civil rights movement did not begin as an anti-state nationalist movement, although it protested the discriminatory policies and legislation that primarily disadvantaged the Catholic nationalist community. As demonstrated in Figure 8.2, the key demands of the Northern Irish civil rights movement were related to equality regarding employment, politics, and the legal and justice system.
The civil rights movement in Northern Ireland called for:

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<td><strong>1)</strong> An end to job discrimination.</td>
<td>Unemployment was disproportionately high in the nationalist community and Catholics were less likely to be given particular jobs (White, 1993).</td>
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<td><strong>2)</strong> Public housing to be allocated based on need rather than religion or political beliefs.</td>
<td>Unionist-controlled local councils allocated housing to Protestants or unionists ahead of Catholics or nationalists (Aretxaga, 1997; Keenan-Thomson, 2010; White, 1993).</td>
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<td><strong>3)</strong> 'One man, one vote'.</td>
<td>In Northern Ireland only householders, the majority of whom were Protestant, could vote in local elections in contrast to the rest of the United Kingdom where all adults could vote (McAuley, 1989; White, 1993).</td>
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<td><strong>4)</strong> An end to gerrymandering of electoral boundaries.</td>
<td>Nationalists had less voting power than unionists even where they formed a majority (Aretxaga, 1997; White, 1993).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5)</strong> A reform of the police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).</td>
<td>The RUC was comprised almost wholly of Protestants and was accused of sectarianism and brutality (McAuley, 1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6)</strong> A repeal of the Special Powers Act.</td>
<td>More formally the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland). This Act had been introduced in 1922 during the Irish Civil War, was utilised almost exclusively against Catholics/nationalists. It allowed the RUC to search without a warrant, arrest and imprison people without charge or trial, and ban any assemblies, parades, or publications (Aretxaga, 1997; Keenan-Thomson, 2010).</td>
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*Figure 8.2. The key demands of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.*
By the latter half of the 1960s, the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland was gaining momentum. In early 1968, the civil rights movement was invigorated by the forcible removals of Catholic protestors who were squatting in council housing in protest of discriminatory housing allocation (Keenan-Thomson, 2010). Throughout 1968, various marches for civil rights were held, and many were met with both loyalist and RUC violence (McAuley, 1988). The beginning of the civil rights movement had coincided with the emergence of a renewed loyalist commitment to resisting Irish nationalism amid perceptions that republicanism, and particularly the IRA, was on the verge of revival. Indeed, it is likely that the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland—with its very public approach to activism and focus on alleviating discrimination against the Catholic and nationalist community—instigated many of these loyalist fears; in line with the notion of violent backlashes against dominant ideologies of the era or wave (Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). In fact, the IRA was not on the verge of revival and support within the nationalist Catholic community for republican campaigns of violence was low (Eager, 2008; English, 2003). Despite this, several loyalist paramilitaries were formed in the mid to late 1960s, including the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) in Belfast. The UVF issued a statement declaring war against the IRA, vowing to execute IRA members and anyone assisting them. UVF members were involved in several murders of Catholic civilians and shortly thereafter, the Northern Irish government made the UVF an illegal organisation, although it would continue to play a large part in the violence of the Troubles.

In 1968, after a particularly brutal attack on civil rights marchers by both loyalists and the RUC, the People’s Democracy—a civil rights group—formed in Belfast. The following year the People’s Democracy organised a four-day civil rights march from Belfast to Derry. The march was repeatedly harassed and attacked by loyalists, with marchers claiming that the RUC did nothing to help them and at times even assisted the loyalist attackers (Devlin, 1969). The following months saw further clashes between civil rights marchers and the RUC and loyalists. In response, nationalists held protests at RUC
bases around Northern Ireland with some of these, in turn, leading to violent clashes and attacks. In Belfast, loyalists responded by invading nationalist districts and burning houses and businesses (McAuley, 1988). Gun battles ensued between nationalists and the RUC and loyalists. Significantly, the IRA was not directly involved in this violence initially; indeed, the lack of protection offered by the IRA to the nationalist communities under attack led to the derisive nationalist colloquialism ‘I Ran Away’ (Sanders & Wood, 2012) although some have argued that this is not an entirely accurate representation (Hanley, 2009). British troops were finally deployed in Derry and Belfast in late 1969, which brought the riots to an end. However, by then eight people were dead (Brady et al., 2011; Sutton, 2002) and more than 750 injured (Coogan, 2002). More than 400 homes and businesses had been destroyed; over 80 percent of these Catholic-owned (Coogan, 2002). Approximately 1500 Catholic families and 300 Protestant families had fled or been forced out of their homes (Coogan, 2002; White, 1993) – although this number has been said to be as many as 3500 Catholic families (Brady et al., 2011).

The manifestation of the third wave global civil rights movement and New Left ethos in the context of Northern Ireland was important for several reasons. It reignited the non-state republican movement and the paramilitary IRA – and public support for both. Whilst in other European countries, such as West Germany or Italy, the extremist New left groups that emerged from the civil rights movement were new organisations, the IRA and the republican movement, had been in existence in various formations throughout the history of Ireland. However, support for republicanism and the IRA had been on the wane since the partitioning of Ireland in 1921 and particularly since the decline of the second wave of terrorism in the 1950s (Eager, 2008; English, 2003). The third wave civil rights movement in Northern Ireland sensitised people to discrimination and injustice and the violent loyalist and state backlash revitalised the republican movement and, in particular, the IRA. Whilst the beginning of the 1960s witnessed the rise of a largely peaceful civil rights movement, the deterioration into violence in the late 1960s marked a return to
traditional republicanism as the means to achieve change in Northern Ireland (Keenan-Thomson, 2010). After the rise and then split in the IRA in 1969, as a consequence of differences of opinion regarding the means to achieve secession from the United Kingdom, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) emerged as the militant leaders of the renewed republican movement (Bowyer Bell, 1994; English, 2003).

The context of the third wave in Northern Ireland (including the civil rights movement and the violent backlash) was also critical in the increasingly active involvement of women in republicanism, as would be expected based on the findings from Part Two of this thesis. The civil rights movement and New Left ethos combined with experiences of community resistance politicised and radicalised many women (Aretxaga, 1997). Women had a strong presence in the civil rights movement from its inception and particularly in working class areas that bore the brunt of the discriminatory policies that were the focus of the civil rights movement (Clarke, 2010; Keenan-Thomson, 2010). In fact, Keenan-Thomson (2010) argued that women were largely responsible for instigating the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland through a public housing campaign that opened the way for a broader critique of systematic government discrimination against the Catholic/nationalist community. Women became increasingly involved in community protests after the civil rights protests of the 1960s (M. Alison, 2009). Furthermore, the 1969 violence impacted heavily on families and communities, not least through forced displacement (Fairweather et al., 1984; Hackett, 2004), which effectively created nationalist ghettos within both Belfast and Derry (Hackett, 2004). Hackett (2004) argued that a significant role of women in the conflict was that of maintaining a social and community structure, particularly as the conflict

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76 The IRA splintered into two factions in 1969: the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA. The Provisional IRA waged the armed struggle of the Troubles and came to be known as the IRA proper as the conflict progressed whilst the Official IRA become increasingly dedicated to nonviolent forms of resistance – this is covered in more detail in the following section that outlines meso-level factors relevant to the case study.
progressed. The nature of the conflict itself meant that violence frequently intruded into private life and into the home – the traditional domains of women, especially women from traditional Catholic families (Aretxaga, 1997). This breached the public/private divide and facilitated the politicisation of women and their entry into public, and political, life (Kaufman & Williams, 2007). Significant numbers of women were also drawn into the militant Provisional republican movement through the civil rights movement and in the aftermath of the 1969 violence through community assistance work in relief committees (Clarke, 2010). Thus, women’s involvement in republicanism took place within the global and regional socio-political context of the third wave of terrorism. Female involvement in the republican movement continued to increase – particularly in active and grassroots ideological/political activities – as violence in Northern Ireland increased throughout the 1970s.

Three events were significant in the early years of the Troubles both in terms of cementing the communal violence into a more sustained and organised conflict and in the increasing involvement of women. In 1970 British troops imposed a curfew on the nationalist Lower Falls area of Belfast, known as the Falls Road Curfew. Up to 3000 women marched to break the curfew, holding placards and singing in protest against the British Army, and delivering food and essentials in prams to the women of the Falls Road (Aretxaga, 1997; Brady et al., 2011). There are reports of these women smuggling weapons away from the Falls Road in prams after delivering the supplies, ensuring that very few weapons were actually confiscated (Plunkett, 1991; Sanders & Wood, 2012). After the Falls Road Curfew, the British Army, initially welcomed by many Irish nationalists as peacekeepers, quickly became regarded as forces of occupation and legitimate targets for violence (Aretxaga, 1997; McAuley, 1988). In 1971 internment without trial was introduced and utilised almost exclusively on the nationalist population. Many women, often for the first time in their lives, became involved in republicanism as men were interned indefinitely, hiding or on the run (McAuliffe & Hale, 2010). Women were also interned – approximately 230 were imprisoned at the height of internment – indicating
their increasingly militant involvement in the republican movement (Brady et al., 2011). Finally, in 1972, the fatal shootings of 14 unarmed nationalist civil rights demonstrators by the British Army – known as Bloody Sunday – caused mass outrage in the nationalist community and ended any remaining hope that their political objectives could be achieved through civil action and constitutional change. Nationalist confidence in the Northern Irish government plummeted, support for armed conflict increased, and male and female recruitment to the IRA surged (Eager, 2008; Plunkett, 1991).

The British government began to see the Northern Ireland administration as incapable of containing the worsening conflict and in 1972 established direct rule from London by suspending the unionist-controlled parliament at Stormont in Belfast. Although initially intended as a short-term solution until self-government could be restored on a basis acceptable to both unionists and nationalists, political deadlock between the major political parties was to characterise the next three decades and ensured that direct rule from London remained. Successive British governments failed to achieve political settlement in Northern Ireland and, in light of this failure, the British government decided to enact a policy of, first, criminalisation (1976-1981) and, subsequently, normalisation (1980s-2000) (Corcoran, 2004). This policy included the removal of special category status for paramilitary prisoners. From 1972, individuals believed to belong to a paramilitary organisation were tried in juryless Diplock courts, ostensibly to avoid intimidation of jurors but in reality meant a reduced chance of a fair trial (Brady et al., 2011). If convicted and sentenced to a

77 The criminalisation policy removed special category status (see below) that had been instated in 1972, representing an administrative and policy approach where paramilitary prisoners were viewed, not as political prisoners of war, but as ‘terrorists’ who had committed a criminal offence and, thus, were compelled to serve their sentences under the ordinary criminal regime (Corcoran, 2004). Subsequent to the hunger strikes in 1981 (discussed to a greater extent in the next section), the government attempted to implement a normative disciplinary regime intended to allow the prison system to move on from these protests (Corcoran, 2004).

78 Special Category Status meant that prisoners convicted of politically motivated offences were able to wear their own clothes, freely associate with one another, and have extra recreation, education, food parcels, visits, and letters (Brady et al., 2011).
term of imprisonment, paramilitary prisoners were treated as ordinary criminals rather than as political prisoners. Republicans already imprisoned initiated the blanket and no-wash/dirty protests that would culminate in the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981 (see the next section on meso-level factors). The onset of these protests signalled the transition of the conflict focus from 'the streets' to the prisons (although violence continued outside of the prisons), coinciding with the transition from wave three to wave four of terrorism. This transition from wave three to wave four of terrorism influenced women's involvement quite significantly, although it will be discussed in greater detail in the meso-level section it manifested in changes at the organisational and movement level.

Overall, during the 1960s and 1970s a large number of women experienced some form of political activism and/or radicalisation due to the prevailing ethos of the third wave, including the civil rights movement and its localised impact on Northern Ireland. However, this activism/radicalisation manifested initially as participation in the ideological role. This included participation in a range of activities from, initially, private actions such as withholding rent in the spirit of civil disobedience and squatting to protest discriminatory housing allocation, to subsequent public actions such as attending and organising protests and establishing committees and campaigns (Keenan-Thomson, 2010; Mac Crossan, 2010). Clarke (2010) argued that the nature of women’s activism at this stage was of political propaganda work that succeeded in sustaining the PIRA's campaign in these early years; claiming “women’s voices carried more weight in the moral arbitration of PIRA violence” (p. 45). Similarly, after internment was introduced, women were crucial in fundraising to support prisoner’s families and ensuring regular family visits and proper legal support (Clarke, 2010). Later on, Relatives Action Committees composed primarily of women would rally around prisoners and their families affected by the criminalisation policy and the consequent prison protests (Clarke, 2010). In this sense, women’s involvement, particularly in these early years of the conflict, appears to be important in the context of the broader civil rights movement and the revival of the republican movement. Their
continued involvement in ideologically-based activities ensured that the PIRA’s authority in nationalist areas was supreme (Clarke, 2010). Thus, perhaps in contrast to the findings from Part Two, women’s participation in the ideological role was substantial throughout the Troubles – indicating the importance of examining how population level trends in female involvement manifest in different conflict contexts.

Women were also heavily involved in the support role throughout the Troubles, as expected based on Part Two findings. Women who were visiting the prisons regularly often smuggled contraband and communiqués to and from prisons as they were generally less thoroughly searched (Clarke, 2010; Fairweather et al., 1984; Hackett, 2004). In fact, Hackett (2004) reported that a group of women were officially engaged and coordinated by the Sinn Féin Prisoner of War Department to carry and deliver communications between prisoners and the outside leadership. Aretxaga (1997) claimed that “communication between the prisoners and the outside IRA leadership relied heavily on women relatives” (p. 112). Similarly, the involvement of women in the Falls Road Curfew outlined above indicates how an overtly ideologically-based activity such as protesting and demonstrating solidarity with a community may be simultaneously utilised for support purposes, such as smuggling guns and contraband away from a location to prevent discovery (Plunkett, 1991). Women were often the smugglers and couriers of guns and ammunition (Aretxaga, 1997; MacDonald, 1991). Corcoran (2004) found that 80 percent of women imprisoned in the 1970s were convicted of aiding and abetting terrorism, fine defaulting in connection with rent and rate strikes (prevalent in the civil rights movement in protest of housing allocation), and public order offences. Groups of nationalist women known as ‘hen patrols’ were infamous for banging bin lids and blowing whistles to both warn people of security patrols and demonstrate community solidarity (Clarke, 2010; Mac Crossan, 2010; McAuley, 1988). Many nationalist women left buckets of vinegar and napkins on their doorstep for rioters to use against the effects of tear gas, left their doors open in order to provide escape routes for those fleeing
arrest and provided their homes as safe houses – places to hide weapons and construct explosives (Mac Crossan, 2010). There were also incidents of women tarring and feathering other women for acts deemed to contravene the republican cause and of attacking peace rallies (Clarke, 2010). Furthermore, Cumann na mBan,79 a women’s organisation dedicated to providing practical support to the PIRA, also experienced a revitalisation during the third wave and remained active throughout this period – discussed to a greater extent in the following section. Thus, it can be seen that, in support of the findings from Part Two, women’s involvement in the support role in the Troubles was quite prominent in wave three and continued into wave four.80

Ultimately, the events in the Islamic world in 1979, as outlined in Chapter Three, signalled the end of the third wave of terrorism and the beginning of the fourth wave. Whilst the ethno-nationalist conflict continued in Northern Ireland, it was not immune to the effects of the fourth wave or to the impact of a long-running conflict. War weariness was evident on both sides of the community by the end of the 1970s; one manifestation of which was the Peace People.81 Particularly within the nationalist community the lack of progress and the end of internment meant that people were losing both

79 Cumann na mBan (Irishwomen’s Council) was formed in 1914. Its aims were: advancing the cause of Irish liberty; organising women; assisting and arming Irish men, and; engaging in fundraising to support the aforementioned goals (Eager, 2008; M. Ward, 1983). Cumann na mBan was a hard-line republican organisation: “Cumann na mBan is an independent body of Irish women, pledged to work for the establishment of an Irish republic, by organising and training the women of Ireland to take their places by the side of those who are working and fighting for Ireland” (cited in Talbot, 2004, p.134).

80 Women’s involvement in the active role was also prominent in wave three, as expected based on the findings from Part Two. This will be discussed to a greater extent in the following section on meso-level factors.

81 Peace People, originally the Women’s Peace Movement, was an organisation founded by two women, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, after a particularly horrific incidence of violence resulted in the death of three young children from the same family and the subsequent suicide of their mother. Peace People began demonstrating in 1976 and won the Nobel Peace Prize the same year. The movement rapidly lost momentum, however, amidst criticisms of the women’s decision to keep the Nobel Prize money and accusations of lenience with regards unionist violence directed towards Catholics and/or nationalists (Fitzsimons, n.d.).
interest and the will to continue with the armed struggle (Aretxaga, 1997). More broadly, the world lost interest in the New Left ethos propagated in the third wave and became focused instead on developments in the Middle East and on the beginnings of religious terrorism. Although the conflict in Northern Ireland was not representative of the typical New Left group (as in other parts of Europe and the United States) it was revitalised by the rise in New Left ideology and it was not immune to the effects of its demise.

Thus, by the end of the third wave, the conflict in Northern Ireland was in danger of turning into a long-running stalemate. This change in the global and local socio-political context resulted in a shift in strategy by the republican movement to a greater emphasis on political participation and a focus on the prisons and rights of republican prisoners as the British government attempted to enact their policies of criminalisation and normalisation. Interestingly, the shift in focus to the prisons in the early 1980s was driven on a significant scale by the female relatives of imprisoned republicans who mobilised the people in support of republican prisoners and succeeded in once again revitalising the republican movement (McCrory, Autumn, 1994).

In 1980 you had another rebellion, like another wave of revolution, as in 1971...But it took four years to mobilise all the people, and during all those years there were mainly women in local action committees who did all the work (Aretxaga, 1997, p. 107).

