The role of women in a changing IS

A study of the correlation between successes, setbacks and the role of women in the Islamic State

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Abstract

Terrorism is a global problem and the existence of IS has been of global concern. People from all over the world have travelled to the caliphate to fight for IS, and 79 countries and organizations with USA in the lead has fought the battles against IS. This research looks into how the role of women has changed due to the military and territorial development. This is a hypothesis-testing case study where the method process tracing is used. Feminist theory is used to categorize the different roles of women, which are searched for in open sources that by the media house of IS were published in English. The findings show that the narrative of a woman as a mother and wife is seen as the most important task throughout the whole existence of the caliphate, even if women in 2015-2016 are described more as objects. In 2017-2018, women are described more as actors and even allowed to participate in combat 'under certain circumstances’. The morality codes are though maintained. Women are, for example, seen in a video participating in combat in a fully covering niqab. The main body of the thesis contains 18 407 words.

Key words: Islamic State, IS, women, jihadism, extremism, process tracing
1. Introduction
Terrorism is today a global problem and it affects world politics. The 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center was a history-changing event in global politics, where George W. Bush declared "war on terror". He also declared that "those who are not with us are against us" and made the fight much broader than only USA combating Al-Qaeda (Bush, 2001). This resulted in escalated violence in the Middle East, affecting both the Middle East and Western countries in different ways. In June 2014, the Islamic State (IS), also called by the names Daesh, ISIS and ISIL (later in this paper called IS, because of to the organizations own naming of themselves) declared a caliphate, a state where they strictly practised sharia laws. Both men and women have travelled from all over the world, including the West, to join the organization and fight for the extremist Muslim values that IS promotes. The fighting has included actions that can be classified as crimes against humanity and genocide. As a reaction, the USA formed a coalition with 79 partners (74 countries and five organizations) that jointly have counteracted and combated IS. Fighting IS has been a priority for the governments of the coalition, united in ensuring IS enduring defeat (the globalcoalition.org). IS have lost all their territorial power, after they in March of 2019 lost their last pockets of territory in Baghouz, Syria. In Baghouz they, as in many other battles, used civilians as human shields to keep control of their last territory (https://isis.liveuamap.com).

Historically, the mainstream picture of a jihadi-fighter is a male, and in many jihadi-organizations there have only been men allowed to participate in fighting and violent actions. Jihadi violence has historically been monopolized by men, though rare cases within jihadi extremist organizations women have also been allowed to be a part of carrying out terrorism (Pearson, 2015: 6). IS are descended from the organization Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI). AQI used female fighters and female suicide bombers, which they justified by referring to Muhammed having both male and female fighters fighting with him (Cohen and Kaati, 2018:67). Initially, IS focused on recruiting women only as state builders to participate in the state-like construction of the caliphate. The role for women in the organization was initially communicated as their main task were to be wives of fighters, and mothers of the next generation fighters that were to be brought up in the caliphate (Hamaid, 2017: 48). The propaganda aiming at women was glorifying and romanticizing marriage inside the caliphate. Women were seen as possessions of men and as a helper of men, that could be owned and needed protection. In contrast to this narrative, over 30 women carried out suicide attacks in the area of Mosul in February 2017, before the battle where IS lost control of the area started. In February 2018 a video where women were combatants with weapons posing next to men were released. The fact
that women in the later IS propaganda was seen portrayed with weapons, as actors, may be a shift in the roles that female IS members were encouraged to take (Cohen and Kaati, 2018:69).

IS are an ultraconservative organization, and one of their main goals was to establish a Muslim state, a caliphate, where strict Sharia-laws were practised. Due to the rules of IS, women were not allowed to travel by themselves. They had to wear certain clothes that covered up all skin, even hands and eyes. A specific all-women police force, called the Al-Khanssaa Brigade, was formed to make sure that the laws were followed (Winter, 2015:29). The puzzle that will be looked into is the contraposition that despite the conservative rules and manners that were to be followed by women inside of IS, women have been used in combat and suicide missions. In one way the role of women was said to be as a supporter, but despite that, women were in the later years allowed to have active roles in the organization. Due to the Shalafi-Jihadi theology adopted by the organization, women should not leave their home, and even then women were seen participating in battles in 2017 and 2018. The aim of this thesis is to look at how that affected the actions of the organization and how the organization managed to communicate the change.

The questions that will be examined in this thesis is, therefore, the following:
- Why has the role of women in IS changed?
- How has IS balanced their ideals when the need for manpower has contradicted the role of women?

This study is a case study, where the case of IS will be examined through the method process tracing. Data of open sources will be used, where an analysis of the magazines that IS have published called Dabiq and Rumiyah will be conducted along with video material produced by the Islamic State. Process tracing can be used as a theory testing or theory building method. In this case, the hypothesis that will be tested is the one that military defeat and reduced military and territorial power lead to a changing role for women, no matter the ideal principles. The contradictory hypothesis that will be tested is that IS kept the same ideals and jihadi theology throughout the rise and fall of the organization and that the role of women does not relate to the military power.

This research will be limited to the time where the caliphate existed and IS had territorial power. Therefore this research will only focus on the time between 2014 and 2018. IS as an organization existed before then and started their recruitment of women earlier than this, but due to the limitations in data, this is the timeframe that will be researched. I will also limit my material to sources where English is used, that is published and accessible on the internet. The data that will be used is
the officially released material of IS in forms of the magazines Dabiq and Rumiyah as well as the video material ”Inside the Caliphate”. The first number of Dabiq was released in July 2014, the last number of Rumiyah was published in September 2017. The video series ’Inside the caliphate’ was published in 8 different episodes between July 2017 and October 2018. This official material is the data that is used for the research.

The rise off IS was a global phenomenon that affected many actors. The fight against IS in Syria and Iraq has been of international concern with international forces joining the fight against the organization and at the same time other Western citizens were being a part of IS. This research will be a part of trying to understand how the role of women have developed in the organization during the rise and fall of the caliphate.
2. Background and literature review
This passage will examine what knowledge previous research can tell us about the role of women and how women have engaged in IS, to give an understanding of the case looked into in this thesis. This will be done by looking at previous research regarding women in IS and what can be understood about the propaganda that has been carried out by IS. The history of IS is researched for contextualizing and giving a background for the topic researched. The research regarding propaganda in IS is studied to give a better understanding of the material that is used in the research of this thesis.

2.1. The history of IS
IS is sprung out of the organization Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a branch of Al-Qaeda that was founded after the USA invasion of Iraq in 2004. After the group in 2013 took territory in Syria, they renamed themselves to ISIL and later on ISIS. In 2014, after Al-Qaida concurred Mosul and declared their caliphate, they changed the name to the Islamic State (IS), declaring the state being a caliphate for all righteous Muslims to migrate to. At the same time, Al-Qaeda and IS parted their ways. The organizations disagreed with one another on what level of violence to use, with Al-Qaeda condemning IS for their most violent actions. Al Qaeda and the Al-Nusra Front in Syria thought that IS acted too brutal and they wanted a more civilized approach to gain support from the Syrian people (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018: 2).

After IS carried out extensive propaganda campaigns that called on Muslims from all over the world to join the organization, many have travelled to join the cause of IS in Syria and Iraq. The number of how many international travelers that have joined IS between 2013 and 2018 is estimated to be somewhere around 40 000 people. This number contains mainly boys and men leaving to fight, but it also includes approximately 5 000 women that have joined the organization (Hamaid, 2017: 48), where over 600 of them has been Wester women (Loken and Zelenz, 2018:46). Today, some of the travelers that have joined IS have died in Syria and Iraq. Some are imprisoned, some are in refugee camps, some have disappeared and are not to be heard of, but others have returned home again to the countries they came from (Schori, 2018). The goal of IS that was spelled out when they declared the caliphate was to establish a massive Islamic State where sharia laws were strictly applied, while at the same time develop terrorist cells and divisions around the world, which they called wilayat (Arabic word meaning administrative division, usually translated as "province," or occasionally as "governorate") around the world (Spencer, 2016: 74). They encouraged their
members to either travel to join the caliphate in Syria and Iraq or to commit terrorist actions around the world.

After extensive bombing campaigns from the USA-lead coalition and ground forces attacking the group from both Iraqi, Syrian and Kurdish fronts, IS lost their last pockets of territorial power in March 2019. Despite president Trump's statement that IS is 100% defeated, their leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi is claimed to be alive and appeared in a video in April 2019 (svd.se), and some media sources are reporting that IS is regrouping in southern Syria to continue to pursue the goals of the organization (Hunadi, 2019).

2.2. Women in IS
For IS, women have been seen as an important factor to succeed with the goals of the organization and to establish a state that is a place to live in a way according to their ideology, not only an organization that acts as a guerrilla force. Yuval-David states that women historically have been important for state-building in many cultures because of them being seen as ”bearers of the collective” and the ones producing new generations of a state (Yuval-David, 2003: 9). The responsibilities that women of IS have held included to be wives to soldiers, being mothers, raise the next generation of jihad, advancing IS’ global reach through online recruiting and maintaining order within IS’ network of women. The state that IS built were highly gender-segregated and women and men that were not husband and wives did not have much contact. This required a parallel society for the women in the caliphate alongside the administration for men. For example, there were hospitals with only women employees that only handled health issues of women and children (Spencer, 2016: 74).

The life in the caliphate was in propaganda highly romanticized and marriages with IS-fighters were told as fairytales. This was done through social media by women who promoted their lifestyle as to how to best live as a Muslim woman, wife and mother (Kaati, 2018: 64). Salman and Smith have in their research identified three factors that mainly were drawing Western women to the caliphate. The first one was the idealistic goals of it being a religious duty to build the caliphate, the second affiliation and sisterhood inside of the caliphate and the last factor was romanticism of the adventure that traveling to the caliphate was (Salman and Smith, 2015: 13).

