Securing the society – a woman’s risk to take?
A field study on how women’s perception of safety is impacted by engaging in prevention of violent extremism

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Abstract

This study explores how women’s perceptions of safety is impacted by participating in a program aimed at preventing violent extremism (PVE). The theoretical framework mainly draws on literature on women and conflict prevention, sacred values and human security studies. In combining theoretical arguments from these fields, I hypothesize that women’s perception of safety will be negatively impacted by participating in PVE-programs. That is because their participation will challenge sacred gender norms by taking up leadership roles in the community that usually belong to men. As a result, hostile reactions from community members will follow, i.e. from those whose sacred values are challenged, which in turn is expected to impact women’s perception of safety negatively. This thesis applies qualitative methods and to compare between two groups of women who participate in a PVE-program through different roles, and one group of non-PVE-participating women. Semi-structured interviews were held with two PVE-participating groups (female religious leaders and female economic leaders) as well as with non-PVE-participating women in Indonesia. The purpose of this case selection is twofold. First, to examine whether the PVE-participation in itself has an effect on women’s perceptions of safety. Second, to explore whether to explore whether certain roles that women take in a PVE-program challenge sacred gender norms more than others, and as such, leads to more negative perceptions of safety. The results indicate that PVE-participants challenge sacred norms, however, these norms do not always have a gendered underpinning, but are more religious in nature than anticipated. Contrary to my hypotheses, women’s perception of safety is not necessarily negatively impacted by participating in PVE-programs. The results rather indicate that women’s perception of safety can be both positively and negatively impacted by their participation, mainly depending on how their participation is understood by others. Additionally, PVE-participating women mainly challenge gender norms before they begin their participation, instead of during its active phase. As such, the results suggest that time aspects are important to fully understand women’s perception of safety.

Key Words: PVE, women, sacred values, perception of safety, Indonesia
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Abbreviations

CVE Countering of Violent Extremism
GBV Gender-Based Violence
ISIS Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
MFT Moral Foundation Theory
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
PVE Prevention of Violent Extremism
RQ Research Question
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UK United Kingdom
VAW Violence Against Women

List of Figure

Figure 1 Causal argument ................................................................. 24
Figure 2 Operationalization of women’s perception of safety ................................. 32
# Table of content

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

2. Introductory framework ......................................................................................................... 4
   2.1 Countering violent extremism .......................................................................................... 4
   2.2 Preventing violent extremism ......................................................................................... 5

3. Theoretical framework ........................................................................................................... 7
   3.1 Women and conflict prevention ....................................................................................... 7
   3.1.1 Women and prevention of violent extremism ............................................................... 9
   3.2 Sacred values ................................................................................................................. 11
   3.2.1 How moral foundations become sacred values ............................................................ 13
   3.2.2 The moral foundation of men’s authority and women’s subordination ................. 14
   3.3 Challenging Sacred Values and Hostile reactions ......................................................... 16
   3.4 Human Security .............................................................................................................. 17
   3.4.1 Feminist perspectives of human security ................................................................. 18
   3.4.2 Women’s perception of safety .................................................................................... 20
   3.5 Alternative explanations ................................................................................................. 24

4. Research design .................................................................................................................... 26
   4.1 Case selection ................................................................................................................. 27
   4.2 Location and generalizability ......................................................................................... 28
   4.3 Ethical considerations ...................................................................................................... 30
   4.4 Operationalization ......................................................................................................... 31
   4.4.1 Dependent variable – Women’s perception of safety .................................................. 31
   4.4.2 Independent variable – Participation in PVE-program ............................................... 32

5. Contextual Background ........................................................................................................ 34
   5.1 Gender norms in Indonesia ............................................................................................ 34
   5.2 Preventing violent extremism in Indonesia .................................................................... 34

6. Empirics ................................................................................................................................ 37
   6.1 Female economic leaders in PVE-program .................................................................... 37
   6.1.1 Participation in PVE-program ................................................................................... 37
   6.1.2 Challenging sacred values .......................................................................................... 39
   6.1.3 Perception of safety .................................................................................................... 41
   6.2 Female religious leaders in PVE-program ..................................................................... 44
   6.2.1 Participation in PVE-program .................................................................................... 44
   6.2.2 Challenging sacred values ......................................................................................... 46
   6.2.3 Perception of safety .................................................................................................... 48
   6.2.4 Non-PVE-participating women .................................................................................. 51
   6.2.5 Perception of safety .................................................................................................... 52

7. Analysis .................................................................................................................................. 54
   7.1 Participation in PVE-program .......................................................................................... 54
1. Introduction

Women’s participation in conflict prevention has often been overlooked in academia and policy. Despite growing international recognition of women’s important role in conflict prevention, their representation in such processes tends to be ad hoc or purely symbolic (Ellerby, 2013; Naraghi-Anderlini, 2001; Paffenholz et al., 2016). This is the case even though a growing body of research suggest that women play crucial roles when it comes to conflict prevention. Evidence indicate that when women are involved, it advances security, foster social cohesion on a grassroots level and improves conflict resilience (Brodsky et al., 2011; Neutwirth, 2002). Even if the topic has received scarce academic attention of women as conflict preventers, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that women are central contributors to successful conflict prevention and instrumental in building resilience on the local level (Smyth & Sweetman, 2015). For example, in Nigeria, women’s groups confronted internationally owned oil companies and reached a compromise solution that benefited their communities (Hassan et al., 2002). In Kashmir, women from widely differing ideological and political positions joined together for peace (Butalia, 2014). In Afghanistan, women have been instrumental in providing health and education to a generation of children under the Taliban rule (Rostami, 2003). Evidently, women play important and diverse roles when it comes to conflict prevention.

Recently, the concept of conflict prevention has expanded to include phenomena such as prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Efforts aimed at preventing violent extremism have been carried out in several countries where violent extremism is perceived to be a rising threat, such as in Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, United Kingdom and Indonesia. In the last few years, several PVE-programs are being implemented with women as the leading agents. Around the world, various attempts have been done to prevent violent extremism through female leadership. Such programs have for instance focused on enhancing women’s religious leadership, their capacities to detect early warning signs of radicalization and abilities to build social cohesion in polarized communities (see e.g. Speckhard & Shajkovci, 2017; Subedi, 2017; Rashid, 2014).

Most studies on women as conflict preventers in general and as preventers of violent extremism in particular, do however focus on the positive effects following women’s active participation. Several studies have, for instance, shown that women’s involvement brings
communities closer together and enhances prospects for preventing radicalization (see e.g. Colletta & Cullen, 2001; Holmer 2013; Husband et al., 2011). Even though research acknowledges the positive effects of women’s inclusion in conflict prevention and PVE-programs on a societal level, it remains unexplored what impact it has on the women themselves. As such, academia and policy have largely neglected how women’s collective efforts to ensure societal security may impact them on an individual level, this is particularly the case with regard to their own safety. As a result of this gap, we are unaware of the potential risks triggered by women’s participation in PVE-programs. Jeopardizing women’s individual security for the greater good of society may be an unintended consequence that has been overlooked in research and policy. To gain more knowledge of how women are impacted by having participated in conflict prevention, this thesis will examine how women’s participation in a PVE-program impacts their perception of safety. As such, I seek to make a contribution to the field of gender and conflict prevention in general, and the body of research examining women’s preventing violent extremism in particular. This is done by addressing the following research question (RQ);

*How do women’s participation in PVE-programs impact their perception of safety?*

This question is approached by analyzing unique data gathered in the field through semi-structured interviews with women participating in PVE-programs in Indonesia. Indonesia is the world’s largest Muslim majority state with a long history of Islamic fundamentalism (O’Rourke, 2002). As such it offers an important context to explore the effects of women’s participation in PVE initiatives. Several PVE-programs are being implemented by women at the grassroots level since a couple of years, and some empirical studies have been made to observe the efficiency of these programs, i.e. how well they deliver on preventing violent extremism (see e.g. Feddes et al., 2015; Khalil & Zeuthen, 2016; O’Halloran, 2017). However, to the best of my knowledge, not a single study has examined the perceived safety implications for the women participating in these programs. Therefore, this study wishes to yield important nuances that could benefit future policy-making on PVE-programming by providing grassroot narratives on the experiences of participating in terms of perceived safety. In this thesis, women’s safety is examined based on their own subjective understanding, meaning how they perceive their safety rather than examining their actual safety.

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In this study, I hypothesize that women’s participation in a PVE-program will challenge sacred gender norms. That is because they take on leadership roles in the society which usually are reserved for men. As a result, PVE-participating women are expected to face hostile reactions from having challenged sacred gender norms - coded as men’s authority and women’s subordination - which in turn is believed to affect their perception of safety negatively. This theoretical argument is based on literature on women and conflict prevention, sacred values and human security. The results indicate that women’s perception of safety is impacted by participating in PVE-programs, however, not always in a negative way. Empirics further suggest that the challenging of gender norms mainly takes place prior to their participation, and not during. Lastly, I conclude that gender norms possibly should be regarded as a secondary sacred value, and religion as a primary, which has an effect on women’s perception of safety.

This paper is outlined as follows. In the first section, I introduce academic debates on Countering of Violent Extremism (CVE) and PVE to demonstrate the research gap within this field. To answer the RQ of this paper, I construct a theoretical framework to help analyze the empirical situation of interest. Following the theoretical framework, I present the methods and research design behind this study. The paper continues by analyzing gathered data, after which the thesis concludes with some final remarks together with discussions about limitations and suggestions for future research and policy-making.
2. Introductory framework

As this study examines how women’s perception of safety is impacted by participating in PVE-programs, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a background to Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (C/PVE) in general, and women’s PVE-participation in particular. As such, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the research gap of which this study seeks to make an academic contribution.

2.1 Countering violent extremism

In recent years, the world has witnessed new waves of violent extremism that have taken the lives of many innocent people. ISIS in the Middle East, Boko Haram in Nigeria, MILF in the Philippines, Al-Shabab in the horn of Africa and various attacks in Europe and North America, constitute a small sample of recent extremist waves, groups and attacks around the world (Cilliers, 2013; Piazza, 2007; Wright-Neville, 2007). Despite academic inadequacies in identifying the exact mechanisms behind violent extremism, the fear and horrible consequences caused by extremism have forced policy-makers, governments and international organizations to take actions to stop the spread of violent extremism. Therefore, stakeholders regularly try new methods in countering violent extremism (Koehler, 2016).

As with the concept of 'violent extremism', there is no universal consensus regarding what exactly countering violent extremism entails (CVE), nor what forms such actions should take and what assumptions to make (McCants and Watts, 2012). The key elements of CVE tend to comprise the "use of non-coercive means to dissuade individuals or groups from mobilizing towards violence and to mitigate recruitment, support, facilitation or engagement in ideologically motivated terrorism by non-state actors in furtherance of political objectives" (Khan, 2015: 3). The lack of agreed definition to key terms in CVE has resulted in "conflicting or counterproductive programs" that make it difficult to evaluate the effects of CVE programs (McCants and Watts, 2012: 1). Without general guidelines on what CVE actually entails, it risks evolving into a "catch-all category", i.e. that programs lack precision and context-sensitive guidelines. This is problematic because as an effect, it is challenging to draw clear boundaries that distinguish CVE programs from other related field programs, such as those on development, poverty alleviation, governance and democracy building (ibid). Fink (2013) finds that ‘international initiatives to counter terrorism have more often than not been directed at the
military aspects of such threats, with insufficient attention paid to the specific context—the social, political, and regional dynamics—in which they evolve’ (Fink, 2013:1-2). Even though research continues to emphasize the need to consider such contextual dynamics. CVE-efforts have repeatedly been criticized for its failure to include cultural dynamics on a grassroot level. With the continued rise of violent extremism around the world, policy writers and academics have begun to shed more light on different ways in stopping the spread of violent extremism. In recent years, preventive initiatives have started to gain more attention in scholars and policy. Methods to prevent violent extremism are assumed to be better equipped in recognizing cultural dynamics, because it is more often grassroot-led compared to CVE initiatives (Lakhani, 2012). The next section will therefore introduce current debates on PVE, as it is within such programs (PVE) that the women interviewed in this study are part of.

2.2 Preventing violent extremism

The rapid growth in research directed toward PVE has resulted in a rich but fragmented body of literature spanning multiple disciplines. As a concept, PVE has quickly become a priority for the global community (Frank & Reva, 2016: 2). That is because PVE expects stakeholders to undertake a deeper assessment of the root causes of violent extremism, addressing its key drivers, i.e. adopting more of an 'upstream' approach than CVE-programs usually have done. In actions plans, PVE often calls for a comprehensive approach, embracing not only essential security-based CVE measures but also systematic preventive steps in addressing factors that make individuals appealed to join violent extremist groups from the very start (Boutellis & Fink, 2016).

Currently, PVE-programs vary across the spectrum of improved education, cultural outreach, and counter-messaging, to prevent radicalization at the individual level. Some countries have undertaken inter-religious and inter-communal dialogues to engage with citizens from various ethnical and cultural groups. Other countries have focused on socioeconomic development for marginalized groups that they see as potential risk groups for radicalization (Christmann, 2012). However, the few existing academic studies on PVE-programs have more often than not directed criticism to certain assumptions that the programs are built on (Stephen et al, 2018). This criticism has for instance been directed towards PVE-programs who contribute to stigmatization of Muslim communities. Community-based PVE-programs in United Kingdom (UK) have for instance received criticism for singling out the Muslim communities by labeling
them as a potential risk group to violent extremism. PVE initiatives in e.g. Denmark, Austria and Germany have received similar criticisms for labeling communities as “suspect communities”. Such PVE-programs merely exacerbate the lack of trust and cooperation between community groups, as well as been the community at large and law enforcement, rather than enhancing opportunities for social cohesion (Schanzer et al. 2016).

Around the world, PVE programs have also been implemented based on other assumptions than religious identities. In South Africa, for instance, several PVE-programs are being carried out in educational institutions, intended to reduce risks of radicalization and extremism by providing more knowledge and education on this topic. Similar efforts to improve education have been made in East Africa, where PVE actions also are directed to improve health care systems and economic opportunities as a means to reduce the roots causes to violent extremism (Waghid, 2009).

Most studies on PVE-programs merely scrutinize the program per se, rather than asking the participants about their experiences. Repeatedly, studies on PVE-programs focus on the successes and security contributions on a state or sub-state level that results from the program implementation (Bettison, 2009; Lakhani, 2012). To my knowledge, however, no studies have examined how such programs contribute to the PVE-participants security. Even less attention has been directed to women in such programs, who increasingly are being involved in conflict prevention programs of this type. To better understand how women are impacted by their PVE-participation, the next chapter, i.e. the theoretical framework, will start by introducing current debates on women as conflict preventers: what roles women take on, what they contribute to and why women as conflict preventers are receiving more attention in research and policy-shaping. It will then move on to research on women and PVE, and continue by applying theoretical arguments that are believed to have explanatory power in examining how women’s perception of safety may be impacted by participating in a PVE-program.
3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework is outlined. Here, I will present the mechanisms that connect women’s participation in a PVE-program with their perception of safety. In understanding how women’s participation in PVE programs impacts their perceptions of safety, I combine theoretical arguments on women and conflict prevention, sacred values and human security studies. Based on the sacred values literature, I hypothesize that some roles women take on in PVE programs challenges sacred values on gender norms. More specifically, the sacred values I argue may be challenged by women participating in a PVE-programs are the gender norms of men’s authority and women’s subordination. Men’s authority and women’s subordination can be a part of a non-negotiable moral foundation in a society. As such, it may be understood as a sacred value. When men’s authority and women’s subordination is a sacred value, it is taboo to challenge. Once sacred values are challenged, consequences will follow. The consequences may be varied, but due to the scope of this paper, I will focus on safety-related consequences for women, where the safety of women participating in a PVE-program may be at risk from having challenged the sacred moral foundation of men’s authority and women’s subordination.