The transition from wave three to wave four also resulted in significant changes at the meso-level that was to have a significant impact on the involvement of women.
Meso-level Factors: Strategic and Tactical Developments and Characteristics of the Republican Movement and the Provisional IRA

When the IRA remained largely unresponsive to the eruption of communal violence in the late 1960s, it came to be perceived by many nationalists as outdated and ineffectual. In late 1969, in response to this situation, and disagreement over the policies of the IRA (including the issue of parliamentary abstentionism), the IRA split into two factions; the Provisionals and the Officials (Bowyer Bell, 1994; English, 2003). Both factions endorsed a united Ireland and Catholic equality; however, the Official IRA was committed to traditional Marxist thought and fostering working-class unity across both the Protestant and Catholic communities (Eager, 2008). The Officials, although participating in some armed action became increasingly committed to non-violent civil agitation to achieve a united Ireland and, in 1972, they declared a ceasefire that remained permanently in place. Eventually they evolved into the Workers Party, rejecting violence completely.82

In contrast, the Provisionals were committed to defending the Catholic community through retaliatory violence and to waging an armed struggle against British rule in Northern Ireland. They elected a Provisional Executive and an Army Council of seven (Bowyer Bell, 1997) and utilised the rhetoric of anti-imperialism to frame their cause (Eager, 2008). The PIRA politics were, quite simply; defence, defiance, retaliation, and anti-imperialism (English, 2003). After the Provisional Army Council sanctioned attacks on the British Army, the PIRA took centre stage as the primary republican militant group and became the ‘IRA’ of the 1970s onward (M. Alison, 2009; Eager, 2008). Thus, the Provisionals had a nationalist/separatist agenda, desiring secession from the

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82 In 1974, there was a split within the Official IRA between those who were committed to non-violence and those who believed in the armed struggle. Thus, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) was formed and began their militant campaign from 1974. The PIRA continued to drive and instigate the vast majority of anti-state violence; however, the INLA committed significant acts of violence and participated in several important events of the Troubles, such as the Hunger Strikes (M. Alison, 2009). The INLA, however, never attracted large numbers of women to their ranks. Talbot (2004) attributed this to the INLA’s reputation for criminality and extreme brutality.
United Kingdom and unification with the Republic of Ireland. They eschewed Marxist or socialist ideology, but maintained a left-wing non-state nationalist ideology. Whilst the Provisionals were a secular group in terms of their agenda and ideology, English (2003) noted the inherent paradox between their publicly-declared agenda and the conservative nature of Catholic ideology. The conservative nature of Catholicism dictated to a certain extent the officially sanctioned activities for women (Gillespie, Autumn, 1994). Many women joined the Official IRA where they were incorporated into battalion ranks and given equal opportunities and training as combatants (prior to their ceasefire in 1972) (Talbot, 2004) – as would be expected given the finding of greater female involvement in the active role in groups/movements with a communist/socialist agenda in Part Two of this thesis.

The Provisional IRA, however, maintained Cumann na mBan (the female-only auxiliary organisation) as a separate organisation but allowed women to be seconded into their ranks; these seconded women were militantly active but did not have full status as members of the IRA (M. Ward, 1983). Perhaps in keeping with the nationalist/separatist agenda of the PIRA as well as the roots of the IRA in the Catholic community, Cumann na mBan – particularly in this early stage – acted as “a feeder for the IRA, first-level indoctrination units, and for some, especially in the Republic, simply a scouting opportunity” (Bowyer Bell, 1994, p.163). As discussed in the previous section regarding macro-level factors, in this early period of the Troubles women were seldom engaged directly as combatants in the armed campaign (Talbot, 2004). However, they demonstrated their support in other ways, such as warning of approaching Army patrols, hiding weapons in their homes, and secreting/transporting bomb materials and weapons (Clarke, 2010; Mac Crossan, 2010) – activities typical of the support role. Women also played a significant part in Provisional Sinn Féin and it has been said that women formed the backbone of this

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83 Sinn Féin was, and still is, a political republican organisation aligned with the IRA. It experienced a split in 1970 along the same lines as the OIRA/PIRA split. The
organisation (Clarke, 2010). After Bloody Sunday and the subsequent breakdown in civil life, Sinn Féin established a Dáil (parliament or assembly) and women undertook the responsibility of performing tasks to legitimise the armed struggle – they volunteered to deliver the post, acted in a political capacity, and staffed complaints offices (Clarke, 2010). They were also crucial in organising pickets and protests that promoted agitation and publicity for the republican cause (Keenan-Thomson, 2010). However, by the end of 1971 – and in line with the findings from Part Two of this thesis – an increasing number of women were brought into the republican movement in an active militant capacity.

The 1970s represents the peak of PIRA’s militant campaign; they were responsible for over 1000 deaths in this decade alone (Sutton, 2002). Three events already discussed in the early 1970s resulted in recruitment surges for the newly formed PIRA: internment, Bloody Sunday, and the ceasefire of the Official IRA. The widening of PIRAs objective in 1972/1973 – basically to bomb the British into granting Irish freedom – also led to an increased role for women. The progressive militarisation of Northern Ireland and the increasingly security-controlled environment made women attractive options for the PIRA for both operations and covert activities. Throughout this period, women became increasingly involved in operational activities (M. Alison, 2009; Clarke, 2010; Talbot, 2004). After August 1971, for instance, more women were charged with gun possession and the number of women interned or imprisoned continued to rise throughout the 1970s; possibly indicating a more active role in PIRA (Clarke, 2010; Talbot, 2004). Women featured as snipers in ambushes and became more active in bombing missions (Clarke, 2010). Women were often used as decoys on bomb-planting missions (e.g. acting as part of a romantic couple) and as lures for British soldiers (e.g. for ‘honey trap’ killings) (Bloom, Provisional Sinn Féin is of primary interest in this case study and is referred to herein as Sinn Féin.

84 The Provisionals were responsible for 1707 deaths in the conflict (1969-1998), 59% of which occurred in the 1970s (Sutton, 2002).
Part Three, Chapter Eight: Results

Framework Test

2011a; Clarke, 2010; MacDonald, 1991). They also played an important role in intelligence gathering; important because the PIRA maintained a non-sectarian stance and relied on intelligence to identify individuals whom they viewed as legitimate targets.85 A Northern Irish Office press release in 1973 indicated the more active role that women were taking in the conflict:

Women have been active in Northern Ireland for some time, as gelignite bombers, fire bombers, armed back up agents for bank raider’s couriers, carriers of weapons and explosives. Several women are in custody on a series of charges, some involving firearms and bank raids (Northern Irish Office, 26 January 1973).

The violence on the streets continued through the 1970s, despite an IRA-declared ceasefire in late 1974. Whilst there had been hope in the early 1970s that a rapid British withdrawal from Northern Ireland could be forced, this hope had faded by early 1976 when the Provisionals officially revoked the 1974 ceasefire. At the end of the 1970s the PIRA was regrouping and restructuring (Brady et al., 2011). Although it is hard to make a causal link between this restructure and the transition from third wave terrorism to fourth wave, the timing and nature of the restructure appears to be significant. By the late 1970s the Provisionals had developed a strategy for the ‘Long War’, comprised of a less intense but more sustained campaign of violence that could continue indefinitely (Moloney, 2002). Part of this strategy was a reorganisation into a cell structure emblematic of fourth wave terrorist groups (Weinberg et al., 2004). As a result, the PIRAs overall military membership decreased and command decentralised (Moloney, 2002). Along with the restructuring of the PIRA into cells, Cumann na mBan was officially disbanded and women were accepted into the new cells on an equal basis with men as opposed to positions of secondment from Cumann na mBan (M. Alison, 2009; 85 Security officials and members of the British government were the only legitimate targets in the view of the PIRA, rather than Protestant civilians.

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M. Ward, 1983). These tactical and organisational innovations essentially saved PIRA from military defeat (M. Alison, 2009) as the third wave of terrorism drew to a close. It could be said that the republican movement and the PIRA in particular were not immune to the effects of the diminishing third wave and the rise of the fourth wave of terrorism. As the third wave neared its end, the Troubles of Northern Ireland were at risk of developing into a stalemate and petering out altogether as the world became focused on developments in the Middle East. However, the strategic innovation of the PIRA and its increasing focus on political participation early in the fourth wave strengthened the PIRA anew.

The restructure also had a significant impact on the involvement of women – not usually discussed in the scholarship but outlined in some detail in Clarke’s (2010) in-depth history thesis. Whilst women were drafted into the new PIRA structure as full members, it was actually on a limited basis. The PIRA had not been recruiting in large numbers since 1975, and the women who had remained involved through to the late 1970s were more experienced and committed and better trained. It was these women who were recruited into the new PIRA cells, whilst women who had remained primarily involved in Cumann na mBan in support capacities were disbanded. This organisational change limited the role of some women, but enhanced the status of women who were now officially PIRA Volunteers – even if they had been acting in this capacity for some time. Nonetheless, the disbanding of Cumann na mBan led some women to voice their disapproval, as they were no longer bound by their oath to the republican movement, and the number of recruits to the PIRA dropped sharply. Many women began to turn their back on the armed struggle, and as the conflict entered the new ‘prison’ phase of the fourth wave, “only the ‘best’ women stayed active. Those considered weak were no longer required for the gender specific tasks that had once been so crucial to the PIRA’s campaign” (Clarke, 2010, p.258). Thus, as would be suggested by the results of Study Three, women’s involvement in the republican movement changed considerably in the fourth wave of terrorism whereby women’s
participation in militant activities on a large scale decreased, although did not disappear completely. Women once more became prominent in ideological activities, including a greater involvement in political and community activism, propaganda production, and fundraising – particularly in support of the prison protests that were to develop in Northern Ireland during the fourth wave of terrorism. As alluded to in the previous section, it has been argued that women were vital in revitalising the republican movement in this direction (Aretxaga, 1997; McCrory, Autumn, 1994).

The political developments in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, including the policies of criminalisation and normalisation discussed previously, had an impact on both the PIRA strategy and the involvement of women. The withdrawal of special category status from paramilitary prisoners meant that new prisoners convicted of terrorist offences were classified as ‘ordinary’ criminals and did not receive the special privileges associated with the previous political prisoner status. After the first prisoner convicted under the new criminalisation policy entered prison and refused to wear prison clothes, male prisoners in Long Kesh/the Maze\(^{86}\) commenced the blanket protest, wearing only blankets instead of prison clothes.\(^{87}\) In both Long Kesh and Armagh (the women’s prison) prisoners refused to participate in prison work and so were confined to their cells for most of the day. They also lost access to education, free association, visits, parcels, and remission of sentences (Aretxaga, 1997; Brady et al., 2011). After the blanket and no-work protests failed to achieve traction with the British government, prisoners in both prisons began the ‘no-wash’ or ‘dirty’ protest. The women of Armagh participated in the no-wash protests despite opposition by the leadership of the republican movement (Aretxaga, 1997). Armagh prisoners have contended (see, for example, Aretxaga,

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\(^{86}\) The name Long Kesh for the male prison was changed to the Maze in the mid-1970s although many republican prisoners still refer to it as ‘Long Kesh’ or ‘the Kesh’ (M. Alison, 2009).

\(^{87}\) The women in Armagh were exempt from the stipulation that paramilitary prisoners must wear prison clothes; all female prisoners in the United Kingdom were allowed to wear their own clothes (Aretxaga, 1997)
1997; Brady et al., 2011; D'Arcy, 1981; Fairweather et al., 1984) that they were forced into the no-wash protests by a particularly brutal search by male prison guards. They contend that they were locked in their cells without access to toilet facilities. Windows were boarded up after they attempted to empty their chamber pots out of their cell windows instead and so they resorted to smearing the contents of the chamber pots on the walls as a means of disposal. Again this protest failed to gain traction despite lasting for over four years. These protests took on a particular gendered aspect with regards to the female protests. The notion of women living in such conditions, particularly the imagery of menstrual blood on the cell walls and, later, the strip searching carried out by prison guards, was especially powerful and received much feminist scholarly and media attention both at the time and since (e.g. Aretxaga, 1997; D’Arcy, 1981; Loughran, 1986; McAuliffe & Hale, 2010; McCafferty, 1981; O’Keefe, 2006; Weinstein, 2006) although little in mainstream accounts of the prison protests (Aretxaga, 1997). However, the disproportionate focus on the menstrual aspect of the dirty protest undertaken by republican women has also been criticised (Weinstein, 2006).

Due to the failure of these protests to achieve the reinstatement of political status, in 1980 the first hunger strike to demand reinstatement was called. The initial hunger strike included three women from Armagh. The first hunger strike was called off when the British government appeared to acquiesce to the prisoners’ demands (Gillespie, Autmun, 1994). However, when changes were not implemented a second hunger strike was called in 1981. This time the female prisoners did not participate, variously attributed to the small number of women being unable to sustain the sequential organisation of the second hunger strike and republican leadership fears regarding possible

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88 The five demands of the hunger strikes were: the right not to wear prison uniform; the right not to do prison work; the right to associate freely with other prisoners; the right to a weekly letter, parcel, and visit; the right to organise recreational and educational pursuits, and; full restoration of remission lost through the protest (Brady et al., 2011).
negative propaganda value in the death of female prisoners (Aretxaga, 1997; Brady et al., 2011). The no-wash protest was also called off so that all attention would be focused on the hunger strikers in Long Kesh (Brady et al., 2011). By the end of the hunger strike, ten prisoners, belonging to both the PIRA and INLA, were dead. However, the second hunger strike elicited mass demonstrations across Ireland, demonstrating the depth and breadth of support in the community, and had repercussions for the future strategy of the Provisional movement. The prison protests and the public response were crucial in the development of the political side of the republican movement, especially in the growth of Sinn Féin (English, 2003; McCrory, Autumn, 1994; Talbot, 2004).

When the British government continued to refuse to acquiesce to prisoner demands, one hunger striker – Bobby Sands – stood as a candidate in a by-election. This strategy was an exception to the long-standing IRA/Sinn Féin policy to abstain from participation in elections or politics. Bobby Sands won the by-election and was elected to the British House of Commons. However, the British Government, under Margaret Thatcher, still refused to concede and Bobby Sands became the first hunger striker to die. Yet the circumstance of his death – the fact that he was an elected member of British parliament when he died – was a huge propaganda coup for the republican movement. The British government was internationally condemned and PIRA recruitment surged (English, 2003). There were 100,000 people who lined the street for Bobby Sands’ funeral and another nine protesting prisoners went on to contest the general election in the Republic of Ireland, some of them successfully. Thus, the hunger strikes, whilst not initially achieving the concessions that the prisoners’ hoped for, attracted international attention to

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89 Much of the mainstream literature features somewhat disparaging accounts of the hunger strikers’ relatives, usually mothers, who brought an end to the hunger strikes by authorising medical intervention when their sons lost consciousness or pressuring their protesting relatives into quitting the hunger strikes. Clarke (2010), however, presents a different view, arguing that the British government was not prepared to concede to the
Northern Ireland and opened the way for republican candidates to stand in elections; the ‘armalite and ballot box strategy’ became a tactical innovation for the republican movement at a time when a new strategy was sorely needed (Moloney, 2002) – coinciding with the transition from wave three to wave four – and women were crucial in facilitating this shift (McCorry, Autumn, 1994). The remainder of the Troubles was characterised by periods of violence and secret political manoeuvring combined with official republican political participation (English, 2003; Moloney, 2002; Taylor, 2011), which eventually led to the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

Whilst the women in Armagh did not participate in the second hunger strike, the impact of the strike on the policy of the PIRA and Sinn Féin opened the way for republican women to contest elections (Gillespie, Autumn, 1994). Several female ex-prisoners in fact went on to become heavily involved in Sinn Féin and to contest elections. Several accounts have indicated that imprisonment functioned as a form of politicisation, and this was particularly the case with the women in Armagh – many of these women were very young when they entered prison and the long stretches of time spent confined in cells afforded them the opportunity to learn the Irish language and history as well as political theory and conflict strategy and tactics (Aretxaga, 1997; D’Arcy, 1981; Talbot, 2004). Many republican women left prison with a greater understanding of the republican cause and a greater commitment to the PIRA (Talbot, 2004). In this sense – and has been noted elsewhere (della Porta, 2012; Neumann, 2010) – prisons themselves can become sites for politicisation and radicalisation. Despite this politicisation, women remained largely absent

hunger strikers whilst they were refusing food; however many of the concessions were subsequently granted quietly by the Secretary of State “in the spirit of reconciliation” (p. 163) after the hunger strikes had been called off – without the formal recognition of political status. Thus, Clarke credits the relatives of the hunger strikers with the eventual capitulation of the British government to their demands. However, other factors were important as well, for example the prisoners sabotaging the work they were required to participate in (Brady et al., 2011).
from the political negotiations leading to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Thus, the impact of meso-level factors on female involvement in the Troubles appears to be substantial. The initial left-wing secular ideology of the republican movement and the PIRA facilitated the involvement of women in an active militant capacity. However, examination of the meso-level factors unique to this context revealed other aspects at this level that affected women’s involvement. Two periods of restructure – the first in 1969 and the second in the late 1970s at the turn of the third/fourth wave – influenced first the rise in women’s active militant involvement and then the decline of female involvement in this capacity as well as the rise in female involvement in the ideological role, consistent with the findings from Part Two of this thesis. Women’s involvement in the caring role was harder to ascertain as these hidden activities are generally not considered to constitute participation and are rarely reported in archival or secondary sources. Women also appeared to be heavily involved in the support role throughout the Troubles, although again these activities are not often examined in archival or secondary sources. It is likely that their involvement in a support capacity was impacted substantially by the dismantling of Cumann na mBan in the late 1970s, although only Clarke (2010) has examined this in any depth, finding that women’s official en mass involvement declined sharply after this restructure.

**Summary of Phase One Results: Macro-level and Meso-level Factors Important to Women’s Involvement in the Troubles**

For the last 20 years women have been involved in all aspects of the struggle. They are Volunteers in the IRA, political activists in Sinn Féin, campaigners, fundraisers, political prisoners and the relatives of prisoners. They provide the IRA with safe houses, care for Volunteers on the run, and confront the British occupation
forces on the streets. They are, in effect, the solid bedrock of the national liberation struggle (McAuley, 1989, p. 9).

The notion that women formed the backbone or bedrock of the republican movement is one that is commonly reiterated in the scholarship on women’s involvement in the Troubles. Whilst there are several accounts of female involvement in specific types of activity, for example in political activism (Hackett, 2004; Keenan-Thomson, 2010), as combatants (M. Alison, 2009), or in historical nationalism (M. Ward, 1983), studies have seldom examined how an interplay of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors influenced the nature and extent of women’s involvement in the Troubles (see Eager, 2008 for an exception). Phase one of this case study analysed the way in which the macro-level variables of wave of terrorism and world region in combination with the meso-level variables related to the republican movement and the PIRA affected the involvement of women in the Troubles. In particular, the case study allowed a deeper exploration of the interplay between the levels – how the macro-level in terms of the wave of terrorism influenced the course of the Troubles at the meso-level and, in turn female involvement. Third wave terrorism and its associated civil rights movement, for instance, reignited the republican movement and the IRA in the 1960s whilst the transition from wave three to wave four coincided with and may have precipitated a change in strategy and focus by the republican movement (from violence on the streets to political participation and mobilisation in support of republican prisoners, eventually leading to overt political participation) as well as organisational restructuring of the PIRA (changing from a conventional army structure to a cell structure, similar to other militant or extremist groups of the fourth wave). An examination of these factors refined understanding of how women were involved throughout the Troubles. It was found, for example, that women’s involvement in the ideological role was frequent in the initial stages of the

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90 See also phase two of this case study where this statement was commonly reiterated by interviewees.
Part Three, Chapter Eight: Results

The conflict during the civil rights era whilst their involvement in the active role increased substantially throughout the 1970s. With the change in the PIRA’s strategy and structure during the third wave/fourth wave transition, women’s involvement in the active role declined; however, their involvement in the ideological role once again came to the fore. Their involvement in the support role also appears to have been more substantial in wave three when the auxiliary Cumann na mBan existed compared to wave four when it was dismantled.