Bringing women into the organization was a way of creating sensationalism, that it provided a strategic advantage for IS. The media attention around the world was a core foundation in the strategy to call attention to their aim, and propaganda was brought out all over social media. To add women
into the equation resulted in the media attention of IS drastically increased, and the coverage from global media became even higher when it became apparent that there were women joining the terrorist organization and not only men (Spencer, 2016: 78).

2.3 The advantages of using women in terrorism
It is important to understand the motivation of why leaders of terrorist organizations want to recruit women into their organizations to understand the motivation for their participation and how the role of women are shaped. When women carry out terrorist attacks and suicide missions, women have the advantage over men to not be the typical stereotype of a terrorist. The fact that women are with far lower numbers participating in jihadi violence makes the situation when it happens harder to understand, why the rareness of attacks carried out by women also makes it beneficial to use women alongside men for jihadi organizations. There is a general belief that women are less threatening than men. The preconception of a woman is often of her being non-violent and they, therefore, can make it through security checks easier than men and go under the radar in a situation where a man would be suspected (Buril, 2017: 9). Experts say that attacks committed by women have a four-time higher kill rate than the men that carry out the same type of attacks. Women can also hide bombs and other harmful objects underneath loose clothes. There is argued that women are used to creating a strategic surprising element and therefore are used for carrying out attacks, rather than a shortage of men in the organizations (Ispahani, 2016:102). Scholars also argue for the symbolic value of having mothers in an organization. The martyrdom carried out by women that are mothers is often sensationalized by media and used as recruitment tools of organizations to reach more people. It is also argued that involving women in an organization gives the men of the organization a mate and a higher willingness of men to join, alongside with the importance with reproduction and raise new generations to grow the organization in numbers (Dalton and Asal, 2011: 806). For the society as a whole, the narrative of women as less likely to commit terrorist attacks may be dangerous and neglects the fact that many terrorist groups actually have been using women for attacks all over the world, and possibly also will do so in the future.

2.4 Propaganda of the Islamic State
IS have produced thousands of different propaganda products in many languages. The propaganda has been used to increase the followers of the organization and to instill fear in its enemies. The propaganda was often of a sensational kind, where they, for example, beheaded western journalists and aid workers. The extreme and violent propaganda created sensationalism that creates a spectacle for media. The graphic pictures were not a product of the war, it was a measured strategy. In addition, IS has also published pictures of an everyday-life in the caliphate where they romanticize
their view of a Muslim lifestyle picturing children playing, members of the organization distributing food to the poor, and workers doing construction work in villages (Milton, 2018:1, Andersen and Sandberg, 2018: 2). Terrorist groups, that are numerically inferior to their opponents need propaganda to reach their goals and gain more support and publicity. It is argued that suicide missions in one meaning is used to gain attention and is called ”propaganda of the dead”. This because deadly attacks can be carried out to spread the words and goals of the organization through mainstream media and the proliferation of it being done through the sensationalism of such event (Milton, 2018:2).

Winter argues that different pieces of propaganda were aiming women with different ethnical backgrounds, where for example the documents aiming Arabic women were not written to be read by women living in Western countries. If these types of propaganda were to be read by Western women it may have gotten a counterproductive result and not the support that was the goal because of the cultural preconceptions of a how to live (Winter, 2015: 5).

In the propaganda outlined by IS, the ”we” and ”them” narrative was highly promoted and the picture that is painted talks about the ”West” and ”Western values” oppressing the Muslims of the world in a systematic way, where ”all the others” was working against and marginalizing all Muslims. According to the propaganda, there has been a fight between the groups of Muslims and non-Muslims for a long time, and the righteous Muslim needs to fight back and defend themselves towards the ”infidels”. The goal and the solution to break the oppression from the Western countries and the people living there was to gather all the Muslims of the world in a major Muslim state where Sharia laws were to be applied. In the propaganda, the caliphate was seen as a heaven for all Muslims, where they can live exactly in line with their view of the will of Allah. Terrorism was argued for in propaganda as a way to search revenge for past harms committed against Muslims, but also to restrain the countries fighting IS in Syria and Iraq to prevent them from interfering in the fights and favor the establishment of the caliphate.

According to social movement theory, to mobilize followers and big groups of people to join an organization is easier to do if the group is considered successful. Therefore, groups have incentives to exaggerate their success. In the case of IS, the global media have been writing a lot about their military success and the threat that IS was to the rest of the world. It is argued that they also searched for this kind of publicity due to the many sensationalizing elements in their communication. According to social movement theory, the attention caused by the global media towards IS and the at-
tacks that were carried out was a well-thought strategy, and through the sensationalizing of the or-
ganization it led to increased recruitment of foreign fighters (Andersen and Sandberg, 2018: 8). IS
have taken the use of violence in an organization to a new level, where their propaganda attracted
individuals that found the excitement of the jihadist lifestyle, and at the same time the propaganda
was a way of communicating a narrative to the countries that were seen as the enemies of IS.

The propaganda used in this thesis is seen as written to attract more followers and encourage
women to join the caliphate, as well as create sensationalism. This is taken into account in the anal-
ysis, that the aim of the material used may be exaggerated to reach the goals of the organization.
3. Theory
In the next passage, the theories that build up to the framework used in the analysis will be laid out. Radicalization theory is used to understand what mechanisms that are triggered when a person becomes radicalized, as well as to see the difference in women and men in this field and what it can tell us about propaganda that is aiming to radicalize only women. Gender theory is used to give us tools on how to understand women in war and gives us mechanisms to trace in the analysis on how the role of women has changed throughout the existence of the caliphate. The role of women in Salafi-Jihadi ideology is looked in to see what areas of womanhood that IS ideologically valued and saw as important, too see if IS has changed its standpoint over time.

3.1. Radicalization theory
Radicalization is when a person goes through an individual process to change the values and beliefs. It is a process that happens over time, in several phases towards extremism (Musial, 2016: 52). For many people, it is impossible to understand why people would like to go into war with a terror organization, or as a women join a state that is (by Western standards) highly oppressive towards women. Andersen and Sandlund argue that the radicalization process does not occur in a vacuum, instead, it is rooted in specific social environments where radicalization can grow (Andersen and Sandlund 2018: 14). Oliver Roy argues that IS is the result of a youth movement where heroism, self-destructiveness and longing of revolting towards the existing order is the goal of the recruited, rather than a strong religious foundation (Roy, 2017). His studies also show that many of the young IS-supporters lived ordinary lives with partying, drinking, temporary relationships and not many visits to the mosque. About half of the recruits in his research had a criminal record including drug trafficking, violent crime or drunk driving. According to Roy, it is not the religious conviction, but nihilism and self-destructiveness that drives these individuals recruited by IS. Kaati argues that the caliphate was, is and remains a fantasy, strategically impossible to achieve. For many young followers, it was not the actual state that attracted, rather the revolt and the violence itself that made them join IS. The romanticization and aesthetics of violence, death and renunciation of one's own culture or society is something that IS has in common with many other forms of radical or extreme youth movements (Kaati, 2018: 74).

In jihadist research, push and pull factors are often used as explanation models for the radicalization process and why people engage in terrorism. Push factors are the reasons that drive a person out of their situation, the push out of the original context towards the extreme ideology. This can be the feeling of alienation or dissident towards your background or the situation you are in. The other causal factor, the pull factor is drawing the person into the extreme environment. The attraction of
potential radicals and the extreme organization offering answers to negative push factors, offering an ideology and context that reveals itself appealing to the person (Musial, 2016: 53, Saltman and Smith, 2015: 9).

Two common theories of why people join extreme terrorist organizations are often used as explanation models for the root problem of terrorism, inspired by modernization theory and securitization theory. Modernization theory sees societal development on an economic and social level as a part of the democratization process and derives terrorism to people being poor and facing frustration for lack of socioeconomic development. This theory also argues that educational and economic empowerment is the best antidote against radicalization and recruitment of terrorists. This has though been criticized when it is acknowledged that many of the people that have been involved in transnational terrorism in the last decades have had a middle-class background and does not fit into the stereotype used of a poor, breached person. The people criticizing modernization theory puts focus on the "security threat" and means that terrorism should be prevented with focus on state actors, jihadi ideology, counter-intelligence and coercive actors. Taspinar himself holds that these two theories should be combined and radicalism should be fought instead of terrorism (Taspinar, 2009:75).

This study, along with many other regarding terrorism and radicalization (Von Hippel, 2002, Van San, 2018, Taspinar, 2009) do not express if it is aiming women or men, and in some way, their research is gender blind. It is not common that studies on radicalization is done on women, but rather on men or just people in general.

A difference that is to be found between the recruitment of women compared to men is the platforms of where people are recruited and radicalized. Men are often recruited in person, at Mosques, gyms, or by friends. For women, the in-person-recruitment is rare, and instead, more of the recruitment is performed online. The exposure to an extreme picture of Islam may, therefore, be greater for women because of the internet providing an inclusive virtual social environment for religious exploration that extreme organizations as IS are taking advantage of due to gendered segregation (Shapiro and Maras, 2019: 90). For many women that are coming from a conservative and controlling context, the internet can be seen as a "safe zone", where the number of contacts they can have is higher than outside the internet. The internet is therefore where many women have been targeted. This allows them to act more freely without preconceptions, and they also have the opportunity to act anonymously. Therefore women are more vulnerable to be recruited online through IS approaches than men are (Pearson 2017:852). The feeling of community in the online space also had an effect on women's offline behavior and decisions (Pearson, 2017: 869). Therefore, studying the role of women and the message of propaganda is specifically beneficial to do in the cases of
women, because written material is more influential in the recruitment of women than the recruitment of men.