First, the independent variable is discussed in this chapter – women’s participation in PVE-program – which is done by situating the topic within the larger debate on women and conflict prevention. Subsequently, the second part of the causal argument - challenging sacred values – analyses how sacred values come about and how women in PVE-programs may challenge such values through their participation. Then, the third step in the causal argument is discussed – challenging sacred values and hostile reactions – which outline the consequences of challenging sacred values. Next, I move on to the dependent variable of this thesis – perception of safety – which draws on literature on human security in general and feminist perspectives on human security in particular. The chapter concludes with presenting expected case variances and two hypotheses.

3.1 Women and conflict prevention

Men are often the most immediately visible and recognized protection actors in societies around the world. Men are frequently overrepresented in security and military forces and seen as more natural security agents than women. Arguably, this tendency colors and defines what is conventionally understood as protection, prevention and security, especially due to its
preoccupation with masculinized force (Sjoberg, 2011). Women, on the other hand, are more often seen as the victims of conflict and violence, rather than its protectors and preventers. In recent years, academic attention has increasingly been directed to women as victims in war-torn countries. Women who have been targeted for rape and sexual violence, suffered disproportionately from direct attacks on communities, and been forced from their homes as refugees and internally-displaced persons (see e.g. Gardam, 2000; McKey, 1998). While it is important to recognize that women often are the first victims in conflicts, this binary gendered structure also renders invisible the safety contributions of women, and in this case, women who are protectors and preventers of conflict. The existing literature on the role of women in conflict prevention has merely focused on two kinds of assumptions. One is essentialist, defining women as inherently peaceful and men inherently warlike (Skjelsbaek, 2001). The other is a discourse of “victimology,” purely making women as victims of conflict (Ewald, 2002). As opposed to the latter assumption, women constantly demonstrate that they are much more than just victims. For example, the Naga Mother Women’s Association was the first group in India and in South Asia to actually sit with the government of India at the peace table and negotiate a ceasefire (Shimray, 2002). In Colombia, women participated in official peace negotiations where they contributed to putting pressure on conflicting parties to reach an agreement (Rojas et al., 2004). In short, there is a need in the field to move toward a more comprehensive understanding of the complex roles and interests of women and men as victims and as agents in armed conflict, and in the building of peace and prevention of conflict (Pampell, 2002).

Even if the work women do for the safety and protection in their community is not widely considered a security practice, the power of women to intervene for the protection of all is valuable. Women’s practices to secure their community speak to the instinctive and multifaceted ways in which women respond to insecurity in their communities. In Bosnia, women identified the need for mobile medical clinics to go from village to village to serve health and psychosocial needs. In Sudan, women risked their lives by marching in the streets for peace. In Albania, women collected weapons to secure their villages. The range of women’s activities for peace and security are wide (Hunt, 2007; Pampell, 2002). This patchwork of women’s everyday actions creates a security infrastructure that, while often taken for granted and invisible, infiltrates many aspects of life and society. There are many examples where women demonstrate ability to organize peace advocacy campaigns at the grassroots level, pressure governments to end wars and to act as security agents. In some cases, women even use the new roles and responsibilities that result from conflict as tools of advancement and empowerment.
within their societies. Women's roles as both victims and active parties within the continuum of conflict make them integral actors for conflict prevention strategies (MacKenzie, 2009). Because they play an important role within the dynamics of conflict and are often directly affected by the escalation of violence, women have a crucial role to play in the prevention of conflict.

As we are gaining more insights to women’s valuable roles and capacities in conflict prevention, the focus is continuously expanded to new ways of including women in various forms prevention activities. Recently, attention has increasingly been directed to the role women play in the prevention of violent extremism. Before this thesis moves forward to analyze how women’s perception of safety is impacted by their PVE-participation -which is the focus in this study - the next section discusses how women’s roles as conflict preventers has entered the field of violent extremism.

3.1.1 Women and prevention of violent extremism

The involvement of women as ‘policy shapers, educators, community members and activists’ are essential to prevent terrorism (OSCE, 2013: 2). Integrating a gendered approach in PVE enhances the role that women and men play and ensures that programming is tailored to gender-specific needs. A gendered approach to PVE also enables a better understanding of how women effectively and collectively can contribute to PVE interventions, and how they are impacted by such actions.

Dharmapuri (2016) states that violent extremism are highly gendered activities because of their exploitation of rigid stereotypes of femininity and masculinity (Dharmapuri, 2016). Gender stereotypes of women as peaceful or non-threatening have for instance been exploited by extremist groups, e.g. in the perpetration of suicide terrorist attacks. Checkpoint guards, military members, and security guards are overwhelmingly male, and therefore, unable to check women. That is why women are perceived as more likely to slip past security checks undetected, which is one of many explanations to why women increasingly are being recruited by extremist networks (ibid.). Women’s roles in violent extremism should however be understood through the various roles they play as sympathizers with violent extremism; for instance, some women actively choose to become jihadi brides. In the case of Boko Haram, women have gathered intelligence, assisted in recruitment, promoted radical ideologies and indoctrinated abductees and converts (Insight of Conflict, 2017; Onuoha, 2015).
To date, various programs around the world have been implemented to support women’s meaningful role in PVE. Women in countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Nigeria, Mali, and Libya are on the frontlines of women’s efforts to build peace, ‘not only countering (violent) extremism, but also providing with positive alternatives and challenging state actions’ (Ni Aoláin 2015). The world’s first female counter-terrorism platform Sisters Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) was launched by Women Without Borders in the year of 2008 and is currently operating in Yemen, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Israel, Palestine, and Northern Ireland. SAVE also runs ‘Mothers for Change’ campaigns in some of these countries, which aims to encourage and empower mothers to take a stand against ideologies of violent extremism in their homes and communities (Giscard d’Estaing, 2017; SAVE, 2018). Women are understood in this discourse as assets for PVE; often because they are perceived as potential ‘inside mediators’, particularly in the private sphere where they are perceived to be closely connected to the family. For policymakers, women offer an entry point to this sphere, essentiality through their role as mothers, wives, and sisters. As such, they are appreciated to assist PVE programs in reaching individuals and groups that are often difficult to access (Ni Aoláin 2015).

However, related to discussions in the previous chapter, such approaches to PVE risk essentializing women’s roles by only assigning their capacities to the private sphere. Additionally, and central to this study, the greater good of society which PVE-engaged women contribute to, might mask the difficulties of being a security agent on an individual level, i.e. by perpetrating violent extremism. So far, research suggests that women are often trapped between terrorism and countering terrorism. Women in PVE-programs are working in dangerous contexts where extremism exist, and where their chances to deliver their voice simultaneously are shrinking (UN Women 2015, 224). Additionally, by associating women with PVE activities, it potentially places women at risk of exclusion or threats within their own communities. The growing visibility of women’s engagement in activities aimed at preventing violent extremism risks exposing them to violent reprisals from violent extremist groups which hence causes a backlash on women’s rights. At worst, ill-conceived interventions will stigmatize women from their own communities (Giscard d’estaing, 2017).

In sum, women’s participation in conflict prevention in general, and prevention of violent extremism in particular, has gained more attention in recent years. Most studies have however
focused on the positive effects of including women in such activities, especially on a societal level. As this study seeks to gain more knowledge to the potential negative side effects for women in PVE programs, the next chapter moves from having discussed the independent variable of this thesis, to next step in the causal argument, i.e. challenging sacred values. In this thesis, I hypothesis that women challenge sacred gender norms by participating as leading figures in their PVE-program which in turn will have negative effects on their perception of safety. To further understand how and why women may challenge important gender norms through their PVE-participation, the next chapter will delve into relevant literature on sacred values and gender norms as moral foundations. Hence, the coming sections follows up on how the independent variable discussed in this section – women’s participation in PVE-program—may impact sacred values, and subsequently their perception of safety.

3.2 Sacred values

The term ‘sacred values’ is widely used today without clear theoretical underpinnings. In previous academic studies, the term ‘sacred’ has often been treated as a simple synonym with religion. In the early 20th century, when Emile Durkheim first introduced his theories on sacred values, he made a separation between the sacred and the profane. In this dichotomy, the sacred represented the unity of a group which is embodied in religious group symbols and activities. According to Durkheim, the sacred also captures the moral processes under which individuals acquire a sense of responsibility towards, and act in the interests of one’s group (Tetlock, 2012, Dehghani et al., 2010). The profane, on the other hand, involved mundane concerns, hence with no respect to religious values and activities. At Durkheim’s time, sacred values as a concept or phenomenon was merely embedded in religious narratives, symbols and actions. Today, however, social psychologists argue that the common denominator in the sacred values debate does not necessarily have anything to do with religion. Instead, most social and moral psychology researchers have drawn from Durkheim’s discussion on the moral processes in framing important values, and the taboos of challenging those values that are fundamental to a group or community (Dehghani et al., 2010).

Therefore, in recent years, the bearing and understanding of sacred values has gained more attention across different disciplines. It has for instance become a valuable theoretical approach to peace and conflict research. As social psychology entered the field of peace and conflict research, the scholarly world gained new perspectives on how fundamental values can help explaining the causes and dynamics of cultural and religious conflict, such as the Israel-
Palestinian conflict and the Kashmir conflict. Research in the West Bank, Iran, India and Indonesia have for instance revealed that when people transform a resource, idea or activity into a sacred value, normative approaches to dispute resolution may fail (Atran & Ginges, 2013). Atran and Ginges (2013) found that encouraging people to compromise over a sacred value will often “backfire”, i.e. lead to increased disapproval in making compromises on negotiated topic (Atran & Ginges, 2013). That is because holders of sacred values are usually strongly averse to apply traditional utility-based rationales when reasoning about their values (Tetlock, 2003; Atran, 2010) Several researchers of social phycology (see e.g. Atran, Ginges, Tetlock and Haidt) also found that even the most mundane material thing may be understood as a sacred value. Mundane values can become sacred rather quickly and include obviously non-religious activities (such as harvesting a special crop), or ideas (such as obtaining a nuclear weapon). Several studies led by Morteza Dehghani (Dehghani et al., 2009, 2010), tested the last notion by investigating the sacredness of the Iranian Nuclear Program, which he suggested could be understood as a sacred value in Iran.

As Tetlock (2002) put forward in his social-cognitive research, “any value that a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing infinite or transcendental significance” can be regarded as a sacred value (Tetlock et al., 2000: 853). From a social-cognitive perspective, sacred values appear to be intimately bound with sentiments of personal and collective identity (Sachdeva & Medin, 2009) and have strong links to the emotional life (Ginges et al., 2007). For Lynch (2012), gender, the care of children, nature and the neo-liberal marketplace all have sacralized significance in modern social life (Lynch, 2012). Across the world, people believe that devotion to certain core values and norms- such family or country well-fare- should be absolute and inviolable, and hence sacred (Atran & Axelrod, 2008). In brief, the sacred is accordingly found in what people see as an important and absolute normative reality (Lynch, 2012). That is why challenging sacred values is considered as taboo. What taboo is in particular depends on context, but always refers to something inhibited by societal norms.

The question remains however, how certain norms, activities and roles actually become sacred. A core assumption is that people share beliefs and practices that unite all who adhere to them into a distinct, collective moral community (Tetlock, 2002; Lynch, 2012). A community can therefore define anything as sacred, as soon as it builds upon a shared moral belief system (Tetlock, 2002: 52). To understand how some moral values become sacred, and hence taboo to challenge, the next section moves on to theories on moral foundations.
3.2.1 How moral foundations become sacred values

In understanding how gender norms can be seen as a sacred value, this thesis draws on arguments from moral psychology, specifically from the Moral Foundations Theory (MFT). The sacred values literature proposes that the sacredness of a value arises from a moral community (Tetlock, 2002). Therefore, MFT adds further understanding as to what a moral community actually is and how its members contribute to making a moral foundation sacred.

Within moral psychology several theories have made conflicting claims about the moral mind and how it impacts social order (see e.g., Curry et al., 2018; Haidt et al., 2012; Gray & Wegner, 2011). In brief, the MFT proposes that there is a certain set of moral beliefs that are inherent and universally accessible through the psychological systems within people. Each community, or culture, constructs the features, narratives, and institutions of their moral foundations. Thereby, people create a social order which is based on a shared moral belief system. According to MFT, very important and hence non-negotiable values are shaped and maintained through people’s moral beliefs. These collective moral beliefs constitute a moral order within a group or society – a sacred moral order – that informs how the society should operate. A group’s moral order is related to its practices, languages and patterns of thinking. Through socialization, group members learn to focus their judgments on values and actions that are central to their own culture (Haidt et al., 2012; Gray & Wegner, 2011). The sacredness of a moral order provides a set of meanings through which people understand their experiences and make judgments about what is valuable and important in their lives. The moral order also dictates what counts as appropriate actions and sets boundaries on what people are able to do. Thus, an individual's beliefs and actions can be understood within the context of a particular social world based on moral foundations (Maise, 2003 Haidt et al., 2012).

As Graham and Haidt (2010) argues, the sacralization process, i.e. to make something sacred, focuses on group-binding activities and effects. Researchers (2012) further suggest that certain roles can become sacred in a society, given that they symbolize something normatively and morally important to a community (Haidt et al., 2012). From this perspective, gender roles may represent a certain set of moral norms and beliefs. Thus, it is not gender norms per se that are sacred, but rather what they represent and symbolize. In accordance with the MFT, gender roles are sacralized based on what people recognize as vital to their moral foundations. To further understand what type of moral foundation gender roles can be understood through, the next
section will outline the non-negotiable elements of gender roles through men’s authority and women’s subordination. In this thesis, men’s authority and women’s subordination draws on the moral foundation of authority, as opposed to subversion, which I argue can become a sacred value in certain societies.

3.2.2 The moral foundation of men’s authority and women’s subordination

To date, most MFT researchers claim that there are five moral foundations (Haidt & Graham, 2009):

1. Care: cherishing and protecting others; opposite of harm
2. Sanctity or purity: abhorrence for disgusting things, foods, actions; opposite of degradation
3. Fairness or proportionality: rendering justice according to shared rules; opposite of cheating
4. Loyalty or ingroup: standing with your group, family, nation; opposite of betrayal
5. Authority: submitting to tradition and legitimate authority; opposite of subversion

This study will apply the last moral foundation, namely authority, and here men’s authority. Authority and subordination are intrinsically interlinked with each other, where men’s authority is dependent on women’s subordination and vice versa. Some researchers argue that this moral foundation is shaped by our long history of hierarchical social interactions. It underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including respect for authority and traditions. People who do not respect authorities or traditions are often disliked or punished for disobedience (Haidt, 2013). The authority/subordination foundation speaks to the demand for social hierarchies as a means to maintaining order. In the family microcosm, this moral foundation can be manifested in respect for one’s parents and, in some cultural contexts, as central to this thesis, the respect for gender roles (Lakoff, 2014).

