Violent Extremism: A Challenge for Pacifist Feminism

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ABSTRACT
The right of women to participate in peace processes was finally recognised and promoted by the international community in UN Security Council Resolution 1325/2000. This victory for reason was a long time coming. Diverse women thinkers and groups began pondering the issue over a century ago and they followed the path of anti-war initiatives. It is they who sowed the seeds of Pacifist Feminism. This participation has led to various achievements when it comes to: starting negotiations; resuming negotiations after stalemate; extending agreements; broadening the issues addressed; taking gender into account. Over the last few decades, armed violence against the population has widened and shifted in scope: most of the active armed conflicts in the world involve home-grown Violent Extremism (VE), which affects both the Global South and North. The paper discusses what the emergence of VE means for Pacifist Feminism, the challenges it poses and the core of the debate, strategies and action within the context of growing globalised cyber-activism.

Keywords: violent extremism, peace, pacifist feminism.

FEMINISM WAS BORN OUT OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST VIOLENCE

Feminism was born as a social movement begun by women rebelling against discrimination. It was based on the liberating power of the ideas of equality and universalism enshrined by The Enlightenment, and demanded equal rights for women. The lack of rights enjoyed by women placed them on a material and symbolic footing that made them easy prey to violence. One can say that Feminism sprang from the need to eradicate the violence women suffered first hand. Although these women did not use the term 'Pacifist' to describe themselves, it was an intrinsic feature of the movement from the outset. As time went by, Feminism became firmly convinced that the system of patriarchal domination was based

on a continuum of violence. The corollary to this was that full equality could only be achieved by embracing diversity that neither ignored people who were different or discriminated against them. The idea was that 'violence' must be opposed no matter what form it takes[1] (Galtung, 1996; Magallón, 2005).

Throughout history, one can identify a long line of women who took initiatives against war. In this paper, we limit ourselves to the great international bodies inspired by Feminism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here, we find lines of development displaying features of the Feminist struggle that became apparent in the creation of successive international organisations. One of these bodies was the International Council of Women (ICW), whose socio-economic ambitions were vast in scope and that was to press for women's right to vote. It was to add its voice to the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA), and later sought to ban war, founding the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). These strands became interwoven in the organisation of an international women's movement (Rupp, 1997) whose final goal was to end all discrimination and violence.

As a movement and as a way of thinking about the world, Feminism has gradually diversified as it keeps abreast of changes in the forces shaping women's lives, and in which other factors are superimposed on gender (culture, ethnic group, location, age, beliefs, ideology). The women who called themselves Feminists were of different colours and from many places. The various latent voices at the outset led to many strands of Feminism expressed through a plethora of adjectives: Liberal Feminism; Radical Feminism; Post-Colonial Feminism; Black Feminism; Islamic Feminism, and so forth. The kind of 'equality' sought also became more complex. Some women included participation

in decisions on war and peace in their discourses and practices. This gave rise to Pacifist Feminism in the strict sense. The WILPF was founded at The Hague Congress (1915), marking the beginning of an anti-war movement that enshrined the values and commitments of the Pacifist movement at the time. Pacifist Feminism set out to end the war and put forward changes in international politics with a view to creating an institutional and legislative network to tackle conflicts of interest among nations through dialogue and negotiation (Magallón, 2006; Magallón and Blasco, 2015).

Women's movements spent years battling against the war and for peace. Their efforts were finally rewarded by the international community, which gave Pacifist Feminists a voice in its institutions (now leavened with sundry bodies and leaders approved under Resolution 1325/2000 of the UN Security Council) giving rise to an agenda for Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The Resolution called for a perspective based on women's lives (agency and protection) in peace negotiations and peace-building measures in international conflicts (Magallón, 2008; Mesa, 2011; Villellas, 2015). The positive impact of this participation led to, among other things, breaking negotiation stalemates, longer-lasting agreements, defence of a gender-based standpoint, and broadening the scope of the issues covered by negotiations (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015).

