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Reproducing gendered and orientalist narratives

The representation of Western IS-women in Swedish media

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Abstract

Development and international relations discourses have for a long-time represented women through dichotomous portrayals, either as liberated Western women or as oppressed Eastern women. The former being the heroic saviour of the latter. The subject of Western women joining the Islamic State, has not only received extensive media attention but proved the dichotomous portrayals of women to be insufficient. To make sense of women's political violence, gendered and orientalist narratives have been applied both by scholars and media. This research explores the dominant narratives in the representations of Western IS-women in Swedish media, through the lens of postcolonial feminism. The data is a collection of news articles and radio programs, which are analysed through qualitative content analysis. The findings show that Swedish media have to a large extent represented IS-women as brainwashed teenagers, oppressed Muslim wives, and traumatised victims. These sexualised and racialised representations raise questions about the inability to recognise women's agency, as well as the implications media representation has on the knowledge received and potentially reproduced by the public.

Keywords: media representation, women, gender, political violence, ISIS, Islamic state, postcolonial feminism, narrative, orientalism, neo-orientalism

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Feminist objectivity makes room for surprises and ironies at the heart of all knowledge production; we are not in charge of the world

Haraway, 1988

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1 Introduction

In January 2020, the Swedish television series “Kalifat”, about five women’s lives whose destinies entwine due to religious zeal, received record views as a drama series produced by Swedish television. With 600,000 viewers per episode during the first month, it became the biggest series ever in its category (Dagens Nyheter, 2020). After watching “Kalifat” I was, probably like many other viewers, convinced that the women who joined the Islamic State were in fact victims of brainwash, and I was determined to take a feminist stance to prove how this was yet another example of violence against women. However, after engaging with the academic literature on the topic, I realised that I had just been trapped by the gendered and orientalist narratives produced by the media. The series had made me believe that women who travelled to ISIS were merely victims of socio-economic circumstances and oppressing men, when in fact most of them were ideologically motivated actors, opposing the Western lifestyle. This made me question the narratives we receive from media and the power representation has over our reproduction of knowledge.

Feminist scholarship on development and international relations often portray women either as victims of violence or as actors for peace, (Samuel et al, 2019; True, 2012), which contribute to a dichotomous and simplified representation of women and their choices. A woman engaging in violence is considered a mystery, in need of being put into either one of the two categories, which results in the adoption of gendered and orientalist narratives to make sense of women’s surprising choices. In these representations, women are often attributed little or no agency and are marginalised into the private sphere (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015; Sjoberg, 2008). This research aims to analyse the representations of Western IS-women who have been subjects to intense media debates trying to explain why and how these women could possibly choose to join such a violent organisation.

Through the perspective of postcolonial feminism, I intend to explore the dominant narratives in Swedish media, which will give insights into an interestingly paradoxical context. While Sweden is known for having the world's most gender-equal society and a feminist government (Government Offices of Sweden, 2019; Salam, 2019), right-wing nationalism and Islamophobic attitudes are rising, especially since the anti-immigration party, the Sweden Democrats won about 18 percent of the votes in the 2018 general election (BBC, 2019). As of 2019, a quarter of the Swedish population had a foreign background (SCB, 2019), a fifth was voting for a right-wing Islamophobic party and Sweden was considered a feminist country, but for whom?

Postcolonial and feminist perspectives have been crucial in bringing development discourses into criticism of being ethnocentric, masculinist, and rooted in a dominant Western world view. Recently, mainstream development discourses have normalised 'new' imperialism by the West, justified as a means through which to deliver development and democracy to the Middle East (McEwan, 2019). Development interventions, as well as military interventions, are presented as necessary to bring democracy, and equality to the oppressed (Khalid, 2011). Development through democracy promotion as a form of (re)colonisation has been criticised by postcolonialism, which "challenge the very meaning of development as rooted in colonial discourse, depicting the North as advanced and progressive and the South as backward, degenerate and primitive" (McEwan, 2019, p. 149). Considering the contemporary context of global geopolitics, the need to deconstruct colonial discourses is urgent. That is why this study will be situated within the postcolonial and feminist criticism, aiming to reconstruct the dichotomous representations of Western IS-women, assuming them to be oppressed by 'barbaric' Muslim men, and in need of liberation of the 'civilised' West (Khalid, 2011).

1.1 Definition of concepts

Before spelling out the research question and aims of the research, I believe it is necessary to introduce the key concepts used in this study, namely gender, orientalism and neo-orientalism, narratives, and the Islamic State.

1.1.1 Gender

From a feminist perspective, gender is understood as a social construction that reproduce behaviour expectations, rules, and stereotypes based on the perceived membership in biological sex classes. This leads to the binary presumption that associates men with masculinity and women with femininity. Gender is intertwined with other factors, such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, creating multiple social assumptions and different gendered experiences across the different processes by which they operate (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015; Khalid, 2011).

1.1.2 Orientalism and neo-orientalism

As with gender, orientalism is a style of thought based on a binary distinction, but between ‘the Orient’ and ‘the Occident’. It centres the Western (European/American) world and views the Eastern world (Asia and the Arab world) as ‘the Other’. Throughout history orientalism has justified Western domination and imperial conquest of the Eastern world through its identification of the West as superior in comparison to ‘Other’ people and cultures (Said, 1978). While early orientalism viewed Muslims as backward and inferior, post 9/11 neo-orientalism fuelled the constructions of a threatening and violent Muslim ‘Other’, closely related to the social phenomenon of islamophobia. Neo-orientalism originates in neo-conservative and pro-Israel circles, which views the Muslim world as an existential threat to what right-wing actors call the Western civilisation (Kerboua, 2016).