The idea of authority as something that belongs to men and not to women is prevalent in many patriarchal societies. Patriarchal structures in a society give men authority over women. Men are perceived to hold superior characteristics and abilities that are exclusively possessed by men, including power, wisdom, knowledge, and the ability to make a living (Sultana, 2010). Feminist scholars use the concept of patriarchy in discussions on women’s subordinate role –
stressing male domination as key to understanding women’s subordination (Sultana, 2010). Based on this reasoning, gender norms can be understood as sacred values in patriarchal societies, resting on a moral foundation where men’s authority and women’s subordination are fundamental to a community’s moral structure. While gender norms are shaped by religion, culture and norms – and therefore manifest differently depending on context – men’s authority and women’s subordination as a moral and social structure is still central in all patriarchal societies. Moreover, patriarchal norms are found to be particularly evident in religious contexts. Religious contexts can further provide a space where gender norms are culturally articulated and reinforced. Religion is hardly the only such space, but it appears to have been a particularly effective way of sanctifying gender hierarchy (Feminist Philosophy of Religion, 2018; Haj-Yahia, 2005). For example, studies have found that religious people tend to respond in a particularly hostile manner to people who threatens their worldview² (Rothschild et al., 2009). That is because religion acts as a glue in religious societies, binding people together with common beliefs, practices and norms. It is therefore argued that men’s authority and women’s subordination are particularly evident in religious contexts. Within no other domain are gender norms as cemented and important as in religious contexts (Woodhead, 2007). Sacred values theorists further suggest that certain aspects can mitigate the importance of sustaining sacred values in some spheres, such as when it comes to economy (Tetlock, 2012). Even if people are largely sincere in their pronouncements on that certain values are sacred, people regularly run into decision problems in which the costs of upholding sacred values become too expensive (ibid). Tetlock (2012) exemplifies this by arguing that if parents dedicated all their money to their children's safety, they would impoverish themselves. Similarly, if a major society would guarantee free health-care for all citizens, the society risks dedicating its entire GDP to this mission (Tetlock, 2003; 2012). Accordingly, challenging sacred gender norms may have different implications depending on context. This is an important aspect to this study, which will be more thoroughly discussed in the end of this chapter when presenting the expected case variation.

Hitherto, previous sections, including this one, has progressively described how gender norms - coded as men’s authority and women’s subordination - can be regarded a sacred value in some

² It is worth taking into account that certain groups and individuals might be more prone to protect sacred values than others. However, it is not within the scope of this study to investigate how strongly people adhere to their sacred values on an individual level. Instead, the sacredness of gender roles is understood based on existing research and at a societal level.
societies. As this thesis anticipates that women’s participation in PVE-programs challenges sacred gender norms, the next section will continue by discussing the consequences of challenging sacred values. As such, the third step in the theoretical argument is presented below, i.e. challenging sacred values and hostile reactions, which later culminates into the final step in the theoretical argument, namely how women’s perception of safety is impacted by 1) their participation in PVE-program, and 2) challenging sacred gender norms.

3.3 Challenging Sacred Values and Hostile reactions

For starters, challenging sacred values always involves risk. That is because challenging normatively important values is considered a taboo. The affect is that people may become angry at the very thought of values violation (Tetlock, 2003: 121). As such, aggression is a consequence of the moral violation that comes with challenging sacred values. When people discover that members of their community have compromised sacred values, they experience strong feelings of intolerance towards those members. This intolerance is expressed through a series of cognitive, affective and behavioral components, such as harsh trait attributions to norm violators, including aggression, hatred and disrespect. Norms violators need to be punished for the ‘greater good’, which by holders of sacred values means protecting the value from further violation (Tetlock, 2003). These types of reprimands against people who challenges sacred values may have multiple sources, including in this case where men’s authority over women’s subordination is examined as the sacred value. That is because the moral belief system of men’s authority and women’s subordination is anchored in the society at large. It is therefore difficult to identify exactly from where and by whom to expect threats against women who violate sacred gender norms, i.e. which people that will perceive their values as jeopardized and as such, react in a hostile way. Some assumptions can however be made based on the sacred values literature. First, you need to be part of the same community as the norm violator. Otherwise you will not experience the norm violation, nor the be aware of who the violator is. Second, you will have to recognize the value as sacred to yourself and your community. Even if the sacred value is gender-based, i.e. that men’s authority is challenged by women who take on authority roles, it does not mean that only one gender will oppose the norm violator. In patriarchal societies, gender hierarchies are a generally accepted and encouraged system by both women and men. Hence, both genders in the community at large, i.e. in the geographic location where PVE-participating women operate, may show hostile attitudes towards those women who challenge sacred gender norms.
As the theoretical underpinning of this study is that women who challenge the sacred gender norms commits a taboo - and thereby are exposed to threats to their own safety and well-being - the next chapter moves on to a discussion on human security. To situate this study on women’s safety within the field of security studies, the following chapter starts by introducing how and in what ways security studies have evolved to pay attention to individual security. That is to account for women’s security in particular, which has been largely neglected in much work on security. The subsequent chapter will accordingly speak to the dependent variable of this thesis, i.e. women’s perception of safety, to understand how and why women’s safety might be negatively impacted by participating in PVE-programs.

3.4 Human Security

As implied in the previous paragraph, security is gendered, and women’s security has received insufficient attention in both policy and academia. To better understand the specific security needs of women, this chapter will start by first introducing how security studies have move from being state-centric, to paying more attention to the individual. Because in the last decade, concepts of security have shifted to include individual perceptions to a greater extent. Unlike the traditional realist security focus on national self-interest, military and economic power, and the survival of the state, human security focuses on security as on the impact of insecurities on people, not just their consequences for the state (Buzan et al, 1998; Paris, 2011). Hence, human security moves the focus from state security, to threats that affect people, such as, threats emerging from famine, epidemics, economic decline, environmental degradation, migration, and other crises that affect the individual safety (King & Murray, 2009). This security shift does not mean that human security discards the importance of state-security. Instead, human security theorists argue that state-centric realism is insufficient to explain and meet the security challenges posed in a post-Cold War era, emphasizing the need to meet insecurities both between and within states (Tripp, 2013; Paris, 2011).

The concept of human security places people, and their complex relationships and realities, at the heart of peace, and focuses on the needs of people. It further enlarges the scope of security to include all issues that influence individuals. In that sense, human security offers a multidimensional framework to understand security issues, including matters of rights, security, development and humanitarian concerns (King & Murray, 2009; Tripp, 2013). These matters are dynamic and sensitive to the changing nature and realities of insecurity. A UNDP report from 1994 explains this seemingly vague concept by stating “like other fundamental concepts
human securit[y] is more easily identified through its absence than its presence. Most people
instinctively understand what security means, which offers a more explicit definition, by stating
that human security means first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and
repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns
of daily life - whether in homes, in jobs or in communities” (UNDP 1994: 23).

While the human security approach has evolved to be more focused on individual concerns, it
is still being criticized for lacking a feminist analysis, which is, as Heidi Hudson (2005) states
“crucial to overcome certain gender silences in security issues” (Hudson, 2005: 156). In the
human security framework, it is central to examine the needs of people, but not as a
homogenous group, but rather as individuals who have different realities and overlapping
identities. By adding a feminist approach to human security studies, the prospects increase to
attend to the needs of marginalized groups – including those marginalized through gender
(Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

3.4.1 Feminist perspectives of human security

This paper seeks to understand and analyze women’s perception of safety when participating
in a PVE-program. Thus, it is necessary to recognize the gendered differences when it comes
to human security. Human security studies have generally invoked, but not engaged, feminist
scholars (Buzan et al, 1998; Hansen, 2000). Notions of security are sometimes presumed to be
gender neutral. However, assumptions of gender neutrality often mask bias (Caprioli, 2004).
Feminist security theorists challenge the gender blindness of human security by expanding the
concept and addressing the inadequacy of the state-centered understanding of security. Feminist
thinkers like Ann Tickner (1992) argue that real-world events are not adequately addressed by
the genderblind accounts in global and national politics, and that gender is not just a subsection
to security analysis, but conceptually, empirically and normatively essential to understand
human security (Tickner, 1992; Sjoberg, 2010: 2). Guaranteeing people’s security is not
necessarily a guarantee to women’s security.

To exemplify the gendered dimensions of human security, it is worth noting that there are
particularly gendered dimensions when it comes to violence. Often, violence impacts women
disproportionately compared to men. The terms "gender-based violence" (GBV) and "violence
against women" (VAW) are often used interchangeably, since most gender-based violence is
perpetrated by men against women. VAW and GBV take many forms, including sexual, physical and psychological abuse. It happens in the private sphere as much as in the public life, in times of peace as well as in conflict (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). However, several empirical studies suggest that VAW tends to increase during and after armed conflict (e.g. Shalhoub-Kevorkian et al., 2009; Swiss et al., 1999; Wood, 2009). Armed conflicts in Rwanda, Kongo Kinshasa, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sierra Leone are just a few examples of where women have been systematically targeted as victims of sexual, physical and psychological abuse, both during and after the conflicts (Marshall 1992; Wood, 2009).

Not only are women the first and main victims of various kind of violence. Empirical studies have also demonstrated that men and women experience security differently. They have different security concerns and needs, as a result of socially generated gender roles and norms (Tickner, 1992:190; Wood, 2009). Women’s and men’s well-being are often differently impacted by the same type of event and some security issues are more prevalent in women’s everyday lives compared to men. Poverty, for instance, poses security risks for all human beings. However, women often carry the burden of not being able to provide for herself or her family. In a poverty-stricken environment, regardless of whether that is at home or in the society, violence against women often follows as a consequence. The reasons are be multiple and context dependent. Often, however, poor economic opportunities cause frustration and lack of hope, which may lead to men perpetrating of VAW. This pattern is also true in reverse, meaning that impoverished women often cite violence as a factor in their poverty. Even if poor men, just as poor women, need to search for credit and job opportunities, women have reported that they face special vulnerability. That is because they are exposed to humiliation and sexual abuse to a larger extent than men when they cannot find income generating opportunities (Heise, 1998; Narayan et al, 2000). Studies in India and Pakistan, for example, have confirmed this pattern (Babu & Kar, 2009). The economic elements are just one of many examples of how security means different things to women and men. To understand the gendered dimensions of security is however important to this study. That is because women’s perception of safety cannot be fully understood without building upon a theoretical background on gender, women and security.

The above-mentioned studies exemplify how feminist security studies have contributed to unpacking the gendered variances within the realm of individual security. A feminist understanding of security further posit how economic, political, social and/or personal
circumstances matters in understanding gendered differences to security (Sheehan, 2005: 127-128). In the next chapter, I will build upon how feminist security studies expands the concept of security across the spheres of public and private. Women’s security is not guaranteed either during peace nor at times of conflict, and their insecurity can come from within the family, community or the state. This insecurity is largely invisible in the private sphere and gendered in the public sphere (Wood, 2009). In dealing with the gendered structures of security, the next chapter continues by discussing women’s perceptions of safety in both public and private realms, and why their subjective understandings to their safety is an important approach.

3.4.2 Women’s perception of safety

According to Crawford and Hutchinson (2016), there has been a remarkable lack of appreciation to the gendered nature of safety, e.i. how women experience safety concerns in their everyday lives. Crawford and Hutchinson (2016) have further cited feminist work on safety in making their case for more nuanced considerations of women’s safety experiences and the lived realities of their everyday lives (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). By emphasizing the ‘everyday’, the primary attention to state-centered security is removed and directed to ways in which women live and experience their day-to-day lives. Feminist security studies further suggest that in some societies, women’s understanding of safety tend to start at the level of family and community needs. It includes issues relevant to the private sphere, for example peace within the household, education for children, and the attainment of individual rights and freedoms. One reason for this distinction may be the gendered division of roles, where women spend a greater proportion of time within the private sphere (Broadbent, 1993; Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016; Women’s Rights organization, 2012).

However, recent security studies have demonstrated that women’s safety not only should be considered in the private sphere. In fact, the public and private realms are inextricably linked in women’s lives (Broadbent, 1993; Sullivan, 1995). What happens in the private sphere affects and reflects what happens in public, and vice versa. To apply a public–private dichotomy merely reflects and reinforces power relations and, as such, is a function to everyday insecurity as well as an invisibility to women’s overall safety situations (Sullivan, 1995). Women face threats to their safety as much in the public sphere as in the private. That is because women’s everyday safety connects with all the places where they move around, and with all people in their everyday proximity. Conversely, men’s insecurity is generally more threatened in the
public sphere, especially as they usually are given dominating positions over their wives in the private sphere, which reduces security risks at home (Broadbent, 1993). Therefore, women’s everyday safety connects with the experienced insecurities at home (where the family setting could be a potential platform for violence and fear) as much as in the community (where community members could constitute a platform for violence and fear).

Moreover, in fully understanding women’s perceptions of safety, it cannot only be seen in light of measurable or observable indicators. The perception of safety – how safe you feel in your everyday life – is not always observable, but rather a subjective experience. The objective safety can be described as quantified risks or perpetuations of violence, while the subjective safety is more about the feeling or perception of safety, i.e. how people subjectively experience their freedom from or fear of various forms of violence (Sørensen & Marjan, 2009). In this thesis, women’s perception of safety is examined. Women’s perception of safety is best appreciated by understanding how they view their own safety situations, regardless of what objectively happens to and around them. The main argument behind this approach is that the number of attacks and threats does not necessarily match their experiences. They might feel threatened while they are not and vice versa. In that regard, women are the only ones who get to define their safety situation, which hence is their subjective perception, rather than understanding it as something objectively observable.

This thesis approaches women’s perception of safety by focusing on two main dimensions of safety; (the lack of) physical and psychological violence. Categories of violence are many, and often overlapping. Psychological violence is sometimes separated from emotional violence, and physical violence from sexual violence. In this study, however, psychological violence borrows concepts from emotional violence, such as isolation from a group and stigmatization. The same goes with physical violence, which here includes sexual violence, such as rape and sexual abuse. These dimensions are believed to capture important nuances of women’s perceptions of safely by including both bodily and emotional harm.

Physical violence is in this thesis understood as harm to the body, e.g. through domestic violence and physical harm caused by someone else. It also includes sexual violence, such as rape and sexual abuse (Cohen and Nordas, 2014). Psychological violence concerns emotional harm and speaks to an environment free from harm and threats (Taormina & Sun, 2015). Individuals who a free from psychologically violence usually perceive that the world is
emotionally safe. For example, this dimension involves the lack of verbal threats, harassment and humiliation as well as stigmatization, exclusion (ibid).

**Presenting expected case variations**

This thesis takes two approaches when examining women’s perception of safety in the PVE-program. First, it compares between PVE-participants and non-PVE-participants, simply to see whether the PVE-participation at all impacts women’s perception of safety. Second, it compares between two different types of roles taken by women in the PVE-program, namely female economic leaders and female religious leaders. For the latter comparison, I anticipate that women’s perception of safety will differ depending on what role they take on. More specifically, I believe that female religious leaders in the PVE-program will perceive their safety more negatively than female economic leaders who are in the same program. That assumption is based on theoretical arguments presented in chapter 3.2.2., suggesting that female religious leaders will challenge sacred gender norms more than female economic leaders. The more women challenge sacred gender norms, the more negatively will they perceive their safety. The reason why female religious leaders challenge sacred gender norms to a greater extent than female economic leaders, is that their participation takes place in religious spheres. In religious spheres, gender norms - coded as men’s authority and women’s subordination – are more sacred than in other spheres, such as in economic ones where the participation of female economic leaders takes place. That is because religion can be regarded as one of the main channels to express a religious community’s moral belief system. In religious environments, men’s authority is understood as in their spiritual leadership and religious leadership continues to be reflective of male hegemony (Riesebrodt & Chong, 1999).

Female religious leaders who challenge gender norms in the religious sphere are challenging the normative core of their society. As they are entering the religious sphere in a country where authority is based – at least partly – on religion, it is considered a great taboo to challenge the religious authority. In other words, female religious leaders are challenging the very core of authority in religious contexts. There may also be a wider symbolic value to challenging men’s authority in religious spheres. If women are able to challenge men’s authority at its very core, it symbolizes how they potentially could be challenging the whole system of which the society is built upon. That is why it will be seen as a particularly big threat to the moral order, and hence sacred gender norms, when female religious leaders take up leadership positions in religious spheres. As a result, female religious leaders are expected to be exposed to more
hostile reactions from the community than female economic leaders. Because female religious leaders are more likely to face hostile reactions to their PVE-participation compared to female economic leaders, I hypothesize that they will perceive their perception of safety more negatively than female economic leaders.