The majority of the IS recruits are what can be called "born-again-Muslims", that do not have a history of religious devoutness and does not have a deep understanding of the religion. This does not mean that their actions are not influenced by religion or religious texts or that they do not believe in God. Instead, their will and desperate need of pleasing God felt after years of neglecting God and religiosity, can instead make them more vulnerable to teachings of extremist groups and the way the group are framing the religion. This makes a powerful tool in manipulating and controlling members of the group because many do not have an understanding of the broad teachings of Islam and are therefore easy to convince of the radical teachings of the group. The propaganda of IS and how it has changed over time can also show how the representation of gods commands has changed regarding how the leaders of IS want the group and followers of the organization to act (Buril, 2017: 2).

3.2. Gender Theory
The definition of gender is different compared to the definition of sex. Sex can be seen as a biological matter, in relation to the definition of gender that is argued to be something socially constructed and culturally originated. What the exact definition of the expression gender should be, have been highly debated by different scholars, where there is a distinction between the feminist theory and naturalist theory. Feminist scholars argue that the social division between men and women is mostly a cultural division and in practice the division between men and women is unnatural. The difference in the power structures of men and women exists because of how society forms us to be to withhold gendered power structures. This could be both learned and unlearned (Sjöberg and Gentry 2007:7).

The naturalist way of viewing gender instead sees masculinity and femininity as biological given and something that is to greater extent controlled by the nature of men and women. Naturalists see women as natural carers due to female hormones and the reproductive role. Men, on the other hand, are according to naturalists shaped to be hunters, naturally aggressive and competitive (Bradley, 2013: 18). In this thesis, the feminist view of gender will be used, that gender is a social process of identity construction. The process of development regarding gender varies in different cultures and according to power hierarchies, where different views and ideas of masculinity and femininity have status, and therefore is applied by individuals. Though gender is a social conduct and a cultural process, in a specific group the roles of men and women are constructed to be a non-questionable truth. This types of rules were dictating the women of IS, who were highly controlled by the ideology and
the culture shaped how they behaved. The roles were also followed because of the strong control of women by both police and social control in the caliphate (Pearson, 2017: 852).

### 3.2.1. GENDER AND TERRORISM

Historically, war and fighting have been a men's arena, as well as terrorism. Jihadi violence has been seen as monopolized by men, and Jihadi organizations have often been a men's only club (Bloom, 2011; Lahoud, 2014), even if women participating in war in the Islamic history can be traced back to the seventh century. The phenomena have though been rare (Dalton and Asal, 2011: 803). The involvement of women in a violent organization and how recruitment and participation look like have changed with IS. Recruitment of women has not been done in such a systematical way before, where the organization have actively recruited women to be a part of the caliphate and build the state that IS tried to establish.

Autcher argues that there is no linear correlation between gender and terrorism, which leaves us as a society and outside world not capable to understand female terrorism and the phenomena that occurs when women choose to join terrorist organizations (Autcher, 2012: 125). The understanding of women in terrorism as an agent is rare, and it is common that women are seen as forceless and not capable of making decisions of joining terrorism by themselves. They are often portrayed as non-agents, people that are not capable of making decisions based on their own will, instead controlled by their urges or other peoples expectations (Autcher, 2012: 122).

Women have been a part of political violence throughout history in different types of organizations, based on different foundations. This has been both political and religious, but for a long time, it has not been brought up in news or by media, and not acknowledged by policymakers. Either, women have been ignored as actors in political violence, or the other way around, instead of being ignored, sensationalized for their involvement. When this has happened, the sensationalized women is seen as abnormal actors that carry out violence. To be violent is then viewed as not in the capacity of a "normal" woman. Men are often seen as they are following their own will when participating in war and conflict. Many women today act on the same prerequisites and should be seen and treated as. Even within situations of violence carried out from organizations with very gendered social structures, as in the case with IS where a jihadist view dictates the place of women in society, females, as males have choices which they are responsible for (Sjoberg, 2017: 298).

Elshtain argued in 1982 that the dynamic between the sexes in war often are described and portrayed in two specific images of women and men, that is simplifying the actions and preconception.
of how people are acting. According to the images of Elshtain's, women are seen as "beautiful souls" of war and that men are seen as "just warriors". It is an expression of archetypes and notions of how men and women behave and what roles they are interpreted to have in a war due to certain war theorists. "Beautiful soul" women are seen as victims of war and in need of protection, and therefore unable to protect themselves. A woman seen as a beautiful soul is unable to fight back when attacked (Elshtain, 1982: 341). This can be seen as a rather old and invalid view of women that today has changed. Sjöberg though points out that even feminist work sometimes still sees women as peaceful and victims of masculine violence and seen as not capable of participating in war in their own power. This assumes that femininity is linked to peace and innocence and that women by themselves are not capable of committing either crime or participating in war and combat. If a woman is taking part of a war it is due to these theorists explained with the women not being driven by her feminine sides, rather influenced by violence from men (Sjöberg, 2018: 297). According to traditional gender roles and the preconception of women behaving as "beautiful souls", women can not be seen as violent terrorists. In contrast to this preconception, women still engage in terrorism and join violent organizations. In this research, how women are viewed by IS will be analyzed, and one characteristic that is looked in to is if they are seen as capable of committing violence, in line with the theory of Elshtain. It will be tracked if women are mentioned by IS in a way of not capable of violence and if that has changed over time.

3.3 Women in Salafi-Jihadi theology
Since 2014, thousands of women around the globe have joined IS. IS offered an alternative way of living compared to the secular Western female liberation and gender-equality, promoting that migrating to the caliphate would give them divine redemption and a possibility to live life as a "true Muslim", instead of having to be "enslaved" by the Western lifestyle. IS promoted divine redemption over gender-equality (Khelghat-Doost, 2017: 23).

How the Quran and other religious texts should be applied today is in Islam controlled by fatwas. A fatwa is an Islamic text written by an Islamic scholar, judged capable of interpreting religious texts of legal pronouncements. There are six fatwa:s written that is allowing women to participate in martyrdom operations, none of them written by conservative religious leaders that IS followed. In the ideology of the global Salafi Jihadi, the role of women is by religious leaders promoted to be supporters, facilitators and promoters of carrying out jihad. A fatwa written by Yussuf al-Ayyiri, an ideological leader of the Saudi Arabian branch of Al Qaeda, encouraged women to take an active role in Jihad, though not fight actively. He called women to encourage and support men to join the armed fight of Jihad. At the same time also explicitly stating that women should not actively engage
in physical combat, but that their role in encouraging men to join jihad was important for the whole Muslim community. In another fatwa, Usama Bin Landin said that

“Our women had set a tremendous example for generosity in the cause of Allah; they motivate and encourage their sons, brothers and husbands to fight for the cause of Allah (...) May Allah strengthen the belief—Imaan—of our women in the way of generosity and sacrifice for the supremacy of the word of Allah” (Bin Ladin, Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places, Expel the Mushrikeen (infidels) from the Arabian Peninsula.)

In the branch that IS is sprung out from of conservative Salafi Jihadi theology, the religious leaders that are followed encouraged women to take a supporting role of men to join the jihad, not participate actively (von Kopp, 2007: 406).

Historically, jihad as participating in violence has been a men's arena and in classic Salafi-Jihadi theology, only men have been able to participate in armed fighting. The place of women has instead been inside the house. The women are in Salafi-Jihadi theology seen as the ones keeping the values and morals of the family and being the pillar of honour in the families, and the honour of families was kept out of how the women of the family behaved. The responsibility for women as mothers was to pass this on throughout generations. When Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was established, they started to allow women to participate and carry out attacks, in contrary to what had been advocated in jihadi organizations before and the fatwas written by their religious leaders. After the USA invasion of Iraq, 27 female suicide bombers from AQI carried out attacks between 2006 and 2008, and women were frequently participating in suicide missions (Spencer, 2016:78). The core of AQI and IS is the same and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the precursor of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (now the leader of IS), that was the leader transitioning AQI into ISIS, released in 2007 a statement titled “The Harvest of the Years in the Land of the Monotheists.” In the statement, he highlighted the use of women in suicide missions and for instance, he said the following:

“Even Iraqi women were pleading for martyrdom operations, but we forbade them from what men can do unless it is in special circumstances where men are unable to. Oh, what anguish, for those whom [sic] were less brave than women.” (Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, 2007)

This quote is an example of the internal struggle that has been debated in violent Jihadi groups where they face discussions of the question of using women in combat roles. Here the responses to the issue are carried out by shaming men into taking action and also giving permission for women to be carrying out suicide missions under the interpretable "special circumstances". After 2008, it seemed like the use of female suicide bombers had stopped, though without an official statement about the matter. Margolin concludes that this was because of the withdrawal of USA military
troops, and that the participation of women was a "pragmatic decision" and that the ideological state was formed due to the needs and external circumstances around the organization (Margolin, 2019:44).

The rules of how a woman should behave were by IS presented as extremely strict, with men having control over women in line with the religious background that was applied by the organization. Buril argued that this was seen changed and the roles of women loosening when that implied strategic gains. As for example were women according to sharia not allowed to travel without her husband or unmarriageable relative. This was initially applied by IS, but exceptions for "when it gained the caliphate" were later on established for when it was appropriate for a woman to travel without a man (Buril, 2017:6). In 2016, scholars predicted that it was likely that IS would be more acceptant to women participating in the fighting, both in Syria, Iraq and the West, when the fighting of all members was needed in the organization (Buril, 2017:9). Buril meant that the religious aspect of the organization, where the highest power and authority is God, and that makes the responsibility of the physical leaders less if just communicated in a way where the message tells that the change is the will of God. By using general verses from the Qur’an and sayings in the Hadith’s for specific topics, interpreted in a beneficial way, the members of the organization sees the messages as unconditionally truthful and unquestionable, especially because many of the recruits of the organization was newly converts and did not have a deeper understanding of Islam themselves (Buril 2017: 8).