1.1.3 Narratives

Narratives, often in the form of stories or metaphors, ‘frame’ complicated events to fit into discrete categories, allowing people to process large amounts of information with limited cognitive capacity. As such, it recounts events for an audience or readership, who internalise the narrative as their own intellectual or emotional understanding of those events (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

Media indoctrinate certain perceptions into the minds of the audience through ‘framing’, which involves processes of selection and salience (Azeez, 2019). The ‘framed’ narrative call attention to one aspect of reality while undermining another. In the end, despite what is real, the dominant narrative receives such a substantial audience that it becomes the account of a certain phenomenon, including the definition of causes and remedies (Azeez, 2019, Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

1.1.4 Islamic State

The Islamic State was a Salafi-Jihadist militant organisation that operated primarily in Iraq and Syria from June 2014 to March 2019. Its goal was to create a global Islamist movement and to establish a caliphate (CISAC, 2019). A caliphate is an Islamic state that contains a so-called caliph, a political and religious leader of all Muslims (Purpura, 2019). The Islamic State is commonly referred to as ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), ISIL (the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant), and IS (Islamic State) (Pearson, 2018). While the most common term is ISIS, some have adopted the use of the original Arabic acronym Daesh (داعش), which is argued to disconnect the group from any links to Islam. However, written out and translated, al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham, translates to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Hijjo et al, 2019), which means that it does not differentiate much from the English term ISIS. In this research, I will mainly use the term ISIS, but also at times refer to IS, as in the case of ‘IS-women’, which is a reoccurring term in Swedish media.

Concerning the Islamic state, the highly politicised concept of terrorism and the often-misleading term of jihad will be referred to in this study. Here, I do not aim to define these concepts but to introduce some of the debates around them. Many researchers struggle with defining terrorism. In global politics, one government may call a group a terrorist organisation, whereas another government calls them freedom fighters or a resistance movement. As such, terrorism is a politically loaded word, referring to an enemy that must be defeated (Purpura, 2019). Many of the core assumptions about Islamic terrorism derives from a long tradition of orientalist narratives and labels, which have been reproduced by hostile media representations

and depictions of Islam and Muslims. Also, the post-9/11 discourse on Islamic terrorism is embedded within the political-cultural narratives surrounding the war on terror (Jackson, 2007).

In the West, the concept jihad is often linked to terror acts by individual Muslims, which promotes a different meaning than jihad based on the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. To most Muslims, jihad refers to the internal and external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer and to inform others about the faith of Islam. Thus, the Western concept ‘jihad’ is not the equivalent of the Arabic ‘جهاد’ (jihad) and is a misleading concept (Hijjo et al, 2019).

1.2 Research aim and question

The research aims to explore how Swedish media have represented Western women who joined the Islamic State between 2014 and 2019. Through the lens of postcolonial feminism, it explores the gendered and (neo-)orientalist narratives in the representations of IS-women. It aims to contribute to critical debates around women’s agency, as well as challenge the ‘malestream’ international relations and raise new areas of analysis. The chosen case: Swedish media representation of IS-women, offers an insight to a paradoxical context of international feminist fame and rising right-wing nationalism and islamophobia. In the end, the research aims to reconstruct the problematic dichotomous representation of women in development and international relations discourses, as either Western empowered women or Eastern oppressed women and provide alternatives to these representations. The research question is the following:

What are the dominant gendered and orientalist narratives in the representations of Western IS-women in Swedish media?

2 Background

2.1 Western women in the Islamic State

The flow of Western foreigners to the Islamic State is not only remarkable for its scale, but also its inclusion of women. 17 percent of the near 6000 Western Europeans that joined ISIS were women (Cook and Vale, 2018), which is a large proportion of women compared to previous terrorist organisations. However, these women have remained an understudied group, often subjugated to gendered narratives based on stereotypical assumptions of femininity (Bakker et al, 2015; Hoyle et al, 2015; de Leede, 2018). Previous studies have focused almost explicitly on answering the question *why* Western women joined ISIS, but also on their roles and responsibilities within the caliphate (Bakker et al, 2015; Gan et al, 2019; Hoyle et al, 2015; Kneip, 2016; de Leede, 2018; Perešin, 2015).

While the predominant stereotype is a naïve, docile victim, or a fanatic agitator, most feminist research suggests that there is no single profile of Western IS-women. The various attempts to relate their participation in ISIS to their young age, low level of education, troubled childhood, religious background or mental health have oversimplified the complexity of the phenomenon and reinforces stereotypes about women and Islam, as well as deny their agency in the decision to travel to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (Bakker et al, 2015; de Leede, 2018; Perešin, 2015).

2.1.1 Why women join ISIS

As in the case with men, the motivations of women joining ISIS vary from one person to another. While the most cited motivation among women themselves is their religious and ideological duty to support the ‘jihad’ (Bakker et al, 2015), Perešin (2015) argues that religious motivation alone is not sufficient in explaining Western women’s willingness to leave their homes and join ISIS. Rather a

combination of religious and other motivating factors fuels the aspiration of women to support violent ‘jihad’ (Perešin, 2015).

Gan et al (2019) identify four common motivations for foreign women to join ISIS: ideology, alienation/inequality, romance, and peer influence (Gan et al, 2019). Within terrorism studies motivations to join terrorist organisations are generally referred to as drivers of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors. ‘Push’ factors are the ones that alienate a person from society and community, leading to feelings of exclusion and discrimination, such as lack of education, low socioeconomic status, low job prospects, and extreme ideology. ‘Pull’ factors are the ones that attract a person to political extremism, such as spiritual fulfilment, perceived obligation, money, status, or the search for a sense of belonging, romance, and adventure (Cook and Vale, 2018, Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). One of the strongest ‘push’ factors is the experience of discrimination and injustice due to their religious practices, leading to alienation in their community (Gan et al, 2019; Strømme, 2017).

Some scholars differentiate the motivations for women who travelled alone and women who travelled with a partner. For those who travelled with a partner, the association with, or marriage to a male ISIS supporter, is considered the main reasons for their travel, while for those who travelled independently, the perceived attacks on the Muslim community, especially by Western secular powers and experienced oppression in the West, is what resulted in their search for an alternative society in the ‘South’. Many were attracted by the state-building project, where they could see themselves contribute as mothers, nurses, or teachers, as well as promised the ability to influence both internal and international politics of ISIS (Hoyle et al, 2015; Strømme, 2017; Tarras-Wahlberg, 2016).

2.1.2 Women’s role in ISIS

Within the existing literature on women in terrorism, there has been an over-emphasis on female combatants, while the supportive role often has been ignored (Alexander, 2017). In contrast, the literature on women in ISIS has emphasised their domestic and supportive role, referring to more active roles within the organisation

as exceptions. Women within ISIS are likely to have had a domestic role, with the prime duties being to look after the household, support their husband and give birth to future IS warriors, and raise them accordingly. They are commonly referred to as ‘mothers of the caliphate’, which sums up what their purpose might have been. However, some women took on more active roles, such as policing officials within the moral police, propaganda narrators, recruiters, and suicide bombers (Gan et al, 2019; Strømme, 2017). In the end, when ISIS had lost almost its whole territory and male warriors, women were called to join combat in the frontlines. These “enhanced” roles might have encouraged more women to join ISIS (Gan et al, 2019).