**Summarizing the argument and presenting the hypotheses**

The causal argument posits that participation in PVE-programs negatively impacts women’s perception of safety. As such, women who participate in these programs will feel less safe than women who do not participate. This is because women’s participation in PVE-programs will challenge sacred gender norms – more specifically men’s authority and women’s subordination. As an effect, this thesis hypothesizes that women’s participation in PVE-programs will negatively impact their perception of safety. This is investigated by addressing hypothesis I; *Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive their safety more negatively compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program.*

Furthermore, the type of participation in PVE-program is expected to influence women’s perception of safety. More specifically, I assume that women who participate in PVE-programs as female religious leaders will perceive their safety in a more negative manner compared to women participating in PVE-programs as female economic leaders. This is because female religious leaders challenge men’s authority more than female economic leaders because they take up leadership roles in religious spheres. The gender norms coding for men’s authority and women’s subordination are more sacred in religious spheres than in economic spheres. By challenging sacred gender norms in settings where they are particularly sacred, female religious leaders will have a more negative perception of their safety compared to female economic leaders. This is investigated by addressing hypothesis II; *Women who participate in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles.*

In sum, this thesis will investigate the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis I**

*Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive their safety more negatively compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program.*

**Hypothesis II**
Women who participate in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles.

Where Hypothesis I serves to investigate whether there is, in fact, a relationship between the independent and the dependent variable, the main contribution and focus of this thesis lies in assessing Hypothesis II. As such, it will also receive the most attention.

The causal argument can be visualized as follows:

![Causal Argument Diagram](image)

*Figure 1 Causal argument*

### 3.5 Alternative explanations

In examining how women’s participation in a PVE-program impacts their perception of safety, this study will apply the theoretical framework presented above. However, there might be other factors influencing the expected relationship, outside of what I have outlined theoretically. This section will discuss some of those.

While this study hypothesizes that women’s perception of safety is impacted by their role in the PVE-program, their background and location could potentially bear more explanatory power to their safety situations. Even if men’s authority and women’s subordination is theorized to be prevalent in patriarchal societies, gender norms are a fluctuating phenomenon. Therefore, expressions of gender norms may differ depending on e.g. religious and cultural traditions. Women who take on PVE-related leadership roles in communities where gender norms are particularly significant may therefore experience more negative perceptions of their safety, compared women who operate in more progressive communities. In that sense, variations in perception of safety may not necessarily be due to given roles in PVE-programs, but instead related to geographic differences. Adding to that, the threshold of participating in PVE-programs may be easier to pass for women who have been involved in civil society activities before. Community members might not view women’s participation in PVE-programs as
challenging their sacred gender norms if women already have been active before. As such, the challenge of sacred gender norms might already have been made at an earlier point in time, before they entered the examined program.

Additionally, age, class, religion and status need to be taken into account, as such factors might affect how women perceive their safety. Therefore, interviewees will be asked about such background details to enable a more holistic assessment on how women’s perception of safety is impacted by their PVE-participation.

Lastly, the size of the program and the type of actor implementing it might relate to how women perceive their safety as a result of their participation. For example, whether the program implementer is international or local impacts how well cultural dynamics are taken into consideration, which in turn might influence how well women’s safety can be guaranteed. Also, the size of the program, i.e. the overall number of women involved could matter. It can be assumed that the more women participating, the less is the threat to their safety. That is because women’s participation might have become normalized and is as such not seen as a challenge to sacred gender norms.
4. Research design

The roadmap of this chapter is as follows. In this research design chapter, I will start by introducing the chosen method for conducting this study. Second, I discuss my case selection strategies, followed by a section on how the selection of cases and location may impact the generalizability of my results. Then, I move on to the ethical considerations taken in this research process and finishes with an operationalization of my variables.

This study was financed by a Minor Field Study scholarship provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The material that provides the foundation of this study was gathered through 24 in-depth semi-structured interviews, carried out during field research at Java Island in Indonesia for eight weeks in the spring of 2019. Accordingly, this study applies qualitative methods to examine how women’s perception of safety is impacted by their PVE-participation. To collect relevant data on this topic, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women in PVE-programs, and with women who are not part of the PVE-program. As a data collection strategy, semi-structured interviews are appropriate as I seek to find information on women’s perceptions of safety. Perceptions are easiest understood by in-depth interviews, especially as I intend to capture women’s subjective experiences of their own safety, as opposed to examining objective facts and figures. For the semi-structured interviews, I created a list of questions where fairly specific topics were covered. As such, this method allowed respondents to develop their own reasoning while answering within the framework of my study (Brounéus 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann 2007:50–51). At times, follow-up questions were asked to grasp the complex reality of women’s perception of safety. By asking about the same topic multiple times, and in different ways, it gives a better idea of the concept that I seek to gather data on and simultaneously, the validity increases (Fowler and Floyd 2013, 97). To reach high validity on the analysis, i.e. the absence of systematical error of measurement, the interview questions follows the theoretical framework of this thesis which in turn is connected with the research question (Esaiasson et.al. 2012: 227-228; Teorell & Svensson 2012: 55).

An interview guide was developed based on a review on the theoretical framework, which was conducted before arriving in the field3. I recorded the interviews which I later transcribed into

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3 Interview guide can be found as an appendix
text. Unclear or vague responses were, if necessary, re-analyzed for confirmation. Despite efforts to accurately capture and present relevant information expressed by the interviewees, it is worth to remember that misunderstandings and mistakes might have occurred due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Such shortcomings are solely the responsibility of the author.

4.1 Case selection

In this section, I briefly describe my cases and present how they have been selected. In this thesis, the population of interest is women preventing conflict and the examined cases are women who prevent violent extremism, which is regarded as one type of conflict prevention. The bigger phenomenon which this study speaks to is accordingly women preventing conflict, and the unit of analysis is on a group level, where the examined cases are two groups of women who take on different roles in a PVE-program; female religious leaders and female economic leaders. Additionally, a third group of women is examined, consisting of women who are not active in the PVE-program.

Because this research applies a case study design, the selection of cases is crucial to avoid biases or incomparability. In studies where only a limited number of cases are available, random sampling is generally inappropriate. A deliberate selection of cases has therefore been made based on the purpose and research question in this study (Gerring and Seawright 2008:87–90). To find women who prevent violent extremism in Indonesia, I decided to seek for assistance from a local NGO in Indonesia working with the implementation of a PVE-program. The organization is called Wahid Foundation, which to date has included two different ‘groups’ of women in their PVE-program; 1) female religious leaders and 2) female economic leaders. In this program, both groups take on leadership roles, yet through different approaches, which makes them comparable in this study. In sum, two different roles that women take on are examined within one PVE-program.

The female economic leaders lead women-only business groups and run small-scale businesses in their villages. Everything they sell and produce needs to include a peaceful message which the buyer receives with the product, such as a friendly not or peaceful pictures of e.g. hearts, doves and people holding hands. The female religious leaders run religious women-only groups where they share values of peace and tolerance through their religious beliefs.
These two groups are examined via Hypothesis II: *Women who participate in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles.* To examine whether the PVE-participation at all matters to women’s perception of safety, I also interviewed a group of women who have not participated in the PVE-program. The non-participants and the PVE-participants will be compared and examined through Hypothesis I: *Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive themselves as less safe compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program.*

Interviewed non-participants were from the same villages as the PVE-participants, often their friends or neighbors. Accordingly, non-participants were found through the sampling technique known as the snowball effect (see Noy, 2008). This process included using my personal connections at Wahid Foundation, who knew of women in the village whom I could reach out to.

While it would have been desirable to interview women who have been part of the program for equally long time, the selection process of interviewees did not allow for this. In general, however, respondents have been active in the PVE-program for about two years, since 2017, shortly after the program was implemented. Two women had however only been active since 2018, hence for a bit more than a year. Based on the theoretical framework on challenging sacred values, much time does not need to have passed for reactions to evolve towards women who challenge sacred values.

### 4.2 Location and generalizability

This field study was carried out in three different regions at the Java Island in Indonesia; West, Central and East Java. The choice of location was based several practical and logistical reasons. To my knowledge, in only a few countries have PVE-programs been implemented with women as leading actors. Because women just now are being recognized as important PVE agents, the case selection was rather limited. The examined PVE-program in Indonesia has however been ongoing for about three years, which enables me to examine an established PVE-program with the potential of selecting among many women to interview.
In Indonesia, most PVE-programs have been implemented at the Java Island. Despite some provincial differences, as a region, Java is labeled as a medium-risk zone when it comes to violent extremism. In medium-risk zones, there are reasons to work with PVE because violent extremism is actually a potential threat. In high-risk zones, such as in Aceh and Sulawesi in Indonesia, the threat of violent extremism is considered to be much higher compared to medium-risk zones. Yet, opportunities to implement preventive measures to violent extremism are not favorable in high-risk zones. It would just not be feasible to carry out safe and successful PVE-programs when the risks of violent extremism are considered to be high. Nevertheless, in finding resources to implement PVE-programs, the region needs to be considered as potential risk-area for violent extremism, otherwise it provides insufficient value to implement an “expensive” PVE-program. Low-risk areas are therefore rarely targeted when it comes to PVE-initiatives. By only examining PVE-programs in medium-risk zones, it limits the generalizability of the study. As such, this study is merely able to draw conclusion on women’s perception of safety when they participate in PVE-programs in what is labeled medium-risk zones. Labeling an area as a medium risk zone does however entail a fluctuating and vague term, which nevertheless seems to be a definition applied on areas where most PVE-programs are implemented around the world. Additionally, there are reasons to believe that women’s perception of safety could be impacted by the level, or risk, of violent extremism in the context where they operate. In medium-risk zones, however, I assume that the level of violent extremism is not too high to permeate on women’s perception of safety. Most importantly, and in accordance with the theoretical framework in this thesis, I hypothesize that it is challenging sacred values that impacts women’s perception of safety, and not the threat of violent extremism (for reference to assessment of risk zones, see Logan and Lloyd, 2019).

Another important consideration for the generalizability of this study relates to how and by whom the program is carried out. In this study, the Wahid Foundation is the PVE-program developer, yet, the program has received funding and support from international donors, such as UN Women in Indonesia (UN Women, 2018). How the program is shaped and implemented may be influenced by the funding actors, which many times are international organizations or state actors. PVE-programs are rarely completely grassroots led. Rather, they depend on funding, resources and support from external stakeholders. The actor designed the PVE-program may have implications on how its participants perceive their safety situations, e.g. by how well the program is locally anchored and takes cultural dynamics into consideration. In this study, however, despite the fact that funding has been received from international
organizations, the Wahid Foundation is the main program designers and the program can therefore be understood as largely grassroots led. It can therefore be expected that women’s perception of safety should not be affected the lack of cultural insensitivity which may be a side effect of international program organizers.

4.3 Ethical considerations

This study touches upon several sensitive topics. Carrying out field research with and about women who prevent violent extremism in post-conflict societies aggravates ethical challenges of research. In order to overcome such difficulties and to adhere to the principle of “do no harm”, a number of ethical decisions were taken before, during and after carrying out research in the field. Before starting the interviews, an informed consent form was handed out which outlined the voluntary nature of the interview, guaranteed the right to anonymity and the right to withdraw any statement. Respondents’ names, specific locations and occupations are therefore withheld from publication due to the protection of their identity. To ensure the emotional well-being of respondents, all interviewees were offered an opportunity to choose the location to meet up. During the interviews, I also had translators or facilitators from the Wahid Foundation, whom the interviewees knew and trusted. By having someone present during and after the interviews, -who is knowledgeable on the topic and generates trust among the respondents – it mitigated risks of respondents feeling uncomfortable and unsafe.

Moreover, in interviewing human subjects, one issue that one might come across as an international researcher is the social desirability bias. Some questions can be sensitive, and the respondents may answer in line with what they think they should or should not say, instead of what they actually think (Fowler and Floyd 2013, 94). Questions on women’s safety have a risk of generating social desirability bias as they are sensitive in nature. Participants might portray their situation as better or worse depending on how they see me as a researcher and understand the purpose of my study. Having a translator whom they knew to help facilitating and the interviews and explain the purpose of my research was hence a way to overcome, or to at least limit such hurdles.

Lastly, considering the potentially sensitive nature of my topic, one-on-one interviews (aside from the translator) further enabled a safe and protected environment for interviewees to share their experiences without being at risk from others judgement. Particularly in comparison with
focused group discussions, where the exposure is higher. Based on the same reasoning, questionnaires may be even better in terms of reducing the exposure. However, interviews - compared to questionnaires - are more powerful in eliciting narrative data that allows me as a researcher to investigate women’s perceptions of their own security in a greater depth (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2007). The structure of the interviews was in-depth and ran for about 1-1.5 hour in length.

4.4 Operationalization

Below, I introduce the operational definitions of the theoretical concepts central to this study. I will start by explaining the operationalization of the dependent variable – perception of safety – and then move on to the independent variable – women’s participation in PVE-program.

4.4.1 Dependent variable – Women’s perception of safety

To structure the investigation of women’s perception of safety, the operationalization will be two-dimensional. Women’s perception of safety will in this thesis be defined as in how they subjectively experience (the lack of) physical and psychological violence. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, I argue that physical and psychological violence are sufficiently broad categories to capture relevant elements of women’s safety.

Physical violence is in this thesis understood as harm to the body, e.g. through domestic violence and physical aggression in other ways, e.g. through sexual violence, such as rape and sexual abuse (Cohen & Nordas, 2014). Psychological violence concerns emotional harm instead (Taormina & Sun, 2015). Individuals who are free from psychological violence usually perceive that the world is emotionally safe. This dimension includes, but is not limited to verbal threats, harassment and humiliation as well as stigmatization and exclusion (ibid).

The table below further clarifies what the two examined dimensions of women’s perception of safety entail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Safety</th>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical violence</strong></td>
<td>Violence in terms of bodily harm, such as:</td>
<td>Private – at home, family members, e.g. caused by husband, children and relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Domestic violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Physical aggression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sexual violence, including, rape and sexual abuse</td>
<td>Public - at the community level, caused by community members, whether at work or in other public spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological violence</strong></td>
<td>Violence in terms of emotional harm, such as:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Verbal threats</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stigma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Exclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Harassment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Operationalization of women’s perception of safety

The importance of these dimensions is placed on how she experiences her own safety situation related to physical and psychological violence. The two dimensions of women’s safety are accordingly approached based on her own subjective understanding. To further clarify, even if a woman may have been exposed to verbal threats, for instance, it is not the verbal threat per se that this study will draw conclusions on, but rather how she perceives her own safety in light of what she has been exposed to. Accordingly, these dimensions of women’s safety are applied when examining whether and how their participation in PVE-program impacts their perception of safety. Furthermore, these dimensions on women’s perception of safety will not be rated. Meaning that I do not beforehand find one or the other as being more vital to women’s perception of safety.

4.4.2 Independent variable – Women’s participation in PVE-program

The need to operationalize the independent variable differs distinctly to the necessity of a clear definition of the dependent variable. However, some elements are important to consider in
defining the participation. In this study, the independent variable (IV) takes two approaches. For Hypothesis I: *Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive their safety more negatively compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program*, the IV mainly refers to a binary understanding. You are either a participant or a non-participant in the PVE-program. For Hypothesis II: *Women who participate in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles*, the comparing is between two types of roles taken in the PVE-program. i.e. female religious leaders and female economic leaders. To make the female religious leaders’ and the female economic leaders’ participation comparable, only women who take on some kind of leadership role, e.g. as facilitators and group-leaders have been selected as interviewees. The main reason for choosing women in some kind of leadership position is based on the theoretical framework, as they can be understood as challenging men’s authority and women’s subordination more than women who do not take on leadership positions.
5. Contextual Background

This chapter introduces the contextual background in Indonesia, which takes three approaches. First, it provides a short background to gender norms and violent extremism in Indonesia. Second, the role and purpose of examined PVE-programs in Indonesia are discussed, including descriptions of the two groups of PVE-engaged women that have been interviewed in this study.