Women’s involvement in the ideological role throughout the initial stages of the conflict, whilst perhaps consistent with the findings from Study Three regarding groups/movements with a nationalist/separatist agenda, are in contrast to expectations based on the secular left-wing nature of the republican movement situated within Europe. This finding illustrates the importance of examining population level trends in relation to specific contexts in order to establish how these macro-level and meso-level factors interact in reality. It should be noted that female involvement in the caring role was harder to examine and establish, as these types of activities are not commonly reported with consistency. As reiterated throughout this thesis, more research that is focused specifically on these types of covert activities is needed, particularly as the findings of this thesis suggest that these caring activities form a distinct type of involvement. Finally, the influence of micro-level factors is harder to ascertain through secondary sources; thus, the next phase of the case study examines how micro-level factors influenced the involvement of women in the Troubles according to the model developed in Study Two.

Phase Two: Micro-level Factors in Women’s Involvement in the Troubles

This phase of the case study will examine if, and how, micro-level factors elicited through primary research were important influences on women’s involvement in the Troubles according to the model developed in Study Two of this thesis. It will begin with a brief summary of micro-level factors identified as
important in the scholarship, although these primarily relate to initial mobilisation rather than variation in involvement. These micro-level factors have already been discussed in detail in Chapter Three, thus those identified as specifically important to the Troubles are simply highlighted here. The methods utilised to collect primary data are subsequently outlined, followed by the results and a discussion of the findings.

**Overview of Micro-level Factors**

The Troubles is one of the most studied conflicts in recent history and there is a developing body of work examining women’s experiences in the conflict. Most of the micro-level factors identified in this scholarship are related to initial mobilisation decisions and primarily for women who were involved in militant or political activist positions. Research on women in the Troubles, like in the broader research arena on women in conflict, seldom examines reasons for variation in type of involvement particularly at the micro-level. Those micro-level factors that have been suggested as important to mobilisation in the republican movement include experiences of trauma and discrimination, republican political ideals, participation in the broader civil rights and/or republican movement, specific biographical and demographical characteristics, and personal relationships.

One of the most consistent micro-level motivations for involvement reiterated in the scholarship is personal and communal experience of violence and discrimination. The most common reason specified by the former republican combatants in Alison’s (2009) study was that of community, family or personal experiences of discrimination, injustice, harassment, and violence. Nine out of the 11 women had experienced or witnessed such incidents, including house raids, people being beaten by security forces, harassment and sectarian abuse by security officials, work discrimination and difficulty getting a job, forced displacement in often violent circumstances, and the imprisonment/injury/murder of a relative. Women involved in militant positions in the Troubles also commonly reported a strong belief in the nationalist cause.
as a result of experiencing this oppression and injustice (Brady et al., 2011; Fairweather et al., 1984; MacDonald, 1991; Talbot, 2004). All the women in Alison’s (2009) study, for example, expressed a strong identity as Irish and republican. In contrast, Clarke (2010) reported that the death of a loved one was not a factor in joining the PRIA as the majority of women who experienced this appeared to be involved prior to the death. Similarly, Aretxaga (1997) reported that whilst 10 out of the 32 protesting female prisoners in the 1980s had lost relatives as a result of the conflict, all these deaths had occurred after they were imprisoned.

The experience, either first or second hand, of significant events in the course of the conflict is also commonly identified in the scholarship as a micro-level influence on female mobilisation. For older republican women the civil rights movement, Bloody Sunday, and internment were catalysts for involvement in the republican cause (Clarke, 2010; Eager, 2008; Fairweather et al., 1984; Hackett, 2004). The civil rights movement politicised the women of that era and got them involved in the republican movement:

From street protests, many women began to take a more direct part in the national liberation struggle. This was not so much based on a family tradition of republicanism as born of the Civil Rights Movement, the ensuing loyalist backlash, and the increasingly threatening presence of thousands of British soldiers (McAuley, 1988, p. 10).

For younger women, the prison protests were significant events (Aretxaga, 1997; Clarke, 2010; Fairweather et al., 1984). An interviewee in Alison’s (2009) study described the way in which she perceived these protests, particularly regarding the role of women;

The way they mobilised and organised street campaigns and political campaigns, and the fact that I knew these women were in the IRA and Sinn Féin and they were human rights activists,
they were just multi-faceted, multi-tasked, multi-skilled women, and that to me was the catalyst for wantin’ to be a republican, wantin’ to get involved (p. 152).

The research that has explicitly examined biographical and demographical characteristics is fairly consistent (e.g. M. Alison, 2009; Bloom et al., 2012; Clarke, 2010) although it primarily relates to women involved militantly. The research demonstrates that most republican women came from urban nationalist areas of Belfast (M. Alison, 2009; Bloom et al., 2012; Clarke, 2010). These areas of Belfast were the most militarised in Northern Ireland and were violence was centralised (Bloom et al., 2012; Clarke, 2010). A smaller number of women came from Derry or rural areas, and a minority from the Republic of Ireland, England, or the United States (M. Alison, 2009; Bloom et al., 2012). In Alison’s (2009) study the majority of the women were from working class families and all came from Catholic backgrounds. No studies reported educational attainment data; however, Bloom et al (2012) found that the majority of women were employed.

In the studies of both Clarke (2010) and Bloom et al (2012), the PIRA women were young; Bloom (2012) reported an average age of 26.56 at time of first identifiable PIRA-related activity whilst Clarke (2010) reported an age estimate of 20. Similarly, Alison (2009) reported that most of the women she interviewed became active in the PIRA (one in the INLA) in their late teens, although many had been involved in the broader republican movement for many years. Only Clarke (2010) delineated biographical/demographical characteristics according to method of involvement, reporting that the activities that women undertook varied according to their age. Clark found that older republican women were engaged in less risky activities, such as recruitment and patrol of communities, and older women or women with children were more likely to join less militant branches of the Provisional movement, such as Sinn Féin. In contrast, younger women were involved more militantly and were also responsible for support tasks such as ferrying weapons and ammunition
and intelligence gathering. As the conflict progressed, Clark argued that these younger women were assigned increasingly more militant and operationally risky tasks.

With regards to personal relationships, Clarke (2010) reported that only 8 percent of women in his sample were married whilst Bloom et al (2012) reported that 50 percent of the women included in their sample were married. Clarke (2010) claimed that, whilst family connections are generally accepted as influential in a woman’s involvement in the republican movement, there is no quantitative data available to either support or disprove this proposition. However, Clarke (2010) concluded that “overall, a woman’s involvement in PIRA had less to do with her education and wealth and more to do with her family background and the needs of the PIRA” (p. 125). McAuley (1988), from the quote, would appear to concur that family background was less influential in female mobilisation. Alison (2009) also reported that whilst three women in her sample of 11 came from republican families with varying histories of involvement in Irish nationalism, this factor was not cited by any of these women as a direct motivation for involvement.

Thus, a range of micro-level factors have been identified in the developing scholarship on women’s involvement in the Troubles, including specific biographical and demographical characteristics, experiences of trauma, republican political ideals, and participation in the broader republican movement. Primarily this scholarship has focused on women involved in militant or activist positions and on factors important to mobilisation rather than on those factors that may influence variation in female roles. However, this scholarship is a good starting point for this case study and it is more in-depth and rigorous compared to the broader research on female involvement in conflict.
Method

Participants

The participants in phase two were seven women and one man who had all experienced aspects of the Troubles and knew women who had been involved in varying capacities (important for the purposes of the repertory grid technique outlined below). The sample included three members of the community, two women who were actively involved in militant republican activities during the conflict, two scholars specialising in the conflict who also experienced the Troubles personally, and one political activist who had campaigned on conflict-related issues. Six participants were recruited through professional contacts whilst two were contacted through an ex-prisoner organisation based in Belfast. The sample was one of convenience, rather than random or representative; as is the norm in research examining an illegal or subversive phenomenon (Silke, 2001).

Measures

Five interviewees participated in a structured interview whilst three interviewees participated in an unstructured interview. The structured interview was based on the repertory grid technique where the aim was to have the interviewees discuss, anonymously, four women they knew well who were involved in the Troubles in different ways (based on the conceptual model developed in Study Two) and at least one woman who was not involved. The repertory grid technique is a structured process that elicits constructs that an individual holds about a particular topic. It was originally developed by George Kelly (1955), and stemmed from personal construct theory. Kelly proposed that people understand and order the world through a series of binary discriminations, or constructs, such as leader-follower or pleasant-rude. Kelly claimed that constructs were personalised and their meaning varied according to context. To fully understand an individual’s constructs in relation to a particular phenomenon is to comprehend the phenomenon from the individual’s point of view. Originally the repertory grid technique was developed for use in
clinical psychology (e.g. Bannister, 1965; Fransella & Adams, 1966; Reisenzein & Hofmann, 1990; Winter, 2003) but it has since been used extensively in marketing and business contexts (e.g. Lemke et al., 2011; Marsden, 2000; Senior, 1997) and increasingly in forensic settings (e.g. Fisher & Howells, 1993; Pollock & Kear-Colwell, 1994; Westera et al., 2014).

In essence, the repertory grid technique involves the participant and researcher working collaboratively to create a grid that best represents the participant’s ideas and beliefs about a particular phenomenon – in the case of this research the phenomenon was women’s involvement in the conflict in Northern Ireland. The grid itself is made up of several elements and constructs. An element is simply something from the participant’s world that relates to the topic under investigation – in this case the elements were up to four women involved in different ways in the Troubles as well as at least one woman who was not involved. Through systematically comparing the elements for similarities and differences a series of constructs are elicited that comprise the final grid.

The primary advantage of the repertory grid technique is that it allows the elicitation of a series of specific and accurate constructs regarding a particular topic in a systematic and structured manner. In the context of this research, the technique allowed the exploration of not only the roles that several anonymous women played in the Troubles and the characteristics of these women, but also the beliefs and perceptions of the interviewees in relation to women’s involvement in the Troubles. Thus, the repertory grid technique facilitates a nuanced understanding of the specific factors that influence women’s involvement at a group level (where this group was women involved in Troubles), in contrast to a standard interview that consists of a recollection of personal involvement. Blee (1996) noted, for example, that when women involved in the racist Christian-based movement in the United States reflected on their life, they tended to attribute their political commitments to a single sensational event or series of events, rather than the end result of a sometimes chaotic or disorderly process of radicalisation. Thus, their recount of involvement primarily reflected their current personal interpretation rather
than being an accurate representation of the radicalisation process (Blee, 1996). In this regard, the advantage of the repertory grid is that personal attachment to involvement is removed, as it is other women who are the focus of the interview. Furthermore, the repertory grid technique facilitates a comparison across interviews and, consequentially, reliable and valid findings. It also increases the sample size as each interviewee discussed multiple women. However, the accuracy of information clearly depends upon memory recall and how well the interviewee knew the women they discussed. Similarly, the findings reflect the interviewees’ interpretation rather than truly represent the women discussed as part of the interview process.

In two instances interviewees expressed an unwillingness to participate in the repertory grid technique due to their reluctance to discuss the experiences of other women, despite the fact that these women remained anonymous and unidentified. In both these instances an unstructured interview was conducted that focused on the participant’s own experiences with some generalisations made by the interviewee. An additional unstructured and informal interview was conducted with a scholar specialising in the conflict in Northern Ireland and with personal experiences in the conflict. Throughout these unstructured interviews, interviewees were asked about their perspectives regarding the influences on their own and/or women’s participation in general, as well as the different roles or activities that women performed.

Recruitment and Interview Procedure

The recruitment procedure involved two approaches. Primarily the interviewees were recruited through professional contacts in Northern Ireland and consent to contact potential interviewees was first gained through this intermediary. The second approach involved recruitment through an ex-prisoner organisation in Belfast. In this instance, an interview request form was submitted, as is standard procedure for this organisation. The advantage of these two approaches is the variety of viewpoints that are represented in this research. The ex-prisoner population in Northern Ireland is one that is studied
extensively and represents a specific sub-sample of women who have been involved in militant activities and imprisoned as a result. However, this research, as a whole, was focused on the full spectrum of women’s involvement and, thus, recruiting through professional contacts facilitated the collection of perspectives from a variety of other people, including community members, political and community activists and scholars.

All interviewees were provided with a consent package (see Appendix E) where their anonymity, confidentiality, and right to withdraw at any time were reiterated. In addition, interviewees were specifically cautioned not to provide any identifying information about the women they discussed or reveal any information that may be of interest to law enforcement agencies. These issues were highlighted, and verbal consent was explicitly gained, prior to beginning the repertory grid procedure or unstructured interview.

The first part of the repertory grid involved the interviewees selecting elements, or women whom they knew had participated in the conflict in some manner and some women who were not involved – allowing elicitation of constructs related to both mobilisation and role. The number of elements ranged from four to six depending on how many women the interviewees knew who were involved/not involved and who they felt they could discuss in some level of detail. It was specified that the women chosen as elements should have participated in a range of different ways. Although the thematic model was not specifically mentioned, interviewees were prompted to choose women who were involved in different ways (e.g. militantly, logistically, politically etc). Anonymity of the women discussed was ensured by use of a number/letter system in place of names.

Once the elements/women were specified to the satisfaction of the interviewee, the process of eliciting constructs began. This process involved systematically discussing triads of elements in terms of similarities and differences. For each triad of elements the interviewee was asked, “is there something that two of these women have in common that makes them different to the third woman in terms of how/why they were involved/not
involved in the conflict?” If the interviewee was unable to specify a construct (as occurred in a minority of interviews at the beginning) they were prompted with, “it might be something to do with their personalities, or how they were raised, or their life experiences”. After all triad combinations were systematically discussed, the interviewee was asked if there were other constructs that they thought were important that had not been identified thus far. The constructs were noted by hand throughout the interview; no audio recordings were taken. Throughout the interview process, many interviewees elaborated the identified constructs with either personal stories or stories of the women in question. Where appropriate these stories were noted minus identifying information.

The final part of the interview involved clarification of constructs if needed, as well as, in many instances, a more general discussion regarding women’s involvement in the Troubles based on themes and stories that arose during the interview. This section was unstructured and relevant points were again noted in written form. Thus, the end result of the repertory grid interview was a list of specific constructs or ideas generated by the interviewee and refined through discussion with the researcher. These constructs related to micro-level factors that interviewees believed were important in understanding or explaining different types of female involvement as well as non-involvement (although a small number of meso-level variables were also identified by interviewees). Personal opinions and stories regarding the role of women in the conflict and perceived influences on involvement were also included.

Ethical and Methodological Issues

This study underwent a full ethical review and was granted ethical approval by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (PSY/88/12/HREC). Of primary importance in terms of ethical considerations, and given the nature of the research topic, were researcher safety and participant confidentiality. Lee (1995) and Alison (2009) identified two considerations in regards to researcher safety: ambient danger (experienced by
virtue of conducting research in potentially volatile or violent settings) and situational danger (experienced when the presence or actions of the researcher evoke violence or hostility). Specific practical measures undertaken throughout the field trip included regular communication with supervisors and seeking advice from experienced researchers in the field. All interviews took place in mutually acceptable public spaces (e.g. cafes, university offices, a community centre). At no time during the course of data collection was either ambient or situational danger experienced.

Given that this research sought to examine the participation of women in an illegal and subversive phenomenon, participant confidentiality and anonymity was of the utmost importance. Practical measures to limit the collection of identifying information and reduce the chance of disclosure of information that may have been of relevance to law enforcement agencies were taken, including reminding interviewees not to identify the women discussed during the interview, not taking audio recordings of any of the interviews and not noting identifying information if revealed. Whilst these precautions were taken, none of the interviewees revealed information that would be of interest to law enforcement agencies, and no identifying information was revealed beyond the occasional first name.

Recruitment of interviewees through the ex-prisoner organisation represented some unique and somewhat challenging ethical and methodological issues. With regards to ethical considerations it was unclear how informed interviewees were prior to the interview. No personal contact occurred (or was possible) between researcher and interviewee prior to the interview as a representative of the organisation recruited the interviewees. Whilst the consent package containing information about the project and the repertory grid technique had been supplied to the organisation, it did not appear that this package had been passed on to potential interviewees. Indeed, these were the two interviewees who indicated, at the commencement of the interview, an unwillingness to participate in the repertory grid as it involved discussing other people’s experiences. As identified by Knox and Monaghan (2003) and Alty and
Rodham (1998), sensitive research requires flexibility on the part of the researcher as well as practical solutions that are not always identified or discussed in reference to traditional ethical dilemmas. Although it was stressed that the purpose of the repertory grid was not to gather information on other women but simply to use these unidentified and anonymous women as a means to understand the participant’s own perspective on the conflict, an interview of an unstructured nature was eventually negotiated. This situation illustrates some of the issues inherent in recruiting participants through an organisation external to the research process. In this situation, methods of recruitment as well as the extent and relay of information regarding the research project is largely beyond the control of the researcher. However, the research project and data collection tool was discussed with the interviewees and modifications made in order to address concerns. Whilst this was appropriate practically (and subsequently ethically approved by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee), it presented some methodological issues and challenges to subsequent data analysis as not all the interviews were consistently structured.

A final methodological issue relates to the identification of elements, or women involved/not involved in the conflict in Northern Ireland. The ability of individual interviewees to identify women whom they felt they could discuss in some level of detail varied and, consequentially, the actual numbers of women/elements discussed in each individual interview varied from two to six. This was a result of the background of the interviewees, for example one interviewee left Northern Ireland early in the conflict and knew a limited number of women who she could discuss in detail. Another interviewee who was actively and heavily involved in political activism knew only one woman who was not involved in the conflict. However, as the results from the interviews were collated and discussed at the group level rather than at the individual level, this issue should have limited impact on the final results.
Summary: Participants, Measures, and Process

In summary, there were a total of eight interviews conducted that comprise the second phase of this case study of the Troubles. Five of these interviews followed the procedure of the repertory grid technique whereby elements were identified and constructs systematically elicited through triadic comparison of these elements. Many of these interviews also included personal anecdotes or stories from the lives of the women discussed which are included where appropriate to illustrate the specific construct. Three of the interviews followed an informal structure where the lives and personal experiences of the individual interviewees were explored in detail; two interviewees who had been involved in militant activities and imprisoned as a result and one interviewee with both personal experience of the conflict and research expertise in the area.