2.2 Media representation of IS-women

Despite little evidence that female and male terrorists are different in terms of their motivation, empirical evidence shows that media treat women associated with terrorism very differently than their male counterparts (Alexander, 2017). Western IS-women have been met with a storm of disbelief and gendered commentary. Rarely referred to ‘female foreign fighters’ they have rather been designated the term ‘jihadi brides’, which links their choice to join ISIS inherently to men (Strømme, 2017). The gendered term ‘jihadi bride’ came into widespread use in news media after February 2015, when the story of three British teenagers from London who left the UK to migrate to the Islamic State was captured by British media. Since then, it has been applied by media to describe any women who leave their Western home to join ISIS (Azeez, 2019). Other commonly used terms are ‘mothers of the caliphate’, ‘vulnerable women’, and ‘naïve girls’. These terms narrate women as sexualised and infantilised and indicate that women joined ISIS for different reasons than men, based on emotions and dependence rather than rational choice (Strømme, 2017).

Women who engage in terrorism are captured in storied fantasies, portrayed as unnatural, sexually deviant, psychologically unstable, or easily manipulated. These representations deny women their agency and reify gender stereotypes and subordination. Women who engage in terrorism interrupt stereotypical expectations

of women as innocent, pure, and peaceful, which are replicated in Western media's representation of them (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2011).

2.2.1 Gendered and orientalist narratives in media representation

Particularly Muslim women who engage in terrorism are defined via their roles as mothers, sisters, and wives of radical men (Patel and Westerman, 2018). Western media often emphasise the dependence and lack of choice of women living in conservative Islamic societies (Sjoberg, 2008), portraying these women as submissive, infertile outcasts or rebels, which sensationalise their violence in a highly gendered and racialised context (Gentry, 2011). This can be described as part of a gendered and orientalist narrative, which assumes Muslim women to be victims of oppression in need of being saved by the paternalistic and liberated West (Azeez, 2019; Gentry, 2011; Khalid, 2011). As such, the representations of IS-women are manipulated by narratives that delegitimizes women's political agency and claims to resistance (Alexander, 2017). Instead, assumed personal and private motivations to their engagement in terrorism constructs a 'terrorist' that is neither credible nor dangerous (Martini, 2018).

Azeez's (2019) study on English-speaking media outlets shows that the framing of the terms 'jihadi bride' and 'foreign fighters' reinforce counterproductive narratives on radicalism, portraying IS-women as innocent victims, oppressed by barbaric men and in need of being rescued (Azeez, 2019), which strongly mirror the orientalist discourse. A similar study on leading British broadsheets indicates that IS-women challenge neo-orientalist narratives of Muslim women, causing a destabilisation of gender itself. Their engagement with ISIS and opposition against the West has created counter-narratives to the dominant neo-orientalist discourse (Martini, 2018). The two studies contribute to important discussions around the gendered and orientalist narratives that are inherent in the representation of IS-women in Western media. However, there is a lack of research done on non-English speaking media outlets, such as Sweden, where similar studies are non-existent.

2.2.2 Implications of media representation

Medias' representations of women who engage in political violence distort how we understand and treat women, but also how we try to solve political violence. In the end, the dominant narratives in media lead to the definition of problems, causes, and suggestions of remedies (Azeez, 2019; Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). When IS-women are narrated as innocent victims without agency, counterterrorism policies and judicial processes are likely to underestimate the danger of women returning from ISIS (Alexander, 2018; Strømme, 2017). Empirical evidence shows that many women who return from ISIS to their home countries have received pardons or lesser punishment than average male foreign fighters. Case documents of these women indicate gendered arguments of women as 'misled victims', 'unknowing', 'lured', 'brainwashed', 'emotional', 'terrified', and 'seduced' (Strømme, 2017). This research focuses on the discursive implications of media representation, with the aim to explore how the dominant narratives reproduce gendered and orientalist stereotypes and assumptions.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial feminism seeks to challenge and destabilise dominant Western discourses. It has been crucial in bringing development and international relations discourses into criticism of being ethnocentric and masculinist, but also in understanding the power discourses have on justifying and promoting certain interventions. Dominant Western discourses have not only lead to sexualised and racialised representations that reproduce stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups in society, they have also justified development and military interventions in certain parts of the world. For instance, the normalisation of the ‘new’ imperialism by the West, is a result of the current war on terror discourse, which justify and promotes development and military interventions in the Middle East (McEwan, 2019). The interventions are presented as necessary to bring democracy and equality to the oppressed and therefore criticised for being rooted in colonial discourses, depicting the ‘East’ as primitive and backward (Khalid, 2011; McEwan, 2019).

A postcolonial and feminist understanding of gender, power, race, and violence is essential in undertaking the task of analysing representations that create and reproduce gendered orientalism (Khalid, 2011). Feminist scholars have examined the relationship between ‘female liberation’, orientalism, patriarchy, and imperialism, arguing that “the colonial project put forward an image of victimised and subjugated women for whom the ‘civilising mission’ of colonialism would spell freedom and liberation” (Khalid, 2011, p. 18). While orientalist depictions during colonial times served to objectify female colonial subjects as means to subjugate whole Muslim societies, post 9/11 neo-orientalist depictions rather emphasise the need to liberate Muslim women from oppressive communities, to elevate their status to that of Western women (Azeez, 2019; Kerboua, 2016). Thus, gendered (neo-)orientalist representations rely on binaries that employ gendered and

racialised hierarchies, placing the ‘civilised’ Western man and the ‘liberated’ Western woman at the top, and the ‘barbaric’ Muslim man and ‘oppressed’ Muslim women at the bottom (Khalid, 2011).

Orientalism and neo-orientalism are forms of critical analysis that are key to understand the Western construct of Easterners as ‘Other’ (Kerboua, 2016; Said, 1978), while the social construction of gender questions the assumptions of certain characteristics based on perceived biological sex (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). Taking gender and (neo-)orientalism together as analytical approaches we can examine the meanings and assumptions inherent in media’s representation of Western IS-women, including their positions and possibilities for action (Khalid, 2011).