5.1 Gender norms in Indonesia

The traditional society in Indonesia is to a large extent based on patriarchal values that put men’s position higher than women’s (Pedersen, 2012). Previous research on gender roles in Indonesia suggest that gender stereotyping and traditional views of women’s roles continue to be prevalent in almost every region in Indonesia (see for ex. Asia Foundation, 2012; Pedersen, 2012; Mulyani, 2009). In a study made by Mulyani (2009) in Indonesia, he suggests that Indonesian people have been socialized to think that men are the income-gatherers and that politics and general leadership are for men and not women (Blackburn, 1999, Mulyani, 2009). Such societal norms on gender have been sustained through its long traditions, particularly in combination with the idealization of women as housemothers and “good wives” (Mulyani, 2009). According to researchers (see Blackburn, 1999; Robinson, 2008; Rinaldo, 2008), the traditional gender role of women as merely wives and a mother in Indonesia are further strengthened through its religious ideals, particularly in regard to Islamic values. This is essentially evident as Indonesia has become a considerably more widespread Islamic nation throughout the last four decades. The increased influence of Islam may have significant impacts on women’s role in Indonesia, which centralizes women’s position at home and men’s position in the decision-making positions (Blackburn, 1999; Utrecht, 1978).

5.2 Preventing violent extremism in Indonesia

Indonesia is home to the largest Muslim population in the world and has struggled with extremist activity since its independence from the Netherlands in late 1940’s. The peak in violent extremism attacks did however being in 1980’s, since then, Indonesian extremist groups have launched multiple terrorist attacks in the country. In recent years, ISIS has capitalized on Indonesia’s existing Islamist networks as a means to boost their recruitment span and to carry out attacks in multiple places around the world. As a result of ISIS recruitment in Indonesia,
Indonesia leads Asian countries in the number of foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria (USAID, 2016).

Many attempts have been made by the Indonesia government to fight the spread of violent extremism. They have passed a series of domestic counterterrorism laws and established regional alliances to address violent extremism (USAID, 2016). Despite several counter-terrorism efforts, such efforts have not yet impeded the spread of violent extremism in the country. This worrying trend has therefore motivated policy- and decision-makers to try new methods in hindering violent extremism. Preventive approaches to reduce the likelihood of violent extremism have been implemented around the country, often on grassroots level, and mainly in the form of community-based engagements (ibid.). Such approaches have for example been through capacity-building and de-radicalizations programs, which has been considered as a strategic method to empower communities, especially women and teenagers. Similar community-led programs have aimed to apply approaches to improve the sense of togetherness and respect for religious differences in Indonesia. These initiatives have mainly been state-led and it is first now, since 2016, that local and international organizations have started to fund, or support programs targeted at countering or preventing violent extremism. Today, projects aimed at countering and preventing violent extremism are usually initiated by international organizations and led by local trustees who empower grassroots actors to carry out the day-to-day operations (USAID, 2016; Woodward et al., 2010).

Today in Indonesia, women and women-led civil society organizations are actively combating violent extremism and terrorism by building social cohesion, tolerance, and community resilience (UN Women, 2018). Women-led PVE-programs have just started to gain momentum as they are increasingly involving women in its activities. However, not all PVE-programs are designed based on the same assumptions of women’s capacities to PVE. Some projects have focused on women’s competences in preaching peaceful message of Islam, others on strengthening their roles in the community by empowering them economically and enhancing their leadership skills (ibid.). There are also programs that have sought to benefit from women’s socialized roles as mothers, sister and wives. The international organization SAVE has for instance implemented programs in Indonesia called “Mother’s Without Boarders”, which seeks to provide mothers with skills and tools to detect early warning signs to radicalization (SAVE, 2017).
One organization that has been working with PVE in Indonesia is the non-profit organization Wahid Foundation. This organization was established to advance the development of tolerant, multicultural, society in Indonesia, improving the welfare of the poor, building democracy and fundamental justice, and expanding the values of peace and non-violence (Wahid Foundation, 2018). Wahid Foundation has since 2016 implemented a women-targeted and Java-wide program aimed at preventing violent extremism. In this program, two groups of women are involved: 1) female economic leaders and 2) female religious leaders. The objective of including female economic leaders is threefold. First, to enhance women’s economic stability and by so reduce the economic incentives to join radical groups. Second, to anchor peaceful ideas in the village through the products women sell, which contains peaceful messages such as friendly notes or peaceful pictures of e.g. hearts, doves, people holding hands. And third, to strengthen women’s position in the community in general, which in turn is believed to make the society at large more gender equal and hence less likely to abide by the traditional gender roles that radical groups tend use in their recruitment propaganda. Female religious leaders are also intended to spread peaceful messages, yet through religious narratives. These women are leaders and facilitators of female religious groups, where they invite women to talk about peaceful Islam (and Catholicism in one case) and ways in which women can assist in spreading peaceful values associated with their religious beliefs. In preventing violent extremism, the purpose is to strengthen religious women’s outreach in the community to speak about the positive sides of Islam. As such, PVE initiatives seek to reduce the spread of radical views through “false” religious narratives, which otherwise may incentivize people to join radical groups.
6. Empirics

This section will present the empirical findings from the field study. The empirical chapter will, with one exception, be presented by following the causal argument of this thesis. Hence, it begins with women’s participation in the PVE-program, followed by if and how degree they challenge sacred values, how this triggers hostile reactions, and in turn impacts women’s perceptions of security. The third step in the causal chain – hostile reactions to challenging sacred values – will be presented in the section on challenging sacred because these accounts are too intermingled to be presented separately. Answers from female religious leaders, female economic leaders and non-participating women are kept separately in this chapter and will be jointly analyzed in the next one on the analysis.

6.1 Female economic leaders in PVE-program

6.1.1 Participation in PVE-program

All female economic leaders said that were asked to join the PVE-program by Wahid Foundation, the NGO who has implemented the PVE-program examined in this study. According to them, The Wahid Foundation entered several communities around Java where they conducted a mapping on where to find women to join the program. After the mapping, some villages in West, Central and East Java were selected to implement the program. Accordingly, it is within these villages that women were asked to become female economic leaders.

Before they became economic leaders in the PVE-program, they did not have any experiences of running or learning about businesses. These women were merely asked to join the program because they were considered to have strong social skills. It was believed that strong social skills would make it easier for them to build business groups with women in the community. All women who established business groups have taken on leadership positions in those, meaning that they organize and facilitate their own business groups where they invite women to share and consult business ideas. These groups consist of about ten women in each. On a weekly basis, the women meet to discuss their businesses as well as values of peace and tolerance. Generally, their business ideas are based on selling various kinds of products, often
hand-made, and frequently related to farming and harvest. The products are later sold to community members, where women are among the most frequent buyers. Included in the group meetings are also discussions on how to spread peaceful messages through the products they sell. While there is a broad spectrum in how to think about peaceful messages, it often involves friendly notes or peaceful pictures attached to their products, such as doves, hearts and people holding hands. The friendly notes could, for instance, be something in line with how people should respect each one another and that everyone has an equally strong value.

According to interviewed women, their participation is often viewed positively by the community members. One female economic leader in West Java emphasized how appreciated their work is in the village:

“People outside our group call us a group of peace agents. Because we are not only talking about savings and loans, but also about peace and tolerance.”

Female economic leader, West Java

While there are a variety of reasons to why these women decided to join the program from the very start, almost everyone said that a main intention was to support their husbands, and more specifically, their husbands’ businesses. For most women, this was their first time ever partaking in any civil society activity, let alone in the business sector. Nevertheless, to even be able to take on these new leadership roles in the community, several women spoke of how they had to make an agreement with their husbands. These agreements entailed how much time they were allowed to spend with the program activities. When they facilitate and lead business sessions, their husbands need to stay at home to take care of the children. Due to such arrangements, female economic leaders had to make an agreement with the husband, where he could have a say in how much time his wife was allowed to spend outside the household.

Nevertheless, multiple woman shared how happy they are about facilitating business groups with other women. Not least because they otherwise only would stay at home to take care of their families. A majority of female economic leaders echoed this sentiment and shared how happy they were to finally be able to leave their houses and meet with women from their villages. This was something they had not been able to do before. The social networking was therefore highlighted as a strong incentive to continue with the program-participation. One female economic leader from Central Java underlined how much closer she now is to people in her village, especially the mothers:
“After joining the program, the (female) neighbors say hi to each other in the morning. When we pass each other’s’ houses, we ask how we are and what we have planned for the day. We have become closer to each other in the village, especially the mothers.”

Female economic leader, Central Java

6.1.2 Challenging sacred values

“I can only make a decision if it is not very important, otherwise my husband decides”

Female economic leader, Central Java

As mentioned in the previous section and indicated by the quote above, female economic leaders stated that they only are allowed to start their own businesses if their husbands permit them. However, on a community level, informants said that it had been quite easy for them to be accepted as businesses leaders by community members. Stories shared by female economic leaders informed about how people in the community understand that everyone needs money, which hence justifies their participation. Some women even said that their participation mainly is viewed as a way of supporting their husbands and families, which has resulted in general approval among community members. The common understanding is that women need their husband’s permission and support to start their own business. As such, these women are not recognized to be challenging their husbands’ authority, but rather maintaining it through their income gathering activities. The challenge that comes from their participation is accordingly not related to the fact that they have become business women. Instead, however, several women mentioned the difficulty of coming up with non-offensive peaceful messages to attach to their products. While these women often were confident in the actual product, which they hoped would become popular on the market, they were more hesitant to how people would react to the peaceful values attached to it. One woman from East Java exemplified this anxiety by saying:

“What if they misunderstand my message, or even worse, if I write something bad and stupid? The buyer might tell other people about my message, who will then dislike both me and my product.”

Female economic leader, East Java

This concern was a repeated phenomenon around various villages at Java. Female economic leaders worried about that their families would feel ashamed of them for having created an offensive product. In this case, however, they mainly spoke about reactions from the community members. In East Java, some female economic leaders started their business groups
in the beginning of the PVE-program. At first, they did not want to sell their products in the community because of the presence of various religious groups. These informants were Shia Muslims and the village “belongs to” Sunni Muslims. They said that when Shia Muslims trade with Sunni Muslims, they go against their faith and religious norms. Female Shia Muslims also mentioned that they were worried about having business friends from Sunni groups, and to accidentally trade with a Sunni Muslim. That is not accepted here, they said, and might result in rejection from their own community. For that reason, it was difficult to expand the business in those communities with mixed religions, as they were anxious about challenging religious norms by cooperating with someone from another religious group.

Nevertheless, as long as the female economic leaders were not stepping on anyone toes, i.e. by trading with people from another religious group, people generally accepted their new business leadership roles. The reason behind this acceptance is not only related to the fact that their husbands have given them permission to participate. According to several female economic leaders, people in the community were not completely aware about that their roles and activities aimed at preventing violent extremism as well. Their participation in the PVE-program is mainly perceived as something non-PVE-related. According to several female economic leaders, family and community members simply understood their participation as business-oriented and as a means to gather income to the family through their small-scale businesses. This was exemplified by a female economic leader from West Java said:

‘Most people see us as business women, some as peace agents, but I know that what I do is preventing (violent) extremism as well’

Female economic leader, West Java

While the community generally approves the economic leaders’ business activities, and often the husbands as well, still, most husbands had hesitated to allow their participation in the beginning. With two exceptions, all female economic leaders interviewed in this study said that their husbands were skeptical to their participation before they started. One woman said that before she joined the program, her husband had never allowed her to get involved in any civil society activities. That is because her main responsibility is at home, according to him. Several women shared similar experiences with the men in their households. They claimed however, that after meeting with other women who also wished to become business leaders in the PVE-program, they realized that they were many women who shared similar situations of having to
negotiate with their husbands. This shared situation gave them a sense of solidarity and confidence to discuss their participation with their husbands, because they knew that they had a women’s network supporting them. Many female economic leaders echoed this sentiment, reflecting on how the women’s network continuously boosted their confidence to be part of the program.

Female economic leaders also noticed that by being able to demonstrate the economic benefits of their participation, husbands were generally more easily convinced to allow their PVE-participation. However, it is still crucial to maintain the husband’s authority in decision-making processes, many women said. Without his permission, they would not be able to participate at all. The husband is therefore always consulted and has the final word in important decision-making.

6.1.3 Perception of safety

To female economic leaders, their perception of safety was reflected in how safe and relaxed they were able to feel in their everyday lives. To them, safety is to live in a community where people are not put against each other, where there is no segregation nor hatred among and between people and religious groups. Their own safety can first be protected when they feel sufficiently safe to go anywhere without having to worry about who to encounter. The household was however repeatedly referred to as an especially important place for their safety. To enjoy a life without worries, a safe and comfortable situation at home, free from fear, violence and harsh discussions, was described as essential. In the household, many women said that violence often took place due to poor economic opportunities. When economy is bad, fights start, they explained. This type of violence could be physical and phycological, where physical aggression and verbal threats between themselves and the husband frequently was mentioned as a consequence of being poor. Yet, no one mentioned that they had been a victim of sexual violence, nor did they explicitly mention any situations of physical violence during their PVE-participation. The risk of physical violence was merely at the time before their participation began, when they had to seek for their husband’s permission in becoming an economic leader. After that, any risks to their physical well-being was mitigated thanks to their economic advancements. A female economic leader in East Java voiced this reality:

“We can develop our businesses with the permission from or husband and socialize with others if we get the permission from our husband, and only then we can feel secure”.

Female economic leader, East Java

While many women stated how their physical safety was at bigger risk before they joined the program, some also mentioned how they feared psychological violence during their participation. This was often related to the peaceful messages attached to their products, which they were afraid could offend people who misunderstood its meaning. To their knowledge, no one had been offended by their peaceful messages yet. However, they feared that negative reactions might come in the future, depending on what messages they decide to put on their products. Additionally, they also feared stigmatization and social exclusion as an effect of having sold products to religious groups different from their own. Because female economic leaders were aware of this trading taboo, they added that they had not been selling their products to religious groups excluded from their business market. As a result, they had not experienced any direct violence due to challenging sacred values during their participation, but rather feared exposure to psychological violence in the future, in case they (accidently) would cross a normative boundary, e.g. by trading with someone from another religious group, or by having their peaceful messages negatively misunderstood.

In spite of the fear of psychological violence in the future as mentioned above, most female economic leaders spoke about how their improved economic situation at home has made them less afraid in their everyday lives. Now, they are able to share their opinions about family decisions with their husbands, e.g. on education and livelihood matters, which many said drastically had improved their safety situation. A shared narrative among female economic leaders is that their economic resources were scarce before they joined the program. As a result of their economic leadership, however, they could finally discuss how to spend family money without being exposed to aggressive reactions. The discussions at home has become more positive and peaceful in nature, many women voiced. While women’s safety has improved thanks to the families’ economic advancement, it is however not the improved economy per se that have enhanced their safety situation. Instead, it relates to how the economic improvements have had ripple effects on the family situation in general, and the husband’s mood and reactions in particularly, which in turn makes the women feel safer.

“As women, we prepare the food for our families and children. If we don’t have money, we have to ask our husband. If our husband does not have money, well, we have no food. You see right, how this will lead to problems and conflicts at home”.