3.4. Summary of theories

From the different researches regarding women and terrorism, different characterizations have been lined out around how women are viewed in the propaganda researched. To be able to test the change in a systematical way a few categorizations have been made. The categories tested are divided into traditional or non-traditional view of Salafi-jihadi theology. The categories are sorted in a way where the roles of the most active roles are seen in one end as non-traditional due to the Salafi-jihadi theology and the ones in the other end are seen as more traditional jihadist roles for women. The traditional roles are where women are seen as supporters, wives and mothers, in line with fatwas written by traditional Salafi Jihadi religious leaders. One category that is used is if women are seen as a possession in need of a man for protection and livelihood. The narrative of "the beautiful soul" established by Elshtain will be used to see if women are seen as a peaceful creature that are supporters, not capable to carry out violence (1982). On the other end, for the non-traditional roles in relation to Salafi Jihadi theology, it is examined if women were encouraged to stay steadfast and strong, to protect the family is used as a category, along with the roles of actors and part of combat, in line with the characterizations mentioned by Sjöberg (2017). This categorization scheme is used
to see if the role of women that were promoted in propaganda changed and if the organization abandoned their initial religious views to be more pragmatic in relation to the military needs of the organization, to test the hypothesis of the thesis. How the argumentation in relation to the role of women was carried out were looked into as well. According to Buril, the level of religious background inside of IS was low, and the argumentation that is laid out to recruit women and what type of religious arguments that are used to attract new recruits is looked into, to see how the argumentation changed.
4. Methodology

This study will be conducted as a case study, where the case of women in IS will be investigated. As Yin holds, a case study is used when "you want to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth" (Yin, 2009:18). A case-study has historically been seen as a method where we try to understand and interpret a temporally bounded set of events, but lately, case-studies instead focus more on contributing to constructing and validating theoretical propositions (Levy, 2008: 3). This study, of the role of women in the extreme terror organization IS, is a study of how the ideology has shifted throughout military successes and setbacks, and if this has been communicated throughout the organization. This will be done by conducting the method of process tracing. Different mechanisms that are outlined due to the theoretical framework will be traced, that can show us how the nature of the female role in IS have changed throughout the rise and fall of the caliphate. Process tracing as a method is executed by tracing causal mechanisms to see links between a cause and an outcome. We will take a cause (X) and try to find the links that lead to a certain effect or outcome (Y) (Beach, 2016: 463).

In the hypothesis used, we argue that the territorial loss and state of the organization is linked to the role that the women of the organization play. In this research, this will be done by investigating how the role of women has changed over time, due to the rise and fall of the caliphate of IS. The role of women will first be looked at in depth and how the role of women in IS has changed, and thereafter this will be linked to the military and territorial situation of IS. The mechanisms that are changing can show us an underlying causal process, of how women are viewed, what roles women are advocated to take and what type of tasks they were allowed to participate in. It is interesting to see how the organization managed a shift in the role of women, due to the gender segregation being a strong part of the jihadi ideology that was applied by IS. The shift of women, how the change was advocated, what it lead to and how it affected the view of women from the organization will be looked into (Beach, 2016: 464). When looking at written material the research is easily replicable and the reliability of the analysis is therefore high.

Process tracing is a method that gives us tools for a causal analysis that should be built on theoretical ground, testing hypotheses. In this research, I will test the hypothesis that that military defeat and reduced military and territorial power lead to a changing role for women, no matter the ideal principles. A contradictory hypothesis will also be tested, where the rivaling theory that will be used is that IS have kept the same ideals and jihad theology throughout the rise and fall of the caliphate. The main hypothesis should always be tested contradictory to the opposite hypothesis.

The starting point of the analysis in this thesis is made out of the realistic approach that the method process tracing gives us. The research is made in light of abductive reasoning. Conclusions are
made in a term of this being the most likely outcome of the situation and the explanation is made out of the best explanation to be found (Josephson, 1994:5). The logic standpoint of process tracing is inspired by the Bayesian approach, where we see that science is about using empirical evidence to show us if a causal theory is valid, where the degree of updating depends on the uniqueness of the empirical evidence in relation to the hypothesis (Beach, 2016: 468).

4.1. Research design
This study is conducted in line with the practical checklist that Ricks and Liu (2018) outlines in their practical guide of their Research Design of process tracing. They have in their paper outlined a 7-step checklist to go through while using process-tracing as a method, that is methodically followed to see if there is causality in line with the hypothesis or the counter hypothesis (Ricks and Liu, 2018: 842).

The first step when carrying out a study based on process tracing is creating the timelines that will be used for the study. The first timeline, tracking the military and territorial developments of the Islamic State, where significant battles and the territorial expansion and decline will be arranged in a timely order to see the development of the organization. The other timeline will be arranged with the development of the propaganda, giving information regarding women. In the analysis, different characteristics and tasks advocated for women in the propaganda material is used, and ways that women are viewed will be categorized and outlined. Six main categories of the role of women are used, wherein these six categories different attributes outlined by the theoretical framework will be incorporated. The aim is to see how women were portrayed by IS themselves or what view of the female nature that is communicated in the organization in relation to the Salafi-Jihadi theology that the organization is founded on. The six categories are sorted in relation to each other from women being of possession of men and wives, mothers and carers in one end, which is seen as the most traditional view of women according to Salafi-jihadi theology. The roles of women that are less dependent on men and more of their own actors and part of combat, that are not typically seen in the ideology carried out by IS, is in the other end of the chart.

After the timelines were established, a causal graph, where independent variables of interest were identified. This is to focus on the link between the explanation and the concerned outcome. Then, alternative choice of events, due to the theoretical background was looked for. Then, counterfactual outcomes, what would actually have happened if the alternative choice of an event would have happened, how would the outcome looked then. If there were no alternative choice of events, the link between input and outcome would have been predetermined, and the value of the research would be
with little to add. Then data is collected to find evidence for the main hypothesis, and later on, data is searched for evidence of the counter hypothesis. If the first data that is collected is confirming the main hypothesis and entail that we can exclude all other hypotheses, that is the final step of the research. Though that is not the case most of the time, often data is collected and compared. If the rival theory cannot be discarded with the data, there is a need to move on to other explanations and hypothesizes that would explain the causal link of the input and outcome (Ricks and Liu, 2018: 846).

Counterfactual outcomes, in this case, is if IS would not have been defeated territorially and if the caliphate would have remained strong military and kept their main territory. If that would have been the case, the outcome is pretty likely that the role of women would have been to be wives and mothers, and not playing an active role in carrying out violence on behalf of the organization.

The themes that is used to display the change in the role of women is chosen to help us understand how IS has acted in their organization during the time that the caliphate existed, and how the tension of protecting and keeping the ideology of the organization have played out in the time researched. How the relationship between the role of men and women and the need of all manpower that is accessible when military setbacks occurred, is handled. This data is searched to confirm the main hypothesis and see how the shift has occurred. This will also point towards how the development of the women in the organization is moving, and in what direction the organization is moving, regarding the role of women. If the role of women being participating in combat is affected by the territorial and military defeats will be tested, as well as the role of women overall, have changed due to the state of the organization. Is women seen in the same light as before, or is the picture of the women of the organization as actors or not changing along with the tasks allowed for a woman to participate in.

4. 2. Data
This study is a qualitative study, where one case is looked into and the propaganda of IS is analyzed. What the propaganda communicated about and to women is used to understand how the situation of women has changed and how the rhetoric has changed. Significant documents that will help to understand the question researched is studied in depth. The data will though be quantified in a part of constructing the second timeline where the change of the role of women will be tracked, due to gain information on how the frequency of themes has changed.
To create the first timeline with the rise and fall of the caliphate of IS, and to see how the military and territorial power developed, different news articles and information from a range of sources was used. Multiple sources were used to prevent unilateral information that could enable biased information. The news outlets Al Jazeera, BBC and CNN were used to take in information from global media houses that have a wide international reporting with bases in three different countries, in these cases, Qatar, Great Brattain and USA. The news outlets were also complemented with studies conducted by the think tanks Wilson Center and ICSR (The International Center for the study of Radicalization and Political Violence). Information and statements from the Pentagon and the US Department of Defense were used as well. All of the information from these different outlets were used to create a timeline of the events, battles and statements made by the Islamic State along with the opposing side and the coalition that fought against IS. Regarding the military and territorial timeline, the domination of key cities is used to see how the rise and fall of important IS-strongholds evolved during the time researched, along with the number of airstrikes that were carried out towards IS. Then a timeline was established of how IS territory developed due to the most important areas, where it can be argued that the area inside of Raqqa or Mosul was more important to hold and protect, in relation to an area on the countryside that did not have as much strategical value.