3.2 Women’s political violence

Gentry and Sjoberg (2015) argue that existing theories of women’s political violence ask the wrong questions. The frequently asked question ‘*why* do women commit political violence?’ frame women’s violence as exceptional and men’s violence as normalised. Influenced by postcolonial feminism, the two international relations scholars rather seek to explore *how* women’s political violence have been portrayed and which narratives they in turn reproduce (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

According to Gentry and Sjoberg (2015) Western media use gendered and orientalist narratives to explain women’s political violence, which indicates that people are more disturbed over the fact that a woman was willing to blow herself up, torture, rape, or join a terrorist organisation, than the actual crime she committed. The sexualised and racialised assumptions within the representation of women joining terrorist groups, such as ISIS, are well captured in the mother, monster, whore narratives by Gentry and Sjoberg (2015), which is why they will work as a theoretical framework for this study. Below, I present the three narratives that according to Gentry and Sjoberg (2015) have been used to describe women’s political violence, as well as their suggestions of possible counter-narratives.

3.2.1 The mother narrative

The mother narrative makes sense of women engaging in violence by binding them to their role as a mother. In this case, women are suspected to join terrorist organisations for emotional and social reasons, rather than rational and political. Women within the mother narrative are portrayed either as *the nurturing mother* – acting in a supporting role, *the vengeful mother* – acting out of revenge or as *the mother of nations* – emphasising their reproductive role. The nurturing mother is domesticated and non-threatening, as she is limited to behind-the-scenes work in her roles as a mother and wife. The vengeful mother, on the other hand, is driven by rage because of her inadequacy or inability to fulfil her role as a mother, while the mother of nations mobilises men into terrorist organisations through her birth and raising of sons into insurgent groups (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

3.2.2 The monster narrative

The monster narrative explains women's violence through psychological disturbance. It is the pathological deviance from prescribed feminine norms that makes women able to commit political violence. They are labelled as mad, insane, and mentally ill, not capable of making rational choices, and therefore not responsible for their actions. The narrative takes away their very humanity and womanhood, by describing them as inhuman, evil, and psychologically broken. These women are represented as irrational because of emotional weakness and mental illness, often associated with their racial and religious background. Above all, they are victims of unfortunate situations. Childhood traumas and experiences of abuse are used as examples that have caused their unstable condition and loss of honour, making them extra vulnerable to recruiters' manipulation and brainwash (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

3.2.3 The whore narrative

The whore narrative characterises women who engage in political violence as sexually deviant. Their participation in violent organisations is a result of their

erotomania, erotic dysfunction, or sexual slavery. The *erotomania narrative* describes women as obsessed with sex, and their violence is explained by their overwhelming perversion, while the *erotic dysfunction narrative* explains women's violence by their inability to perform their basic function in life, namely to pleasure men with sex. These women are often labelled as lesbians, transsexuals, or infertile. The *sexual slavery narrative*, on the other hand, describes women as victims, who are forced and controlled by men. While Western women who engage in political violence often are portrayed as sexual maniacs, lesbians, or transsexuals, Muslim women are ascribed to the sexual slavery narrative, which has been especially prevalent in the stories about IS-women. They have been described both by researchers and journalists as victims of exploitation and sexual abuse, through online recruitment and brainwash. Seduced, owned, and under control of men, their engagement with ISIS is described as neither voluntary nor political (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

3.2.4 Counter-narratives

Gentry and Sjoberg (2015) suggest that “both men and women live in a world where their violence is relationally autonomous – that is, chosen, but constrained and interdependent” (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015, p. 145). As such, possible counter-narratives would represent women's choices to join violent organisations as related to their differently constrained positions in social and political life – based on gender, race, class, and nationality (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). While this definition may seem quite diffuse and difficult to identify, I believe that any representation of women who engage in political violence as *informed and ideologically motivated actors* could be considered as counter-narratives to the mother, monster, and whore narratives.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research design

The research is designed as a single case study, aiming to describe how IS-women have been represented in Swedish media from 2014 to 2020. The chosen design does not aim to generalise findings but to provide an insight into the gendered and orientalist narratives inherent in the portrayals of Western IS-women (Scheyvens, 2014). The study of media is crucial to understand the knowledge received and reproduced by the public, especially because the dominant narratives distort how we understand and treat certain social phenomenon (Azeez, 2019).

4.2 Research method

In the search for underlying meanings of communication messages, *qualitative content analysis* is the most suitable method for the research, since it is concerned with the study of the content itself, rather than the broad context within it was produced (Halperin and Health, 2012). Its approach to analysis “focusses on interpreting and describing, meaningfully the topics and themes that are evident in the contents of communication when framed against the research objectives of the study” (Williamsson et al, 2018, p. 464). This is essential in the study of gendered and orientalist narratives in media’s representation of IS-women, since the meaning may not reside on the surface of the content but ‘between the lines.’ It further allows the researcher to interpret any type of media – textual, verbal, or visual (Halperin and Health, 2012).

4.3 Data collection

The unit of analysis is a collection of news articles from the four biggest morning newspapers in Sweden: Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Sydsvenskan, and Göteborgs-posten, and selected radio programs from Sveriges Radio. Adding radio

programs to the study allows more depth and understanding of the Swedish population's media consumption; while 55 % read the newspaper, 61% listen to the radio (Hellingwerff et al, 2018). Purposeful sampling of news articles was done through the media database Retriever, which is Sweden's biggest internet-based media archive, while radio programs were collected directly through the Swedish Radio application. The sample of articles and radio programs was limited to those whose primary focus was IS-women, and to the period of the start of the so-called caliphate in 2014 until April 2020. Despite its fall in March 2019, I choose to include data until the time of my data collection, since the debates around IS-women continue.

In the search for data, I used the following keywords: IS/Islamiska staten (Islamic state), kvinna (woman), and svensk (Swedish). Since the appearing data often concerned ISIS' kidnapping and enslaving of other women, such as the ethnic group Yazidis, a second sampling process was applied, where I quickly reviewed the data and selected the appropriate sample for my study. The final data sample included twenty-three news articles and six radio programs (for detailed list see appendix I).

