

Evolution and International Politics
Lecture 5

*New Ways of Thinking about Islamic
Fundamentalist Suicide Terrorism and
Policy Responses*



Objectives

- ★ New Thinking on the Causes of Islamic Suicide Terrorism
- ★ Key Attributes of Unmitigated Male Dominance Hierarchies
- ★ How Do You Get a Young Male to Commit Suicide in the Islamic Context/Prevent a Young Male from Committing Suicide
- ★ How Do you Get Young Woman to Commit Suicide/How Do You Prevent



The Problem

- ★ Non-alpha young adult males and females in Islamic countries serve as recruiting pool for Hamas, PIJ, al Qaeda and associated movements
- ★ They are willing participants due to tremendous sexual rewards, other desires met, and rewards for genetic relatives, for a shaheed, as promised in Koran and Hadith.
- ★ Non-alpha males: Desperate to make their mark, reduced marriage prospects due to economic status, alienation, disfigurement. No Mating Opportunities
- ★ Females: No future due to dishonor, disfigurement, etc.
- ★ Bottom Line: They Want to Be Recruited



Continuing a Consilient Approach

- ★ Using the life sciences to complement insights from the social sciences
- ★ Its value
 - ★ Improves understanding and prediction
 - ★ Suggests policy responses that would otherwise never be contemplated
 - ★ Helps maximize success of policy efforts



New Thinking on the Causes of Islamic Fundamentalist Suicide Terrorism

- ★ Key concepts from evolutionary theory and psychology:
 - ★ Reproductive fitness
 - ★ Male dominance hierarchies (MDHs)
 - ★ Inclusive fitness
 - ★ The special status of the young, non-alpha, unmarried male
 - ★ Tension between group solidarity and reproductive success in MDHs (next slide)



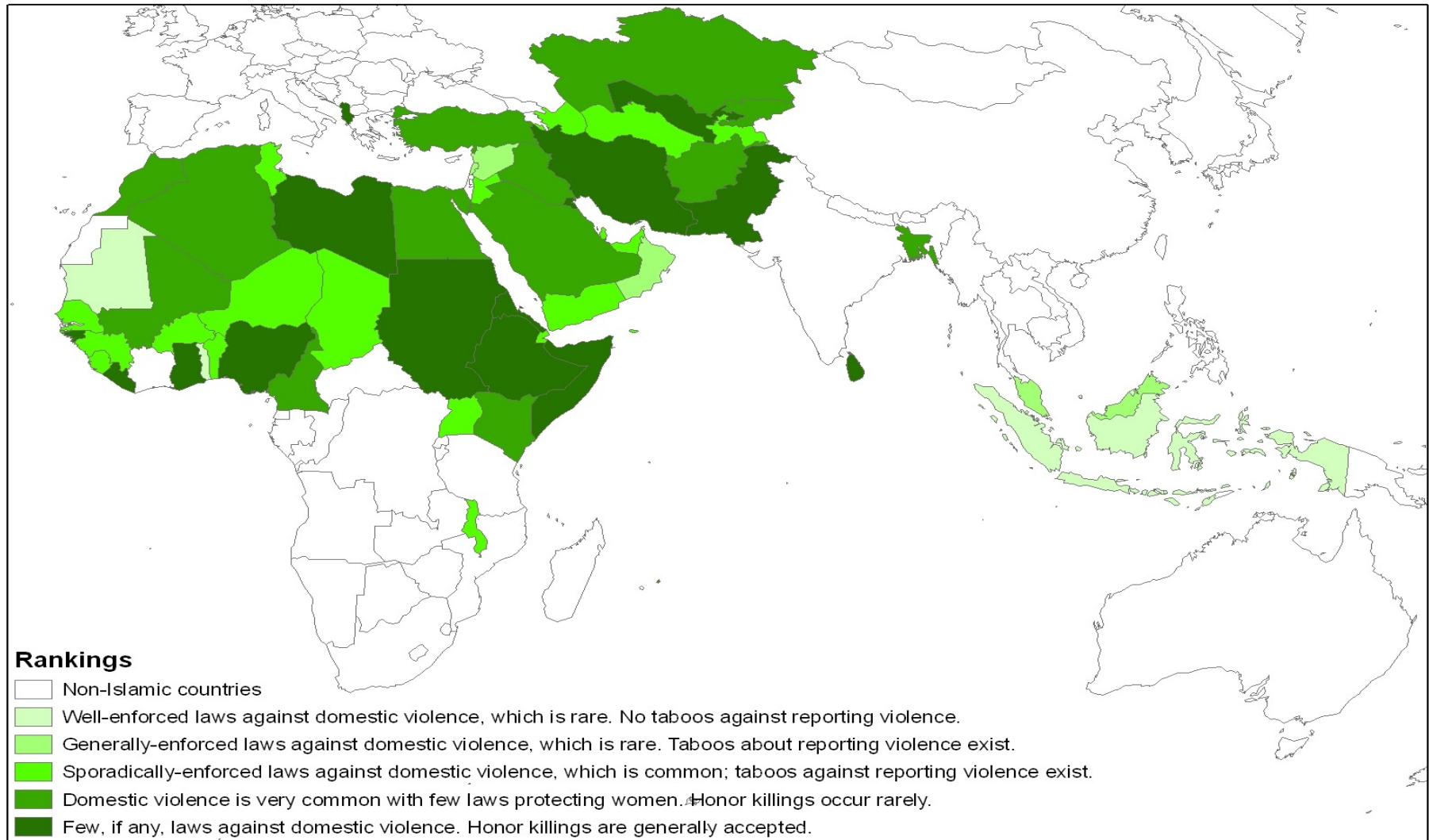
Key Attributes of Unmitigated Male Dominance Hierarchy Societies