Female economic leader, West Java
Not only are female economic leaders better off in discussing financial matters at home without violent reactions. Thanks to their economic leadership in the PVE-program, they are also able to find other women from the program who are in similar situations as themselves. As such, they feel much more supported by other women who can relate and give advice on their everyday concerns. As a woman from Central Java expressed:

“The good relationship with other women is so important to me. I wouldn’t dare to do this much without the support from my friends. I wouldn’t be able to feel safe.”
Female economic leader, Central Java

Another women from East Java echoed this sentiment by saying:

“After I joined the program, I can invite women to talk about problems and look for solutions. This has made me feel a lot safer. I am not alone.”
Female economic leader, East Java
6.2 Female religious leaders in PVE-program

“I am a religious woman. It is my life duty to spread peaceful values of Islam”
Female religious leader, Central Java

6.2.1 Participation in PVE-program

Most female religious leaders said that they decided to become female religious leaders in the PVE-program because of their strong religious identity. They referred to the special duties as religious women to serve for peace and tolerance in their communities. Female religious leaders interviewed in this study have all been active in the program for approximately two years, starting their activities in 2017, after being asked to join by the Wahid Foundation. In their roles as a female religious leader, they have established community groups where religious women come together to pray and converse about religious approaches to make the community more peaceful. In some regions, these groups were interreligious, where people from different religions (such as Muslims and Catholics) sit together to discuss their religious approaches to values of peace and tolerance. This is however not possible in every village, where tensions between religious groups hinders them from closely interacting with each other (usually Sunni and Shia). Generally, the religious groups meet up to twice a week in different religious forums. Such forums could for instance be in Mosques (women’s section), but often in public places where they meet to talk. Through these meetings, female religious leaders also get an opportunity to discuss news and events in their community.

When they meet within these religious groups, most discussions evolve around how their faith can be applied to everyday problems and situations, and how religious beliefs can support peace, conflict prevention and social cohesion. Female religious leaders confirmed that they also discuss mundane issues to PVE, such as the role of social media in enhancing and reducing incentives to join extremist groups. On such topics, they critically assess what information is correct and incorrect, and how they can stop the spread of false rumors online and offline. In West Java, female religious leaders exemplified how false rumors sometimes are spread through hearsay and social media, rumors that blame certain religious groups for practicing their beliefs in the wrong way.

Many female religious leaders pronounced the important responsibility they have in spreading tolerant messages of their faith. These messages are primarily spread within their own female
religious groups. Accordingly, their religious leadership is mainly exercised and manifested in women-only networks. All informants confirmed that in religious settings, women and men are kept separated. Thus, their peaceful religious messages are usually not spread to men’s groups, at least not directly. Usually, the peaceful messages only reach men’s groups if the female group members have a good relationship with the husbands who they discuss their activities with. Otherwise, the gendered separation within religious settings hampers women’s opportunities to spread their peaceful values to men.

“Religion is divided among women and men. We do not sit with each other and we pray separately”
Female religious leader, West Java

Nevertheless, all respondents agreed on that women and men share the same responsibilities to PVE. Even if actions are taken separately. It is however easier for men to reach stakeholders and decision-makers, who actually can make a difference on a decision-making level. Men have greater roles in the public sphere, informants claimed, especially as men have more connections with important stakeholders. One female religious leader in West Java confirmed this by saying:

“The official decision-making is a men’s world. Men talk to men, who talk to men, and then a man makes a decision.”
Female religious leader, West Java

Even if the responsibilities to PVE are wished to be the same, female religious leaders said that women have more important roles when it comes to PVE. That is because they are more closely connected with the family and hence more aware about what is going on in their immediate proximity. Yet, they recognize that their voices are mainly heard in closed settings, among fellow religious women within their community. One female religious leader in East Java exemplified this paradox by stating:

“In religion, men are heard when women talk. One man’s voice is louder than ten women’s voices. But ten women’s voices say more than one man’s opinion.”
Female religious leader, East Java

Even if this invisibility of their opinions is a perceived reality, female religious leaders still consider their roles as important to making their communities more peaceful. Yet, talking about peaceful religion is not a new endeavor in their lives. Interviewed female religious leaders have
been teaching about Islam in religious circles before they joined this program. The difference is now that their circles have expanded to involve more women than before. Additionally, their speeches are more PVE-pronounced than they usually have been, e.g. by focusing on how to respect and live in peace with religious adversaries. Evidently, female religious leaders have expanded their audiences, which in turn has resulted in that they are required to adjust their words to whom they are speaking in front of. For example, many female religious leaders visit rural parts of their communities, where education are low and opportunities to advanced education non-existent. To convey their messages of peaceful Islam in a manner that is accessible to people in such areas, they must choose their words more carefully, in a way in which people easily understand. The purpose of reaching out to a wider audience was exemplified by one female religious leader in East Java:

“The key in my role as a female religious leader is to spread peaceful words to my people, particularly to my women’s group. It is also about strengthening the relationship between people and God and at the same time to strengthen the relationship from one individual to another. These relationships are sometimes difficult to establish, but it is what makes a village peaceful.”

Female religious leader, East Java

6.2.2 Challenging sacred values

Several female religious leaders shared that at first, they were hesitant to expand their religious community groups to involve more women. The reasons were several, and the most frequently mentioned one was that they first are required to ask for their husband’s permission. Particularly as expanded groups means more meetings, and more meetings means additional time outside the household.

At a community level, however, many female religious leaders said that most difficulties evolved around sharing peaceful messages of Islam in conflict-affected areas. They had to think outside of their traditional religious mindsets and act bravely to oppose radical religious groups. In the beginning of the PVE-program, they were doubtful about speaking about peaceful Islam to a wider audience. The more women being part of their groups, the bigger risk to have someone reacting in a hostile way to their values. A few female religious leaders also mentioned how their leadership roles in wider religious groups might be seen as opposing religious traditions. To them, that did not mean that women cannot be religious leaders in the community. In fact, women are expected to exemplify and speak about religious values. However, if their
groups, or more specifically their influence, were to take up too much space in the debate on religion, they were worried about if men’s religious groups would make negative remarks about it. Additionally, as the female religious leaders might have friends or acquaintances in the community with intolerant and radical attitudes, they worried about how they would react to them who clearly oppose such mindsets. Usually, there is at least someone in the community with a radical attitude on religion, they claimed. If there are many who dispute what the female religious leaders preach, they risk stigmatization and exclusion by taking a different religious stance. A female religious leader from East spoke in line with this narrative:

“To keep it peaceful, we have to appreciate one another. The challenge is that people have very different beliefs you know. There are people who...hm, have other ideas about what our religion says, and those are not always good. It’s not good for anyone, including me.”

Female religious leader, East Java

The statement above also reflects how the presence of radical mindsets affects female religious leaders negatively because their roles touches upon these sensitive topics on religious extremism and radicalization. Female religious leaders were often understood to actually be working against violent extremism, and the religious values they preach also intends to be applicable to everyday life situations, e.g. in how deal with conflicts and treat other people. Within their religious groups, female religious leaders share religious examples on how e.g. Islamic values encourages women to have decision-making power. Yet, as not everyone shares such tolerant views on Islam, they are sometimes worried about who they share these ideas with.

“Think about it, what if you would say something that people really dislike? Don’t you think it will spread? It does here at least, everyone talks, it’s a small community and everyone knows everyone”

Female religious leader, West Java

As mentioned in the previous section, female religious leaders voiced how women and men are separated in their duties and activities as religious leaders. Women and men do not teach in the same rooms, nor do they discuss Islam across gendered lines, unless it is at home within the family. Generally agreed among female religious leader is that it would be difficult to change such norms so that women and men could sit together in religious forums, especially as only a few women are involved in the major community forums. The prevailing norm is that women
first and foremost are supposed to be at home, taking care of their family and household, and as such avoid activities in the public sphere.

In a few cases, female religious leaders mentioned how men use Islam to claim their rights as superior to women. As such, these men claim their right to define what Islam is and stands for. Because of such tendencies, some women argued that they have been lucky with their husbands who have been willing to make an agreement with them. Such agreements usually entailed what she as primary a mother and wife, is allowed to do, and how often, when not taking care of the family.

Some women added that while women and men have the same responsibilities to prevent violent extremism, women’s responsibilities are generally considered to begin within the family. One woman in East Java illustrated this mindset by saying:

> “Women are first a teacher to her children, then to her sister and brother and then, to her community and village”
Female religious leader, East Java

### 6.2.3 Perception of safety

> “Our tongue has no bones, but it hurts in our heart”
Female religious leader, West Java

Various female religious leaders recounted that issues of safety and personal security are always relevant dilemmas in their roles as religious leaders. A majority said that if the village is safe, its members will also feel safe. Being able to do whatever they want in the community, without having to fear from other people’s reactions and behavior was repeatedly mentioned as important to female religious leader’s safety. Many wished to be able to speak about whatever they wish without fearing from people’s reactions. In general, female religious leaders associated safety with peace and tolerance in the community, where they are free from psychological harm and conflicts. A female religious leader from East Java expressed it as follows:

> “Safety is where people can speak to each other despite religious barriers.”
Female religious leader, East Java
Several female religious leaders mentioned that their safety could only be guaranteed when they can pursue their religious practices without feeling intimidated or threatened by others. Accordingly, many female religious leaders referred to the lack of psychological violence as a means to feeling safe. Now, however, after having been part of the PVE-program for some time, they have become acquainted with women from other religious backgrounds who they met over prayers and religious practices. These women respect each other’s beliefs, which has provided them with some feelings of safety. According to female religious leaders, religious beliefs and opinions will always differ. It is an inevitable consequence in mixed religious settings. However, the female religious leaders’ worry mainly stemmed from the fact that they could never really assess to what degree opinions will differ, nor how important other people’s opinions are to them. This insecurity posed a risk to them, they said, mainly because of never being fully convinced about how their peaceful messages of Islam would be received and understood by various members of the society. One woman from Central Java exemplified this by saying:

“Sometimes I worry about how other people will react to me speaking about Islam. However, I do not feel unsafe speaking about my perspectives on women, Islam and peace with the women in my own group anymore, because I know we have a safe zone here when we meet.”

Female religious leader, Central Java

In East Java, female religious leader mentioned how been lucky they have been with their husbands. That is because their husbands are liberal and encourages them to speak their mind about religious values and help members of the community to truly understand the peaceful values of Islam. The educational level is however quite low in many of their village, meaning that members of the community get trapped in what they refer to as mistaken and traditional ways of practicing Islam. One female religious leader in Central Java echoed the importance of marrying a liberal man to be able to enjoy a good and safe life. A few years ago, her husband spontaneously reacted aggressively towards her. He could become violent for no reason. Her husband is also the person in the village leading Islamic speeches, a role she now has taken on in her female religious groups. To avoid any violent reactions from him, she always seeks for his advice when it comes to religious practices. She does that as a means to make him feel as the main Islamic spokesperson in the village and as such to enhance her own safety situation.

Some female religious leaders have heard from their friends in the PVE-program that their husbands yell at them about what they can and cannot do. Their husbands tell them to stay at
home and take care of their families instead of being active as religious leaders in the society. Some husbands are like that, they said, and one female religious leader in West Java added the following:

“Me and my female friends would feel a lot safer if we would have more freedom to do what they want, without our husband’s restrictions.”

Female religious leader, West Java

Aside from fearing negative reactions from their husbands, several female religious leaders voiced their concerns on how the community would react to them speaking about peace and tolerance to a wider female audience. The concepts they were introducing to their villages were new and they were not sure how they would be received by others. A female religious leader in East Java voiced this concern:

“These new concepts of peace won’t be easily accepted by the people, but it’s my own risk to take”

Female religious leader, East Java

Respondents claimed that their opportunities to succeed as female religious leaders and guarantee their safety, depends on who they share values of peace and tolerance with. They all agreed on that these new concepts of peace will not be positively recognized by everyone. For example, there could be resistance and hostile reactions from the community in two ways. First from people who are intolerant and do not share the same ideas of Islam that female religious leaders promote. Second, male community leaders (both political and religious) are generally skeptical to the purpose of the PVE-program as they perceive their village as already being tolerant and peaceful. As such, some community leaders do not understand why the female religious leader’s efforts are needed. That is because they do not recognize their village and way of understanding Islam as intolerant and hostile. When a PVE-program like this is implemented, introducing female religious leaders in prominent positions within religion, several female religious leaders said that it sends a message that something is wrong with the community, that something needs to be fixed. As men usually have been the leaders of the communities, the male leaders feel questioned about not having been successful in making the society peaceful through their religious leadership. Especially as this responsibility is perceived by them as being redistributed to women now. As a result, several women voiced how this perception on their assigned roles as “community leaders” have made people upset. They are
understood to symbolize what local leaders in general, and religious men in particular, has failed with in the securing the society. Because of this attitude, female religious leader sometimes felt unsafe and feared hostile reactions to their participation, essentially for what they symbolize as female religious leaders in a PVE-program.

6.2.4 Non-PVE-participating women

“Women can take on important roles to PVE as mothers and wives”.
Non-participant, East Java

Most of the non-PVE-participating women had never been engaged in any civil society organization before. Only a few of them had thought about joining this particular PVE-program, but they had avoided participation due to difficulties in balancing such activities with household duties. They all said, regardless of geographic location, that they doubted being able to find time to engage in the PVE-program and that is why they had not joined yet. Moreover, they stated that their potential PVE-participation would not be solely up to them. When they were asked about their opportunities to make decisions by themselves without anyone else’s opinion, they all agreed on its impossibility. They always have to consult with someone in their family, usually their husbands who has the final word in decision affecting the family life.

Generally, the non-participants are aware of who the PVE-participants are in their village. That is because interviewed non-participants are their friends and neighbors, but also as one woman in Central Java shared:

“It is a small village and rumors spread quickly when something happens here, such as when these women started to engage in these community activities.”
Non-participant, Central Java

All informants shared a positive impression of women partaking in the PVE-program. First and foremost, they all agreed on that the program benefits the village, mainly because of how it empowers women to take actions outside of their households. In their everyday lives, they questioned finding sufficient time to be part of any civil society activity. A shared understanding among all non-participants is that their main obligation is to take care of the family and household. Therefore, they could not understand how the PVE-participating women found time to be active leaders in the society and take care of their households at the same time. Nevertheless, one non-participant still added how important it is to include women in the
prevention of violent extremism, because, according to her, women’s approach is softer than men’s. Women can take on roles as mature advisers who can keep their men and children from joining harmful groups, especially in their roles as mothers and wives, she continued. Some of the non-participants further alleged that it is not a risk-free role that these women take on. People’s opinions may oppose what these women are doing, which might put them at risk. Particularly female religious leaders, they added, as they are sometimes conflicting religious narratives in their communities. Not everyone is as open-minded as they should be, one informant from East Java claimed, and there is more than one religion in her region, or at least different branches within Islam. She continued by stating the following:

“They (the female economic leaders) are so brave, taking big risks for the peace of our community”
Non-participant, East Java

Female religious leaders were generally understood as carriers of peaceful messages of Islam, helping their communities to become more peaceful. On the other hand, female economic leaders were merely spoken about as businesswomen, helping their families to improve their economy and financial well-being. By being a business leader, which is how they referred to the female economic leaders, it also helps women to become more independent, so that she can make her living on her own instead of always having to be dependent on her husband’s money.

6.2.5 Perception of safety

In defining their perception of safety, non-participants often said that they associated their own safety with being able to make a living on their own. It is about having an economic stability and a good income so that they can help provide for their families. In general, they said that they carried the main responsible for their own safety. To feel safe, they also need to stay away from conflicts, disputes and harmful people, both at home and in the village. In addition, non-participants also referred to God as a means to ensure safety and well-being. They pray to God, asking for His protection to themselves and the people they care about. Another non-participant from East Java mentioned how lucky she is to be able to pray for her safety, because she belongs to a majority religion in her community. If you are part of a minority religion, it is not as safe to pray, she said, because not everyone will respect that person’s religious beliefs:

"I am a Muslim, which means that I can peacefully pray for my safety in this community. But not everyone is a Muslim, so they cannot do that, pray for their safety in peace".