The timeline where the situation for women is tracked was created out of the propaganda of IS. Since 2014, a lot of different propaganda documents produced by IS have been circulating on the internet. The documents of propaganda that are used as data in this thesis are ones that were communicated from the central media branch of the organization to possible IS recruits as well as members of the organization. Social media and documents produced by individual members of IS will not be used, nor interviews and media reports regarding the role of women either. The documents are used to see how the role of women has changed by looking at if the information that is communicated to women by the official channels of IS have changed over time. The magazines that will be analyzed have been used by the leadership of IS to communicate the main standpoint of the organization and are used to see how different questions were handled in the authority of IS. This type of information gives us a more accurate picture of the role of women inside the caliphate, rather than propaganda carried out by individuals that are coloured by that specific person's views and incentives. There is no source to be found that it totally neutral and not biased in any way, that have written about how the life inside the caliphate was and what role women have played in the organization over the years the caliphate existed. Many of the interviews with women of IS that has been conducted after the fall of the caliphate may be highly biased, because of the fear of persecution for being affiliated with IS and of the war crimes that were conducted inside of the organization. The
living conditions of the women living in refugee camps are uncertain and they are kept guarded by the military. Therefore, their oral statement may not be of such value that it can tell us about the life inside the caliphate (Winter and Margolin, 2017). In the analysis, it is taken into account that the material used is a tool of propaganda, written with a certain aim and a goal of impacting the people that reads it in a certain way. The propaganda that is used for this research is through a part of portraying the situation inside of the caliphate and how women were positioned. The focus of this thesis will be what is communicated from the organization and what narrative that the core group want to claim, and how it has developed over time. This will not tell us about the exact role women had in practice, but it will instead tell us how the role of women was seen and how women were advocated to behave.

The recruitment of women has often been done by other women through the internet and in the online sphere, in contrast with the recruitment of men. On the internet, there is more freedom to express thoughts without offline gender norms and meet more people outside of their closest circuit (Pearson, 2017: 853). Due to the arena for women being on the internet instead of relational recruitment, for the analysis, a study of written material and propaganda that is reachable online is particularly suitable. It may be easier to view the development of the role of women in the written sphere, in relation to men, where the platforms of recruitment were much broader and harder to track.

The big amount of propaganda that was carried out by the Islamic State was also done so in a range of different languages, aiming Muslims from all over the world. Some magazines and videos that were published in many different languages were directly translated between the different editions, others were customized to aim the specific group spoken to. The all-female Al-Khanssaa Brigade's media wing published in 2014 a manifest regarding how women of IS were to behave, though only published in Arabic, not aiming English-speaking recruits (Winter, 2014). For the analysis of this thesis, the main data that will be used is propaganda and messaging that was published from the official sources of IS where the main language of the material used is English. This includes the magazines Dabiq and Romayah, and the videos of propaganda that are labelled “Inside the Caliphate”. This research has been limited to use only English sources, just analyzing materials that have been aiming western Muslims. This is a choice made both with the time limit and the amount of data that is possible to analyze in mind, along with the language barriers and the uncertainty and limitation to use translated material. Therefore, only material that is directly understood is used. This thesis is limited to draw conclusions regarding women that were English-speaking and how their roles have changed. There are scholars that argue that the roles were different for women inside of IS regarding on what ethnical background you had (Spencer, 2016: 93). There may be slight differences in
how the role of women of for example Arabic descent changed throughout the time of the existence of the caliphate. Even though, the demand for manpower is assumed to have affected all women, not only the ones that understood English and therefore changed for all women in a similar way. Therefore, even if not able to establish a certain result for all women of the caliphate, the conclusions that will be drawn can be interpreted to be universal and be valid for all women that joined IS. This will only be looked in to for the women that by their own choice joined IS and travelled to the caliphate, not the ones that were forced in to joining or being taken as slaves, due to the research using propaganda and material for recruiting women by their free will.

On the 5th of July 2014, the first issue of the magazine Dabiq with the title ”The Return of the Caliphate” was published and spread throughout the internet. The magazine was published in 15 issues, in the languages Arabic, English German and French. The name Dabiq came from an area occupied by IS at the time, and the magazine was regularly issued until August 2016, when the paper changed its name to Rumiyah. The change of name occurred time after IS loosed control over the area where the city Dabiq is located. Rumayah was an updated version of the magazine, and it was issued in the languages Arabic, English, German, French, Indonesian, Turkish, Uyghur, and Urdu. Rumiyah were published in 13 issues and the last magazine that was published was done so in September 2017. In most of the released issues of both Dabiq and Rumayah, an article produced specifically written by women, for women, at least by what it is told in the paper, and it was labelled ’To our Sisters’. The manifest that is used in the analysis will be used as a datapoint of how the attitude towards women was in 2014, when it was released and when the caliphate was proclaimed. The videos that are used were published called ”Inside the Caliphate” were published in 8 issues that were published between July 2017 and October 2018.

This data is mainly a material including what the organization wants to communicate about themselves, and may not necessarily reflect how the organization operated in detail. This material can tell us something about the ideology of IS and how their view changed during the existence of the caliphate. This thesis is therefore limited to only carry out conclusions regarding the picture IS wanted to paint of themselves, both to their own members and their enemies, during this specific time. To look at the open material that is published by the organization can tell us what type of message and ideology they wanted to spread and advocated for.

For the videos, they have been analyzed in their whole to find sequences that include women and talks about the role of women in the organization. Regarding the magazines, they are not read from
cover to cover, instead keywords that are related to women is used and searched from, such as female, woman, women, sister, wife, mother, and daughter. When the relevant passages were found, they were read, categorized and used in the analysis. Only the passages that refer to the women of IS were analyzed. In the magazines, passages with topics regarding women that were enslaved by IS, Yazidi women and women of the enemy was disregarded. This research aims to look closer to the role of the women that were recruited by IS, and is not looking in to how IS treated and handled the women that lived in the territory before IS occupied it or the women that they enslaved inside of the caliphate. Therefore, only women that by their own will traveled to live inside the caliphate and was a part of their organization will be looked into in the analysis.
5. Result of study

5.1. Timeline over IS territorial and military power
In line with the method of process tracing that is used to examine the research question, the first part when conducting the analysis is to produce a timeline over the development of IS during the time researching, here the development throughout the years 2014 to 2018 in a territorial and military way is analyzed. This timeline is created out of multiple sources and the different timelines produced by different sources are mentioned in the data section. The sources that are used are articles from the global media houses Al Jazeera, BBC and CNN, as well as studies conducted by the think tanks Wilson Center and ICSR (The International Center for the study of Radicalization and Political Violence). Information and statements from the Pentagon and the US Department of Defense were used as well. These are all combined and when a specific day were consistently used in all places read it is mentioned with the specific date, if the day or time differs it is mentioned more broad with it taking place in a specific month.

In 2014 IS occupied cities and villages throughout Iraq and Syria, and among others, they took control over the cities Fallujah, Mosul and Tikrit. Thereafter, they proclaimed a caliphate, a state-like entity with its own military, along with their own police-force and authorities. The declaration of the caliphate, occurred at the 29th of June 2014, from the city of Mosul. At this time, IS had experienced rapid success and taken the territory they then controlled without much military resistance. In August 2014 they continued to attack and occupy multiple villages and did so with surprising elements in their invasions, and therefore they could take in the areas without hardly any resistance from other military entities. At this time, the Yezidi village Sinjar were invaded by IS and many Yezidi-men were killed, and the women were raped and taken as slaves. In September 2014 IS besieged the Kurdish city of Kobane in northern Syria. After this event, the USA coalition started to answer the territorial offensives that IS carried out to widen the caliphate of IS with airstrikes. The focus on defeating IS started by then to be an international priority from firsthand the military that previously controlled the area that IS besieged, but for the international community as well. The USA sends troops to educate and train Kurdish forces that fought IS in the fall of 2014. After the global coalition of 79 countries and organizations united to join in a joint operation to defeat IS, they started to pressure IS. The global coalition with the USA in the lead started an airstrike-campaign towards IS in December 2014, even if they did not put in any ground forces. In the first months of their operation, hundreds of IS fighters were killed and many were injured. As an answer to the airstrikes and the resistance that IS experienced, IS encouraged people to carry out terrorist
attacks throughout the world, with a specific focus on the countries that participated in the campaigns towards IS. In the following two years, in 2015 and 2016, 150 different terrorist attacks were carried out in 29 countries all over the world with over 2000 victims killed and many injured.

In 2015, the USA-lead coalition carried out 9 000 airstrikes towards IS. In January 2015 IS lost their control over the Kurdish city Khobane, after losing many of their fighters in the combat. After the battle of Khobane IS regrouped, expanded in other directions and incorporated other organizations in theirs. In March 2015, Boko Haram in Nigeria announced that their organization had merged with IS, and joined them in their cause, renaming themselves to ‘The Islamic State in West Africa’. IS was at the same time also expanding its organization and incorporating jihad-organizations in Asia, including groups in the Philippines and Indonesia. In May and June, 2015 IS took control over Palmyra and Baiji. After that, there started to be more setbacks against IS. At the 16th of June 2015, IS lost control over Tal Abyad when Kurdish forces took in the city. This was a strategically important city for IS to have control over because the loss of the city deprived IS of a key supply route of goods.

In 2016, the battle of Fallujah took place from the 22nd of May to 26th of June. During the fight, it was estimated that approximately 300 IS fighters were killed and many were injured. At October 16th 2016, the battle of Mosul started. During the battle, approximately 38 suicide attacks were carried out by IS in the outskirts of Mosul. Many of the suicide bombers were women. The battle of Raqqa started on May 24th 2017 when the coalition started their offensive towards the city that IS saw as their capital and one of the most important cities. In July 2017 IS lost control over Mosul and in October 2017 they also lost control over Raqqa. At the 9th of December 2017, the Iraqi government declared that IS had lost all their territory in Iraq. IS was at that time struggling with financial problems, they had trouble with their infrastructure after the heavy bombings directed to the areas they controlled and a big part of their administrative structure were ruined. In 2018 and 2019 heavy airstrike campaigns were continuously carried out towards the organization and the brackets that still existed in Syria, where their territory systematically shrunk until March 2019, when they lost their last territory. SDF (the Syrian Democratic Forces) took then full control of Baghouz, that were the last pockets of territory that IS controlled, after weeks of heavy combat in which IS used civilians as human shields in the fight.