- ★ Male-bonded groups are at the heart of society
- ★ Authoritarian
- ★ Inherently unstable
- ★ Highly violent
- ★ Violence towards outgroups serves as a male bonding mechanism, dampening within-group tensions between males
- ★ Key tension: Alphas must keep non-alpha males under control and loyal to the group, but non-alphas stand to become complete reproductive failures if the alphas are successful
- ★ Key indicators: high gender differentiation, high levels of violence against women, highly inequitable family law favoring men

Rates of Domestic Violence in Islamic World

WomanStats Database

Domestic Violence



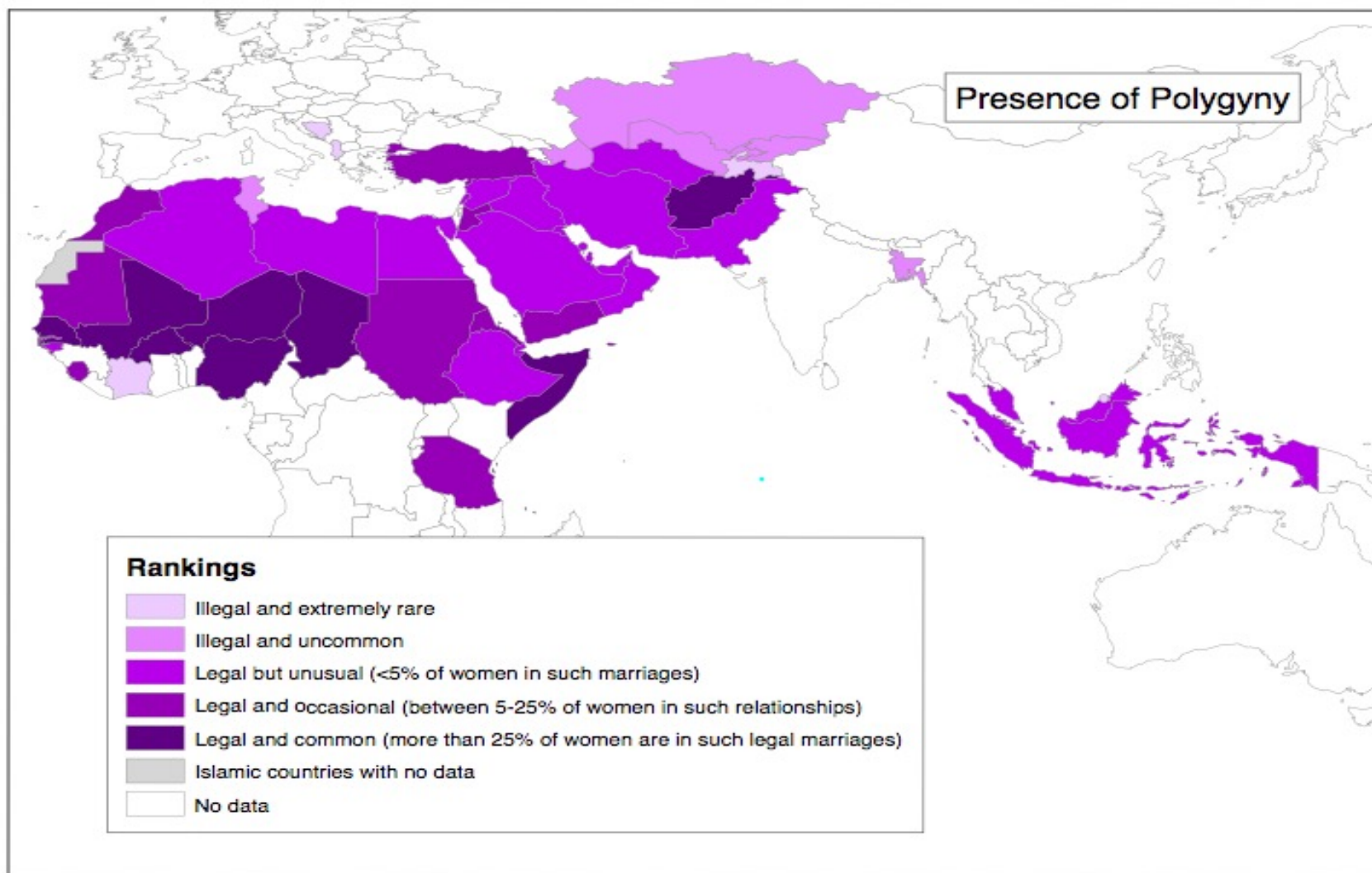


Aggravating Factors

- ★ Scarcity of females due to polygyny
- ★ Obstruction of marriage markets, leading to significant delay in male marriage age
- ★ High levels of gender differentiation, leading to deep concerns about masculinity
- ★ All of these factors are relatively common in Islamic states

Prevalence of Polygyny in the Islamic World

WomanStats Database





The Perfect Solution

- ★ Promotion of suicide terrorism to be performed by non-alpha young adult males:
 - ★ Violence of bare branches directed outward at enemies, not at the alpha males
 - ★ Their deaths lower the M:F ratio
 - ★ Their deaths reduce the level of instability within society



How Do You Convince a Healthy Young Adult Male to Commit Suicide?

- ★ You convince him he will be a reproductive success if he does, and a reproductive failure if he does not
- ★ You convince him that inclusive fitness for his kin will be enhanced by his suicide
- ★ Both motivations present in Islam



How Do You Convince a Young Male to Abhor the Thought of Suicide in this Cultural Context?

- ★ **Shame** is the message
 - ★ Was not masculine (was effeminate)
 - ★ Was not a good son and grandson (cut short his family's line)
 - ★ Was impotent
 - ★ Was deformed
- ★ Give him a wife and son (PLO, Hamas)



For Female Suicide Terrorism

- ★ Suggest that the woman must have dishonored her family for her to take this route instead of wifehood and motherhood-- i.e., she must have been having an affair.
- ★ Since some female suicide terrorists were in fact adulteresses whose only choice was how to die (suicide or honor killing), this gives the innuendo real plausibility



Long-Term Policies: How Do You Change This Cultural Context?