Other governments, aware of women's potential, decided to invite the fairer sex to broaden the scope of their involvement. This led to new proposals that were incorporated in a series of initiatives that began with Resolution 1325: 2242/2015 of the 9th of October 2015, in which The Security Council called on "The Member States and on the United Nations to ensure women's participation and leadership in strategies to fight terrorism and in violent extremism that might lead to terrorism". The Resolution was tabled by Spain and The United Kingdom — two countries in which terrorism had scarred society and caused many deaths. Within the United Nation system, *ONU Mujeres* supported this call and stressed the role

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1 Although violence throughout the rest of the paper refers to physical or direct violence, in this paragraph it alludes to the various kinds of violence according to Galtung's scheme. Applying this scheme to women, violence ranges from feminisation to poverty, gender bias, scientific bias, and social exclusion.

women could play in their respective communities to prevent violent extremism.[2]

What do Pacifist Feminists think of this call? Can terrorism be considered a new kind of warfare and if so, is it something they should fight against in the battle to make today's world a more peaceful place? Is terrorism the same as violent extremism? What critiques, challenges, and proposals might they offer in eradicating such violence? Might the surge in Feminism denouncing sexual aggression be harnessed to eradicate other kinds of violence against women, such as those spawned by extremist movements?

VIOLENCE, WAR, AND EXTREMISM

War is the greatest form of violence and is an institutionalised practice by which Man kills others to achieve sundry aims: wielding power over a territory: imposing an ideology or creed on the population; secession; overthrowing a regime, and so on. As the women at The Hague Congress (1915) said, war destroys the achievements made by Mankind over the centuries — cities, monuments, symbols — and above all, it destroys the lives of those whom women bring into the world, bring up, and cherish.

Over the last few decades, Communication and Information Technology (ICT) has greatly facilitated the flow of data and information throughout the world, leading to ever stronger political, economic, military, and cultural links. Fierce economic competition on a planetary scale sparks and fuels wars and local conflicts. The converse also holds true given that local violence ends up having global repercussions. Violence rears its head in many contexts, making it harder to see wars for what they are and the harm that they inflict. Here, the forms violence takes become more complex and blur the bounds of war and peace. War has become very different from what we knew

in the past (Kaldor, 2001). That is because violence is now present in settings that used to be safe (for instance, in cities), giving rise to what some authors call "new kinds of wars" (Moura, 2010). The kinds of massacres that typified the wars of yore now take place in places where no war has been declared, or are committed in strange new but no less lethal ways. Over the last few decades, 79% of the world's active armed conflicts (26 out of 33) are internal matters that have been internationalised (Escola de Pau, 2018). In some places, women's bodies have become battlegrounds in struggles in which one or more warring parties slaughter womenfolk to further their economic and political ambitions (Segato, 2016). This host of violent conflicts is facilitated by the proliferation of assault rifles and the like from which arms merchants make a financial killing. Although a treaty regulating arms trafficking was first enacted in 2012, the 'merchants of death' can still dodge controls and protocols designed to stop weapons ending up in areas where Human Rights go by the board. There is a clear link between the proliferation of light arms and gender violence (Santos, 2014).

One of these 'new' (or not so new) forms of violence is attacks against: communities, buildings full of people; passers-by, discotheque-goers, women walking home at night, and indeed anyone who does not belong to the terrorist group. This new realm of violence is something that is 'patriarchal' in nature even though a significant number of perpetrators are women. It is violence underpinned by fanatical ideologies that give rise to extremist movements that believe 'the ends justify the means' no matter how abhorrent those means are. One can generically label such behaviour as Violent Extremism (VE).

The international community has not reached agreement on a definition of violent extremism or of terrorism. By the same token, there is no agreement on how to identify terrorist groups and extremists. Here, one man's 'extremist' is another man's 'freedom fighter'. Massacres, terrorist attacks, killing women, kidnappings, and shoot-outs at schools and shopping malls have their origin in terrorist training camps.