Approach to Data Analysis

Each repertory grid was individually analysed in the first instance in order to identify the key constructs related to the micro-level factors important in, first, women’s involvement/non-involvement and, second, the different types of involvement in the Troubles. The key constructs identified in each interview were then collated and examined collectively in order to identify key micro-level factors across the interviews. Constructs were grouped according to these micro-level factors and then re-checked with the individual interviews for validity and accuracy. The three unstructured interviews were subsequently analysed for additional themes, although none were apparent. These unstructured interviews, thus, provided a means to confirm and further elucidate the key constructs based on how the micro-level constructs manifested in an individual’s experience.91 Thus, data analysis involved identification of key constructs in the repertory grid interviews important to

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91 These unstructured interviews were conducted after the repertory grid interviews; thus, several micro-level themes apparent across the repertory grids were discussed with these interviewees.
women’s various types of involvement followed by refinement, where appropriate, of these constructs using the informal interviews.

**Results**

The findings are divided into two sections related to key components of this research. The first component comprises the key constructs that the participants identified as important factors in women’s mobilisation. The second component is related to the key constructs important in differentiating between women’s different methods of involvement or roles. In total the repertory grid interviews involved systematic comparisons and discussions of 26 women; 21 women who were involved (five in the active role, five in the caring role, six in the ideological role, and five in the support role) and five women who were not involved. The women identified as not involved came from both sides of the sectarian divide; nationalist/republican and unionist/loyalist.

**Key Constructs Related to Women’s Mobilisation in the Troubles**

There were a total of 17 constructs identified by all interviewees as important to women’s mobilisation, where these were related to five key micro-level factors as seen in Table 8.1. These constructs were elicited by systematically comparing involved women with women who were not involved and adding the experiences of women garnered through the unstructured interviews. The five key micro-level factors were: individual traits and characteristics; personal relationships; biographical and demographical characteristics; experiences of trauma and discrimination, and; ideological and political commitment. The most frequently identified constructs across all the interviews were: direct personal impact as a result of the conflict \( n = 7 \); personal experiences of violence \( n = 6 \); residential location \( n = 6 \); personality traits \( n = 5 \); family background \( n = 5 \); belief in the republican or

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92 One of the interviewees specified near the end of the interview that one woman she had identified came from the unionist community. All the other women discussed across the interviews came from the republican community.
nationalist cause \( (n = 4) \); politicisation \( (n = 4) \), family involvement in the conflict \( (n = 4) \), and; imprisonment \( (n = 4) \).

Table 8.1. Micro-level factors and constituent constructs identified by interviewees \( (n = 8) \) as important in determining women's mobilisation in the Troubles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-level factor</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual traits and characteristics</td>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>5 (62.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rebellious nature</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radical</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
<td>Family background and environment</td>
<td>5 (62.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement of family members</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husband/partner involvement</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical and demographical</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>6 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics</td>
<td>Social class</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social identity</td>
<td>1 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences of trauma and discrimination</td>
<td>Personal impact from conflict</td>
<td>7 (87.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiences of violence</td>
<td>6 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work discrimination</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological and/or political</td>
<td>Belief in cause</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td>Politicised</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imprisonment</td>
<td>4 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politically active and vocal</td>
<td>3 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* As the repertory grid technique elicits constructs rather than personal experiences, the frequencies in the table relate to the number of interviews in which the construct appeared.

*Individual traits and characteristics*

Included under the micro-level factor of individual traits and characteristics were three key constructs: general personality traits; a rebellious nature, and; being a radical. The construct of personality traits consisted of several dimensions across all the interviews. Women who were involved in the conflict were described in general terms as strong and capable women who possessed many desirable and positive personality traits whilst women who
were not involved in the conflict were generally viewed more negatively. Women who mobilised were variously described as: strong women or as possessing strong personalities; leaders or possessing leadership ability; organised; socially responsible; articulate; able to bring people together and diffuse dissension in a group setting; a motivating force; creative; practical; problem-focused; determined; focused, and; identifying with the underdog. In contrast, women who were not involved in the Troubles were described as: not as strong; focused on other things; not wanting to put children and career at risk by involving themselves; less disposed to risk-taking; shy; less confident; a homemaker; wanting to be left alone, and; unable to see how they could be involved in the conflict. In addition, women who mobilised were described as adaptive, quick thinkers, able to cope well with change, and use their initiative. In contrast, women who were not involved were described as habitual and liking routine. Women who mobilised were perceived as good in a crisis in comparison to women who were not involved who were unable to cope even with everyday life crises. Also included within the individual traits and characteristics theme were the constructs of ‘rebellious nature’ and ‘radical’. The interviewees perceived women who mobilised as rebelling against Catholicism, a sheltered upbringing, the United Kingdom, and/or in support of the Republican cause and perceived justice. Women who mobilised were also perceived as more radical compared to women who were not involved. In summary with regards to personality traits, one interviewee described women who mobilised as possessing the “right skill set” whilst women who were not involved as “not good resources” in a conflict situation.

Many interviewees stressed that the women who mobilised were not abnormal or predisposed to violence. Several interviewees described these women as decent and loving people. The impression gained across the interviews was that the women who mobilised were admired as people in general but also specifically for their involvement. In contrast, women who were not involved were generally perceived less favourably. This may indicate both a bias on the part of the interviewees and a degree of community pressure to
participate in nationalism/republicanism. Finally, with regards to personality, one interviewee hypothesised that the conflict may have shaped the women’s personalities in addition to, or even rather than, the women’s personality facilitating involvement. This may indicate a reciprocal relationship between personality and mobilisation; although it may also indicate a degree of stereotypical thought on the part of interviewees in terms of the ‘type’ of person who would be involved and why (i.e. any ‘normal’ person would choose to mobilise for republicanism).

**Personal relationships**

Included under the micro-level factor of personal relationships were four key constructs: family background and environment; involvement in the conflict by family members; husband or partner involvement, and; peer influences. With regards to the construct of family background and environment, women who mobilised were described as coming from a political, republican, nationalist, and/or socialist family background as well as from families who were decent and principled and who instilled ethical and moral values. In contrast, women who were not involved came from non-political families.

The second construct, involvement of family members, referred to whether immediate relatives of the women were involved in some manner in the conflict. Interestingly, both involved and uninvolved women had at least one family member who was involved in the conflict. However, one interviewee differentiated between the women who mobilised and those who did not by reference to their different approaches to coping with family involvement. The women who mobilised appeared to take their family’s involvement “in stride,” challenging criticisms, and handling confrontations over the issue well. In contrast, the women who were not involved in the conflict expressed embarrassment over their family member’s involvement, were unable to withstand or challenge criticism over the issue, did not talk about it, and seemed to wish that their family member had not been involved.
The third construct in this theme was husband or partner involvement in the conflict. Some interviewees reported that a number of the women who were involved in the conflict had a husband or partner who was also involved in some way. One interviewee reported that these men were known within the community for their involvement and were among the first people to “respond in a crisis” – they were viewed as reliable and active within their communities and in the conflict. In contrast, women who were not involved in the conflict did not have a husband or partner who was involved; they married men who preferred to remain uninvolved (“kept themselves to themselves”). These men were perceived as private and would not be called upon to help in the community or in a crisis situation.

*Biographical and demographical characteristics*

Included under the micro-level factor of biographical and demographical characteristics were four key constructs: location; social class; education, and; social identity. The construct of location consisted of several different components related to place of residence either prior to mobilisation or where the women grew up. Thus, there were a range of constructs related to location, including growing up in Derry, living in particular constituency areas of Belfast, and being brought up in specific rural areas. One interviewee reported that a particular woman had intentionally moved to a specific area of Belfast in order to participate in activist campaigns. Generally the location where a woman grew up or subsequently lived meant that the conflict itself or its effects were more immediate, for example living in particular areas of Belfast that were predominantly Catholic and militarised increased the chance of witnessing or experiencing brutality or discrimination. In contrast, women who were not involved in the conflict lived in areas that were not immediately affected by the conflict or in areas where the dominant social identity was not their own (i.e. in predominantly Protestant or mixed areas or in higher socioeconomic areas).
The two constructs of social class and social identity are related. The women who mobilised were of the same republican social identity, whereas those women who did not participate in the conflict did not conform to this social identity (some of these women even deliberately moved away from the nationalist area in which they grew up). One interviewee reported that many people (men and women) who were involved in the conflict never left the working class nationalist ghettos where they were born and raised. Similarly, women who mobilised came from analogous geographic areas that were predominantly nationalist working class whereas many of the women who did not participate came from middle class backgrounds where this formed their dominant social identity.

The final construct, education, had two elements. First, many women who were involved were educated in the Catholic tradition which may have influenced the formation of their personal social identity and later experiences of discrimination and trauma. Second, tertiary education was identified as important in facilitating social mobility. Women who mobilised did not generally participate in higher education (due either to personal choice or limited access), or they did not use their degree if they had one. In contrast, some of the women who did not participate in the conflict went back to higher education at a later age, which allowed them to focus on their careers. Furthermore, as a result of their education they were upwardly socially mobile which distanced them from the conflict; they did not directly experience the effects of the conflict, its adverse societal conditions, or the discrimination and oppression that brought it to the fore.

Experiences of trauma and discrimination

The micro-level factor of experiences of trauma and discrimination included three key constructs: personal impact from the conflict; experiences of violence, and; experiences of discrimination. The two most frequently mentioned constructs – personal impact from the conflict and experiences of violence – were inter-related and represented traumatic events experienced personally or
observed within the community. Almost every interviewee related their own personal experiences of violence and brutality, in addition to the experiences that they described from the lives of other women. The women mobilised had these experiences of trauma in common and appeared to have been greatly affected by them. Common experiences reported were violence and brutality perpetrated by security forces and/or witnessing this in the community, intrusion by security forces into the home, interment or imprisonment, and general traumatic effects of living in a highly militarised society. Although women who were not involved in the conflict may have also had these experiences, the women who mobilised appeared to have experienced a greater personal impact.

As mentioned, many of the interviewees described their own experiences of trauma. Where personal experiences of this kind were narrated, they were reported with clarity, detail and emotion; indicating that these were important and powerful experiences in the lives of the interviewees. One interviewee who subsequently became involved in militant activities described in detail being burnt out of a house that her older brother and sister-in-law had recently purchased in a predominantly Protestant area. The interviewee described how terrified she was hiding in the house holding her baby niece whilst people outside threw bottles, shouted abuse, and spray painted the word ‘Fenian’ on the house. Another interviewee described her own experiences of seeing black and white images of the riots and civil rights marches and the particularly significant impact that Bloody Sunday had on her when she was a child. She described the experience that sparked her political activism when she was a teenager and the criminalisation policy was introduced. She saw her neighbour in a police car with a bruised and swollen face, apparently from being beaten by the police and attempted, unsuccessfully, to find her neighbour at the police station.

93 A term for Irish nationalist often used by unionists or loyalists in a derogatory or demeaning manner.
One interviewee extrapolated that some women mobilised because they saw and experienced the injustice towards the Catholic community, and particularly because women bore the brunt of this injustice and suffered the most. This view was reiterated to varying degrees by other interviewees; another interviewee hypothesised that women feel the effects of conflict more because they witness their own and other children suffering.

Specific experiences of discrimination, particularly in relation to job discrimination but also related to experiences of victimisation and abuse of rights by the security forces, were mentioned as important determinants of mobilisation by several participants. In contrast, women who were not involved in the conflict had not experienced this kind of discrimination, especially in relation to work. One interviewee recounted her own personal experience of trying to find work and reading job advertisements in the paper where it was specified that applications from Catholics were not welcome, and where potential employers would enquire about which school an individual attended in order to deduce whether they were Catholic or Protestant.

Ideological and/or political motivations
Included under the micro-level factor of ideological and/or political motivations were four key constructs: politicisation; imprisonment; belief in the cause, and; politically active and vocal. The two constructs of politicisation and being politically active and vocal were somewhat related, where politicisation was identified as a more extreme form of being politically active and vocal. Many of the participants identified the women who mobilised as politically motivated, involved in politics, vocal about convictions, politicised and/or politically active. These women were involved in various political campaigns, including H-block marches\(^\text{94}\) and hunger strike campaigns; one interviewee stated that the women who she identified gave their whole life to political campaigns. In contrast, women who were not involved in the conflict were

\(^{94}\) H-block was where male prisoners were housed in Long Kesh. H-block marches refer to protests against the conditions that male prisoners were kept under.
perceived as non-political, not involved in or vocal about politics, and as not acting on any political convictions in visible ways.

The role of internment or imprisonment in politicisation or re-politicisation was also noted. The two interviewees who had been imprisoned described it as an opportunity to read and discuss strategy and ideology. It was at this point that they moved from the simple idea of “Brits out” to addressing strategic options for achieving this goal as well as discussing what would happen in the aftermath of a possible British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Rather than influencing mobilisation, imprisonment or internment was an experience that reinforced involvement and may have further radicalised or politicised women who were already involved.

Finally, several interviewees identified belief in the republican cause as important in influencing women’s mobilisation. Women who mobilised had a strong belief in the republican or nationalist cause, as opposed to women who were not involved who did not demonstrate a belief in this cause. One interviewee reported that the women who were involved in the conflict were, overall, more committed to the cause, more politicised and more aware of the conflict and its antecedents in addition to having a stronger belief in (and knowledge of) the republican movement, history, ideology, and discourse (compared to women who were not involved).

Key Constructs Related to Variation in the Roles of Women in the Troubles

This section will address the constructs important in determining different types of involvement as guided by the thematic model developed in Study Two. The factors addressed in this section are in addition to the constructs already discussed as relevant to initial mobilisation and relate only to the five repertory grid interviews. That is, according to interviewees, women who were involved in the conflict evidenced many of the constructs outlined previously, in addition to some of the constructs discussed below relevant to their particular roles. Based on the activities that the repertory grid interviewees reported that the 21 involved women engaged in, they were
classified into one of the four roles included in the thematic model. Although for ethical reasons details of involvement were not asked about, the interviewees indicated that the women they identified were involved in: militant activities such as kidnapping and planting explosives \((n = 5)\); caring activities such as acting as lookouts and performing household chores and looking after men involved in the republican movement \((n = 5)\); ideologically-based activities such as acting as a political official, messenger, fundraising resources and donations, and encouraging participation in the conflict \((n = 6)\), and; support activities such as acting as a decoy, courier and/or smuggler as well as involvement in Cumann na mBan \((n = 5)\). Activities that were harder to classify were those related to community care and protection, such as taking care of children when there were riots, organising community events to maintain cohesion and a sense of normality, and actively encouraging morale throughout the conflict. These activities may relate to caring activities, as they are perhaps conventionally feminine duties, although as they were not directly included in the original thematic model it is difficult to come to any conclusion. Constructs that were identified as important in influencing involvement in different roles were specific personality features, attitude towards violence, organisational structure, age of the woman, presence of children, and phase of the conflict. The specific ways in which these constructs influenced the role of women in the Troubles is represented in Figure 8.3 where the constructs relevant to each role are depicted.
There were several personality features identified by the interviewees as important in determining the different activities that women undertook in the Troubles. Women who were involved in the active role were perceived as more radical and rebellious and as possessing greater leadership qualities. Women who were involved in caring activities were perceived as more focused on the children of the community, where these women were aware of living in a conflict situation and wanted to create a diversion for the children, an outlet for the community, and a sense of normality. Several interviewees reported that women who were involved in these types of caring activities may have had similar motivations to women who were involved in militant activities, but that these motivations were expressed in different ways.
The second construct identified by interviewees as important in determining involvement in different roles was attitude towards violence. Women who were involved in the active role were perceived to endorse violence or to be capable of committing violence given the right context. In contrast, women involved in ideological, caring, or support activities were perceived as non-violent, although they would have supported changes that came about as a result of violence in the conflict. One interviewee specified that the woman in the repertory grid who was involved in a support role would never have hurt anyone; however, the woman involved militantly would have been capable of hurting someone if she believed that person would harm her family or community.

In all interviews it was stressed that women who were involved, and especially those women who were involved militantly and participated in violent activities, were not predisposed to violence. The importance of context was reiterated across interviews. In this sense, involvement was viewed as an almost inevitable consequence of the nature of the woman and her experiences. Furthermore, one interviewee hypothesised that it is not built into women to hurt people; that they must be hurt in the first instance in order to retaliate with violence. This idea relates to the importance of experiences of trauma and discrimination in determining mobilisation. This interviewee reported that the women in the repertory grid were involved in support or caring activities because they did not “have enough hurt” compared to the woman who was involved in active role.

The presence of children was identified as an important construct determining participation in different roles in the conflict. If a woman had children, she was less likely to be involved in the active, support, or ideological role due to an awareness of the potential repercussions on children, including harassment by security forces, and imprisonment/death of their mother. In some cases, these women deliberately postponed having children whilst they were involved. Furthermore, the birth of a child was frequently seen as a motivation for desistence. In contrast, women who were involved at the
community level in caring activities had children of their own and so were not involved actively but supported the conflict and the cause on the periphery.

Another construct that was identified as important in determining participation in different roles was age. Older women who participated in the conflict were viewed as harbouring more traditional ideas about the role of women in society more generally – also perceived as an explanation for why they were involved more often in community-based/caring or ideological activities. Whilst younger women were perhaps brought up in a traditional manner, the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s impacted them more than older women. It was hypothesised that these women felt that they had a “right” to participate militantly if they wished to do so. Hence, older women appeared more likely to be involved in ideological or caring activities whilst younger women were more likely to participate in the active role. Interestingly, women seemed to be involved in support roles across generations and age groups, although through different means (i.e. older women were involved through Cumman na mBan whilst younger women were appeared to be involved more directly with the PIRA). In summary, one interviewee noted a career path regarding women’s involvement in the conflict whereby young single childless women exhibited significantly more militant involvement in contrast to older married mothers who exhibited less militant (or no) involvement. The progression of young single childless woman to older married mother influenced their decreased involvement in militant activities and a greater focus on community/caring or political/ideological activities.

In terms of the difference between militant involvement and involvement in support activities, the construct of organisational structure was identified as important. One interviewee specified that the woman involved in an active militant role belonged to a cell of five people. This woman was heavily involved in the active role. In comparison, the women included in this repertory grid who were involved in a support role were involved when the conventional army-like structure predominated. In this structure, the women would simply be
called upon to provide auxiliary support to others when necessary, and thus appeared to be involved to a lesser degree in the organisation as a whole.

**Summary of Phase Two Results: Micro-level Factors Important to Women’s Involvement in the Troubles**

Women were identified as engaging in a variety of activities in the Troubles, where these could be classified according to the model of roles developed in Study Two. Thus, the repertory grid interviewees identified 26 women in total who were involved in active militant activities (e.g., kidnapping, planting explosives), support activities (e.g., couriering, smuggling, involvement in Cumann na mBan), ideological activities (e.g., political agitation and activism, fundraising, encouraging participation, carrying messages), and caring activities (e.g., household chores, acting as lookouts). Caring activities were the hardest to identify (as they were throughout this thesis). Several interviewees also identified activities related to community activism, such as looking after children during riots and maintaining community cohesion and morale. These activities identified in the primary data are hypothesised to form part of the caring role as they were rooted in conventional feminine activities.