Table 1. Final data distribution

<i>Media outlet</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>Dagens Nyheter</i>	<i>Svenska Dagbladet</i>	<i>Sydsvenskan</i>	<i>Göteborgs-posten</i>	<i>Sveriges Radio</i>
<i>Articles per source</i>	29	6	10	1	6	6

4.3.1 Translation

Collecting data from another language can come with possible limits and translation biases. However, as a Swedish native speaker and after three years of higher education in English, I believe my language skills to be on a level that allows me to translate from Swedish to English confidently. Nonetheless, I cannot ensure the research to be free from interpretation errors and language biases. In any doubt of translation, I have used English-Swedish dictionaries to ensure the right meaning of my translation.

4.3.2 Limitations

I could not know beforehand how many news articles or radio programs each media outlet would have about IS-women. This resulted in an unbalanced distribution of data, particularly seeing the ten news articles by Svenska Dagbladet and Sydsvenskan with only one. However, I do not believe that the different amount of news articles from each media outlet had a big effect on the data, since each news article and radio program had a different length and depth to be brought to analysis. While the newspapers could be analysed directly, I had to transcribe the selected radio programs. Considering the time limits for this study, I choose to partially transcribe the radio programs, which allowed me to effectively collect the most relevant data. This was done after defining the theoretical framework and the first reading of collected news articles, to ensure a good understanding of what would be relevant data for the research. During the research process, I realised that many of the news articles and radio programs were about the same IS-women. Therefore, the quantity of data should not be confused with quantity of different stories. Despite possible duplicates of stories, I choose to include all of them since each media outlet represent IS-women differently, and thus may relate to different narratives in the analysis.

4.4 Data analysis

The qualitative content analysis is conceptual and involves the identification of themes. It relies on quotation and narrative as the primary modes of presentation (Halperin & Health, 2012). It involves the practice of coding; the organisation and categorisation of themes and topics in the messages of communication (Williamson et al, 2018). Coding allows the researcher to identify a passage of text and apply labels to them that indicate that they are examples of a thematic idea (Halperin & Health, 2012). This study relies on both deductive coding, with departure from Gentry and Sjoberg's (2015) mother, monster, whore narratives, and inductive coding, through the creation of sub-codes when identifying reoccurring labels in the data. Eventually, the sub-codes were grouped into more broad themes, relating

to the mother, monster, whore narratives, or possible counter-narratives found in the data (Halperin & Health, 2012).

4.4.1 Reflexivity

As a feminist and undergraduate student, I wish to share and document my research process for future students, which is why I have attached an interpretative coding protocol that I have used to track my interpretation and relation of the data (see appendix II). In addition to the protocol, I have practiced reflexivity through written reflections and conversations with others throughout the research process. To ensure fair use and representation of the data I have kept in mind the original data and looked over the context within it was produced before identifying any labels (Scheyvens, 2014).

I apply a feminist understanding of objectivity in this study, defined by Haraway (1988) as *situated knowledges* or *embodied objectivity*. This signifies that how we perceive our subjects of study is dependent on the perceptual system within us which translates specific ways of seeing what *is* (Haraway, 1988), also called positionality (Scheyvens, 2014). In Haraway's words: "there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds" (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). As such, the analysis presented below is my situated knowledge, which cannot be replicated nor repeated. The embodied objectivity applied in this study is rather a result of fluid positionality, representing my current knowledge, interests, and experiences. Embodied objectivity argues for the epistemologies and politics of positioning, location, and situation. Partiality, not universality is embraced as the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims (Haraway, 1988). As I hope this research will manifest: "feminist objectivity makes room for surprises and ironies at the heart of all knowledge production; we are not in charge of the world" (Haraway, 1988, p. 594).

5 Analysis

Below I analyse and discuss how data and theory fit together. I explore how the representations of IS-women in Swedish media relate to the mother, monster, and whore narratives, and how these may reproduce gendered and (neo-)orientalist stereotypes and assumptions about women engaging in political violence. The different representations of IS-women as brainwashed teenagers, oppressed wives and traumatised victims often overlap in the data, and so does the narratives they relate to (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). However, some narratives were found to be more dominant than others, which is why I will present them in order. The first, and most dominant narrative being *the whore narrative*, the second being *the mother narrative*, and the third being *the monster narrative*. Finally, I present the findings that relates to possible *counter-narratives*.

5.1 Brainwashed teenagers and the good girl mystery

In the many descriptions of IS-women as brainwashed teenagers, victims of online recruitment, and pedophilia, *the sexual slavery narrative* is obvious (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). The emphasis on their young age is often described in a way that victimises women and denies their agency. Teenage pregnancy and child marriage are used as examples to explain how these girls are in fact victims of male oppressors, controlling not only their lives but their bodies. Women are described as easily seduced victims, young girls that were unaware or even irresponsible (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2011). In these representations, IS-women are sexualised and infantilised, and their reasons to join ISIS are explained by emotions and dependence rather than rational choice (Strømme, 2017).

Just 14 years old, her daughter also became pregnant. “We got furious. And the boyfriend panicked. He had made our underage daughter pregnant. And after that he just stuck and took her with him”. Pasi and Nevalainen tell GP (GP, 03/03/2019)

Some of them have fallen in love with radical guys, married them and followed without initially thinking very much what IS really was about (DN, 18/06/2019)

In contrast, another reoccurring theme that relate to *the sexual slavery narrative* is what I will refer to as ‘the good girl mystery’. Here, IS-women are described as good girls who suddenly changed, which indicates a mystery. The perceived quick radicalisation process of such a ‘good girl’ brings about suspicion that something went wrong. In these descriptions student results and ambitions are highlighted. The girls’ interest in religion was at first peaceful and non-violent, and there were no possible signs of radicalisation until that moment when she went away. The mysteriously quick radicalisation process indicates that young IS-women were in fact victims of pedophilia, grooming, and human trafficking. Political and ideological motivations are ruled out. Rather, the young girls who travelled to ISIS were manipulated, or threaten to do so, and thus not responsible for their actions (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

Their daughters, around 20 years young, have shown a rising interest in religion, undergone a fairly rapid radicalisation, and then disappeared without clear warning (SVD, 28/09/2014)

A girl in Denmark started building bombs after two weeks. The procedure is similar to grooming where you fish for vulnerable individuals over the internet (SVD, 18/06/2017)

Related to the *whore narrative* are also the descriptions of the so-called ‘madaffa’, a women’s house, which was the place where unmarried women and children were placed upon their arrival in the Islamic State. In these houses, hundreds of women and children were locked inside, forbidden to go out, and treated like cattle or slaves. One powerful woman, almost like a brothel madam, ruled over all other women and matched unmarried women with IS-fighters.