2   See: http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/peace-and-security/preventing-violent-extremism, accessed 22nd October 2018.

This is why VE and terrorism are terms that are often used interchangeably. In a study commissioned by the European Parliament, VE was spoken of as "the willingness to use violence or to support its use in order to foster given political, social, economic, or ideological beliefs" (De Leede, Haupfleisch, Korolkova, and Natter, 2017).

The violence used by extremists has grown since 2001, diversifying and affecting ever more places in the world. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) gathers quantitative data and shows trends. The 2017 data showed that Afghanistan had the most deaths from Extremist Violence (4653 victims). Four more countries had over a thousand deaths apiece (Iraq, 4271 victims; Syria, Nigeria, and Somalia). No fewer than 19 countries reported around a hundred dead, and 67 countries suffered at least one death. The death toll from terrorism has fallen since 2014 but its impact has continued to spread, affecting many countries over the last twenty years. The peak year was 2016 with 79 countries affected but 2017 ran it a close second with 67 countries affected (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018). The situation led the Secretary-General of The United Nations to propose an Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism. The plan was presented to The UN General Assembly in January 2016. In it, Violent Extremism was spoken of as "behaviour leading to terrorism".

> 1. Violent extremism is an affront to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It undermines peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. No country or region is immune from its impacts. 2. The present Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism considers and addresses violent extremism as, and when, conducive to terrorism. Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon, without clear definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief. Nevertheless, in recent years, terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and Boko Haram have shaped our image of violent extremism and the debate on how to address

this threat. These groups' message of intolerance — religious, cultural, social — has had drastic consequences for many regions of the world.[3]

IS THIS THE MOMENT TO RESUME THE CONVERSATON ON WOMEN AND PEACE?

Given the new scenarios for violence and the uses made of it by old and new players, some authors think that it is time to resume and re-think the conversation on "women, conflict, and peace" (Saeedi and Fransen, 2018). They consider that the time is ripe to think about and act in the face of deeds and social phenomena upon which there is disagreement but that — as in wars — lead to death and suffering for people around the world. Among the questions that need to be asked, there is one that bears on violence itself. One needs to ask whether there are differences (and if so what) between say the bombing of Gernika during The Spanish Civil War (or bombing of European cities during The Second World War), killing thousands of people in New York's World Trade Center (2001), planting bombs in Madrid's Atocha railway station (2004), running down pedestrians in Barcelona's *Ramblas* (2017), killing women in Ciudad Juárez and hiding their bodies, raping and enslaving hundreds of girls in Nigeria — to name just a few of the most notorious atrocities carried out by extremist movements.

We start from the need to join in the strategy to fight the violent extremism that leads to terrorism. The issue is a controversial one, especially for women's organisations rooted in Pacifist Feminism and that seek to advance the agenda for women, peace, and security.

Here, one should note that Pacifist Feminist organisations tend to be wary of co-operating with governments given that the latter may use them for their own ends. Basically, Pacifist Feminists challenge their governments because it is the latter that declare

3 https://undocs.org/en/A/70/674

war on others. The notion that "War is politics by other means" [*Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln*] (Clausewitz, 1999) is anathema to such movements. This is because from the outset these movements avidly proposed the creation of a framework for peacefully solving disputes through law, diplomacy, arbitration, and negotiation, not through force of arms. This is why they opposed the military-industrial complex that fuels conflicts and enriches arms manufacturers and merchants.

The difference today is that international institutions and some States are seeking to enlist women in the battle against extremist violence. It is not surprising that the leap made by UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (which involved women's agency in preventing VE) is seen with reservations. Is the call to help really framed in terms of gender equality? It would seem not, if one considers the scant funds allocated to women's organisations committed to eradicating VE. Will women be listened to when it comes to drawing up strategies? What is being done to ensure that these organisations are not co-opted and manipulated by governments seeking to further their own ends?