The important micro-level factors in terms of initial mobilisation were personal and communal experiences of conflict-related violence and brutality, ideological and political commitment, particular personality/psychological characteristics, specific biographical and demographical characteristics, and relational networks and family background. In general, women who mobilised were personally impacted by violence and discrimination, harboured republican or nationalist ideals, were viewed by interviewees as possessing several positive personality characteristics advantageous in a conflict, came from a political family background, and grew up in and/or identified with the social identity of the inhabitants of militarised urban areas of Northern Ireland. In contrast, women who did not mobilise were not impacted as much by violence or discrimination, did not harbour or were not vocal about republican or nationalist political ideals, were generally viewed negatively by interviewees, did
not come from a family where politics were openly discussed, and did not identify with nationalists or the working class.

Furthermore, the micro-level factors most important in influencing type of involvement, or the role that women took once involved, were specific personality features, attitude towards violence, organisational structure, age of the woman, and presence of children in the home. Women in the active role were viewed as more radical and rebellious, more capable of committing violence, possessing greater leadership qualities, more affected by violence and discrimination, and generally young and childless. Women in the support role were viewed as non-violent, not as affected by violence and discrimination, and generally young and childless. Women in the ideological role were viewed as non-violent, generally older, and with less responsibility in the home. Women in the caring role were viewed as more focused on the community and children, personally non-violent, not as affected by violence and discrimination, older and with parenting responsibilities.

Discussion

The purpose of this fourth study was two-fold: first, to test the utility of the thematic model of women’s roles and the quantitative trends established in Part Two of this thesis with regards to refining current understandings of female involvement in the Troubles (phase one), and; second, to test the utility of the model of women’s roles developed in Study Two in understanding the micro-level factors important to women’s involvement in this conflict (phase two). This discussion will focus on the utility of the framework in relation to both these aims through an integrated discussion of the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors relevant to both female mobilisation and roles. Interestingly, mobilisation was primarily related to macro-level and micro-level factors (although in the case study it was most thoroughly examined in phase two which focused on micro-level factors) whilst variance in roles was clearly
related to all three levels of analysis – although there is substantial crossover between these two aspects of female involvement.

**Macro-level, Meso-level, and Micro-level Influences on Female Mobilisation in the Troubles**

There is often little demarcation in the scholarship between mobilisation and role, which can lead to an incomplete or inaccurate account of female involvement in conflict. The framework developed in Part Two of this thesis proved useful in effectively delineating these two elements of female involvement. The framework facilitated the identification of a number of factors in both phases of the case study relevant to female mobilisation in the Troubles. This included, primarily, the macro-level factors of wave of terrorism and world region and the five micro-level factors elicited in the primary data (individual traits and characteristics, personal relationships, biographical and demographical characteristics, experiences of trauma and discrimination, and ideological and/or political commitment).

Wave of terrorism, as the broadest macro-level factor was important for mobilisation in terms of the incumbent socio-political milieu. Whilst the nationalist movement for Irish independence from the United Kingdom had existed for centuries, the civil rights movement – and the violent loyalist and security force response – succeeded in reigniting republicanism in the 1960s. Similar to elsewhere in Europe and North America, the third wave facilitated women’s mobilisation through politicisation and radicalisation as well as provision of a platform for their involvement. Similarly, the liberal social and political European context in combination with the left-wing and primarily secular stance of the PIRA facilitated the involvement of women in the Troubles. Women had a strong presence initially in the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland as organisers, activists and leaders; particularly in nationalist working class areas where the effects of discriminatory policies and a sectarian police force were felt most strongly (Keenan-Thomson, 2010). As violence increased on the streets of Belfast and Derry in the late 1960s, women were
increasingly drawn into the republican movement and the armed struggle in response to the conflict that was materialising in their homes and communities (Aretxaga, 1997; Clarke, 2010; McAuley, 1988). The forced dislocation, often under violent conditions, of many nationalist families effectively created nationalist working class ghettos and women were relied upon to maintain social and community cohesion and morale (Clarke, 2010; Fairweather et al., 1984; Hackett, 2004) which also facilitated their involvement in the caring role. The existence of a specialised auxiliary women’s-only organisation also facilitated women’s mobilisation, particularly into the support role.

One of the most important micro-level factors in female mobilisation garnered from the interviews was personal experience of discrimination and injustice. Similarly, several interviewees claimed that women became involved as they felt the brunt of the violence and brutality in their communities most keenly. Experiences of violence and discrimination, particularly in these early stages of conflict (e.g. Bloody Sunday), were particularly poignant for many of the interviewees. It is important to note the variety of experiences encompassed by this particular micro-level variable – experiences of trauma and discrimination – as expressed by the interviewees, in contrast to the wider literature which often portrays women’s mobilisation as stemming from a single traumatic event. Thus, the civil rights movement succeeded not only in revitalising the republican movement but also in politicising and radicalising many women. This finding highlights the complexity of women’s experiences in conflict whereby women can be both victims and perpetrators/supporters of violence. The notion that there can be clear demarcation between those who are affected by conflict and those who perpetrate violence in conflict does not adequately represent the reality of a conflict situation.

Related to the importance of the third wave is the importance of ideological and political commitment in mobilisation, as identified by the interviewees. On the whole, the interviewees indicated that women who mobilised were politically and ideologically motivated, in contrast to the wider literature in which female motivations are perceived as stemming from personal
or emotional reasons. The interviewees highlighted that the women who were involved in the Troubles believed in the republican cause and were politically active and vocal in addition to being politicised. Significantly feminism was not mentioned as a motivating factor for mobilisation, although feminist belief and mobilisation is commonly linked in the broader scholarship on women’s involvement in conflict (Georges-Abeyie, 1983; Gonzalez-Perez, 2008b; Hasso, 2005; Lobao, 1990). Talbot (2004) noted that a feminist understanding or incorporation of a feminist viewpoint did not appear in the republican movement until the late 1980s (Talbot, 2004), although feminist organisations linked to the nationalist movement had been present in Northern Ireland since the 1970s (Hackett, 2004). Similarly, D’Arcy (1981) reported – in a first-hand account of imprisonment with republican prisoners – that female republican prisoners had a limited knowledge or understanding of feminism. Thus, although the feminist movement was prominent in the third wave era it did not appear to influence female mobilisation in the Provisional republican movement in Northern Ireland.

Similar to the wider literature (Bakker, 2006; Cragin & Daly, 2009; della Porta, 2012; Sageman, 2004, 2008), personal relationships were identified as an important micro-level factor in female mobilisation. Family background and environment was particularly important, perhaps in contrast to other findings regarding female involvement in the Troubles (M. Alison, 2009; Clarke, 2010; McAuley, 1988). However, Alison (2009) also argued that the inclusion of women in nationalist groups is more likely to occur where there is a culture or tradition of heroic myths of female national fighters and patriots – which is certainly the case in Northern Ireland (Cannavan, 1999). Similarly, Jacques and Taylor (2013) found that long-running conflicts exhibited an increased number of activist families, although this was only cited as a motivating factor in approximately half of the cases included in their sample. The findings from this study suggest that, in the context of the Troubles, a family history of engagement with republicanism, a family environment encouraging
republicanism/politicisation, and the involvement of other family members may be an important consideration in female mobilisation.

Consistent with other research on women’s involvement in the Troubles (M. Alison, 2009; Bloom et al., 2012; Clarke, 2010) and the wider literature (Weinberg & Eubank, 1987), the interviewees suggested that particular biographical and demographical characteristics were important in mobilisation. These factors primarily revolved around specific residential locations and/or social identities. Interviewees reported that residing in urban nationalist areas that were more militarised – where these enforced geographic boundaries reinforced social identity and class as well as increased the chances of experiencing violence and discrimination – was important in mobilisation. Other micro-level factors in this regard that have been examined the wider literature, such as age, marriage, existence of children, appeared to be more important in determining role rather than initial mobilisation.

Finally, interviewees identified personality characteristics as important in influencing female mobilisation. Whist the scholarship tends to portray women involved in political and revolutionary conflict as abnormal, the findings from this study indicated that the women who mobilised were viewed as possessing many positive personality traits – far from being viewed as abnormal or unstable, these women were viewed as more admirable than women who were not involved. This finding echoes those from more mainstream political violence research. Della Porta (2012), for example, found that people who were involved in terrorism were often admired and viewed as possessing many positive qualities. However, it is also important to note that the sample of interviewees comprised primarily people from the nationalist community (although one interviewee came from the unionist community and another had not lived in Northern Ireland since young adulthood). The fact that the women who had chosen to be involved in the Troubles were viewed positively may reflect a bias inherent in the sample, as well as the unavoidable pitfalls of research on a conflict where people within the community are heavily invested in the ideology of the respective movements.
Macro-level, Meso-level, and Micro-level Influences on Female Roles in the Troubles

The framework facilitated the identification of a range of factors across both phases of the case study that were important in understanding the different roles of women in the Troubles. This is an area that is seldom the focus of scholarship; however, the findings from this study demonstrated that female involvement in the Troubles, as indicated by the framework, varied substantially according to the three levels of analysis. In particular, the findings with regards to the factors that influenced the roles of women in the Troubles highlighted the interplay between the three levels as well as how female involvement in particular roles can influence changes at the meso-level. In this way, the use of the framework facilitated a more nuanced and holistic understanding of female involvement in the Troubles. Similar to the findings from Part Two of this thesis, the active and ideological role appeared to influence the most variation according to the macro-level and meso-level. At the micro-level there appeared to be greater differentiation between women who were involved in the active role and women involved in the other three roles (i.e. women in the active role were perceived as quite distinct from women involved in the other three roles).

In terms of both the active and ideological role the transition between waves and the effect of this on the meso-level appeared to be particularly important. The beginning of third wave terrorism was particularly important for female involvement in the active role globally as well as specifically within the Troubles. The third wave and its New Left ethos as well as the violent loyalist and state backlash reignited republicanism and particularly the IRA. Importantly, it also gave women a platform to push for active involvement in the republican movement. The third wave manifested in changes at the meso-level, forcing the IRA splinter and facilitating the launch of the new PIRA armed campaign in the 1970s. This increase in violence led to an expanded role for women’s active militant involvement and the number of women interned or imprisoned for militant offences increased throughout the 1970s (Brady et al., 2011; Talbot,
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The introduction of internment in 1971 also led to an increased role for women as they were needed to perform the militant activities conventionally performed by men who were now on the run, hiding, or interned (McAuliffe & Hale, 2010).

At the micro-level, several factors were identified by interviewees as important factors in influencing involvement in the active role. A rebellious and radical nature in combination with leadership qualities was important in facilitating involvement in the active role. Women involved in this role were also perceived to endorse violence or to be capable of committing violence. Women in the active role were also younger and less likely to have children. This is in line with research in the area that has found that women involved in militant capacities are usually young (Bloom et al., 2012; Jacques & Taylor, 2013; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987). In Northern Ireland specifically, Aretxaga (1997) identified that older women found it more difficult to reconcile traditional Catholic notions of gender roles with a newfound politicisation, particularly in the context of marriage to men with traditional ideas about gender roles (although there are exceptions to this trend). Older women may have found it more difficult, then, to participate in the active role. Whilst there are exceptions – the relationship between older women, traditional notions regarding gender, and activism is by no means straightforward – it seems that the general trend in the Troubles was for younger women to participate in the active role whilst older women tended to participate in the ideological or caring role.

The transition between waves was also important in facilitating women’s involvement in the ideological role. Towards the end of wave three, when attention on left-wing secular movements was waning, the Troubles was in danger of turning into a stalemate and the PIRA was forced to revise its strategy and focus. They instigated a less intense but more sustained campaign of violence and re-organised from a traditional army structure to cells, similar to the structure of other fourth wave terrorist groups (Weinberg et al., 2004). In addition Cumann na mBan was dismantled and the ‘best’ women
were officially recruited to the new PIRA cells (Clarke, 2010). This led to a
decrease in female involvement in the active role, although particular women
remained involved in this capacity. Simultaneously, however, attention on the
prison conditions of republicans was growing, driven in large part by women’s
increasing involvement in ideological activities. These women – particularly
mothers of the prisoners – mobilised the nationalist community in support of
prisoners and the prison protests (Aretxaga, 1997). The prison protests,
particularly the hunger strikes, were a critical turning point in republican
strategy, bringing a new focus on political engagement. Women were involved
in a significant capacity in this new political strategy, particularly women
emerging from prisons. Imprisonment afforded women the opportunity to learn
the Irish language, history, and politics (Aretxaga, 1997; Talbot, 2004). Many
women were politicised through their time spent in prison and emerged as
political leaders with an increased understanding and belief in republicanism
(Talbot, 2004). Thus, women’s involvement in the ideological role increased in
wave four. However, this finding also illustrates how women’s involvement can
influence changes at the group/movement meso-level.

There were few factors identified at the micro-level that distinguished
women in the ideological role. These women were perceived as personally non-
vviolent, sometimes childless, and generally older. This perhaps indicates that
women’s involvement in the ideological role varies more according to the
macro-level and meso-level whilst at the micro-level a variety of different
women and experiences are represented. Some interviewees identified that
women in the ideological role were sometimes childless but that many also
participated despite having children. As identified by Hackett (2004) concern for
the future of their families, and particularly children, could drive women onto
the streets, but this same concern – in terms of the impact of potential
reprisals or their own death or imprisonment – could also drive women off the
streets. A recurring theme throughout the Hackett’s oral histories was the
relationship and struggle between activism and family. Similarly, Fairweather et
al (1984) reported the complex relationship between children and activism,
where women were motivated to participate so that their children might have a better life whilst at the same time their activism impacted their children negatively, for example their children were targeted and harassed by security forces and threats towards children utilised during interrogations to pressure women into confessing or revealing information. Similarly, the stories of republican female ex-prisoners contained in Brady et al (2011) attests to these women’s personal struggle reconciling active militant involvement with the effect it had on their children and families. Thus, as noted by Viterna (2006) and Braungart and Braungart (1992) women can participate in a variety of ways in conflict despite significant biographical barriers.

The findings from this study indicated that women’s involvement in the support role is primarily influenced by the meso-level and micro-level, consistent with the quantitative trends established in Part Two. Women appear to have been heavily involved in the support role in the republican movement, primarily as a result of the existence of Cumann na mBan, the female-only auxiliary organisation. The PIRA struggled to reconcile its secular left-wing nationalist/separatist ideology and agenda with the conservative Catholic ideology with which the republican movement is intertwined. This paradox is reflected in the PIRA’s decision to retain Cumann na mBan as a separate support organisation after the split in the third wave, rather than incorporating women into their own organisation (as the more socialist-leaning Official IRA did). Not until the late 1970s did the PIRA officially disband Cumann na mBan and incorporate women into its own ranks on a basis equal with men. However, Clarke (2010) reported that this led to disillusionment with the PIRA on the part of republican women, with many voicing their disapproval at the fact that PIRA no longer considered them necessary to perform gender-based support tasks.

At the micro-level, women who were involved in the support role were perceived as non-violent or as not capable of perpetrating violence. Like women involved in the active role, women in the support role were less likely to have children. However, women of all ages appeared to participate in the
support role, although older women tended to participate through Cumann na mBan whilst younger women tended to participate directly through PIRA. Interviewees also perceived these women to be less personally affected by the conflict (less so than women in the active role).

The caring role was harder to identify in the both phases of data collection (as previously discussed), although it was hypothesised to include conventional feminine activities, such as looking after the children of the community and maintaining community and social cohesion, in addition to the activities included in the model in Study Two, such as performing household chores and acting as a lookout. Interviewees reported that women in the caring role were more focused on the community, personally non-violent, older, and not as deeply affected by the violence of the conflict. The presence of children was also identified as an important consideration; women who had children often chose to support the conflict on the periphery through caring activities rather than participate directly in the active, support, or ideological roles. Indeed, in some cases, the birth of a child was motivation to desist from these more risky roles. There did not appear to be substantial variation in female involvement in the caring role according to either macro-level or meso-level factors, in contrast to the findings from Part Two where female involvement in the caring role increased significantly in wave four. However, as the activities included in the caring role are difficult to ascertain in secondary and archival sources related to these factors, it is difficult to come to a definitive conclusion.

Conclusion

Overall this case study highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of conflict and women’s involvement within it. In this regard, the thematic model of women’s roles and relevant contextual factors established in Part Two of this thesis were demonstrated to be useful in delineating the influential factors on female involvement in the Troubles. The framework facilitated the
systematic examination of female involvement and highlighted the macro-level and meso-level factors that are rarely examined in the scholarship with regards to female involvement in the Troubles. In particular, this case study highlighted the importance of the wave of terrorism and the impact of organisational agenda and strategy and how this, in turn, influenced variation in the involvement of women across the lifespan of the Troubles. Furthermore, this case study examined the individual and context specific micro-level factors relevant to female participation in the Troubles, highlighting how these factors influenced both initial mobilisation and role. Thus, these findings provide initial support for the model of roles and contextual factors developed in Part Two of this thesis. They clearly demonstrate that examining the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level is crucial in gaining a more in-depth and holistic understanding of the involvement of women in conflict beyond common narratives of victimhood and peacemaking.
CHAPTER NINE

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL AND REVOLUTIONARY CONFLICT

The genesis of this doctoral research was in the observation of similarity between the dominant scholarly and policy approaches to women in political and revolutionary conflict. In both contexts, women’s involvement has been understood primarily in stereotypical gendered terms. First and foremost, women are understood to be victims of male-instigated conflict. Whilst women are disproportionately and negatively affected by violence and conflict, the predominant perception of female victimhood has unduly influenced the paradigm of female involvement and violence in conflict. As women have commonly been perceived as victims, their involvement in support of conflict has generally been portrayed as minor and unimportant whilst the unavoidable instances of female violence (e.g. suicide attacks) have typically been dismissed as isolated and abnormal. Furthermore, these instances of female violence have generally been attributed to gender-stereotypical micro-level influences (e.g. coercion, mental instability, personal trauma, personal relationships) rather than broader contextual factors or political/ideological belief. In this way, female agency, responsibility, and even credibility as a belligerent or terrorist is consistently undermined in both research and practice. In practice this has meant that women are rarely seen as legitimate targets of post-conflict processes, particularly DDR programs. In research, this has meant that female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict has generally been treated in an individualised manner with a focus on high impact attacks and high visibility women. Methodologically, it has resulted in a dominance of speculative and anecdotal approaches to research with a scarcity of empirical comparative
research examining population-level trends in female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. On the whole, there has been a lack of theoretical development and refinement and there was no theoretical framework available that adequately accounted for female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.