To sum it up, IS did during the peak of their organization occupy an essential part of the territory of Iraq and Syria, which they controlled in a highly effective way, regarding how few fighters and followers that had connected to the organization at that time. At the most, it is estimated that they had
40,000 foreign fighters in the organization, occupying territory with approximately 10 million inhabitants. The first setback for the organization occurred during the fight of Khobane when the USA-lead airstrikes started and affected the battle situation. Even after the airstrikes started, IS were continuously strong and had both advancements and retreats until the battle of Fallujah. There, the pressure became stronger from the outside forces and the power balance between IS and the ground forces in combination with the USA-lead bombing campaigns became significant. From the summer of 2016, IS lost control of their major cities and started to be severely damaged with both military and administrative problems. From 2017 they struggled with setbacks and defeats until they lost their last territory in March 2019.

According to the method of process tracing alternative choice of events must be looked into, to see if there were counterfactual choices of events that could have occurred, to see that the causality tested has a connection even without the events occurred. If there were no alternative choice of events, the link between input and outcome would have been predetermined, and the value of the research would be with little to add (Ricks and Liu, 2018: 846). One alternative event that could have occurred was if the global coalition would not have been formed and joined the Syrian, Kurdish and Iraqi forces in the fight towards IS. If that would have been the case, the power conditions would have been different in the relations between IS and their enemies. The military defeats and setbacks of IS started when the US lead coalition started to participate in the counter attacks and adding bombing campaigns into the equation. If countries from all over the world would not have gathered together to join the fight the outlook may have been different, and chances are high that IS would have been able to put more focus to build the caliphate into a state for a longer time. Then, the role of women may have been more static in the organization if their highest focus would have been to be a strong state with as many supporters as possible. The timeline of the rise and fall of the caliphate could have looked a lot different, depending on which international powers that joined in the fight against IS. Therefore, there are many alternative events that could have occurred. Now, we know the outcome and therefore it is important to see if the military situation affected the role of women.

5.2. Timeline of the role of women in IS
The second timeline that was created was the one where how the role of women that were advocated in the propaganda of IS where established. The propaganda and articles that were carried out regarding women in the material used were categorized to understand how women have been viewed, what part they have played for IS inside the caliphate and what roles they were advocated to take this is done through. In line with the theory carried out, the articles and different outlets of
propaganda was divided into categories of how women were viewed and what roles they were advocated to take. There are six categories used in the thematic analysis, that are sorted in an order depending on how traditional the role is in relation to Salafi-jihadi theology. The first category that is used is where it is traced if women were seen as ”possession of men”, and argued to be an object to take care of. Where women were mentioned, where they were seen to be the responsibility of their husbands and an object instead of a subject that had the decisions in her own hands. The second category is if women were mentioned as caretakers, mothers and wives. The third one is if women were mentioned as ”beautiful souls” in line with the theory of Elshtain, where women were seen as peaceful creatures and not capable to carry out violence. The fourth category is to see if women were called to be ”steadfast”, to ”stay strong and firm”. This category includes when women are mentioned as called to be the backbone of the family and aid the ones in need. The fifth and sixth category that is used for the analysis is if the women were mentioned as part of combat and as actors or are called and encouraged to take part in combat. These last categories are where women are seen as an actor with the power to influence their own life. This is not included in the traditional view of Salafi-jihadi theology, where women are seen as possessions of their men to decide for, and therefore not able to travel for herself or make bigger decisions without the approval of her husband.

In the first five editions of Dabiq that was published before December 2014, hardly any attention was shown to women, and they were just briefly mentioned in passing when other themes were examined. In the first edition women were mentioned in a sentence when it is said that ”women will prosper as long as leaders will treat her with justice”(Dabiq #1, p. 22). In the second and fourth editions, they talked about women as slaves, but there was no focus on the women inside the organization. In the sixth edition of Dabiq, the role of women was mentioned in the context that it is important for men to protect Muslim women, who are also deemed to be lawful. At the seventh edition the first article in the series called ”to our sisters” that at first hand turned to women was published (Dabiq, #7, 50). This series of articles was after this carried out in all editions of Dabiq and Rumi-yah, except magazine number 14 of Dabiq. In the series, many of them were claimed to be written by women and contained requests and guidelines for how a righteous Muslim woman should behave and act as well as how men should treat women.

The first category analyzed was to what extent women were mentioned and seen as ”possession of men” in the propaganda researched. In the six first magazines of Dabiq, that were all published in 2014, women were hardly mentioned at all. In five of the six Dabiq magazines that were published in 2015 women were being portrayed as possession of men. This was also the case in three of the
seven Dabiq magazines that were published in 2016. After that woman was not objectified in the same way as they were in these editions and seen more as subjects than an object that is ’owned’ and someone else is responsible for.

For the category where the role of women as wives, mothers and caretakers was analyzed, this is a theme that was continuously going through almost all the material of propaganda where women were mentioned. In the first article in the series which was turning to women called ’to our sisters’ in number seven of Dabiq, the article focuses on the role of women as wives, and a woman that made ’Hijrah’ (an Arabic word that is used of the process of emigrating to the caliphate) was interviewed. Her husband had died after he carried out a terrorist attack in Brussels, and mainly the focus of the article was her experiences of being a wife to an IS-fighter and traveling to the caliphate. The role of women as a wife and mother was then advocated for in all of the articles regarding women, except the last two editions of Rumiyah that were published in August and September of 2017. Even in the articles when it was mentioned that women should stay steadfast and be role models, which is another category in the analysis, this was mentioned in the context of being role models for your children and family. Also in the contexts when women were encouraged to participate in violence, it was always mentioned that the first and most important task of women is to be mothers and wives and that this should be a priority, and participating in violence was of second priority. But in the last editions that were published, the theme of motherhood was added with that women were allowed to participate actively in the jihad that the men are carrying out under certain circumstances.

For the ”beautiful soul” narrative, this was used in the argumentation on how women were supposed to be acting in a total of three articles in all the magazines. These magazine numbers were published in July 2014, September 2015 and July 2016. In these numbers, it was mentioned that jihad for a woman is ”to wait patiently for her husband” (Dabiq #11, p. 41) and in number 15 of Dabiq it is mentioned that jihad of a woman is to do a pilgrimage to Mecca and not to fight a war, because fighting is not in the nature of woman. Here, women are argued to be to delicate to participate in war, and it is along with it argued that a woman is like a pearl, that should be hidden and protected. The nature of a woman is in these editions of the magazines seen as peaceful and not capable of participating in a war.

The theme where women were called to stay steadfast is mentioned for the first time in October 2016. In the numbers to come after that one, this is a regularly recurrent theme that occurred in seven more magazines until the last number of Romiyah in September 2017. Women were here
called to remain patient and steadfast in times of hardships and pray to Allah that he will keep them on the right track throughout life, and to stay firm and not forsake their faith even if times were hard. Here, the women are encouraged to take a more active role and not only be dependent on their husbands.

In eight of the magazines, women were talked about as actors, that had specific roles and a possibility to fight for the cause of the caliphate in the way possible for them and had a responsibility in relation to the cause of IS. It is clear to see that this view of women changed from not being the narrative of how women were mentioned, to in the end being the way that women are talked about. It is in the last editions of Romiyah talked about that women should fight the fight in their own way. A figure of speech that is not used in the earlier years of the organization.

The category where the theme of women being advocated to take part in violence or women that had participated in combat or attacks where acknowledged occurred for the first time in December 2014. Then it was acknowledged that a woman participated when a terrorist attack was carried out in Berlin. After that, this theme was not included in the magazines published until October 2016 in Romiyah number 2. After that, it is mentioned in two more magazines, which one were published in May 2017 and one in August 2017, both during the offensives of Mosul and Raqqa. The phenomena of women participating in terrorist attacks were mentioned and discussed. In two of the magazines, it was mentioned that women “have a responsibility to protect their Muslim sister as a man, you should aid your Muslim sister”, with the words ”as a man” it is interpreted to that violence was seen as acceptable for women (Romiyah, #12 p. 28). In other magazines, the role of women was questioned, but in a more cryptical way. This was not categorized as women were encouraged to participate in violence, even if the roles of women were questioned. For example, in Romiyah number 11 it is mentioned that it is ”time to examine our duties and roles, our mission is greater than we can imagine.” Here, the addition ”as a man” is not a part of the sentence and therefore it is not clear that it is to be seen as they advocated the role of women as to use violence (Romiyah #11, p. 13).

For the movies published by IS in the series ”Inside the Caliphate”, in the first five videos women were not mentioned or portrayed. In the sixth video in the series, published in December 2017, a story is told of a woman that uses a stone to attack an enemy, fighting the enemy using what she had to participate in the fight of IS. This was mentioned in a passage with a moralizing story, of how you should behave as this woman, that in times of hardships you should participate in the ways you are able to participate in jihad and defeat the enemy. In the seventh video that was published in February 2018, women were portrayed participating in combat and battle. Along with the message
of the responsibility for everyone to "stay fast in the mission of Allah", the women in the video is seen shooting and actively fighting in a battle, dressed in the solid black clothes that were required to be worn by women who lived at the territory of the Islamic State.

5.3. Causality between the timelines
After conducting the two timelines, a causal graph with points of interest was established. Here, how the fluctuations of both timelines move and how they followed each other in the times of significant events were investigated to see the important changes within the themes of the research. A graph was also created to easier picture and illustrate how the different discussions have changed over time.