Women's organisations criticised the US government's reaction after the attack on New York's World Trade Center in 2001, and the French government's reaction after the attacks in Paris in 2015. In 2001, the US responded by bombing Afghanistan for supposedly giving refuge to the authors of the 9/11 attacks. In France's case, the government heavily bombed areas held by ISIS in Syria. Such reactions produce a great deal of 'collateral damage' (a euphemism for killing civilians). The bombing campaign only gave another twist to the spiral of violence, fuelling even more terrorism. Needless to say, such intervention greatly benefited the military-industrial complex because this thrives on conflict.

Security was stressed to the detriment of peace-making and it is this that Pacifist Feminists lament. For them, such an approach is poorly conceived because while peace offers broad horizons and keeps doors open, security is metaphorically based on building walls.

Maybe this is why Feminist theorists have shown little interest in terrorism to date:

> It is noteworthy that terrorism and anti-terrorism have sparked little interest among the main Feminist theorists, who have focused a lot of attention on women, peach, and security. By contrast, they have done little to analyse discourses on terrorism, radicalism, and anti-terrorism (Aoláin, 2016: 277).

Feminists' lack of interest in the issue seems to stem from six factors. These are: (1) Lack of international agreement on a definition of terrorism; (2) The stress on security (with a strong military component and disdain for Human Rights); (3) dominant masculine traits in States' strategies for 'the war on terror'; (4) The interests of political actors in labelling a group as a terrorist one; (5) The fact until lately, gender was not taken into account in the analyses and strategies used; (6) When gender has been considered, it has been in a stereotyped way (women as mothers and wives), without recognising their agency and diverse roles. Feminists worry that joining forces in the war on terror harms women's agenda for peace and security. At the same time, Fionnuala Ni Aoláin (2016) considers that by not taking part, Feminists are losing the chance to shape decisions and actions that affect millions of women threatened by violent extremism. That is why this author argues that women have a greater role to play in lessening this kind of violence.

THE CHALLENGE OF THINKING ABOUT VIOLENT EXTREMISM FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Is there continuity between the fight for peace and the fight against VE? What civilising proposals can we make or implement? It is hard to fall in with armed strategies from the standpoint of a critical strand of Feminism seeking both conventional and nuclear disarmament. Nevertheless, the challenge is there and it is being tackled through new strategies by groups of women who suffer VE in their daily lives. These groups are coming up with proposals that mark a change in discourse and language to deepen

Figure 1

Counter-Terrorism (CT) → Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) → Violent Extremism Prevention (VEP) → What are we for?: Peace; Resilience; Equality; Pluralism

Source: Anderlini, 2018: 27.

knowledge of VE, putting forward new, practical approaches.

A change of discourse and language
The lack of consensus on a definition of terrorism and violent extremism, and the fact that both terms are used interchangeably makes it harder to deal with these issues in a more holistic context. In speaking about VE, the issue arises before action is taken, is deep-seated, and stems from roots, ideology, and motivations. From a Pacifist Feminist standpoint, it is worth distinguishing between 'VE' and 'terrorism' because doing so reveals what is at stake in each case. The distinction helps one pin down sundry kinds of extremism, their roots, and what drives them. VE is projected through violence and thus reflects the latent powerlessness of ideology and the beliefs that underpin it (personal/group based in the case of killing women; social in the case of religious and/or political fanaticism). Thinking of VE as a movement gives insights into: various kinds of Jihadism; the rise of hate-based ideologies; racist motivations; white supremacy movements; the killing of women and mass shootings. This is why Chikodiri and Ezeibe state that: "Violent extremism refers to the ideology that justifies violent acts to achieve a group's goals whereas terrorism is a violent act to achieve a given end" (Chikodiri y Ezeibe, 2019: 2).