In light of these observations, the overarching aim of this doctoral research was to develop an empirically-based theoretical framework for understanding and studying women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The first three studies developed the framework by: first, establishing the full spectrum of activities performed by women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict; second, examining the statistical associations between these activities in order to develop a model of conceptual roles, and; third; examining variation in these roles across several macro-level and meso-level contexts. The final stage of the research applied the framework to the Troubles in Northern Ireland in a qualitative case study in order to test its utility in understanding female involvement according to the conflict-specific manifestation of the three levels of analysis. The guiding research questions for this project were:

What specific activities do women undertake in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict?

Do the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict evidence consistent patterns in associations so as to indicate the existence of a typology or model of broader conceptual roles?

How does the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict vary according to a levels of analysis?

These methodological issues are also symptomatic of the difficulties in researching an illegal and subversive phenomenon and can be observed in the broader terrorism and political violence research arena as well.
framework that includes the macro-level, meso-level and micro-level?

This final chapter will discuss the findings of this doctoral research in relation to these three research questions, including how these findings extend the scholarship in the area as well as reflect on the methodological implications. The next section will outline the theoretical framework of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict, including a discussion of the theoretical, research, and practice implications. The following sections will outline the primary limitations and parameters of the theoretical framework and doctoral research as well as propose directions for future research. The final section comprises a summary and conclusion.

**Summary of the Primary Findings**

The findings from this doctoral research clearly demonstrate that the dominant narrative or script of female victimhood and peacemaking in conflict is incomplete. These contemporary approaches do not facilitate an accurately nuanced or holistic understanding of women in political and revolutionary conflict. In contrast to this dominant narrative, the findings from this doctoral research indicate that female involvement is diverse and forms coherent roles at the population level, as opposed to random activities. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that there are several factors, beyond those that have to date been stereotypically proposed, which influence female involvement.

**The Activities that Comprise Female Involvement in Conflict**

The results of Study One clearly and empirically demonstrated that women are involved in a diverse range of activities in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. A sample of almost 500 women who were involved in conflict across a range of contexts participated in a total of 45 distinct activities. These activities included those conventionally thought to constitute participation in conflict (e.g. combat, leadership, suicide bombing) and those
not typically examined in the scholarship (e.g. recruitment, support, propaganda). These results support the argument that women are involved in contemporary conflict in a variety of ways across a range of historical, regional, and organisational contexts. Similarly, the results indicated that whilst women did participate in support activities, their participation in militant activities was not uncommon or isolated (see also Aoláin et al., 2011; Cunningham, 2003; MacKenzie, 2009; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). The results clearly demonstrated that women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in diverse activities that are often not considered in either policy or research. Thus, this study provided initial support for the argument that conventional notions of participation in conflict should be expanded to include both women as actors within conflict and subversive or less commonly-acknowledged activities (Bouta et al., 2005; MacKenzie, 2009).

As reiterated throughout this thesis, the range of female involvement in conflict has been poorly understood (Aoláin et al., 2011; Cragin & Daly, 2009; von Knop, 2007) and generally poorly researched (Cunningham, 2003; Jacques & Taylor, 2009). The majority of research in the area has been at the case or role level, for example exploring the personal histories of female suicide bombers. Previous research was seldom large-scale or conducted at the population level (Dalton & Asal, 2011). The research that examined a range of female involvement in conflict (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Mahan & Griset, 2008) was either descriptive or impressionistic. The full range of activities performed by women had never been empirically established or tested at the population level prior to this doctoral research. However, the results of Study One empirically established the activities that women engage in at the population level, where these activities were both specific and inclusive in nature. Thus, this study captured the spectrum of female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.
The Model of Female Roles in Conflict

The results of Study Two indicated that the activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict exhibited statistical associations consistent with four conceptual roles that women have in this conflict: the active role, indicative of combat and leadership activities; the caring role, indicative of traditional feminine activities; the support role, indicative of covert logistical and operational activities, and; the ideological role, indicative of activities related to propagating the ideology and agenda of the group or movement. Each of the roles in the model consisted of statistically associated activities that had been systematically documented in Study One. Thus, Study Two extends and quantifies the results of Study One – whilst Study One examined the individual frequency of activities within the sample, Study Two examined patterns in these activities across the sample. Thus, this conceptual model is the first model of women’s roles that is based on systematic and rigorous empirical quantitative research that has been built from the ground up. On the whole, this study demonstrated that, rather than activities performed at random, women’s involvement in conflict comprises coherent roles as represented in the model. Furthermore, it confirms that women’s involvement in conflict is not minor or isolated.

Research on women in terrorism and political violence suffers from a lack of empirical studies, theoretical development (Jacques & Taylor, 2009) and population level research (Dalton & Asal, 2011). There have been few empirical trends established in the scholarship (Sjoberg et al., 2011) and only a very small minority of research has focused on establishing or explaining women’s roles in conflict (Jacques & Taylor, 2009). Most research is focused on explaining why women are involved with research seldom examining how women are involved. Previous research (Cragin & Daly, 2009; Mahan & Griset, 2008) was predicated on the assumption that the performance of particular activities by women was indicative of a broader conceptual role within the conflict or extremist group or the conflict more generally. However, women’s roles had never been quantified or empirically established. The results of Study
Two indicate exactly how women are involved in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict and exactly how these activities statistically associate so as to form four conceptual roles – active, ideological, caring, and support.

**Influences on Variation in Female Involvement in Conflict**

The quantitative results of Study Three demonstrated that women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict – conceptualised according to the model of roles – was significantly influenced by two macro-level factors (wave of terrorism and world region) and three meso-level factors (ideological basis, religious orientation, and agenda of the group/movement). These results indicate that factors beyond the gender-stereotypical micro-level commonly proposed in the scholarship influence female involvement in conflict. Overall, the active role and ideological role evidenced the most variability according to these macro-level and meso-level variables, indicating that female involvement in these roles was associated to a greater extent with specific contexts. In contrast, the caring role evidenced minimal variation and the support role the least variation, indicating that women were involved in these two roles fairly consistently across historical, regional, and organisational context. Thus, this study extends the previous two studies by statistically examining population level variation in the established methods of female involvement. In particular, it confirms the descriptive trends from Study One, which indicated that women have been involved in a variety of ways across historical, regional, and organisational contexts and demonstrates exactly how this involvement varies according to these characteristics. These results provide quantitative support for the argument that women’s involvement in conflict is not abnormal but rather the product of both
the context and the individual (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; Utas, 2005; Viterna, 2006).

Previous research seldom examined broader contextual influences on female involvement in conflict. Jacques and Taylor (2009) found that only a small proportion of research focused on environmental enablers for involvement. The majority of research in the area has been focused on the individual micro-level factors in female participation in high impact attacks, where these are commonly presented in a stereotypically gendered manner (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007; West, 2004-2005). These approaches commonly portray female belligerents as influenced by external forces in the immediate environment (exemplified in Bloom’s (2011a) model of individual micro-level factors that influence female involvement; rape, relationships, redemption, revenge, respect). The results of Study Three clearly indicate that research must move beyond these stereotypical narratives or scripts in order to gain a more accurate and holistic understanding of female involvement in conflict. The study also provides an initial indication of the population level trends able to be empirically established and quantified.

Overall, the three studies comprising Part Two of the thesis highlighted the importance of systematic, comparative, empirical, and quantitative research in the area of women in political violence and extremism in establishing an evidence base for theoretical development and refinement (Jacques & Taylor, 2009; Sjoberg et al., 2011). These three studies contribute one of the first large-scale empirical quantitative and comparative studies focused on population level trends in female involvement (see also Jacques & Taylor, 2013). These studies, as a whole, belie dominant notions in the scholarship which portray female involvement in conflict as stemming from victimhood or as minor or abnormal. These studies empirically and quantitatively demonstrate that women perform a diverse array of activities in contemporary political and

96 See also Crenshaw (2000), della Porta (2012), Horgan (2008, 2011), Kruglanski and Fishman (2009), Lafree and Ackerman (2009) for further support for this argument from the mainstream domain of terrorism and political violence research.
revolutionary conflict where these activities form four conceptual roles (active, ideological, caring, and support) and vary across historical, regional, and organisational/movement context.

**Application of the Model and Contextual Factors to the Troubles**

The aim of Study Four was to apply the model (and relevant contextual factors) to a specific conflict (the Troubles in Northern Ireland, 1960s-1998) in order to test its utility in studying and understanding female involvement in an actual conflict. Overall, the results of Study Four demonstrated that the model and contextual factors were useful as a framework in pinpointing macro-level and meso-level factors and examining how these may have influenced female involvement in established ways. Similarly, utilising this framework facilitated the identification of the context-specific manifestation of, and interplay of, these macro-level and meso-level variables. The findings indicated that – consistent with Study Three – women’s involvement in the active and ideological role in the Troubles varied substantially according to the macro-level and meso-level whilst involvement in the support and caring roles was fairly consistent. The transition between waves of terrorism appeared to be particularly important, for example, and manifested in changes at the meso-level. The influence of female involvement, particularly in the ideological role, on changes in meso-level strategy was also highlighted.

The results of Study Four also illustrated the utility of the model in research design and analysis. The second phase of Study Four was designed to elucidate the context and individual specific micro-level factors important to women’s involvement in the Troubles as defined by the model developed in Study Two. Research seldom examines motivations and recruitment pathways (Jacques & Taylor, 2009), particularly in a systematic, empirical, or objective manner. Utilising the model, however, was particularly useful in systematically delineating the factors that were important in influencing initial mobilisation from those important to subsequent method of involvement – two aspects of female involvement that are commonly confounded in the scholarship (Viterna,
Interestingly, whilst female involvement in both the active and ideological role appeared to vary the most according to the macro-level and meso-level factors, female involvement in the active role was highlighted as the most distinct at the micro-level. These results highlight that an examination of micro-level factors in research more generally needs to distinguish between factors relevant to mobilisation and those relevant to different types of involvement. Furthermore, the inconsistencies between the micro-level factors identified in this case study and those identified in the broader scholarship illustrate the importance of the collection of primary data with regards to individual influences on involvement and specifically refutes the validity of generalising such findings across conflict contexts to the normative population (O'Rourke, 2009).

In summary, the findings from Part Three of the thesis demonstrated that the model of women’s roles and contextual influences empirically and quantitatively developed in Part Two were useful in providing a research design and analysis framework for examining female involvement in the Troubles. The findings from Part Two provided empirically based population level trends in differential female involvement in wave of terrorism, the European world region, and left-wing secular nationalist/separatist groups/movement which facilitated an examination of how women were involved in the Troubles and possible reasons for variance in involvement. Furthermore, by examining female involvement across these multiple levels, other important factors were identified, including organisational change and shifts in conflict phases. Finally, the use of the model of women’s roles and the repertory grid technique in research design and analysis facilitated the systematic and consistent collection of primary data related to the micro-level influences on female involvement in multiple ways in the Troubles. More broadly, this study attests to the utility of examining conflict in a systematic and empirical manner. The reliance on case studies, where findings are generalised for the purposes of theory development, is specifically contested. This thesis demonstrates the need for, and utility and potential of, empirical and quantitative research as
well as systematic approaches to qualitative research (such as through the use of the repertory grid technique utilised in Study Four).

A Theoretical Framework of Female Involvement in Contemporary Political and Revolutionary Conflict

The aim of this thesis was to develop and empirically test a theoretical framework for understanding and studying women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. This framework, which is based on the collective empirical findings of this doctoral research, is presented in Figure 9.1. The framework borrows from aspects of the operational framework of gendered violence proposed by Moser (2001) outlined in the introductory chapter. However, whilst Moser’s framework was intended to encompass and explain a broad range of violence and conflict scenarios (i.e. it was related to the occurrence of violence itself) this theoretical framework is specific to the involvement of women in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. The basic theoretical proposition of this framework is that the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level interact to influence the specific activities, and thus roles, that women have in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. In line with other research (e.g. Crenshaw, 2000; Eager, 2008; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009; Victoroff, 2005; Viterna, 2006) it is argued that context – which encompasses a variety of factors as indicated by the multiple levels of analysis – is crucial in the involvement of individuals in conflict; thus, utilising or searching for one explanatory factor limits theoretical and practical understanding of the revolutionary process. In particular, this theoretical framework specifically refutes the focus of much research in the area of women in conflict on stereotypical micro-level explanations for their involvement in terrorism and political violence.
Figure 9.1. An empirically-based theoretical framework for understanding and studying female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict.
The first part of the framework comprises the multiple levels of analysis, including the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level – as utilised by other researchers, including Eager (2008), Mason (1992), and LaFree and Ackerman (2009). These factors, solely and in interaction, influence the type of female involvement (active, caring, ideological, support) presented in the second part of the framework. It is proposed, specifically, that the three levels influence the type of activities that women perform in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict where these activities are indicative of the broader conceptual roles of women in the conflict. The specific activities included in each of the quadrants of the lower part of Figure 9.1 are those that were found to consistently associate in Study Two. Thus, the quadrants containing the activities performed by women replicate the model developed in Study Two, whilst the first part of the framework replicates the findings from Study Three. Aspects of all of the levels (macro-level, meso-level, micro-level) have been empirically – and, in the case of the macro-level and meso-level, quantitatively – demonstrated to influence female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict in this thesis. Based on the findings from Study Three, it should be noted that the three levels potentially influence greater variation in the active and ideological role than in the caring and support roles (where these two roles are performed fairly consistently by women across contexts). Based on the findings from Study Four it is also suggested that the relationship between contextual factors and roles is reciprocal.

The macro-level is related to the broad historical, political, economic, social, and policy factors that influence female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. In Study Three the factors of wave of terrorism and world region were quantitatively demonstrated to influence female involvement, in the form of the four roles presented in the theoretical framework. Wave of terrorism encompasses a historical or temporal element to female involvement, based on the notion of terrorism evolving in specific and identifiable waves across modern history (Rapoport, 2002, 2004; Rasler & Thompson, 2009; Weinberg & Eubank, 2010). World region encompasses the
cultural, social, political, and economic contexts found in different parts of the world, consistent with the comparative regional research of Cunningham (2003) and other research that has also demonstrated that specific aspects of a country’s context may be important in female involvement – a high level of economic development and lower level of women’s social rights (Dalton & Asal, 2011), historical female involvement in revolutions or struggles (M. Alison, 2009; Lobao, 1990), and dependent development, displacement, and poverty (Mason, 1992).

The meso-level is related to aspects of the extremist group or movement, the constituent community, and other conflict-specific factors. In Study Three, the ideological basis (left-wing or right-wing) and religious orientation (religious or secular) of the group or movement as well as the specific agenda, goals, or aims of the group or movement (nationalist/separatist, communist/socialist, nationalist/separatist combined with communist/socialist, racist or Christian-based, Islamist, Islamist combined with nationalist/separatist, and non-specific revolutionary) were demonstrated to influence female involvement.

In specific contexts, other aspects of the macro-level and meso-level aside from those examined in this thesis may become apparent. When this framework was utilised to examine female involvement in the Troubles, for example, government and loyalist response to the civil rights movement and organisational structure of the PIRA were found to be important in women’s mobilisation decisions and in the type of involvement. Dalton and Asal (2011) also found, in a quantitative study, that the size and age of the extremist organisation predicted the deployment of women in violent operations, where larger organisations that had been in existence for longer were more likely to feature women in this capacity. Additional community-specific factors may also be relevant to female involvement, for example whether the constituent community in which the movement or group is based sanctions female involvement and in what roles. In the context of Northern Ireland, for example, the inherent struggle within the PIRA between the publically declared secular
left-wing nationalist/separatist agenda and the conservative nature of the Catholic ideology was an important consideration in the type of activities that were considered appropriate for women.

Finally, the micro-level includes interpersonal and context and individual specific factors important to both women’s initial mobilisation decisions and to the type of involvement they have in the conflict. The generalisability of these micro-level individual factors across conflict contexts is limited (O’Rourke, 2009), particularly when considering the range of female involvement beyond the active role. The scholarship has suggested, for example, that primarily young women participate in conflict (e.g. Bloom et al., 2012; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a; Weinberg & Eubank, 1987; Zedalis, 2008). However, when taking the caring, ideological, and support roles into account, the results from Study Four indicated that women of all ages were involved in the Troubles. Similarly, Alison (2009) compared the qualitative experiences of female combatants in the LTTE with those in the PIRA and found that whilst there were some similarities in motivating factors (e.g. experiences of violence, discrimination, and brutality) there were also significant differences across these contexts, particularly with regards to sexual violence as a motivation for joining.

Hence, the theoretical framework provides empirical and theoretical support to the notions of relational autonomy (M. Alison, 2011; Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007) and/or tactic agency (Utas, 2005). The concepts of relational autonomy and tactic agency, in relation to conflict, encompass the argument that an individual exists within a multifaceted and complex world within which mobilisation decisions are made and participation experienced. Whilst an individual has autonomy and agency, these are relative and continually negotiated/maintained. In this sense, autonomy is “not independent of the gendered social and political contexts of…local and global worlds” (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007, p. 17) and agency is maintained “in relation to a field inhabited with other actors...dependent on specific social situations” (Utas, 2005, p. 407). These phenomena were exhibited in the findings of Study Four whereby the
role that women played in the Troubles was not solely determined by individual choice. Although, these women had both agency and autonomy, their mobilisation decisions and subsequent role were still influenced by global events, conflict developments, organisational/movement ideology, and group strategic/tactical decisions. Focusing solely on micro-level factors would have neglected the influence of historical/temporal, regional, ideological, and organisational elements. At the population level, this phenomenon is demonstrated in the results of Study Three – if the women in the sample had made completely autonomous and agentic decisions regarding involvement, the model would not have varied systematically across the macro-level and meso-level variables. Thus, this framework specifically refutes notions that women in conflict act solely from micro-level influences; there are a variety of factors beyond the individual that may interact or align to enable, encourage, or dissuade mobilisation or involvement in a particular role. Hence, this framework explicitly incorporates the notion that there may be a reciprocal relationship between each level where this may influence outcomes in individual instances. Similarly, individuals in particular roles may influence changes in the three levels, although this was not examined quantitatively in the present research.

This framework has implications for theory, research, and practice in terms of its theoretical formulation of the methods by which women participate in conflict, the contextual factors that influence their involvement, and their pathways into conflict. The primary benefits to theory and research were identified above. At the theoretical level, this framework comprises the empirical findings from this thesis and belies the current narrative of women in conflict that portrays their involvement as stemming from victimhood and, thus, their clear participation as being either minor or abnormal in nature. This framework supports the argument that the predominant notions of female involvement in conflict need to expand to include their violence and support for extremism (see also Aoláin et al., 2011). At the methodological/research level, this framework illustrates the utility and potential of empirical and quantitative research in countering this dominant narrative or script. This framework
provides an empirically based and tested theory by which to design and analyse research on women in conflict. Overall, the theoretical framework is an important initial step in providing an empirically-supported theoretical base that can support systematic research into female involvement in political and revolution conflict as it based on quantitatively-established population level trends but also allows for context and individual specific variation.

