

# Exploring young women's fear of terrorism and attitudes towards extremism and terrorism

## Introduction

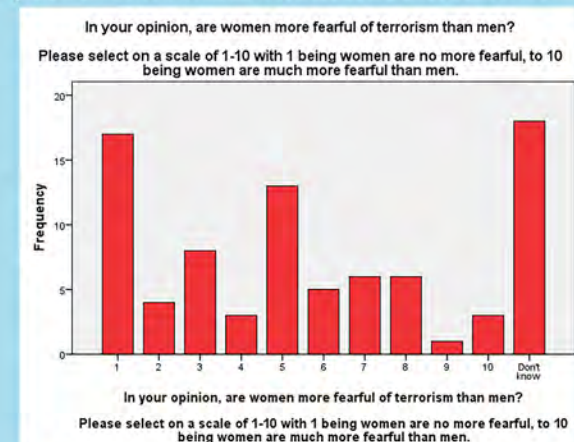
This project involved exploring young women's fear of terrorism and attitudes towards terrorism and extremism. It attempts to look at how and why young women may experience fear and terrorism differently and to also explore respondents' political attitudes towards extremism and terrorism in general. This project has involved collecting quantitative data through an online survey and then analysed using SPSS. The current literature was also reviewed to help situate the findings. From our findings we hope to highlight any improvements to counter terrorism policy and to make more people aware of how such policies impact civil rights, especially for women.

## On the media:

"They all talk about the same stories, it produces a big noise which could potentially add to increased fear".

## Method and literature review

- Research has found women are largely excluded from counter terrorism policy making, reinforcing women's subordinate position as it sees the state as a male entity.
- Gives us a better understanding of how femininity and masculinity and other gender constructs shape terrorism and counter terrorism.
- Literature found: People overestimate the risk of being a victim of an attack despite small chances; women more likely to avoid risky areas; factors that increase fear include exposure to TV, income, race, age and possibly political orientation; those exposed to more media/news sources are more likely to be fearful of terrorism; governments exploit this fear and exaggerate it to secure their power and create policies affecting our civil liberties.
- Collected 109 online survey responses, using Qualtrics (70.6% female; 29.4% male).
- Analysed using SPSS.
- Unfortunately no one wished to take part in the semi-structured interviews.



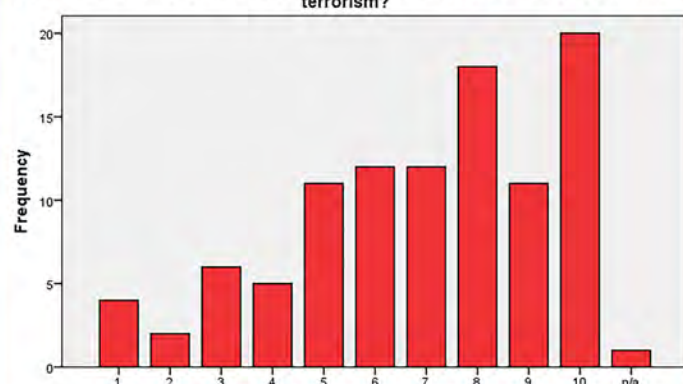
## On Jihadi extremism:

"I feel like I have been conditioned through the reinforcement and repetition of the media to fear more of jihadi extremism"

## Results

- Majority are fairly concerned with terrorism, a mean score of 6.97.
- 89% believe the increased fears of terrorism come from the media and also politicians and the Prime Minister (31.2%).
- Those exposed to more media were more concerned with terrorism, and women were more likely to rate 10 on the scale of how worried they are about terrorism.
- When comparing the use of social media and how worried they are with specific terrorism and extremism, people were significantly more concerned with far right extremism than Jihadi extremism or far left/environmentalism.

Please read the following statements and select how concerned you are about the issue. 1 is not concerned at all, 10 is very concerned. - How concerned are you about terrorism?

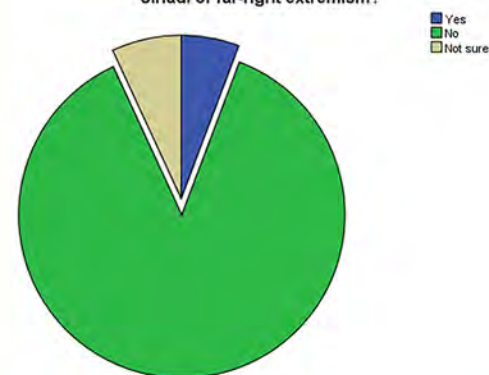


- 37.6% thought there was too much focus on jihadi terrorism.
- 45.9% thought far right extremism is as dangerous as jihadi extremism.
- Respondents reported that far right extremism is closer to home, and seen as more dangerous because they have a political voice and causes a divide between communities because of them legitimising racism.
- 69.7% believe environmental extremism is not as dangerous as jihadi extremism, with a mean score of 3.06 on how worried they were about it.
- A result of 5.75 when asked on a scale of 1-10 whether women were more fearful, but no significance was found after running a t-test.
- 42.2% said they would not avoid risky areas, and overall more women would not take part in avoidance behaviours (31).
- When asked final questions such as whether counter terrorism policing exacerbates racism and if such policies impact civil rights the most common answers were 'not sure', suggesting the majority of people don't have access to knowledge or don't often think about this.

## On the far right:

"This kind of extremism has a lot more potential for influencing UK culture, steering it towards a more hateful and fearful society".

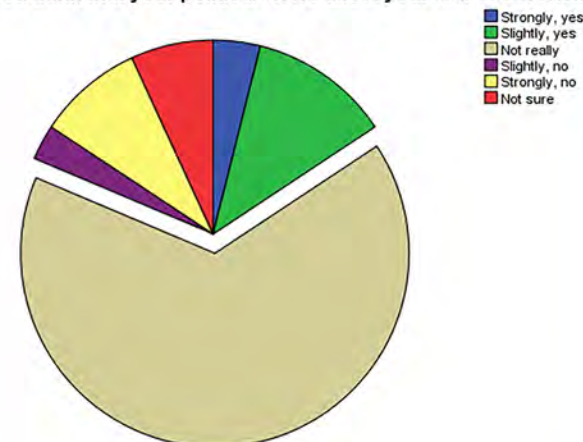
In your opinion, do you think that environmentalist extremism is as dangerous as Jihadi or far-right extremism?



## Conclusion

- People are fearful of terrorism and believe they are likely to be victims despite the rare possibility.
- Women are not more likely to avoid risky areas or be any more fearful than men when it comes to terrorism of any kind.
- Those exposed to more media sources were more worried about terrorism, and women who were exposed to media more were more likely to select 10 when asked to rank their fear of terrorism.
- Must take into account of a very small sample size of mostly women and young people, so it is hard to compare the genders with clear conclusions.
- It is recommended the public needs more education and access to knowledge around threat levels and the impact counter terrorism has on civil liberties and women.
- Respondents have said more needs to be done to tackle and not merely tolerate right wing extremism as it was clearly expressed how more worried people are of this.
- Larger empirical research needs to be carried out and look at the gender differences.
- Compare other gender identities as they may bring a different perception to the fear of terrorism.

Do you think that your political views affect your fear of terrorism?



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