There is a need for "a conceptual change that lets one go beyond the terminology limitations and current discourses" (Anderlini, 2018: 23). There is a firm belief that such change will spawn new, more

effective ways of tackling the issues. This process happened naturally, with lessons being learnt from past failures. Thus Counter-Terrorism (CT) gave way to the Campaign against Violent Extremism (CVE), and Violent Extremism Prevention (VEP). As we shall see later, the most heavily-involved women's network seeks to re-frame the problem in terms of Peace, Resilience, Equality, and Pluralism (PREP), opening the path to new strategies.

Delving deeper into kinds of violent extremism
VE is an umbrella term for many kinds of extremism. One thing they all share is that they see violence as justified. Yet each has its own distinctive ideological, political and/or religious roots. To eradicate these movements, one needs to be aware of these differences. Such movements often seek to force a given actor (State, government, institution) to act or to accept certain policies (for example, introducing Shariah Law, putting women back in 'their natural place'). Their methods involve indiscriminate violence, with evil words and grisly video fantasies on the Internet ending in attacks on both individuals and large groups of people in the real world. Many kinds of Violent Extremism "emerge, driven by a mish-mash of historic, political, economic, cultural, social, and psychological factors" (Schwoebel, 2017: 3). Thus a Jihadist VE is not the same as a White Supremacist VE, or a hyper-male chauvinist VE.

On the other hand, violent extremism is nothing new. That is because there are countless examples throughout history of violence being used to achieve

certain ends. Indeed, one can say that such behaviour is the rule rather than the exception. For instance, in The Yugoslav Civil War in the 1990s, women were systematically raped as part of the 'ethnic cleansing' policy. Feminist activists, such as Stasa Zajovic, of Belgrade's Women in Black, experienced these abuses first hand. In Vienna in 1993, these women managed to get the international community to legally define such rape as a crime against humanity. Again in the 1990s, The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) kidnapped boys and girls, enlisted them as soldiers, forcing them to kill family members and neighbours. During the 2000 invasion of Iraq, death and destruction spread throughout the region. Extremist movements continue to shake up our lives but not all of them are seen as VE. On the international stage, reactions depend largely on who commits the ghastly deeds: "Politicians decide which crimes, which places, and which kinds of violence get labelled 'violent extremism' and that are thus worthy of our attention and of earmarking resources to fight against" (Abu-Nimer, 2018: 22).

Today's violence has two features that distinguish it from that of the past. The first is the weight it gives to 'identity'. The second is Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The identities rooted in homogeneous communities are now more open to change, which also makes them more fragile. As a result, identity has turned into a battleground in our globalised world. Mass migration means we now live in plural societies that shoe-horn us into identities shaped by the intersection of factors such as gender, culture, sexual orientation, race, and body shape/handicap. The present extremist movements are characterised by their manipulation of identities (religion, race, gender, etc.) to create global networks facilitated by ICT. In contemporary multi-cultural societies, there is a tension between weakening bonds of 'belonging' and the enrichment that comes with accepting plurality. Against the background of this tension, VE often springs from defence of an identity that is presented as being better than the rest, whether it be a religion (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism etc.), the colour of one's skin (White), sex (male), rigidly rejecting all others in such a way that it gives followers

a sense of security and binds them more strongly. The fear of losing identity leads to national debate on 'who we are', the content of school curriculums, and so on. This can lead to defensive attitudes and insistence on stasis, tradition, and restrictive practices (something that happens in Diaspora groups, displaced populations, and among White Supremacists and those who miss a past in which men ruled the roost). In Europe, second and third-generation immigrants may feel they are not fully integrated if their schools do not critically review colonialism. If their family origins are not present in art or in the media, they feel they do not belong. If formal education does not give them the resources they need to grasp and accept pluralism, and to debate similarities and differences, the result is a void that other forces are swift to fill, VE being one of them.