However, whilst female involvement in the conflict itself – rather than in conflict transformation or post-conflict processes – was the focus of this thesis, the current international policy arena provided a practical foundation and rationale for this research (as identified in the introductory chapter). Thus, the implications of the research findings for this international policy context, and particularly in relation to DDR programs, will be briefly highlighted next. This is, by necessity of space, only a brief discussion highlighting the primary implications and the limitations of the brevity of this approach are acknowledged; however, the aim is to highlight the potential application of this doctoral research to the international policy for the purposes of future research.

The advantage of this theoretical framework for policy and in practice is that it is not just theoretical – it is based on, and incorporates, empirical and primarily quantitative findings from research on women in conflict around the world. The framework comprises the very specific activities that women perform in conflict at the population level as well as the factors that impact on these activities and, thus, can assist in the development of reasonable expectations regarding if and how women are involved in particular conflicts. In this way, the utilisation of this framework in practice has implications for the development of conflict-related processes, particularly DDR programs, as well as in the design of methods to persuade women out of extremism and extremist groups. As outlined in the introduction, women remain particularly marginalised in the security arena and particularly in the implementation of DDR programs (Aoláin et al., 2011; Baden, 1997; Bouta et al., 2005; Dharmapuri, 2011; Mazurana et al., 2002). DDR programs are a critical element
of the conflict transformation process, where the implementation of these programs often predates any formal pacts or treaties (Aoláin et al., 2011; Ollek, 2007). Aoláin, Haynes, and Cahn (2011) argued, “DDR programs should be utilised as a tool that can effectively enable women to access economic, political, mental, and physical security in the post-conflict environment” (p. 132). Ideally then, DDR programs should recognise the multiple roles that women have in conflict (including as combatants and supporters), be offered to a range of actors involved in conflict (not just highly visible combatants able to produce a weapon), and allow women access to economic benefits and political representation (Aoláin et al., 2011). As highlighted in Chapter One this is not occurring in practice. In a similar vein, Otto (2009) argued that embracing the notion that women can be political actors within the realm of conflict and valid participants in DDR programs:

Disrupts the dominant script of women as the victims of armed conflict by acknowledging a diversity of women’s experience and giving prominence to the importance of women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. This shift from victim to valued contributor disturbs not only the traditional narrative of women’s weakness and vulnerability, and their need for (male/state/military) protection, but is also disruptive of the gendered ways of thinking that have served to legitimate armed conflict (p. 17).\footnote{This claim is consistent with the argument contained in this thesis; that research and practice must look beyond the gender stereotypes of women as victims or peacemakers. Otto (2009) argued that such an approach is embodied in SCR 1325, although she also acknowledged the way in which this document confirms and propagates the gender stereotype of women as naturally peaceful – similar to the argument alluded to in the introductory chapter (e.g. Charlesworth, 2008; Kouvo & Levine, 2008; Lockett, 2008).}

Unfortunately the ideal of these objectives with regards to DDR programs and other post-conflict process are rarely achieved in reality. The
peace negotiation phase is usually dominated by men and elites with the result that the DDR programs implemented in practice privilege male combatants as the ‘natural’ recipients, propagating gender inequalities already present in society and cementing gender inequality in access to post-conflict resources and support (Aoláin et al., 2011; MacKenzie, 2009). The failure to incorporate women into DDR programs – usually the first stage of security sector reform – undermines the objective of achieving long-term peace from the outset (Aoláin et al., 2011; Dharmapuri, 2011; Ollek, 2007). The inclusion of women in peace negotiations does not, of course, ensure that women’s participation in DDR programs will occur; however, it does increase the probability that gender-sensitive provisions may be made for women (Bouta et al., 2005; Ollek, 2007). Furthermore, the inclusion in these political processes of female combatants and other women who participated in a support capacity may increase the chances of the specific needs of this group of women being recognised and more adequately addressed throughout the post-conflict process (Aoláin et al., 2011; Farr, 2008). Research has suggested that women continue to be involved in conflict in a variety of ways if they are excluded from these processes (Anderlini & Conaway, 2007; Aoláin et al., 2011; Dharmapuri, 2011) – the findings from this thesis would support that research.

A key reason why women are excluded from these political processes and DDR programs is the dominant narrative of female victimhood (see also Aoláin et al., 2011; Bouta et al., 2005; Charlesworth, 2008; MacKenzie, 2009; Ollek, 2007; Utas, 2005). International initiatives have largely neglected the role of women as belligerents or supporters of conflict and, thus, their needs – not just as victims – but as current and former perpetrators and supporters of political and revolutionary violence. As argued by both Aolain (2011) and Otto (2009), DDR programs have the potential to enable agencies and the women themselves to disrupt the dominant conflict script that designates them as

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98 Where policies and legislation that positively address women’s issues contribute to a reduction in conflict and terrorism (see, for example, Caprioli, 2000, 2005; Caprioli et al., 2007; Robison, 2010).
Part Four, Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Discussion

victims. Similarly, as identified previously, the theoretical framework developed in this doctoral research has the potential to assist in disrupting this dominant conflict script by empirically demonstrating exactly how women participate in conflict beyond victimhood and how this may be expected to vary according to the conflict context and the actors involved. This research, as reflected in the framework, clearly and unequivocally demonstrates that women are involved as militant actors in, and supporters of, a range of conflicts around the world. Similarly, the results from this doctoral research indicate that women are often involved in activities that maintain and nurture conflict, animosity, and violence in the community and that they are vital in ensuring the maintenance of extremist networks – it is crucial to recognise and address this type of involvement if conflict transformation is to succeed (Aoláin et al., 2011; Robison, 2010). Additionally, as outlined in the introductory chapter, some scholars (MacKenzie, 2009; Parashar, 2011b) have argued that the designation of women as victims or as primarily filling unimportant and auxiliary support positions has limited their perceived admissibility to DDR programs as well as to political peace and security processes due to the perception that they have not participated as ‘true combatants’ in the conflict.

The findings from this research question the prevalent notions regarding the activities that are considered to constitute combatant status for women in conflict. Problematically, the conception of what activities constitute status as a combatant or soldier is different in practice for men and women (Bouta et al., 2005; MacKenzie, 2009). The conception of a male soldier or combatant typically includes a wider range of activities aside from participating in battles, such as courierring, communications and intelligence gathering. In contrast, these same activities, if performed by a woman, are generally considered to be minor support tasks. Bouta, Frerks, and Bannon (2005), in a report published by the World Bank, recommended widening the definition of female combatants within policy documents to include women who act in support positions or who are forced to provide sexual services. This framework represents the diverse array of activities that may be considered to constitute participation in conflict,
and perhaps combatant status, for women. This is not to suggest that this thesis and/or the proposed theoretical framework will solve all the gender-related problems in the international conflict-related policy arena; however, it could go some way to providing an evidential basis for the inclusion of women in this arena.

Consistent with the overarching aim of this doctoral research, an empirically-based theoretical framework for understanding and studying female involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict was developed. This framework incorporates three levels of analysis – the macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level – and how the interplay between these levels influences the specific activities that women perform in conflict and, thus, the conceptual roles that they could be said to hold. Importantly, all aspects of this framework were based on empirical findings and primarily quantitative analysis. Overall, the framework has implications for theory, research and practice and primarily in relation to countering the dominant script or narrative of female involvement in contemporary conflict.

**Limitations**

This section will briefly revisit the limitations of this research; however, greater detail is contained within the relevant chapters. The primary consideration with regards to limitations is the use of secondary data and the effect on the results. The inherent issues with secondary data were manifested in the form of the low frequencies of specific activities (see Chapter Five), which is an issue when considering that the smallest space analysis (see Chapter Six) – utilised to develop the model of women’s roles – is based upon the co-occurrence of variables in the cases analysed. These low frequencies can be attributed to the broad yet specific range of activities that were necessarily documented in each individual case of female involvement. For the purpose of developing a valid theoretical framework, a large number of cases were required for the sample, where these cases, in turn, represented the
diverse activities engaged in across a range of different conflict contexts. As discussed more extensively in the methodology chapter, collecting secondary data was the most appropriate choice given the research questions and purpose of this thesis (collecting primary data on this large scale would be difficult and hugely time-consuming). However, relying upon secondary sources to report the activities that women engaged in is potentially problematic given the criticisms of the scholarship in the area (i.e. the focus on violent activities and the general under-recognition of support activities). To address these issues, reliable secondary sources that reported in-depth primary data were utilised, data collection was systematic and rigorous, and sources were cross-referenced where appropriate. However, the low frequencies of activities (see Chapter Five), as well as the generally low structural coherence values (KR 20 values) for each of the themes (see Chapter Six) attest to these issues.

This should not, however, detract from the importance of this research. This is the first theoretical framework developed regarding female involvement in political and revolutionary conflict. It is based on rigorous and systematic quantitative research and has been empirically tested using both secondary and primary data. Importantly, the theoretical framework is, at this stage, an initial theoretical proposition that requires further research and possibly refinement. Such future research could consist of more extensive work to add data to the current dataset, for example sourcing more information on cases (perhaps by travelling to the specific locale in order to collect data unavailable off-site, as was undertaken for Study Four, and/or conducting interviews with women in the sample where possible). More generally, the inherent limitations of secondary data should not negate its use in empirical or quantitative research. Empirical research is critical in clarifying observational and qualitative trends and for making population level inferences; thus, it is crucial for theory development and refinement. Secondary data can provide the large sample sizes required to make population inferences. The use of secondary data for this purpose, however, requires appropriate awareness and acknowledgement of
its limitations as well as appropriate statistical analysis (Jacques & Taylor, 2009).

**Directions for Future Research and Work**

This section will outline some directions for future research with regards to both refining and extending the theoretical framework and exploring some of the implications of the framework for practice. An important avenue for future research with regards to refining the theoretical framework involves exploring the influence of other contextual factors. In a study that has been utilised extensively throughout this thesis, Dalton and Asal (2011) found that organisational size and age as well as level of economic development and women’s social rights predicted the deployment of women in violent operations; however, their analysis could be extended to examine the effect of these factors on other forms of women’s involvement (i.e. in the caring, support, or ideological role). Furthermore, additional case studies, similar to Study Four, could be undertaken in order to examine if and how the theoretical propositions contained in the framework manifest in the reality of other conflicts. Such case studies could also indicate additional contextual factors and, in particular, those micro-level factors important in specific contexts.

An important avenue for future research is how the theoretical framework could be utilised in a broad spectrum of counter-terrorism measures. This thesis was focused primarily on informing the theoretical foundations for research on female involvement in conflict; however, the findings do have important practical implications. At this stage the primary practical contributions of this research are to education and training for government and security personnel, media outlets, policy makers, and those in the tertiary education sector. Throughout this thesis it has been consistently reiterated that in these sectors there is a lack of information regarding women’s involvement in political violence and terrorism. Cunningham (2007) specifically examined female involvement in the context of counter-terrorism.
and concluded that; “One of the most significant advantages held by female terrorists is that their potential is denied, ignored, and diminished and as a result they are almost always unanticipated, underestimated, and highly effective” (p. 122). She found that this was exacerbated by the shortsightedness and denial of relevant officials and agencies with regards to women in extremism. In order to address these criticisms, the findings presented in this thesis could be used to design educational and training programs for relevant personnel to encourage a more nuanced and holistic understanding of women’s involvement in conflict – not only that it exists and the specific forms it takes, but how it varies according to macro, meso, and micro levels of interest.

Importantly, such training programs would encourage a more holistic view of conflict in general – that it is not simply comprised of violent acts but is sustained by many activities that are often overlooked and performed by women. If large-scale de-radicalisation is to be achieved, it must focus on these activities in the community such as ideological production, practical support, and caring acts, usually performed by women. Training programs incorporating the findings from this thesis could inform government personnel and policy makers who may be more concerned with macro and meso factors (i.e. countries, institutions, groups/movements) rather than personal factors. The findings from this thesis indicate how women’s involvement varies according to different countries and, thus, where governments may find greater benefit in focusing their resources. If governments were considering intervening in a conflict in another country they could utilise the findings from this research (outlined in Chapter Seven) in order to devise a variety of effective initiatives aside from military force. Taking the Middle East as a specific and topical example, this doctoral research suggests that women are heavily involved in the Middle East in propagating the ideology of the conflict and encouraging recruitment. The Australian government may gain benefit by focusing their resources on women’s involvement in these ideological activities in the Middle East as opposed to just concentrating on the more traditional security efforts.
and DDR programs to “force” de-radicalisation. Such an investment may not reduce conflict in the short-term, but would contribute to a reduction of generalised radicalisation if the conflict narrative can be changed through alternative stories told by influential female figures in the community. Initiatives could include encouraging alternative stories of the conflict in the community through the provision of a range of alternative conflict narratives and sources of alternative information in easily accessible ways, shutting down radical publications and websites run by women, targeting propaganda distribution channels, providing safe shelters where people can go who wish to escape recruitment efforts, and partnering with local organisations that are trusted within the target communities and who are already countering extremist ideologies.

Understanding how women are involved in conflict in different countries and movements provides an evidence-base for more effective and efficient resource allocation and opportunities for partnering with local gatekeepers or community-based organisations. Women Without Borders, for instance, devised a program called Sisters Against Violent Extremism or SAVE which is the “first research based female counter-terrorism platform” (from their website http://www.women-without-borders.org/aboutus/). SAVE educates and empowers women around the world, particularly mothers, to counter extremism in their families and communities. This presents a particularly powerful way to harness one of the influential roles of women for prevention. Government personnel and policy makers could conceivably expand on initiatives such as these already on-going in the Middle East and in local communities of migrants. The key to these initiatives countering the ideological activities would be that the information and stories must come from the women themselves and so any initiatives must involve working collaboratively with women in the community.

However, it is also recognised – based on the findings – that women’s roles are varied and can include activities that are not dissimilar from men. Women should, therefore, not be excluded from conventional DDR programs, although these conventional DDR programs require expansion in order to be
inclusive of active female belligerents - as noted by others (e.g. Aolain, Haynes & Cahn, 2011; Dharmapuri, 2011; MacKenzie, 2009; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; McKay, 2004). Additional eligibility criteria to simply possession of a weapon or identification of belligerent status by a male should be implemented in DDR programs (e.g. provision of uniforms or other identification, strategic intelligence, or other fighting paraphernalia such as IEDs). Other research has demonstrated that when women have been effectively incorporated into DDR programs they have been able to provide valuable intelligence on hidden weapons caches and typical travel routes (Anderlini & Conaway, 2007; Dharmapuri, 2011). Additional provisions should be made for female combatants (e.g. separate demobilisation camps, specialist health personnel, education and training programs that recognise and address the additional needs that female combatants have reintegrating into society, increasing the social acceptance of female combatants through public education and information). Provisions such as these, which recognise the role of women in active violence, will increase the demobilisation of female combatants, reduce the likelihood of their continued participation in violence, and contribute to a more peaceful society in the long-term.

As there are long-standing issues with research translating into practice in the area of terrorism and conflict a productive avenue of future work would be to develop collaborative partnerships with relevant government personnel and policy makers. This could include collaborative training programs and ongoing workshops where practical initiatives targeting women in contemporary conflicts of interest could be devised based on a combination of practical expertise and current evidence-based research. In this way, the findings of this thesis support the intent of the Women and Terrorist Radicalisation (2013) report published by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This document emphasised the involvement of women in extremism as well as their importance to counter-extremism efforts. The framework produced in this thesis could facilitate these efforts by providing an evidence-base for the prediction of how women are likely to be involved in particular conflicts (based
on the contextual factors). Importantly, this thesis clearly demonstrated that no decision to participate in conflict takes place in isolation – there are factors beyond the individual that influence decisions to participate (e.g. political and social factors) and these factors need to be addressed by governments in the long-term if a re-occurrence of conflict is to be prevented. This may include addressing factors such as access to education and housing as well as facilitating legitimate political and social outlets for expressing grievances and addressing discriminatory practices.

In contrast to government personnel and policy makers, those in the media or tertiary education sectors may be more interested in the micro level in relation to women in conflict (i.e. the more individual factors important in women’s involvement in political violence and terrorism). The findings from this thesis could be used to devise training programs for media personnel who report on conflict (e.g. foreign correspondents) and particularly those who are interested in women in these conflicts. If media personnel are properly informed by evidence-based research they may be less likely to report women’s involvement in a manner that perpetuates gendered understandings of conflict. They may be better equipped, for example, to look at a wider variety of factors in women’s involvement beyond personal tragedy, they may ask more questions about women’s ideological and political beliefs, and may start to link individual involvement with meso and macro factors (e.g. group ideology, government reprisals, historical and regional context). They may also begin to question their gendered assumptions about women’s violence and start to look beyond female suicide bombers to women who are more hidden in conflict who make a substantial contribution to long-running conflict and violence. Through more informed media reporting, the general public may also come to a better understanding of women’s involvement in conflict, thus also contributing to readily available alternative narratives of conflict.

With regard to the tertiary education sector, the empirical evidence-based findings from this thesis could be incorporated into several relevant programs (e.g. journalism, women’s studies, international relations, security
studies, political science, international law, peace studies). There is a poor understanding of women in conflict in the tertiary education sector where women are primarily understood as victims of conflict. This is problematic as this sector is responsible for training the next generation of researchers, journalists, government officials, policy makers, and international lawyers. A holistic understanding of how women are involved in different conflicts in this next generation is crucial if meaningful change for women is to be achieved. Thus, the findings from this thesis – particularly the theoretical model – could be incorporated as a module in these tertiary courses. Students could be required to conduct their own small case studies of different conflicts using the theoretical model in order to understand female involvement (as per Study Four of this thesis).

Thus, the findings from this research clearly indicate that there is no blanket solution to countering extremism or women’s involvement in it. In contrast, the findings demonstrate that there are a variety of contextual and individual factors that influence women’s varied involvement and, by extension, that any solutions proposed need to take account of these factors. It will be important in the future to look towards ways in which these theoretical understandings can translate into policy and practice. It is hoped that this research can act as a springboard to facilitate meaningful collaborative relationships with relevant agencies and organisations in the conflict arena in order to devise practical and effective interventions to assist women in conflict situations globally.