There is a clear distinction if looking to the overall picture of the themes dominating the role of women looking over the time the propaganda was carried out. The theme of women as wives and caretakers is one of the main tasks of women according to Salafi-Jihadi theology, and this did not change during all of the propaganda that was carried out by the magazines. Even when women were encouraged to take a more active role and participating in violence, the narrative as mothers and wives were still strong and important in the messaging throughout all of the magazines that were published and where women were mentioned. One thing that changed though is how women were viewed. In the first numbers of Dabiq where the role of women was discussed, they often talked about women as possession of men and that a woman belongs to her husband, and is for him to take care of, protect and take responsibility for. The analogy of women as a pearl was used initially, where a pearl is so precious that it needs to be hidden and protected, and that it was the job of the husband to protect his pearl. Here, a difference can be seen between how women were mentioned and seen within the two magazines, wherein Dabiq women were regularly mentioned as a possession of their husbands, while this narrative of women was not to be found in any of the articles regarding women in the magazine Romiyah, that was published later than Dabiq. An explanation to why there is such a clear distinction here between the different magazines can be explained with that IS changed the name of the magazine when they lost the territory of Dabiq, at the same time as they lost Fallujah and other influential parts of their territory. In the later magazines, women advocated to be their own actors with responsibility for themselves, which also coincided with IS losing some of their most important territories and a big part of their military influence, and more manpower was needed for the organization. In most of the numbers of the magazine Romiyah, women were encouraged to be role models, to stay steadfast and defend herself and her sisters, instead of being viewed as the responsibility of someone else and a subject that need to be taken care of as
they were in most editions of the magazine Dabiq. Here, there can be seen a causal relationship between the territorial situation and the role of women in the organization.

Regarding when women were mentioned as participating in violence and encouraged to be a part of carrying out attacks, this first time this occurs is at the same time as the airstrikes from the US lead coalition starts. At that time, IS-supporters from all over the world were encouraged to carry out terror attacks in the West to seek revenge for the soldiers lost in the airstrikes. And in a magazine published at that time, a woman is noticed and mentioned as a good example for joining her husband in a terror attack, and there is no distinction made between the possibility for men and women to carry out attacks. The second time this happens is in the magazine that is released right after the battle of Mosul started. Women were in that number encouraged to be role models and stay steadfast when times are rough, as well as women that carried out violence were mentioned as ideals to follow after and seen as role models. Three women that carried out a terror attack by carrying bombs on their bodies, at a police station were used as good examples in this magazine. The actions of the three women that executed a terror attack were put into contrast with men that stayed behind and did not participate in battles. The men that were not participating in the battles and the violence committed by IS were shamed as cowards, and "even the women took their responsibility even that they were not demanded to do so" (Rumiyah #2, p. 3). After this, during the time that the battle of Raqqa was going on, it was mentioned in two of the magazines that it was important even for women to participate in jihad, and women were encouraged to take an active role in the fight towards the infidels, which can be put in contrast to one of the earlier published magazines, where jihad of a women was mentioned to be the pilgrimage to Mecca in number 15 of Dabiq. There is clear to see that for four of the most significant battles, during the first attack from the US lead coalition when the first airstrikes were carried out and during the fights when IS lost control over the cities of Fallujah, Mosul and Raqqa, women were encouraged to take a more active role in the organization and even encouraged to execute violence and participate in combat in the magazines published during this time. Therefore, causality can be seen that confirms the hypothesis of this thesis, that when IS were attacked and battles were fought in strategic cities, they urged the entire population of IS, even the women, to participate in violence. So this observation confirms that the military and territorial power of IS affects how women were promoted to act and seen from the main communicators of the organization.
5.4. Chart combining the state of the organization and the role of women

Below there is a chart where the relationship between the development of the organization and the role of women and how they are presented in the newspapers of Dabiq and Rumiyah are illustrated. On the timeline, the Y-axis represents the military and territorial development where significant events have been outlined in relation to where they occurred in time. The X-axis has all the categorizations for how women were talked about in the magazines and what role they were encouraged to take. To create the timeline, the magazines have been read in line with the methodology of the research and each X symbolizes a magazine where women are mentioned in line with the categorization. In each magazine, women can be talked about and mentioned in more than one way, and then more than one X is put out on that time when that magazine was published. A causality as described above can be seen, where the narrative of actors, part of combat and where women are called on to stay steadfast are occurring more frequently in the later years, as well as the possession of men and beautiful soul occurred more frequent in the first years. As we can see, the more traditional roles due to Salafi-jihadi theology and the categories where women are seen as more as non-actors is located to the left in the chart and the not so traditional characterizations of women being seen as actors to the right. We can here see that the left categories occurred more at the beginning of the existence of the caliphate, and the categories to the left were used in propaganda more in the end of the existence of the caliphate.
5.5 Argumentation in the magazines regarding the role of women

Regarding how IS in their magazine’s arguments for the change in the role of women, the change that was occurring is seen as exceptions that were motivated with that it was demanded by Allah. The clause "under special circumstances” was used for when it was allowed to act differently then what previously had been allowed. Because of to the members of IS in many cases being converts and "born again Muslims”, the word of the leaders and what is said in official channels of IS was highly respected in the organization and it was not welcomed to question or challenge the way that was presented by the main organization of IS. This is the answer to the puzzle of how women could participate in violence and carry out attacks and even be portrayed in combat, at the same time as the organization promotes the role of women to be inside the home and not leaving the house if not absolutely necessary. That the religiousness in the organization was in some way carried out by a group of “non-experts” (Buril 2017: 8). This can be seen in the magazines and videos that have been analyzed in this thesis, that their theological ground in the argumentation often is weak. The texts and videos are full of religious words, but not many religious references were used. There were not many references to the Quran and the Hadiths or cross-references used in the religious ar-
gumentation of the magazines if any. All the texts were sprinkled with Arabic words as jihad, hirjah, ummah (the Muslim community), kufar (infidels) and janna (paradise), but there were few references to the religious texts of Muslims, rather personal experiences and feelings were mentioned. The religious references that actually were used were often short texts that were not penetrated, set in context or backed with cross-references that confirmed the interpretation that was used in the specific case in the text. It was instead written in a way that was taken out of its context and interpreted so that it was beneficial for the message the writer wanted to declare. For example, in the first article in the series ”To our Sisters” in number seven of Dabiq, a woman tells us about her migration to the caliphate, where she encourages others to do the same. She proclaims that it is the goal of all Muslims to travel to the caliphate and in that way follow the will of Allah. In the three page article references to the Quran is mentioned three times, all times where general calls are written, regarding the righteousness of the people and that the people should praise Allah. Not any citations from religious texts are mentioned about emigrating to a caliphate, or a caliphate and a Muslim state at all. In that way, the message and narrative of what is accepted and not can be shifted in line with the situation of the organization, despite what the initial perception of the role of men and women was. It seems like the argumentation is made in a superficial way, based on feelings and impressions of individuals. The rhetoric is unclear in a religious way, to be able to back out of and withdrawal and change the meaning of what is being said.

The argumentation regarding the role of women shifted carefully and with not much focus on the change, and it is argued in a way that is shaming men, at the same time as it is encouraging women and allowing them to take on a different role. This was firstly seen done in the same way in Al Qaeda in Iraq as mentioned earlier, where Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, the processor to the now leader of IS said that women could participate in suicide missions under special circumstances, and shamed men that were not willing to participate in missions themselves. He said that men must take part in jihad and fight for the cause of the organization and that a man should have the courage to carry out attacks, to do what ”even a woman had the courage to do”(Margolin, 2019:44). This argumentation disappeared from AQI along with the participation of women after the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2008 and IS had initially a strong communication towards the role of women being inside of the home. This changed in October 2016, when the magazine that was published at the same time as the battle of Mosul started. There, the same argumentation that was used in AQI in 2007 was used again, this time regarding a suicide mission in Mombasa. In that number, it was argued that women, in that situation, surpassed men when three women carried out an attack towards a police station, while men at the same time only were spectators and remained behind. These women
became role models in supporting the Islamic State and exceeded the men in that situation, according to IS. Here, women carrying out violence are acknowledged and congratulated, and at the same time, the argumentation was used to shame men into action, and get more men participating in carrying out violence. It was carefully mentioned in that issue that carrying out violence is not the first responsibility and task of women, but when needed, under certain circumstances, it was allowed for women to participate in violence and participate in attacks as men do.
6. Analysis
With the feminist theory in mind, that states that women can be actors driven by their own choices rather than on behalf of other men, the changing of the role of women in IS has been investigated. In mainstream media, it has often been communicated that the women of IS were passive companions, that were acting in relation to the wish of their men. The women of IS have often been mentioned as 'jihadi brides', that has only joined IS to marry fighters, and not seen their own determiners (Sjoberg, 2017: 299). At the same time, women held influential positions in the pronto-state that IS were building with their caliphate and contributed to the capabilities that IS had (Spencer, 2016: 74). Where does the propaganda of IS tell us about the role of women in the organization and what expectations were there on the women that joined IS, and how did that change due to the loss of territory and military power?