In today's Internet Age, the worlds of VE are often virtual ones, with people scattered across the globe but who are linked by ideologies that justify violence as a means to an end. Such violence is considered as a liberating tool. It spreads like the plague in social networks where discourses create a feedback loop and where encryption and anonymity is used to hide the language of hate from public view. Virtual connections can forge communities around strong identities. This is the case of the so-called *mansphere*, a virtual network of blogs, forums, and web sites in which those who reject women's rights and gender equality wallow in anti-Feminist ideas. The same kind of thing happens with White Supremacists who target immigrants and argue that Whites are threatened by the higher birth rates found among racial minority groups. Motivations, radicalisation, recruitment, and propaganda are all key features of VE. The remedy lies in their opposites (prevention, de-radicalisation, re-integration) and of course in in-depth analysis of the problem. Bad government is one of the reasons why people join extremist Jihadist movements, which tend to point to corruption, past grievances, and/or abuses of Human Rights (especially those carried out by the State Security Services)(Holmes, 2017). Other sources confirm that there is a correlation between brutality, Human Rights abuses by the State, the growth of VE, and violent incidents (Institute for Economics & Peace,

2018; Anderlini, 2018). Some studies and models on radicalisation reveal three main strands in the process: (1) emotions or the search for personal meaning; (2) the ideological and social process in building networks; (3) group dynamics (Kruglanski et al., 2014)

Gender and Violent Extremism

Identity has become a key factor in radicalisation. One of these is gender (understood as the normative behaviour and attitudes attributed to men and women). Behaviour patterns and attitudes are shaped by historical, geographical, and cultural factors. They are key to identity, and play a big role in spawning extremist movements. Some men feel threatened by the change in gender roles and the job competition posed by well-trained women. These changes make such men feel insecure, leading them to attack Feminism and to come up with over-the-top chauvinist discourses on the need to send 'the girls' back home to do the household chores. At the same time, men attack women's freedoms, taking a paternalistic attitude towards them. Here, men want to play the role of protector and bread-winner — especially when it comes to White women — and shield them from the attentions of 'other' males.

Over the last few years, the gender perspective of VE has gained ground in both academic discourse and in the media. In a review of the literature on women and VE, Becky Carter (2013) finds that while many women fight VE, some support it (something that was underestimated hitherto). With regard to women's participation in VE, the last twenty years has seen a rise in extremist violence, with women taking part in suicide attacks — something for which the Boko Haram group in Nigeria has become notorious. Of the 434 suicide-bomber attacks made by this group between 2011 and 2017, no fewer than 244 were carried out by women (Chikodiri and Ezeibe, 2019). There are many reasons why these women blew themselves up. Some did so for ideological reasons, some to protect their families, to end a wretched life, and yet others for the same mish-mash of reasons as male suicide bombers. VE is also linked to violence against women and children, kidnapping, sexual slavery, and rape.

These are all tools that VE groups commonly resort to. Gender is also beginning to be taken into account in the strategy against VE — an angle often missing in most anti-terrorist operations. With regard to women's maternal role, there are various messages but in general the tendency is to explore women as members of the community, educators, activists, policy-makers. In general, there is more literature on women's involvement in VE than on those women who try to prevent it or fight against it.

The wives of some extremists have other women as slaves. Some of them confess that playing this role improves their lives in the group. Greater knowledge of VE means de-naturing the role that women play in it and the dynamics at work. Such insights help reveal the processes that radicalised them and how these might be prevented.

NEW FOCUSES AND STRATEGIES

Given that VE has many causes, one needs multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional methods to identify them all. Yet all too often, urgency tends to lead to theory and practice that focus on the State and on armed security frameworks. As an alternative, Mary Hope Schwoebel (2017) and other authors call for approaches revealing VE's roots and challenges. Given that research, politics, and practice in the field are inextricably linked to development, governance, and peace-building issues, such approaches could do a great deal to prevent VE.