Non-participant, East Java

Most non-participating women felt quite safe in their everyday lives. They said that they lived in peaceful neighborhoods and that conflicts rarely broke out. Usually, they were stay-at-home wives, where only a few actually are working with something outside of the home. Frequently, they could not come up with anything that would improve their safety situation because it was already good. They did however say that spreading the words of peaceful Islam would make the community even safer. Some people do not understand what Islam really is about, they voiced, which is a problem in terms of how restrictions are put on people who do not adhere to the norms set by leading figures within Islam in Indonesia.

Some non-participants also referred to the police force when giving examples of protection of their own safety situation. Non-participants referred to the police force as the main protectors and preventers of violence and crime. Thus, members of the community will feel more or less safe depending on how well the police protects its citizens. One of the non-participants who mentioned the police force said that she feels safe as long as she is not breaking any rules. If she does not break rules, she does not need to fear the police.
7. **Analysis**

This chapter contains the analysis on female religious leaders, female economic leaders and non-PVE-participants. The purpose of this section is to deepen the understanding of how women’s perception of safety is impacted by participating in a PVE-program. Similar to the empirical chapter, this chapter is structured in line with the theoretical argument of this thesis. As such, it will first compare between the two types of PVE-participation examined in this study (female religious and economic leaders). Then, it moves on to if and how these groups challenge sacred gender norms through their respective roles and participation, including a discussion on hostile reactions that might be a consequence of their participation. Thirdly, I will analyze the perception of safety among the three groups examined in this study. Repeatedly, inferences will be drawn to the theoretical arguments in this thesis to evaluate the explanatory power of existing theoretical framework and to refine presented arguments. Additional observations that may account for the variation in women’s perception of safety are also examined.

7.1 **Participation in PVE-program**

Regardless of taking the role as a female economic or religious leader, there are some common denominators in how these two groups of women participate in the PVE-program. First, they are both partaking in the same PVE-program, which has been implemented by Wahid Foundation at various locations at Java Island in Indonesia. This non-profit organization has also handpicked all women involved in the program. Second, both groups are operating in the same geographic locations; West, Central and East Java. Third, they all act as some kind of community leader, with facilitating roles in their respective thematic areas, either economically or religiously oriented. Fourth, the groups they facilitate and work within, whether thematically placed on business development or religious beliefs, only involve women.

To be able to actually participate in the PVE-program, both groups said that their participation depended on whether their husbands allowed them to join or not. Many female economic leaders agreed on that their participation has been accepted because their husbands recognized the economic gains. If there would not be any benefits for the husbands, they would not have given their permission. The husband’s acception is equally important for the female religious
leaders. However, more often, they phrased it as that they had been lucky with their husbands who encouraged their participation. A lot of women said that their husbands were extraordinarily liberal, which had enabled them to join the program from the very start. That is visible in that their husbands did not see any concrete benefits to their wives’ participation.

What separates these groups is that they had slightly different views on where they make most impact through their participation. Female religious leaders often spoke about their engagement as a contribution to the community at large. Conversely, female economic leaders emphasized how their influence mainly is on a family level. Despite these differences in where they find their contributions to be directed, women from both groups often shared the importance of the family unit. Both economic leaders and religious leaders repeatedly said that everything is built up by and on the family. They exemplified this in how their words and actions in the public sphere will have a direct impact on their private life, i.e. their families. Such bearings could have both positive and negative effects. Female religious leaders illustrated this by how their sharing of peaceful religious messages within their women’s groups is further spread to the groups member’s families. Depending on how and what the group members spread to their friends and families, that will infuse different reactions.

The private-public interconnection was pronounced in a slightly different manner with female economic leaders. They emphasized how their successes in selling their products and running their businesses in the community will have ripple effects on the family lives. If they were successful in their businesses, that would lead to positive effects on the household, who would gain from better economic opportunities. If businesses were less successful, that could first be because they had not found a sufficiently popular product, but also if they had conveyed a peaceful message that had not been approved by the community. In turn, that would have negative effects, often expressed through the husband who would feel ashamed of his wife’s failure in establishing a business that does not offend anyone. Evidently, the public-private interconnection is relevant for both groups. However, the negative effects from female religious leaders’ participation seems more closely connected to the community sphere, while negative effects are more visible in the private sphere for the economic leaders.

An interesting finding regarding the participation of female economic and religious leaders relates to how their participation is understood, both by themselves, as well as by their families and community members. While their participation is in fact PVE-related, meaning that both
groups intend to prevent violent extremism through their leadership roles, their contributions are not necessarily interpreted as PVE-related to the same extent. This is particularly true for the female economic leaders who mainly described themselves as business women rather than preventers of violent extremism. This was corroborated by members of the community, who they said shared the same idea of their participation. Conversely, female religious leaders more often defined themselves as preventers of violent extremism and pronounced the importance of voicing peaceful religious narratives as a means to reduce incentives to join radical groups. Additionally, female economic leaders said that the community at large approved and appreciated their economic contributions to their families. They spoke about how their roles largely were understood in terms of financially providing to the household, rather than anything else. Starting small-scale businesses and running business-oriented circles with women in the community were mainly viewed by others as a means to secure the family well-fare, and not as a step in preventing violent extremism. Female religious leaders, on the other hand, often mentioned how their roles as religious leaders is regarded as more closely connected to values of peace, tolerance and as such, PVE. Therefore, they voiced how people generally are more skeptical towards their roles and duties, as it touches upon more “sensitive” topics than the female economic leaders’ business circles. Evidently, understandings of what their participation meant and intended to pursue clearly differed between the economic and the religious leaders. Both in terms of their own perceptions, but primarily related to how the community thought about their roles and tasks. Evidently, how their participation in the PVE-program is understood by others seems to an important element to how and whether they challenge norms. This finding speaks to the third step in the theoretical argument, i.e. challenging sacred values and hostile reactions, and will be more thoroughly discussed in the next sections.

In accordance with the theoretical framework on women’s participation in conflict prevention, this is a good example of the multitude of roles women can take on in this field. Even in the same PVE-program, investigated at the same time in the same geographic area, we see several approaches women take to prevent conflict. Hence, women’s participation in PVE-programs should not be understood as binary, but rather as multidimensional. The analysis on women’s participation in PVE-program give further evidence to not only understanding programs at a program level, but also on a participant-level.
7.2 Challenging sacred values

The second hypothesis in this thesis, namely: *Women who participated in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles*, is first based on that all women participating in PVE programs will challenge sacred gender norms. That is because they take up leadership roles in these programs that traditionally belong to men, which hence are taboo to break as it threatens the sacredness of men’ authority. However, not all roles will challenge sacred gender norms to the same extent. According to theoretical arguments in this study, when gender norms are challenged in religious settings, it is considered as more of a taboo compared when gender norms are challenged in economic spheres. That is because men’s roles as authorities has a longer and more anchored tradition in religious spheres and as such in the society at large. Therefore, men’s authority and women’s subordination are considered to be more essential to maintain in societies that largely are built on religious beliefs and practices. In this thesis, sacred gender norms are coded as men’s authority and women’s subordination. The findings in this study indicates that both groups of PVE-participating women challenge such gender norms. Generally, however, it is not actually *during* their participation that they challenge men’s authority, but rather *before* they joined. This scenario is visible in both cases as they all needed permission from their husbands to participate in the PVE-program. In this case, men’s authority is clearly related to the husband, and it is merely challenged when asking for approval to participate. That is when women are regarded to potentially overstep their boundaries, and as such their roles as subordinate their husbands, who is about to lose his monopoly on being the one and only leader. With his permission, however, the findings indicate that the husband does not perceive his authority to be threatened as long as he is the one to make the decision about his wife’s participation.

Nevertheless, to some degree, gender norms are also challenged *during* the women’s PVE-participation. When comparing the two groups, it appears that female economic leaders are less likely to challenge sacred gender norms during their participation compared to female religious leaders. That is because their PVE-activities are perceived as being a means to financially support their husbands, which hence symbolizes how men’s authority is confirmed and sustained. Contrarily, female religious leader’s participation is not understood as an avenue for supporting the husbands. However, the PVE-participation does not necessarily need to be
understood as a financial support to one’s husband to avoid challenging his authority. Simply by partaking in the PVE-program is a sufficiently strong symbolism in itself. That is because the women would not be able to participate without their husbands’ permission and this viewpoint is generally corroborated by the community members. As theorized, these findings indicate that men’s authority and women’s subordination are indeed sacred and important to maintain to be able to participate in the PVE-program. Further evidence pointing in this direction is how both groups voiced that as soon as they did not spend too much time outside of the household, e.g. by travelling or joining public gatherings, their roles as mothers and wives would not be considered as denied sufficient amount of time and effort. When non-participants were asked about how they perceived the roles and duties of PVE-participating women, they referred to their inherently biological roles, as mother or wives. In line with how female economic leaders explained in what way community members perceived their roles, the non-participants confirmed that they merely are understood as making a contribution to their household. The family and household are regarded as their first and foremost responsibility and when they are understood to be upholding their family roles, it is not perceived as they are challenging any sacred values about gender roles during their participation. Related to the theoretical arguments on sacred gender norms, I understand it as that gender norms indeed are sacred in and visible in this study. However, they are only potentially challenged 1) before women join the programs, 2) depending on how much time they spend on their activities and 3) how other people perceive their roles. Accordingly, these findings go against the theoretical arguments in this thesis assuming that all PVE-participating women would challenge sacred gender norms during their participation, which they apparently do not at all times.

In the theoretical framework, I also hypothesized that challenging norms would be a gendered phenomenon, i.e. that men are understood to be the authority actors and women subordinate them in both religious and economic contexts, but much more so in religious ones. While there are findings pointing in this direction, as discussed above, the empirical evidence suggest that religion is more influential in relation to what extent women may challenge sacred values than I had expected. Even though I assumed that challenging men’s authority and women’s subordination would be a bigger taboo in religious contexts compared to in economic spheres, the results do not indicate that religious forums are the only places where religious norms are sacred. Instead, it can be argued that religion adds an extra layer of sacredness to all women in the PVE-program. Hence, sacred religious norms are not only influential in female religious
leaders’ participation, but also female economic leaders are affected by important religious norms.

In East Java, for instance, female economic leaders could not sell their products to everyone in their community. That is because not everyone adheres to the same religious beliefs, and as such, they have separate markets where they could not interact with people from different religious backgrounds. Some female religious leaders corresponded to the same line or argument. In the beginning of their participation, they were hesitant to speak up on their religious conviction and share their religious beliefs. Because most women live in mixed religious communities, they were afraid to offend someone from another religious branch, who might oppose their faith and religious perspectives. Female religious leaders said that they might challenge religious norms simply by taking up too much space in a community dominated by other religious beliefs.

Female religious leaders echoed the strong bearing of religious values in their communities and spoke about how such values impact their PVE-participation. In their communities, where men traditionally are the religious and societal leaders, female religious leaders’ empowerment is sometimes seen as a criticism to their efforts in building a peaceful community. When female religious leaders are given more space and agency to speak on behalf of religious beliefs in their community, it symbolizes a poor job done by the male community leaders. In Indonesia, politics and religion are closely interlinked at a community level, as an affect, some men in community leadership positions, whether religiously and/or politically, react in hostile ways towards female religious leaders. Especially as their community responsibility is perceived to have been redistributed to women. These findings indicate that the theoretical argument on how the roles women take in the PVE-program challenges sacred gender norms to different extents, still has some truth to it. However, it is perhaps not the gender norms per se that challenge sacred values, but rather what the PVE-participating women symbolize in their communities. Accordingly, the empirics indicate that it might not be the gender that has been subject to sacralization, but rather religious norms. This is more in line with the first wave of theorizing sacred values where the sacred is more closely related to the religious narratives, practices and norms. Gender can therefore be understood as secondary value, and religion as the primary.

Lastly, while the attempt has not been to examine regional difference, the field study revealed that there might be variances depending on region. Both gender and religious norms do for
instance seem more sacred in West and East Java as compared to Central Java. While gender and religious norms share many similarities around Indonesia, the presence of different religious groups makes certain norms more pronounced than others, and as such taboo to challenge. This was confirmed by PVE-participating women who live in mixed religious communities, who more often than others referred to how the presence of various religious groups upholds further barriers to their participation, regardless of whether they act as female economic or religious leaders.

7.3 Perception of safety

While some women were hesitant to speak about various forms of violence, they still made references to both physical and psychological violence during the interviews, including other forms of safety threats they had fallen victim to due to their PVE-participation. While this study demonstrates that there is a myriad in ways in understanding women’s safety, one of the most telling findings in the study is that female economic and religious leaders often seem to perceive their safety in relation to conditions at home. More specifically, their safety is to a large extent dependent on their husbands. Women from both groups reported that they have friends who stopped participating in the PVE-program just when it started, just because their husbands would not approve their participation. These husbands had exercised both physical and psychological violence to their wives when they found out that they were partaking in activities outside of the household. Those women who continued to be active in the program, and hence were interviewed in this study, were women whose husbands finally had given permission to participate in the PVE-program. In light of this observation, the sample selection of this study is presumably only women whose husbands were supportive from the very start, which probably affect why negative perceptions of women’s safety are not as evident in the results as I theorized them to be. I hypothesized that all PVE-participating women would perceive their safety negatively, i.e. that they would feel less safe from participating in the program compared to before they started. However, the relationship between the independent variable – Women’s participation in PVE-program - and the dependent variable- perception of safety (negative impact) - is not that straightforward.

While the importance of the husband’s approval seems to be a general trend, both female economic and religious leaders also expressed how they potentially could face safety concerns in their roles as PVE-leaders. This type of safety could both be in terms of physical violence
and psychological violence. Female economic leaders did for instance report that the more time the spent on the activities, the more violent would the argues at home be. After all, the norm is that women should spend most time at home, taking care of family and household duties. When she is away on activities with the PVE-program, her time at home decreases, which according to some informants could fuel fights and disputes with the husband. The same pattern was observable with female religious leaders, who have the same expectations about first and foremost being housewives. When they spend a lot of time away from home, that triggers confrontative discussions with the husband who rarely is in favor of their absence. Even if all women in the PVE-program have been selected to take on leadership roles in the community, by the end of the day, their husbands are the ones deciding to what degree they can fulfill their PVE-duties as community leaders. If, however, PVE-participating women met their requirements, they voiced how they would not have to face any troubles at home, i.e. in various forms of violence.

Aside from understanding PVE-participating women’s perception of safety as dependent on their husbands, i.e. in the private sphere, they also gave examples on how their safety could be threatened in the public sphere. Yet, their perception of safety took slightly different approaches depending on what role they have in the PVE-program. For female economic leaders, they worried about how people in the community would perceive the peaceful messages attached to their business products. Sending peaceful messages is a sensitive topic, they said, and can easily be misunderstood, e.g. by someone feeling blamed for disturbing peace, or who do not adhere to the peaceful norms they promote. A similar pattern was discovered with the female religious leaders. They were also worried about how the community would understand their deeds as PVE-participants. A major concern among them related to how other religious groups would perceive the religious values they shared with women in the community. The minority groups were particularly anxious, because traditionally, they are not given any opportunity to make strong religious interpretations in their communities. For that reasons, they worried about how majority religious groups were going to react to them speaking about peace and tolerance in their villages. They did however not fear any physical violence, but rather verbal threats, stigma and exclusion. Similar to female economic leaders, also female religious leaders referred to safety risks in terms psychological violence. At least during their participation, which is what this thesis focuses on.
Another interesting finding on women’s perception of safety in public spheres relates to how their roles are understood by the community they operate within. As mentioned in the section before, female religious leaders were to a larger extent seen as PVE-agents while female economic leaders were not. This is interesting as in fact, both groups are indeed preventing violent extremism. Female religious leaders who spread values of peace and tolerance based on their religious beliefs were more often understood as preventing violent extremism than female economic leaders, who mainly were seen as business women supporting their husband’s economy. The interesting part is how this in turn affects their perception of safety. The effect is not necessarily related to their role per se, i.e. that they are PVE-participants, but rather in terms of what their roles in the PVE-program symbolizes to the community. Since the activities carried about by female religious leaders were considered as closer related to PVE, it indirectly questions existing structures of leadership in the community. The safety effect on female religious leaders is that they jeopardize their own safety by taking a role that symbolizes how previous leadership has been insufficient in securing the society. This was however voiced as a future concern, as they had not faced any type of violence due to this interpretation yet.