The first thing that happens is that she gets locked up in a so-called 'madaffa', a kind of women's house where women and children who come without men are placed (SR, 17/04/2016)

Unmarried women who came down were put in IS guesthouses that were ruled by strong matrons who whipped them and matched them with "warriors" (GP, 03/03/2019)

To summarise, the most dominant narrative in Swedish media, *the whore narrative*, describes IS-women as young and easy to seduce, blind of love or appreciation. It reproduces gendered stereotypes by describing women as passive victims who are unable to think for themselves (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). The most surprising findings were the reoccurring narration of 'the good girl mystery' and the brothel-like 'madaffa', both which were new to Gentry and Sjoberg's (2015) narratives and appeared through the inductive coding process.

5.2 Oppressed Muslim wives and warrior-machines

The frequent representations of IS-women as oppressed Muslim wives relate to *the nurturing mother narrative*, which describes women as caring wives and mothers, limited to behind-the-scenes work. Women's innocence and passiveness are emphasised in their roles as wives and mothers to IS-fighters. As trapped housewives they are unaware of what is going on outside, and thus neither considered actors nor perpetrators (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). Related to orientalist discourses they are described as forced and oppressed by dominating Muslim men, who they obediently follow. Since it was 'liberated' Western women who joined ISIS, the phenomenon is often described as a mystery. To voluntarily choose a different life than the Western free, democratic, and gender-equal society shocks. However, whether tricked into ISIS or informed, one thing that is for sure is that ISIS consists of barbaric controlling men, who use brutal gender-based violence to control their women. Here, the orientalist representation of Muslim women as oppressed victims is crystal clear (Khalid, 2011). Interestingly, *the nurturing mother narrative* and its representation of IS-women as oppressed Muslim wives

have very much in common with *the sexual slavery narrative* and its representations of IS-women as brainwashed teenagers. Both narratives portray women engaging in political violence as innocent victims, oppressed by barbaric men and in need of being saved by the ‘liberated’ West (Azeez, 2019; Khalid, 2011).

Suddenly she was forced to wear a hijab. Her boyfriend also forbade her to speak with her sister (GP, 03/03/2019)

In an earlier testimony, she said that she rarely left home and did not know that her husband worked for IS because he did not carry weapons or military clothes (SVD, 26/05/2019)

The fact that women have left Europe to support the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq is something of a mystery since they become legally incompetent and cannot move outside without a man (SR, 06/06/2019)

But when they voluntarily enter the area, then ISIS has total control over their lives. In cases where people showed signs of dissatisfaction and wanted to leave, they have been treated very badly. Women can be raped, abused, and treated more or less as slaves (GP, 18/02/2016)

The emotional and human characteristics are reoccurring in *the nurturing mother narrative*, describing IS-women as big-hearted and caring. Their wish to do humanitarian work and give charity is often emphasised and even described as a reason for their travel. Above all, they are driven by emotions and their need to nurture (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). If these needs are not fulfilled it can even make them leave ISIS, since it is their primary motivation.

When women become widows or have children, it can be events that become turning points, making them leave IS (DN, 02/02/2015)

Another frequent narrative found in the data is the *mother of nations narrative*, emphasising women’s reproductive role in giving birth and raising future warriors.

IS-women are described to have a vital role in the nation-building, as well as possible preservation and resurrection of the caliphate after its fall (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015, Gan et al, 2019). However, if IS-women take on this role consciously, motivated by ISIS' ideology, or if they unconsciously contribute to the nation-building as oppressed and controlled housewives, is somewhat at dispute in the data. In some representations, they are described as domesticated and controlled, pointing to innocence and unintentional actions. In others, it is obvious that they have been involved and informed about ISIS' brutal activities outside the house, pointing to responsibility and awareness. Women might even have been motivated to join ISIS because of the central role they were promised as 'mothers of the caliphate' (Strømmen, 2017; Tarras-Wahlberg, 2016). In contrast to *the nurturing mother narrative*, this sub-narrative describes IS-women as an indirect threat in their reproduction of warriors.

I know that my daughter mostly was indoors, almost always, and it was like her role, to give birth to the caliphate itself, that was her actual role, she raised the kids (SR, 06/06/2019)

She said that the parents who wanted to raise their children to become future IS jihadist used to bring them to public executions. In a special square in the city, IS cuts the heads of the doomed people. The children used to cheer then, according to Yasmin. (SVD, 06/08/2017)

There was a strong idealisation around getting married to a "warrior" and raising one's children into the spirit of the Caliphate. (GP, 03/03/2019)

While *the nurturing mother narrative* clearly reproduces gendered and orientalist stereotypes in its representations of oppressed Muslim wives, it is not as clear in *the mother of nations narrative*, where women's agency is conflicted within the narrative. The latter could possibly work as a counter-narrative to the mother, monster, whore narratives, describing women as ideologically motivated actors, depending on the context.

5.3 Traumatized victims and rootless outsiders

The data show that women's political violence often is explained by their pathological deviance, which relates to *the monster narrative*. Women's engagement with ISIS is explained by childhood traumas, dysfunctional families, and alienation from society (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). As deviants from normal 'peaceful' women and traumatized victims driven by revenge or mental illness, they are considered serious security threats (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2011). At the same time, they are represented as victims of unfortunate situations, often related to family background, segregation from society, and experiences of violence (Gan et al, 2019). The representations of IS-women as traumatized victims and rootless outsiders are used to describe the reasons for their madness, causing them to do things they would not have done otherwise (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015).