The first UN High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism was held in June 2018. It was titled "Strengthening International Co-operation to Combat the Changing Terrorism Threat". As part of its work for peace, freedom, and gender justice, the WILPF (the oldest Feminist Pacifist organisation) attended the Conference and followed its proceedings. Although the WILPF continues to be worried by the over-masculinised approach to the war on terrorism (Khan, 2018), this may be the first step in the organisation making commitments to tackle VE.

Leading Pacifist Feminists are shifting from criticism to proposing new strategies. This is the case of Sanam Naraghi Anderlini[4], who for years has been committed to the agenda on women, peace, and security. By contrast with States (which fail to look at VE's causes), Anderlini argues that non-violent action and peace should be key components of security strategy. She states that security is achieved by adopting non-violent pacification strategies. Anderlini also argues that it is not enough to adopt CEV and PEV approaches given that these focus on the problem but do not necessarily lead to a solution. In this vein, she proposes a conceptual change that defines what we seek; sowing seeds that make people abandon fanaticism and supremicism. This, change, posits Anderlini, facilitates progress towards recognition and acceptance of pluralism and peaceful co-existence. The keys for achieving the strategy she proposes are: Peace, Resilience, Equality, and Pluralism (PREP) (Anderlini, 2018).

Peace: prioritising social cohesion and development, prevention, and non-violent methods. These priorities are reflected in the allocation of resources and set bounds to the use of violent methods by the security forces.

Resilience: building resilience from many perspectives, including: (a) fostering cultural and religious training so that the rhetoric of extremists and fanatics does not take root; (b) disseminating moderate interpretations of religion; (c) criticising and abandoning the defence of a past 'golden age' to dismantle extremist racist views; (d) helping people see things from several historical perspectives.

Equality: fostering an atmosphere of equality and respect for the 'other' — something that States themselves should do in ways that are not confined to their discourses but are also reflected in practices and in the strictest respect for Human Rights.

Pluralism: defending plural identities and criticising all kinds of supremacist thinking.

This proposal is based on the work of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), which Anderlini runs from Washington D.C. ICAN has a network of women's organisations. The Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) is present in 30 countries. The network works to stop VE by promoting rights, peace, and pluralism, following the PREP strategy. The acronym *WASL* means "to link" in Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi.

Nigeria provides a notable case of women's alternative action in the battle against VE. There, many organisations led by women are rolling out a host of educational, social, political, and economic projects to stop young people becoming radicalised. They also organise initiatives that have a political impact — marches, gatherings, symbolic actions, press conferences, documentaries, and Twitter campaigns. The movement sprang up following the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014. Its protests and pressure made sure that the national government was not re-elected after its sloth in dealing with the crisis. Furthermore, the movement also made a big impact on the international community, spreading news on the issue through the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag, which was re-tweeted millions of times. It also led to many (but not all of the girls) being released. Other leading women's organisations in the country — notably Women Without Walls Initiative, the Women Interfaith Council, the Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria, and the National Council of Women Societies (Chikodiri and Ezeibe, 2019) — also played active roles.

4   Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini founded and runs International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), which is linked to a network of women's organisations that are active in preventing VE. The network covers 30 countries. In 2000 she was one of the Civil Society draftwomen of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

VULNERABILITY — A KEY CONCEPT FOR TACKLING THE SECURITY ISSUES

Ann Tickner was the pioneer in tackling international relations from a Feminist standpoint. Back then, she criticised the 'realist paradigms' in this field as falling far short of what was needed to ensure human and

environmental security. From the so-called Feminist Standpoint (FS), she argued that all knowledge is situated and that women's lives provide a benchmark for seeing things that cannot be glimpsed from other standpoints (Harding, 1986; Magallón, 2012). She stated that "ecological, policies based on domination and subordination are wholly incompatible with true security" (Tickner, 1992: 129). Taking an ethical, multi-level approach, Feminism had spent years on developing alternative theories on security, and putting forward more rational directions in the light of the ends sought (Blanchard, 2003).