IS was and still is an ultra-conservative organization, that during the time that the caliphate existed were applying an extreme form of sharia laws. They practised public punishment of both the men and women that did not live up to the moral standards of IS and they used stoning and beheading as methods to execute death penalties. This was also told about and sensationalized in their propaganda. The roles of men and women were in many ways strongly dictated throughout the whole existence of the caliphate. In the propaganda made and spread by the organization, women were seen as wives and mothers and men as fighters, where these views had a strong focus in the magazines researched in this thesis. This does not change during the time of the caliphate and no matter the development in the organization and the main role for women that was advocated for throughout all of the magazines were as mothers, wives and carers. Instead, what changed at the same time as the military victories and setbacks occurred between 2014 and 2018 were details and nuances of the role of women, the role was to be extended under certain circumstances. After 2016, one of the main things that changed in the role of women that was advocated in propaganda was that it opened up to a more active role as women being self-determining actors and even under some circumstances as of actors participating in violence. Women were under special circumstances allowed to participate in suicide missions and encouraged to defend her sister ”like a man”. Women were also encouraged to take more responsibility and stay steadfast in times of hardships. But even if IS implemented clauses that a different role was allowed under certain circumstances, IS still promoted the importance of their morality rules regarding on how women were allowed to clothe themselves. In IS, women were seen as the moral pillars of the family, and how the woman behaved and for women to hold all the rules of womanhood was seen as important for the honour of her husband. One can though expect that the comprehensive clothing that the niqab is and all women of IS were
forced to wear, would not be worn by women in IS during a battle, regarding it would be unpractical and unfit to wear in that type of situation. A lot of loose clothes would seem to hinder a person to move easily and that the fabric in front of the eyes would affect the field of view that could affect the ability to combat negatively. But in the seventh of the videos produced by IS called "Inside the Caliphate”, women were seen pictured in a fully covering niqab in combat, shooting in a trench. The roles of women and the interpretation of what was seen as an accepted role and what was not have shifted a bit, but still the same structure and superficial views of how to dress as a woman where maintained. The moral codes of women were more important than the convenience of her clothes. The roles could be changed and advocated to be viewed in a different way, even if they kept all their morals around how a woman should behave. This could though be used with advantage in suicide missions carried out by women. For example, as the insights regarding using women in terrorism that Buril highlights what has been noticed earlier in the theory section, in some cases the clothing that women of IS were using could be advantageously used to hide harmful objects or get permission to areas that a man could not access (Buril, 2017: 9). To conclude we can see that keeping the strong restrictions regarding clothes and the regulations regarding the external requirements of what clothes to wear was stronger than the convenience of the situation. But in some areas, as for example in suicide missions, the clothes that women of IS used could be used to their advantage.

The main question that was focused on for this thesis is how IS balanced their ideals when the need for manpower has contradicted the role of women. Here, it is clear to see that it is a slight change in the argumentation of how the role of women looked during the time of the caliphate, and there can be seen a causality between the territorial and military power and what roles women were encouraged to take. Though even if IS allowed women to participate in violence and in some places even encouraged it, it was always promoted that the first responsibility of a woman was to be a good wife and mother.

The hypothesis that was tested in this research is that military defeat and reduced military and territorial power of IS was leading to a changing role for women, no matter the ideals and principles of IS. The contradictory hypothesis that was tested was that IS kept the same ideals and jihadi theology throughout the rise and fall of the organization. There is support for the main hypothesis when tested, even if it can be found some support for the contrary hypothesis as well. This is because the main responsibility of women is argued to be the ones of caretakers and wives, and that stays constant throughout all propaganda looked in to in this analysis. In the rhetoric regarding the place of
women in the families did not change, even if women in the later years of the existence of the caliphate were allowed to take on other roles as well. The thing that did change was the view of women, which were shifted to be seen as more of actors and not subjects in the contexts. In the first magazines of propaganda, women were hardly mentioned, and when done so, they were mentioned as someone that needed the protection of men and as a property to men. In the later editions of the magazines and mainly in the ones that were released under the name Rumiyah, women were encouraged to stay steadfast, to fight their jihad in the way each woman could contribute and introduce jihad with weapons and explosives to their children. But even if the themes put a higher focus on that woman of IS shall participate in jihad and participate actively in the cause of IS the weaker IS was and the more territory they lost, it was all the way mentioned that the right life for a Muslim woman is to marry early and bear children to make the Muslim community greater and raise the next generation fighters. To conclude, there is a causal relationship to be found between military and territorial power and the role that women are encouraged to take, even though the new rhetoric of women as actors and even encouraged to take part in combat, it is strongly mixed with the encouragement of being a wife and mother and raise the children in a way that they will continue to carry out jihad. Therefore, this research can be seen as it is confirming the hypothesis that territorial, military power and the state of the organization affect the role of women in the organization IS, where the need of manpower in combat and using all the manpower available is more important than keeping the organizations ideal regarding the role of women. The morality and how women were clothed was not compromised with, even when in combat.

The change in the rhetoric around this was made with divine commandments, where how women should behave were argued out of that it was the will of God that women should behave in a certain way. This argumentation around what the will of God was can though be seen as poorly supported in relation to religious texts and there are not many references to the Quran or the Hadiths made in the texts, rather Arabic words are used widely for specific religious expressions, such as paradise, infidels and holy war. This is to give an impression of being an Islamic religious text, even if not.

This thesis has not looked into what effect propaganda had on the women that travelled to the caliphate, though there is to be seen that the information spread did change during the time of the caliphate. The propaganda outlets were the way of the leadership of IS to communicate their position in important questions and their way of impacting the views they wanted people to have in IS. It seems like the role of women has changed pragmatically according to the needs of the organization, though the argumentation has changed carefully and with the same rhetoric telling that it is the will
of God to act in a certain way, and for their argumentation, they were using Arabic words and expressions. The change has also occurred over years when the situation for the people living inside of the caliphate has changed a lot, and with the military development people inside the caliphate needed to move depending on the situation and if IS lost the specific territory they lived in. The change of role may not have been experienced as an ideological change by the women of the caliphate, as long as the external impressions, as the clothing, looked the same. Firstly, the move to the caliphate may have been a significant change for the women that emigrated to the caliphate and the living there probably was a new situation for the often young women that travelled from western countries, and for it to change over the years may be seen as a natural development, along with the situation overall changed even more. In the organization of IS the authoritarian rule also made the members trust the leadership and the organization that controlled the citizens also made the members not question the leadership and the decrees that were given from the top down.
7. Conclusion
In this thesis, the causal relationship between the role of women in IS and the territorial and military state of the organization has been tested. This has been done by analyzing open sources and propaganda that have been carried out by the Islamic State. The puzzle that has been researched in this thesis is circling around the role of women. How could the organization, on one hand, be ultraconservative and promote the role of women to be within the four walls of the home, but at the same time use women in violence and suicide attacks during the later years of the existence of the caliphate? Executing violence has previously been implicated in the role of men, according to the ideology of IS. This case has been researched through process tracing, where both the development of the organization IS in a military way and the development of the role of women has been conducted, and then merged to see causal relationships to either confirm or reject the hypothesis that a shift and a military setback in IS lead to a changed role of women. The role of women was examined with tools and categorizations created to see if they were in line with traditional Salafi-jihadi theology or if they were not in line with the theological framework that IS followed. This hypothesis could partly be confirmed. The result of the research conducted shows that the role for women as carers, wives and mothers is still important throughout all of the propaganda that has been carried out regarding women, but in times of challenging situations for the organization, women were encouraged to participate in violence. There can clearly be seen that at the beginning of the most significant battles that IS fought women were encouraged to participate in the ways possible. They were also encouraged to "stay strong and steadfast" and in their propaganda and opened up possibilities for women to participate and carry out violence "under special circumstances". Here, the need for manpower is clearly controlling how pragmatic the view and role of women was in the organization.

The aim of this thesis was to see how IS handled the tension regarding the ideological views and the military goals of the organization and to see how they argued for the shift. Firstly, there can be seen that they use more emotional arguments and specific Arabic words to shape a feeling of "us" and "them" and to get an illusion of it being a religious text and the word of God communicated. But in reality, the number of passages from the Hadith's and the Quran that are used is limited. The arguments that were used as arguments to join IS was that it was to follow the will of God to migrate to the caliphate. Women should take the role of a wife of a fighter, give birth to a lot of children and then raise them to become new fighters in the jihad that IS was fighting. This was the best possible life to live for a young Muslim woman, though the theological background to why it is so was not explained. The leaders of IS did also use the argument that something was "the will of God" as an
argument on how people should behave. That type of argumentation, coming from an authority, was not possible to contradict or argue against without being classified as an infidel by IS. We can also see that the superficial ideals, for example of how to dress, do not change even in the cases when women are encouraged to participate in violence. In the seventh video in the series ”Inside the Caliphate,” a woman is seen participating in combat and shooting from a trench wearing the strictest type of niqab, with fabric even covering her eyes. So even if what roles that are allowed to take and if it is allowed to participate in actions outside of the home, the ideas regarding morality that have been one of the strongest duty for women is kept steadfast and not compromised with.

To defeat IS have been a global concern and the global coalition that has fought IS have been lead by the USA, in cooperation with 74 other countries and four organizations. While writing this thesis, IS have lost their territorial power, but the people that lived in the state that IS claimed and supported the organization probably still have their values and their beliefs in some way intact. The international community is facing a big challenge in how to handle the people of IS that survived the bombings and the fall of the caliphate. Most of them are now living in refugee-camps or is detained in prisons in Kurdish, Iraqi or Syrian territories. There is no coordinated action planned from the affected countries on how to handle returnees that already have returned to their home countries or IS members that still is in the middle east. The people previous affiliated with IS need to be rehabilitated, reintegrated and brought to trial when appropriate. When this will be done it will be important to have an understanding for the crimes that have been committed under the name of IS, but also what roles people have played in the organization and how those have changed. In that context, this study contributes to understanding what role women have played in IS and how that role has changed, both to get a better understanding on how to handle the situation in the direct situation that is occurring at the moment but also to get a deeper understanding on jihadi organizations overall.

To have a deeper look into the phenomena on why and how women are recruited and to what roles, to get an understanding of how to prevent recruitment to this type of extreme organizations. Even if the caliphate does not exist in its physical form anymore, the threat of IS is still in question. A person claiming himself to be Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi was seen in a video released at the 29th of April 2019, for the first time since the caliphate was declared in 2014, where he encouraged the members of IS to commit attacks in their home countries (svd.se). This shows that the threat of IS is not eliminated, the situation may only be shifting with other types of threats than the one with a caliphate in Syria and Iraq, that needs to be handled for the international community. Future research could focus both on how to prevent the recruitment of women to extreme jihadi organizations, all over the world, but also on deradicalize of the women that have been living inside of the caliphate.
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