It is quite common for them to have been sexually abused or raised in poorly functioning families, some have mental disorders (SR, 07/12/2017)

They have often been kept tight at home. Some have grown up with abuse, others have been left to take care of themselves and their siblings when the parents have been absent (DN, 18/06/2019)

Within the monster narrative, the representations of IS-women as rootless outsiders closely relate to neo-orientalist depictions of Muslim women. Alienation from the majority community is described as a contributing factor to their radicalisation since certain 'Other' communities encourage anti-democratic 'forces' against the Swedish society (Gan et al, 2019, Khalid, 2011, Kerboua, 2016). This neo-orientalist depiction of Muslim/foreign communities in Sweden is very problematic since it generalises a whole community and its people.

There are forces that want to weaken the democratic society because they do not see that this is where they will gain power, rather they can gain power outside the democratic system (SR, 24/02/2020)

In addition, women's madness is quite often explained by parents' 'Other' origin. The feeling of not belonging and being a rootless outsider in Swedish society makes women crazy and desperate to belong to a bigger cause (Gan et al, 2019). After age and gender, the origin seems to be the third most important thing to spell out in the representations of IS-women. Women with any Arab-related origin, or with parents of different origins are not considered as surprising in their engagement with ISIS as those with two Swedish parents. This reproduces neo-orientalist assumptions, describing 'Arabs' as possible terrorists threatening the West (Kerboua, 2016).

She was rootless, as you get when you have parents from different countries (DN, 18/06/2019)

5.4 Informed and ideologically motivated actors

The counter-narratives relate to those cases where IS-women are represented as *informed and ideologically motivated actors*, rather than brainwashed teenagers, oppressed wives, or traumatised outsiders. In these representations IS-women are described as political activists, opposing the Western lifestyle, and embracing a central role in the building of a new society (Strømme, 2017). They are represented as informed and engaged actors in the search for meaning. Through social media networking, they mobilise and encourage collective activism. In contrast to *the sexual slavery narrative*, their interest in 'jihad' is described as something that grew over time, rather than a quick mysterious process. Though, they might have strategically hidden their conviction with possible enemies to ensure not to be stopped in the realisation of their dream. Even marriage could be strategic, allowing women to safely pursue their calling, without much confrontation or suspicion. In these representations, women are neither deprived of humanity or empathy, as in *the monster narrative* nor driven by emotions and their need to nurture as in *the mother narrative* (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). Rather, they handle difficult emotional situations strategically, through performed hatred towards those who they naturally empathise with.

I got stuck on jihad. I had books at home, a lot of books, that were about exactly jihad (SR, 12/09/2019)

I got married just to get people to shut up and that was the only reason (SR, 12/09/2019)

And I said I will never go inside again because I'm not going to sit in a prison with lots of "kuffar", a lot of non-Muslims. But that wasn't what I had in mind actually. I didn't want to see what they go through. It hurt too much. I couldn't handle it (SR, 17/04/2016)

Some news articles criticise the gendered and orientalist narratives reproduced by media and research, arguing that the representations of IS-women have denied women responsibility for their actions. Gendered assumptions that women are peaceful, and passive have led to an underestimated threat (Alexander, 2018, Strømmen, 2017). However, the security focus inherent in this critique indicates that even critical representations of IS-women could be considered to reproduce neo-orientalist discourses, emphasising that even Muslim *women* pose a threat towards the West (Kerboua, 2016, Khalid, 2011). As such, representations of IS-women as ideologically motivated actors that are security-focused, simply add and stir women into 'malestream' international relations, and thus fails to recognise them as actors outside the war on terror discourse.

A continuous disregard towards female recruitment to violent extremist environment is to ignore a serious potential security threat (GP, 31/08/2015)

But in Sweden, so far, the attitude towards women in extremist environments has been based on misleading premises, such as that women only "support" men. The role and task of women in violent extremist environments have therefore long been underestimated in the Swedish debate (SVD, 15/10/2015)

But how could IS-women be represented as actors outside a security-focused neo-orientalist discourse, and why does it matter? It matters because until today the very meaning of development is rooted in colonial and masculinist discourses, which result in misleading and agency depriving representations of ‘Other’ women in media and research. It is only through the recognition of the ‘Other’s humanism and theorising about the world that can we come closer to deconstructing dominant Western discourses (McEwan, 2019). Some representations in Swedish media challenge the neo-orientalist discourse by emphasising IS-women’s opposition to the Western gender-equal ideal. These women do not want to be ‘liberated’ by Western feminism. Rather, they want to be valued for and practice their traditional feminine roles, something they are promised to be in the Islamic State. In the representations of IS-women as self-reflective individuals, who can make their own choices and interpretations of what is right for them, we come closer to counter-narratives that deconstruct gendered and orientalist narratives, rather than reproduce them (Martini, 2018). As humans and women with voices, they are capable of regret and disagreement with the practices of ISIS, in contrast to previous representations of IS-women.

The thing I love about Islam very much is to see how these ‘kuffar’, the non-Muslims torture us, but we, we just cut their heads off, so they won’t feel [...] We should not torture anyone. But IS did it and especially this video where they put fire on that pilot, it was that one that raised all the thoughts. That was when I realised that all this was just a mistake (SR, 12/09/2019)

The IS doctrine greatly appeals to female recruits by offering an alternative image of Muslim women as anything but weak and victimised – and female recruits do not infrequently associate with IS as a stance on the organisation’s contempt against the Western equal women ideal (SVD, 08/03/2017)

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the representations of Western IS-women in Swedish media and reveal whether these reproduce gendered and orientalist narratives. Through a qualitative content analysis, twenty-three news articles from four morning newspapers and six radio programs were put in relation to Gentry and Sjoberg's (2015) three narratives of women's political violence. The findings confirm that "while one narrative or the other might be dominant in one case or another, the mother, monster and whore narratives are *all* used in each case, in ways that overlap" (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015, p. 133). Nonetheless, some narratives were found to be more dominant than others, which leads back to the research question of this study: *what are the dominant gendered and orientalist narratives in the representations of Western IS-women in Swedish media?*

The whore narrative, or more specifically *the sexual slavery narrative* and its representation of IS-women as brainwashed teenagers is identified as the most dominant narrative in Swedish media. The narrative reproduces gendered assumptions about women as passive victims (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2011). It also reproduces orientalist assumptions of Western women as 'liberated' in its narration of 'the good girl mystery', which questions the probability of a smart and good Western girl to voluntarily join the 'barbaric' Islamic State. Rather, she must have been lured and seduced by manipulative recruiters (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). The second narrative is the mother narrative, with *the nurturing mother* being particularly prominent in the employment of orientalist stereotypes in the representations of IS-women as oppressed and controlled Muslim wives, who lack the ability to make decisions independently (Khalid, 2011). Interestingly, women's agency is at dispute within the *mother of nations narrative*. In some representations, the central role as 'mothers of the caliphate' is described as an unconscious and forced role, while in others it is described as an ideologically motivated and chosen role. The third narrative, often closely related to the sexual slavery narrative, is *the monster narrative*, which explains women's vulnerability to brainwash through

their psychological disturbance (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). Women who joined ISIS are represented as traumatised victims and rootless outsiders, making them desperate to belong to a bigger cause (Gan et al, 2019). Surprisingly, this narrative was found to reproduce neo-orientalist assumptions through the emphasis on IS-women's 'Other' origin, segregation from the majority Western society, and the potential threat 'Other' communities may pose towards the Western democracy (Kerboua, 2016).