One of the key concepts proposed by Feminism in the new vision of security is that of 'human vulnerability'. Through women's lives, one can see that vulnerability is an intrinsic part of the human condition. That is because women's roles historically involved looking after babies and children, the elderly, the sick. This role shaped how women thought about things and their priorities when it came to fostering attitudes and behaviour patterns. The result was a paradigm in which women saw war as the wrong response to aggression.

Women's affirmation of Man's vulnerability was the starting point for Feminist discourse in this field. The idea has been defended by various Feminist authors to critically re-draw disciplines and categories. Vulnerability bears on the fragility of human life both with regard to the individual's life cycle (childhood dependence, sickness and old age) and to threats (especially violence) — things that plague all our lives even if they affect groups in different ways. Scientific advances and improvements in living standards lessen these impacts but one cannot deny their existence. Thus we are all vulnerable, not just groups that are identified as such (Magallón, 2015).

Pacifist Feminists argue the need to accept human vulnerability in fostering thought and policies on the subject of peace. This approach led them to criticise the US Government's reaction to the terrorist attacks on The World Trade Center in New York (Cohn and Ruddick, 2004). They considered that going to war

was a knee-jerk reaction that would produce a spiral of violence and hurt everyone. Far from leading to lasting solutions, they argued that 'the war on terror' would merely give terrorism a boost. What happened later bore out their grim warnings on where such war strategies were likely to lead. Carol Cohn again took up Sara Ruddick's (1989) notion of vulnerability in her seminal work *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, as a heuristic tool for thinking about security. Cohn asked what kind of national security policy would be considered rational if we were to admit that vulnerability is inevitable (Cohn, 2013). In calling on the State to do more to achieve a fairer society, Martha Albertson Fineman considered vulnerability to be a more important factor than equality (Fineman, 2008).

There are many ways of responding to vulnerability. One is to pretend that it does not exist, that technical and scientific advances make us all safe. This notion seeks invulnerability through massive re-armament, sealing borders, and using power — and should it prove 'necessary' — to attack one's foes (an approach that sparked The Second Iraq War). The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were justified as a way of putting an end to our vulnerability. A very different approach emerges from accepting our intrinsic fragility, and that vulnerability and interdependence are features of our humanity from cradle to grave (Cohn and Ruddick, 2004). That said, vulnerability takes different forms around the world (hunger, pandemics, terrorism, climate change, and so forth). This means accepting the idea that no super-weapon can stop a man or women bent on a suicide bombing. On the other hand, ascribing vulnerability to given groups (among them, women) merely distorts reality because the issue is a social construct inasmuch as it stems from exclusion and exploitation.

Pacifist Feminism has highlighted the importance of: (1) fully accepting that vulnerability (whether individual or of group) is long-lasting; (2) identifying the consequences that flow therefrom. Accepting vulnerability as inevitable leads to other kinds of attitudes and policies that (while taking security into account) let one come up with ways of lessening

possible pretexts for extremism, fostering a setting in which ever fewer people see VE as their only political way out. The aim is to reduce conflict by building trust, co-operation, and dispelling fears. In a nutshell, the aim is to foster personal and international relationships based on co-operation rather than on domination and humiliation (Cohn and Enloe, 2003).

Gender does not determine one's choice of approach. That said, the quest for invulnerability tends to be a more male trait. By comparison, women tend to recognise interdependence and vulnerability (that is, by responding in non-violent ways). This difference appears to be culturally coded. Insofar as women's

historic experiences are undervalued, it is hard for any political leader to accept vulnerability without losing face or seeming weak. Fully accepting vulnerability and putting forward other options requires the kind of leadership that goes beyond stereotypes.

Last but not least, one should say that terrorist attacks are one of those situations that make all of us feel utterly vulnerable. Based on this experience, one can tackle the roots of VE, based on the conviction that vulnerability is inevitable and that we should foster policies based on co-operation and mutual support rather than on domination. This reflection is one of Pacifist Feminism's greatest contributions.

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