Conclusion

The overarching aim of this thesis was to empirically develop a theoretical framework for studying and understanding women’s involvement in contemporary political and revolutionary conflict. This framework proposes that a variety of macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level factors interact to influence women’s involvement in four conceptual roles (active, caring,
ideological, support) where these roles represent a number of specific activities. This framework was derived from quantitative empirical research and was demonstrated to be operationally useful at the population, conflict, and individual level. The findings from this research clearly demonstrate that the one-dimensional focus on women as victims of conflict does not portray an adequately nuanced or holistic picture. Research and practice must move past the reliance on gender-based stereotypes in order to develop an accurate theoretical understanding of women’s involvement in political and revolutionary conflict as well as effective conflict interventions and transition processes that adequately incorporate women.
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APPENDIX B: UPDATE TO JACQUES AND TAYLOR (2009) STUDY

As an extension of Jacques and Taylor’s (2009) study which included 54 published outputs from the 1980s to 2009, a further 22 empirical research outputs focusing on female terrorism were found to have been published between 2009 and 2014. These included 10 articles, 10 books or book chapters, and two PhD theses. These research outputs represented those to which access was readily available and those that reported empirical research (i.e. work which systematically utilized a particular methodology in order to generate knowledge in the form of findings or results) and excluded theoretical papers, policy discussion papers, reflective pieces, essays, media reports, and literature reviews. On the whole the trends identified by Jacques and Taylor (2009) were found to continue into 2009-2014, although there are indications that the quality of research is increasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Source</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>15 (68.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>8 (36.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method of analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative (no numerical analysis)</td>
<td>18 (81.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency or descriptive analysis</td>
<td>7 (31.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential analysis</td>
<td>4 (18.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C: CODING DICTIONARY

Table C.1.  
*Coding dictionary, including case variables and role behaviour variables*

### Case Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro-level codes</th>
<th>Code definition</th>
<th>Coding Category</th>
<th>Category definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World region</td>
<td>Where the group/movement to which the case was affiliated was based or where the case joined the group/movement in cases of transnational groups/movements.</td>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Northern, Southern and Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>Southern and South-Eastern Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Eastern, Middle, Northern, and Western Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>South and Central America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>Western Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>United States, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave of terrorism</td>
<td>Particular historical and socio-political period in which the group or movement to which the case was affiliated originated.</td>
<td>Wave three</td>
<td>Groups or movements that formed between 1960 and 1979.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wave four</td>
<td>Groups or movements that formed after 1979.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meso-level codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Coding Categories</th>
<th>Coding definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological basis</td>
<td>Ideology endorsed by the group/movement to which the case is affiliated.</td>
<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>Ideology that is liberal, radical and/or reforming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>Ideology that is conservative and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious orientation</td>
<td>Extent to which a religious ideology is endorsed by the group/movement to which the case is affiliated.</td>
<td>Religious reactionary. Some form of commitment to a particular religious agenda.</td>
<td>Secular No religious commitment or platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political orientation</td>
<td>The agenda and focus of the group/movement to which the case is affiliated.</td>
<td>International Political focus is related to imperialism, capitalism, Western culture or globalisation.</td>
<td>Domestic Political focus is localised within the state, economy or social structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals/agenda/aims</td>
<td>Specific goals of the group/movement to which the case is affiliated.</td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist Freedom from state constraints by way of separation and either the creation of a new community/state or joining with a different community/state.</td>
<td>Communist/socialist Marxist/Leninist goals (e.g. overthrow capitalism, creation of socialist system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and communist/socialist Separatist and/or nationalist goals in combination with a communist or socialist aims,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Coding Dictionary

Racist/Christian-based Goals based on Christian or racially based goals.

Islamist Goals based on fundamental or extreme interpretations of Islam (e.g. creation of an Islamic state and eradication of non-believers).

Nationalist/separatist and Islamist Separatist and/or nationalist goals in combination with Islamist goals above.

Non-specific revolutionary Focused on overthrowing an existing government through use of violence but with no clear goal alignment with any of the above.

Role Behaviour Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable (Cohen's Kappa)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Proposed role</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chores (.690)*</td>
<td>Performs household chores (e.g. cooking, cleaning).</td>
<td>Sympathiser</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse (1.000)*</td>
<td>Performs nursing and medical duties.</td>
<td>Sympathiser</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex partner (.945)*</td>
<td>Involved in sexual relationships with male group members – forced or consensual.</td>
<td>Sympathiser</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit res legit (1.000)*</td>
<td>Recruits resources through legitimate means (e.g. purchasing vehicles for use in an operation, renting safe houses).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit res force (1.000)*</td>
<td>Recruits resources through illegitimate means (e.g. stealing a vehicle for use in an operation, bank robberies).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spy (not coded)</td>
<td>Passes on privileged information in order to support general operational, strategic and/or logistical decisions (e.g. a bank clerk may pass on confidential information).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intell gatherer (.656)*</td>
<td>Collects intelligence with regards to a specific operation or attack (e.g. reconnaissance)</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics (.845)*</td>
<td>Provides strategic logistical and operational support (e.g. identification of safe travel routes, logistical support for specific operations).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide res (.727)*</td>
<td>Provides personal resources to the group or specific members (e.g. money, hiding places, shelter).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger (.789)*</td>
<td>Carries messages between operatives.</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistician (protector) Cragin and Daly (2009)

Logistician (courier, protector) Cragin and Daly (2009)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decoy (.1000)</strong></td>
<td>Utilised as a diversion or distraction during an operation (e.g. escorts suicide bomber, distracts security official).</td>
<td>Spy</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smuggler (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Smuggles (e.g. smuggles weapons away from an operative after an attack, smuggles weapons across security checkpoint).</td>
<td>Logistician (courtier)</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courier (.692)</strong></td>
<td>Transports resources between group members, not in a hidden capacity (as in smuggling above).</td>
<td>Logistician (courtier)</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraiser (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Raises funds to support a cause or group.</td>
<td>Logistician (courtier)</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lure (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Entices or attracts a target for operational purposes (e.g. feigns interest in security official in order to lead into an attack).</td>
<td>Logistician (courtier)</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fighter (.820)</strong></td>
<td>Engages in urban or rural battles/skirmishes.</td>
<td>Warrior</td>
<td>Mahan and Griset (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warrior leader (1.000)</strong></td>
<td>Commander in combat situations or of a battalion/cell.</td>
<td>Operational leader</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suicide bomber (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Engaged in a successful or attempted suicide attack.</td>
<td>Suicide bomber</td>
<td>Cragin and Daly (2009)</td>
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</table>
### Appendix C: Coding Dictionary

<table>
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<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Author/Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Propaganda</strong> (1.000)*</td>
<td>Runs web sites/public events or publishes material that encourages others to join the cause or group.</td>
<td>Added by Jacques and Taylor (2009) to Mahan and Griset’s typology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitator</strong> (.789)*</td>
<td>Recruits new members personally through previous or created relationships.</td>
<td>Recruiter (propagandist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indoctrinate children (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Teaches/narrates or directly indoctrinates children with the ideology of the group/cause.</td>
<td>Recruiter (facilitator)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical conscience (not coded)</strong></td>
<td>Passes on the story of the conflict and extremist ideology to future generations through narration.</td>
<td>Recruiter (historical conscience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideology</strong> (not coded)</td>
<td>Provides ideology and strategic worldview for group (e.g. through writing manifestoes).</td>
<td>Dominant force (strategic visionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong> (not coded)</td>
<td>Provides practical leadership for group or sections of the group (e.g. allocation of group resources).</td>
<td>Dominant force (political vanguard (central committee member))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong> (not coded)</td>
<td>Provides strategic direction for group.</td>
<td>Dominant force (political)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The codes are not specified in the text provided.*
### Motivation (not coded)

Provides generalised motivation for participating in the group or continuing the struggle.

**Source:** Mahan and Griset (2008)

### Political official (not coded)

Participates in a legitimate political forum but is known to be a member of (or associated with) the group or is involved in a political party that is known to be associated with the group.

**Source:** Cragin and Daly (2009)

---

#### Variables developed from other research

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<tr>
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<th>Definition</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage participation (1.000)*</td>
<td>Encourage family and peers to participate in the group or conflict.</td>
<td>Von Knop (2007; 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (1.000)*</td>
<td>General administration tasks (e.g. financial administration, banking, record keeping).</td>
<td>Von Knop (2007; 2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage own (.690)*</td>
<td>Married to or partnered with a member of the group; of personal volition.</td>
<td>Ismail (2006)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Von Knop (2007; 2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marriage family (not coded)</td>
<td>Marriage to group member organised/instigated by family member and/or for strategic or tactical purposes.</td>
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#### Data driven coding categories

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<td>Trainer (.727)*</td>
<td>Responsible for indoctrination and/or training of recruits</td>
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<td>Hostage (not coded)</td>
<td>Participates in hostage-taking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skilled work (1.000)*</td>
<td>Engages in skilled work for the group (e.g. mechanic, bomb construction).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murder (not coded)</td>
<td>Participates in organised murder, usually an assassination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kidnapping (1.000)</td>
<td>Participates in kidnapping of targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IED (1.000)</td>
<td>Plants or is responsible for detonating incendiary devices in an attack or operation.</td>
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<td>Camp manager (.789)*</td>
<td>Responsible for the daily running of the camp/base.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jailbreak (not coded)</td>
<td>Participates in jailbreak operations (either internally or external located).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lookout (.634)*</td>
<td>Guard, scout, or lookout for group or on specific operations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founder (not coded)</td>
<td>Founding member of the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hijack (not coded)</td>
<td>Participates in a hijacking (e.g. of an aeroplane).</td>
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<td>Spiritual duties (1.000)*</td>
<td>Performs a spiritual function within the group/movement (e.g. leads religious ceremony before battle).</td>
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<td>Arson (not coded)</td>
<td>Participates in intentional arson (e.g. starts a fire in a department building).</td>
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<td>Communications (.727)*</td>
<td>Responsible for the technological communications system (e.g. radio communications).</td>
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*Significant at $p < .001$
## APPENDIX D: PRELIMINARY DATA CHECKING RESULTS

Table D.1  
*Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the world region variable.*

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* Significant at p < .001.
** Significant at p < .05.
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* Significant at $p < .001$.
** Significant at $p < .01$.
*** Significant at $p < .05$. 

Table D.2
Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the wave of terrorism variable

Table D.3
Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the group/movement ideology variable.

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<th>Tests of variance</th>
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<td>Kurtosis (S.E)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>215</td>
<td>4.583 (.166)</td>
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<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>3.423 (.188)</td>
<td>18.207</td>
</tr>
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<td>Left-wing</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>3.393 (.166)</td>
<td>20.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1.989 (.188)</td>
<td>10.580</td>
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<td>215</td>
<td>2.813 (.166)</td>
<td>16.946</td>
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<td>Right-wing</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2.983 (.188)</td>
<td>15.867</td>
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</table>

* Significant at $p < .001$.
** Significant at $p < .05$. 
Table D.4

*Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the group/movement religious orientation variable.*

| Theme | Religious orientation | Cell size (n) | Skewness (S.E) | Skewness z-score | Kurtosis (S.E) | Kurtosis z-score | Shapiro-Wilk | Variance | Levene | Levene | F_{MAX} |
|-------|------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Caring | Secular                | 300          | 3.035 (.141)   | 21.525           | 9.206 (.281)   | 32.762           | .405*        | .008      | .037   | 1.142  |         |
|        | Religious              | 140          | 3.044 (.205)   | 14.849           | 10.500 (.407)  | 25.799           | .430*        | .007      |        |        |         |
|        | Religious              | 140          | 2.078 (.205)   | 10.137           | 7.754 (.407)   | 19.052           | .711*        | .006      |        |        |         |
| Active  | Secular                | 300          | 2.925 (.141)   | 20.745           | 12.063 (.281)  | 42.929           | .690*        | .011      |        |        | 4.588***| 2.200   |
|        | Religious              | 140          | 1.955 (.205)   | 9.537            | 4.372 (.407)   | 10.742           | .705*        | .005      |        |        |         |
| Support | Secular                | 300          | 2.578 (.141)   | 18.284           | 7.180 (.281)   | 25.552           | .503*        | .007      |        | 9.328**| 1.750   |
|        | Religious              | 140          | 3.054 (.205)   | 14.898           | 11.834 (.407)  | 29.076           | .434*        | .004      |        |        |         |

*Significant at p < .001.  
**Significant at p < .01.  
***Significant at p < .05.*
Table D.4
Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the group/movement political orientation variable.

<table>
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<th>Tests of variance</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skewness (S.E)</td>
<td>Skewness z-score</td>
<td>Kurtosis (S.E)</td>
<td>Kurtosis z-score</td>
<td>Shapiro-Wilk</td>
<td>Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
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<td>205</td>
<td>4.392 (.170)</td>
<td>25.835</td>
<td>20.513 (.338)</td>
<td>60.689</td>
<td>.249*</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.841 (.198)</td>
<td>19.399</td>
<td>15.933 (.394)</td>
<td>40.439</td>
<td>.344*</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2.644 (.170)</td>
<td>15.553</td>
<td>10.474 (.338)</td>
<td>30.988</td>
<td>.636*</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.370 (.198)</td>
<td>6.919</td>
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<td>5.421</td>
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<td>.004</td>
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<tr>
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<td>International</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2.922 (.170)</td>
<td>17.188</td>
<td>11.359 (.338)</td>
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<td>150</td>
<td>2.216 (.198)</td>
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<td>7.543 (.394)</td>
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<td>.007</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.990 (.198)</td>
<td>15.101</td>
<td>10.223 (.394)</td>
<td>25.947</td>
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</table>

* Significant at $p < .001$.  
** Significant at $p < .01$.  
*** Significant at $p < .05$.  
Table D.5
Results of preliminary data checks for normality and variance for the group goals variable.

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<th>Kurtosis (S.E)</th>
<th>Kurtosis z-score</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Levene</th>
<th>$F_{MAX}$</th>
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<td>13.100 (.459)</td>
<td>28.540</td>
<td>.329*</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.224*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communist/socialist</td>
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<td>4.745 (.236)</td>
<td>20.106</td>
<td>22.584 (.467)</td>
<td>48.360</td>
<td>.237*</td>
<td>.007</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nationalist/separatist and Islamist</td>
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<td>12.146</td>
<td>11.830 (.595)</td>
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<td>.417*</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<td>.018</td>
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<th>10.948</th>
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<td>Non-specific revolutionary</td>
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</table>

* Significant at $p < .001$.
** Significant at $p < .01$.
*** Significant at $p < .05$. 
APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

The Role of Women in Political and Revolutionary Conflict

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Who is conducting the research?  
Senior Investigator  
Professor Mark Kebbell  
ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security  
School of Applied Psychology  
Contact Phone: +617 3735 3353  
Contact Email: m.kebbell@griffith.edu.au

Research Team  
Ms Lauren Vogel  
ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security  
School of Applied Psychology  
Contact Phone:  
- Australia (permanent): +617 3735 1041  
- Sep 2012 – January 2013: 07512023836  

Contact Email: lauren.vogel@griffithuni.edu.au
**Why is the research being conducted?**
This research is being conducted in order to explore how and why women participate in political and revolutionary conflict around the world. The key aim is to establish an evidence-based typology that could be a basis for the more consistent, effective and meaningful incorporation of women in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict processes. This project is being conducted at Griffith University in Australia for a Doctorate of Philosophy.

**What does participation in this project involve?**
Participation will involve a structured interview that will take approximately one hour to complete. The interview will involve working with the researcher to construct a grid that represents your own ideas and beliefs about women and political violence. You will be asked to consider women you know who have participated in various ways in the conflict in Northern Ireland and then systematically compare these people by thinking about ways in which they are similar and different. This structured interview allows for great precision; however you are able to choose how much detail to go into. The interview will not cover any personal participation you may have had in this conflict and you will not be asked to identify the people that you discuss.

**What is the basis for participant selection?**
You will have been advised about this research project by somebody that you know. You must be over the age of 18 to participate in this research.

**What are the benefits of this research?**
This research may assist in the more effective and meaningful incorporation of women into conflict resolution and prevention and post-conflict processes which will benefit women who have been involved in conflict as well as the wider community in terms of more effective transition processes and reduced violence in the community.

**What are the risks?**
Due to the nature of the topic, the issue of illegal activity may arise. Thus there is some risk that the researcher may be legally compelled to disclose information provided during the interview. If you choose to participate in this research, this risk can be minimised if you do not disclose the specifics of any illegal activity or any identifying information about the people that you discuss. It is important that if you choose to participate in the interview, you do not disclose this type of information. The researcher will not ask you to disclose this information. Furthermore the researcher will only disclose information collected during the interview if legally required to do so by subpoena. More information can be found in the next section; 'Is participation confidential?'
There is also a low level risk that you may experience psychological harm. Although the interviews are not focused on personal experiences of the conflict, potentially distressing memories may arise. If you experience any psychological distress after this interview you may contact the counselling service below for free counselling (excluding the cost of the call).

Samaritans
http://www.samaritans.org/
Phone: 08457 90 90 90
Samaritans is non-sectarian and provides 24-hour emotional support to anyone experiencing distress, despair or suicidal thought.

Is participation confidential?
As a participant, you will be asked to think about people that you know who were involved in the conflict in Northern Ireland; however these people will remain anonymous (i.e. the researcher will not ask you to disclose any identifying information such as names). The research does not relate to the specifics of individual events, nor is it intended to expose individual participants. The researcher will also not ask you about any participation that you may have had with the conflict. In addition the interviews will not be audio recorded and thus the researcher will not be able to retain or disclose any information about you or the people that you discuss.

The researcher may be compelled by law enforcement or a court to disclose information by subpoena. However, as the data will be anonymous the researcher cannot disclose any identifiable information about you or any other participants if such a circumstance arises. This means that it would be extremely difficult for a law enforcement or other agency to correspond that data with an individual. However, it is important that you do not provide any information during the interview that may be of interest to a law enforcement agency as there is some risk that the researcher may be legally required to disclose the information collected during the interview to a law enforcement agency.

No publication using the data provided during the interview will contain information that could potentially identify individual participants.

The information collected during the interview, in the form of hand-written notes, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office located in patrolled university grounds. Any electronic data related to subsequent analysis of the interviews will be saved in a file only accessible by the researcher on a secure network maintained by Griffith University.
Is participation voluntary?
Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. No participant that withdraws will be disadvantaged in any way. Whether you choose to participate or not will not be discussed with or disclosed to any third party.

Questions/further information
For further information about the project, please contact Lauren Vogel by the contact details listed on the front page of this consent package. Alternatively you may request Lauren Vogel to contact you by the method of your choice.

The ethical conduct of this research
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If potential participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of this research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on +61 7 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au. The Manager, Research Ethics is independent of the research project and will deal with any concerns or complaints you have in an impartial manner.

Feedback to you
If you would like to obtain a copy of the PhD thesis, an executive summary of the key research findings, or any publications that arise from this research you may contact Lauren Vogel on the contact details listed on the front page after your participation. Alternatively you may access any publications via the Griffith University website (www.griffith.edu.au) or via any public search engine by searching for Lauren Vogel.

Informed consent process
As participation in this research is anonymous it is not appropriate to have participants sign an informed consent form. It is understood that by completing the interview that you have given your informed consent voluntarily and freely.