Together, the representations of IS-women in Swedish media reproduce gendered and orientalist narratives, which leads to misleading knowledge about women's political violence. Women are not considered agents, but victims whose actions are obscured by perverting their femininity and very humanity (Gentry and Sjoberg, 2015). Considering the power media has over our reproduction of knowledge (Azeez, 2019, Gentry and Sjoberg), it is very likely that a majority of the Swedish population believe in these narratives, especially because few representations of IS-women could be considered as counter-narratives that successfully deconstruct the dominant Western discourse (McEwan, 2019). Most counter-narratives suggest IS-women to be equal to their male counterparts, the Muslim 'terrorist' man, which at first may sound like a feminist progress that acknowledge their agency. However, the security-focused counter-narrative fails to recognise IS-women outside the war on terror discourse, and thus reproduce neo-orientalist assumptions about Western IS-women who together with male foreign fighters need to be controlled and prevented, to secure the Western democracy and current world order (Kerboua, 2016).

The few counter-narratives that are strong in their contradiction to mainstream development and international relations discourses are the representations of Western IS-women who oppose the Western liberal and gender-equal ideal in their search for an alternative life in the 'South'. These narratives contradict the dichotomous representation of women as either Western empowered women or Eastern oppressed women (Martini, 2018; Khalid, 2011). Western IS-women are represented as informed and ideologically motivated actors, who oppose the Western lifestyle, not because of their young age, childhood traumas or family

background, but because they believe in another way of living. What remains is no longer much of a mystery, but rather an eye-opener to all of us that believe Western feminism and democracy to be for everybody.

Since this study has been focused on the representations of Western IS-women I cannot make any conclusion on whether these women, in fact, were victims of brainwash, oppressing husbands, or childhood traumas. This kind of assessment would require an interview-based research. Future research in the form of qualitative interviews would give important insights into the actual experiences of IS-women, which would help to deconstruct the current knowledge about women's political violence. But what I can conclude in this research is that the representation of IS-women as passive victims, that either are oppressed or psychologically disturbed, reproduce misleading knowledge about women's political violence. Despite its feminist government, Sweden is not an exception when it comes to sexualised and racialised representations in media. The representation of IS-women in Swedish media reproduce gendered and orientalist narratives that in one way or the other denies women their agency and their voice. Their possible political motivation to join ISIS is both overlooked and forgotten in the current media debate. In turn, the received and reproduced knowledge by the public legitimise stereotypes about women engaging in political violence as passive victims rather than motivated actors. I wonder, if it instead were a group of women joining a fundamentalist Christian movement abroad, would they also be represented as brainwashed teenagers, oppressed wives, and traumatised victims?

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix I – Final data sample

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SR (24/02/2020) Kaliber: Dragkampen om IS-kvinnorna (29 min). Retrieved from <https://sverigesradio.se/avsnitt/1448968>

8.2 Appendix II – Coding protocol

<i>Labels</i>	<i>Sub-codes</i>	<i>Themes/Narratives</i>
Mother, married/marriage, husband, housewife, at home, travelled with partner, jihadi bride, family relations, regret, scared, lost, disappeared, stuck, not security threat, controlled, tried to escape, personal reasons, mistake, emotional, locked in, human	Victim, innocent, emotional, human, domesticated, uninformed	Nurturing mother narrative Oppressed Muslim women
Failed marriage, starving children, family issues, abandoned child, lost child, widow	Family related traumas	Vengeful mother narrative
State-building, promised central role, spreading ideology and heritage, give birth to warriors, raise warriors, many children	Reproductive role	Mother of nations narrative
Childhood trauma, economic constraints in family, school dropout, troubled childhood, hard times with friends, bad company, tested drugs, search for safety, from suburbs, dysfunctional family, family issues, rootless, ran away from home, psychological problems, confused, aid from social service, non-Swedish origin, identity issues, suicide	Mental illness, unstable, alienation	Monster narrative

Evil, female jihadis, inhuman, perpetrator, want to fight, revenge, dream of bloody attacks, convinced husbands, picture of executions in phone, cruel, cheer for violence	Inhuman, evil, crazy	Monster narrative
Teenager/below age 20, child marriage, older man, captive, unmarried women put in women's house/madaffa, forced to wear hijab, lack of knowledge, didn't think, teenage pregnancy, online meetings, controlled, not serious, followed husband/partner, siblings/peer influence, against her will, not what she expected, wanted to leave, hated it	Brainwashed teenager, victim, passive, pedophilia	Sexual slavery narrative
Good student, quickly radicalised, ambitious, peaceful, gave charity, big heart, began covering, middle-class, Swedish background, transformation, perfect Muslim, successful parents, popular, sober, quit job, empathetic	Good girl mystery	Sexual slavery narrative
Met jihadist through Muslim online dating	Erotomania	Whore narrative
Voluntary choice, underestimated danger, terror threat, recruiters, propaganda, expressed	Actors, threat (to the West)	Counter narrative Neo-orientalist narrative

<p>extreme opinions, preparation of terror attacks, moral police, participation in violence, terror financing, initiative growing security threat, female jihadis, dangerous, extremely convinced, contribute to terror</p>		
<p>Dissatisfied, politically motivated, IS offers alternative picture of Muslim women, against Western equal women ideal, search for meaning, belief</p>	<p>Ideologically motivated</p>	<p>Counter narrative</p>