The importance of preserving status quo in religious practices and norms was further visible through the businesses led by female economic leaders. They spoke about how their safety could be at stake if they started selling products to adherents of other religious branches. This seemed particularly relevant for Shia and Sunni Muslims who had separate markets. If female economic leaders expanded their markets to include other religious branches, it would result in reduced safety for them, because their communities would stigmatize them for being traitors to their religious norms. As they were aware about these religious trading barriers, none of the interviewees had sold their products to anyone outside of their religious group. As such, threats or stigmatization had yet not been materialized in their lives yet, and they hoped that they would not have to face any in the future either. However, they recognized that the future might entail psychological violence if they ever were to break such religious norms. As such, and in line with the theoretical argument on how women’s perception of safety is based on their subjective understanding, it can be argued that their participation has negative effects on their perception of safety to some extent. Because if they would not be involved in the PVE-program as economic leaders, they would not have to fear challenging important religious norms of this type. The fear of physiological violence can therefore be understood as a side effect of participating in the PVE-program as a female economic leader. That is however only if we take future safety concerns into account when understanding women’s perception of safety.
In general, very few informants mentioned that they had been exposed to physical violence during their PVE-participation. When they actually mentioned physical violence, they either referred to how other women had experienced domestic violence - those whose husbands had not supported them to partake in the PVE-activities - or that it had only happened before they started their PVE-participation, when they had to negotiate with their husbands about joining. When female economic leaders joined the program, with their husband’s permission, the economic situation improved. As a result, their husbands also reacted more positively to their participation, as soon as they got to decide when and where they could participate. This finding indicates how another type of safety is important to women’s safety than the ones focused on in this study, namely economic safety. This safety dimension was not included in the theoretical framework, but based on the empirics, economic security is evidently essential to women’s perception of safety. The importance of a stable economy was echoed by non-PVE participants, who claimed that they felt most safe when their economy was good. Many women witnessed about how fights would occur with their husbands due to financial burdens. When the female economic leaders started earning money to the household, the fights stopped, and they could feel safer at home compared to before.

According to female religious leaders, their activities were instead more closely connected to the society at large, rather the merely related to supporting the family. Some women expressed how their roles therefore could be understood as offensive to others, often men, whose positions were questioned. Not all women had identified this as a prevalent attitude in their village, and hence not a problem to their safety. Still, some women mentioned that this view of their roles made them worried that someone would harm them or make them scapegoats to a situation which is not caused by them, e.g. how they symbolized existing political and religious leadership has been insufficient to make the community peaceful. However, and importantly, while this was a general concern among female religious leaders, none of them had actually faced any physical violence or psychological due to such attitudes. It was merely the rumors they had heard through others that made them feel insecure, that something might happen to them in the future. Just as the female economic leaders, they mainly feared the risks of psychological violence in the future as a result of their PVE-participation.

Another repeatedly mentioned contributor to women’s perception safety was the women’s network. In taking on facilitating roles within religious and economic spheres, the PVE-
participants got to know other women within their community who often shared their experiences and whom they could reach out to when they needed help or advice. To many of them, the women’s network functioned as a social protection. If anything were to happen them, or if they feared any type of violence, they felt safer by the fact that they have a network of women supporting them. This importance of a network was not included in the theoretical framework on women’s perception of safety, but is evidently an important factor to how safe women perceive themselves to be when participating in PVE-program.

7.4 Hypothesis testing

In answering the RQ of this thesis, i.e. How do women’s participation in PVE-programs impact their perception of safety? I will evaluate the two hypotheses explored in this study. The findings in this thesis indicate that the first hypothesis, namely: Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive their safety more negatively compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program, is complex to assess. The complexity mainly relates to the time aspects of safety perceptions. Even if the safety of female economic leaders seems to have benefited from their economics advancements, they also voiced safety concerns related to their future PVE-participation. Almost everyone said that they were worried about facing psychological violence in the future, e.g. in case people would misunderstand the peaceful messages attached to their products, or if they would trade with someone from another religious affiliation. Similarly, female religious leaders did not speak about their safety as being negatively impacted due to their PVE-participation. Instead, female religious leaders worried about the future, about how their roles would upset people who would disagree with their religious values for instance. They also mentioned how previous community leaders might be offended by the fact that they, as female religious leaders, have been assigned to take up leadership roles in the community. That is because it might be understood as in that previous leadership has done an insufficient job in making the community peaceful. In turn, they make react in a hostile way. For none of these groups, their negative safety concerns had yet been materialized, which speaks to an important factor in evaluating women’s perception of safety, namely the time frame. If these women would be interviewed in five years, maybe some of these safety concerns would have appeared. Right now, however, it does not seem like their PVE-participation contributes to negative perceptions of safety. This is however a complex assessment to make as this study examines women’s subjective understanding of their safety. The theoretical framework in this thesis does not sufficiently account for how to evaluate
future safety concerns, even if that can be argued to be an important factor in understanding women’s perceptions of safety today.

The arguments above relates to the second hypothesis in the study, i.e. *Women who participate in a PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles.* Again, the applicability of this hypothesis is challenging to assess. That is first and foremost because the perception of safety emphasized by interviewed women merely accounts for future concerns, and not present safety implications. Secondly, because women’s safety often depends on similar norms, which are not necessarily gender-based but rather religiously oriented, it is difficult to evaluate where and how such norms are challenged the most, and as a result impacts women’s perception of safety. However, and as hypothesized, the findings indicate that female economic leaders perceive their safety more positively than female religious leaders. However, I assumed that the comparison would be between two kinds of negative safety, i.e. that both groups would perceive their safety as negatively impacted because of their PVE-participation, but to different degrees. Yet, the empirics suggest that female economic leaders felt safer now compared to when they started their PVE-participation. That is because their economic empowerment alleviated poverty, which previously had been a major safety concern. On the other hand, the analysis on female religious leaders’ safety does not indicate that they feel less safe than before, aside from the future aspects of course. Still, they did not feel more safe than before, which implies a difference in perception of safety among the groups examined. Even if the reasons were different than assumed, there is clearly a difference in perception of safety depending on what role women take on in PVE-programs.

Evidently, the assessment of above hypothesis largely depends on how to think about the time frame when evaluating women’s perception of safety. Not only in terms of potential future safety concerns, but also because much of their safety anxieties took place just before they started to engage in the PVE-program. As such, these findings offer important lessons in how to think about women’s perception of safety. Future research should therefore broaden the spectra in how to examine women’s safety, both in terms of time aspects as well as with additional explanatory factors.
7.5 Limitations

In this chapter, I outline three major limitations together with a discussion on how they impact the results of this study.

First, that participants from only one PVE-program is examined in this study impacts the generalizability of the results. Therefore, definite conclusions cannot be drawn on how examined PVE-program corresponds to other PVE-programs in Indonesia, to PVE-programs around the world and lastly, to conflict prevention as a phenomenon in general. Future research should also seek to include men in similar studies to fully grasp how gender matters in PVE and to perceptions of safety.

There are also some limitations related to the research design in general, and to the chosen time frame in particular. Because PVE-participants are only interviewed at one point in time, i.e. after having participated in the program for about two years, it is challenging to make solid comparisons to how their perception of safety has changed during their participation. In effect, when we compare their current perception of safety, we do so with their memorized perception of safety. Memory, as we know it, is heavily impacted on what is occurring around us, which means that the findings must be problematized. However, to reduce the negative impact on only examining PVE-participants at one point in time, non-PVE participants are also interviewed to better assess how women’s perception of safety is impacted by participating in a PVE-program. This discussion also speaks to another limitation to this study, which relates to the fact that human subjects are interviewed to gather primary data. As a researcher, I therefore have little space to do any fact-checking. However, as I examine perceptions, this study, and hence the interviews, are not intended to do any fact-checking, which also makes this limitation less of a burden to the research design. Moreover, that I have had a translator during the interviews lowers the degree of reliability in the results. Cultural and language barriers might impact the translation process, which in turn could affect the reliability. Furthermore, as I had to rely on gatekeepers in Indonesia, such as the translators, that might have affected the sample of this study. After all, the translators were the ones contacting my interview subjects, and their selection process did as such heavily influence who are part of this study.

Lastly, the social desirability bias might pose further challenges to this research design. As this study touches upon sensitive topics, such as women’s safety, informants might not wish to tell
me everything about their lives, which in turn may limit the possibility to fully capture their perception of safety. Participants might portray their situation as better or worse depending on how they see me as a researcher and understand the purpose of my study. Having a translator whom they knew to help facilitating and the interviews and explain the purpose of my research was hence a way to overcome, or to at least limit such hurdles.
8. Conclusion

This thesis has contributed to an identified research gap on women and conflict prevention. It has done so by theorizing and examining how women’s participation in a PVE-program impacts their perception of safety. This is undertaken by gathering data through semi-structured interviews with women who participate in PVE-programs in Indonesia. The theoretical framework draws on literature from women and conflict prevention, sacred values and human security. As such, it cross-fertilizes knowledge from different theoretical fields, and such provides a unique theoretical approach to this subject. The framework outlines two hypotheses, namely I: Women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive their safety more negatively compared to women who do not participate in PVE-program, and II: Women who participate in the PVE-program and hold religious leadership roles will perceive their safety more negatively than women who hold economic leadership roles.

Assessing Hypothesis I turned out to be a much more challenging task than anticipated. That is because the question of time became more relevant than hypothesized. Even though none of the examined groups saw their participation as having negative impacts on their safety today, several women spoke about future safety concerns, i.e. that they feared negative impacts on their safety in the future. Yet, applied theoretical framework does not sufficiently account for how to assess future safety concerns, even if that perhaps can be understood as affecting women’s perception of safety today. Hypothesis I only find support if future safety concerns are taken into consideration. Especially as non-PVE-participating women did not account for perceiving their safety negatively. Therefore, it is not possible to definitely conclude that women who participate in programs aimed at preventing violent extremism will perceive themselves as less safe compared to women who do not participate in a PVE-program.

The discussion above also applies in reference to Hypothesis II. If we only take into consideration current perceptions of safety, and for a moment sway off PVE-participating women’s remarks about future safety concerns, I find some support for Hypothesis II. That is because female economic leaders feel safer today compared to before starting their PVE-participation. Conversely, female religious leaders do not feel safer than before they began their PVE-participation. However, the comparison appears to be between two kinds of positive
safety, and as such, not in line with how I hypothesized it, i.e. that one group would feel less safe than before. Instead, female economic leaders perceive their safety more positively now than before thanks to their economic advancements. Female religious leaders, on the other hand, do not feel safer today, but nor do they perceive their safety as more negatively impacted due to their PVE-participation.

8.1 Future research

This study provides insights into a few research fields, such as on women and conflict prevention in general and on women and prevention of violent extremism in particular. Additionally, as the field of human security continuously expands by adding new perspectives on women’s security, this study further offers new understandings in how to think about women’s safety in conflict prevention. Essentially, it focuses on the safety implications on the individual woman who are assigned to secure the society at large, thereby contributing to moving the research field in a new direction.

Even though there have been significant advancements on gender-responsive policies in PVE-programs over the past years, gaps still remain with implementation, including in ensuring that PVE-programs does not cause any unintended harm to its participants. To guarantee that PVE-programming protects women’s everyday safety, gendered impacts must be monitored throughout the lifecycle of an intervention. As such, future research should cumulate by examining gendered differences related to PVE-programs, e.g. by including men in similar studies to this. That is to fully assess gendered differences when it comes to 1) PVE-participation and 2) perceptions of safety. Furthermore, research on PVE-programs can better focus on the individual implications, rather than just examining the program itself. That will give important lessons in how to think about the effects on PVE-program, not only on a societal level, but also on an individual one.
9. Bibliography


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(Accessed: 15 - 06 - 19)


10. Appendixes

10.1 Interview guide for PVE-participating women

Opening questions

- What is your age?
- Do you work in the village or at home?
- Have you been active in civil society activities before?

Participation in PVE program

Joining program
- When and why did you decide to participate in this program?
- How did you feel about starting to participate in this program?

Participation in program
- Can you tell me about your role in this program? What are your main tasks and how much time do you spend on program activities?
- What is the best thing about being part of the program? Could it be challenging as well? *(If applicable)* In what way?
- How do you talk about what you are doing with other people?
- How do people react when you say you are part of this program?

Social relations within and outside activities
- How does your family situation look like?
- How would you describe your role at home?
- Has anything about it changed since you joined the activities? *(if applicable)* In what way?
- How would you describe your social relations with other program participants?
- Have you found new friends through these activities? *(If applicable)* How do you spend time with them?
- Thinking back, have you experienced any changes in your relationships with other people since you started participating in the program?

Changes after having joined activities
- Would you say that your life has changed since you joined the program? *(If applicable)* In what way?
- Would you consider joining another civil society program in the future? Why, why not?
Security related questions

PVE
- What do you associate with preventing violent extremism?
- When thinking about preventing violent extremism, do you think that women and men have different roles and responsibilities? Why, why not?
- Do you think that the activities you are part of can make your village more peaceful? Why, why not?

Perception of Safety
- What do you think about when you hear the word safety?
- How would you describe your own safety?
- Could you describe a situation or a place where you feel particularly safe? What is about this situation/place that make you feel this way?
- If you would find yourself in a situation where you did not feel completely safe, what would you do?
- If there would be a conflict in your community, how would that make you feel?
- If there would be a conflict at home, how would that make you feel?
- What could make you and your female friends feel even safer in your village?
- Before you joined the activities, do you remember if you thought about your own security in the same way as now? (If applicable) What has changed?

Final questions

- Is there something that you would you like to add?
- Do you have any other questions for me?
10.2 Interview guide for non-PVE-participating women

Opening questions

- What is your age?
- Do you work with anything outside your home?
- Are you, or have you been active with any civil society activities?

Social relations

- Can you tell me about how your family situation looks like?
- How would you describe your role at home?
- Do you feel that you can make the decisions about your life without anyone’s opinion? Why/why not?
- Do you know anyone who participates in the PVE program? (if applicable) How do you know them and what roles do they have in the program?
- Do you think that the PVE-program is important in your village?
- Has anything changed in your community because of the peace village?
- What could have made you join the program?

Security related questions

PVE

- How do you think that radicalization and extremism can be prevented?
- In your community, do women and men have different roles to prevent from radicalization and extremism?

Perception of safety

- What do you think about when you hear the word safety?
- How would you describe your own safety?
- Could you describe a situation or a place where you feel particularly safe? What it is about this situation/place that make you feel this way?
- If you would find yourself in a situation where you did not feel completely safe, what would you do?
- If there would be a conflict in your community, how would that make you feel?
- If there would be a conflict at home, how would that make you feel?
- What could make you and your female friends feel even safer in your village?

Final questions

- Is there something that you would you like to add?
- Do you have any other questions for me?
### 10.3 List of interviews

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