- ★ Mitigate the male dominance hierarchy
 - ★ Women's rights in order to lower the level of gender differentiation
 - ★ Women's reproductive rights so the number of bare branches will decrease (importance of family planning)
 - ★ De facto ban on polygyny
 - ★ Clear the marriage markets

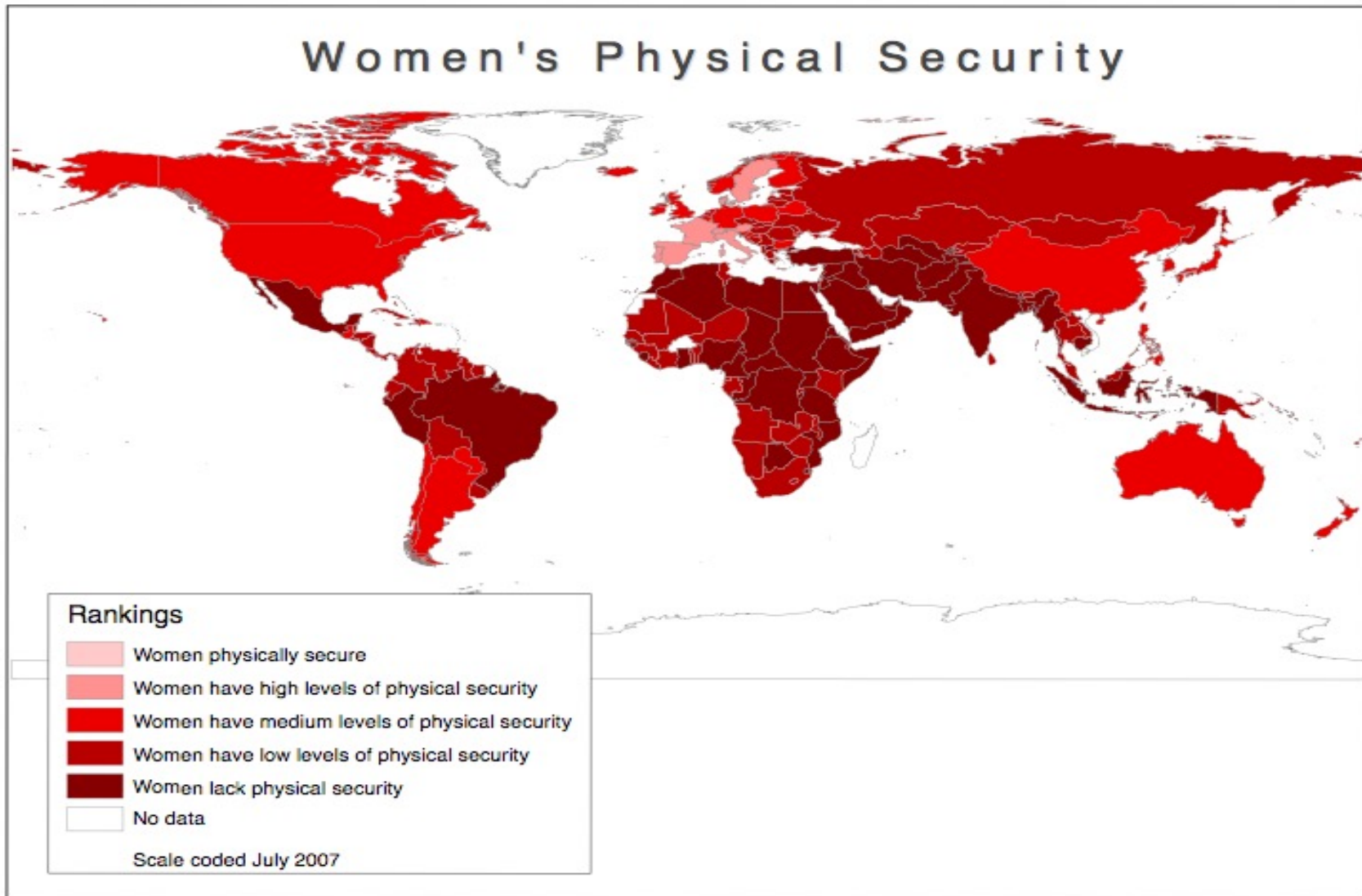


What Happens with Women Determines What Happens with Men

- ★ Overlooked wellspring of violence
- ★ Clash of *gender* civilizations better describes the fault lines today
- ★ Much greater discrepancy in attitudes on women worldwide than in attitudes on democracy

The Real Clash of Civilizations

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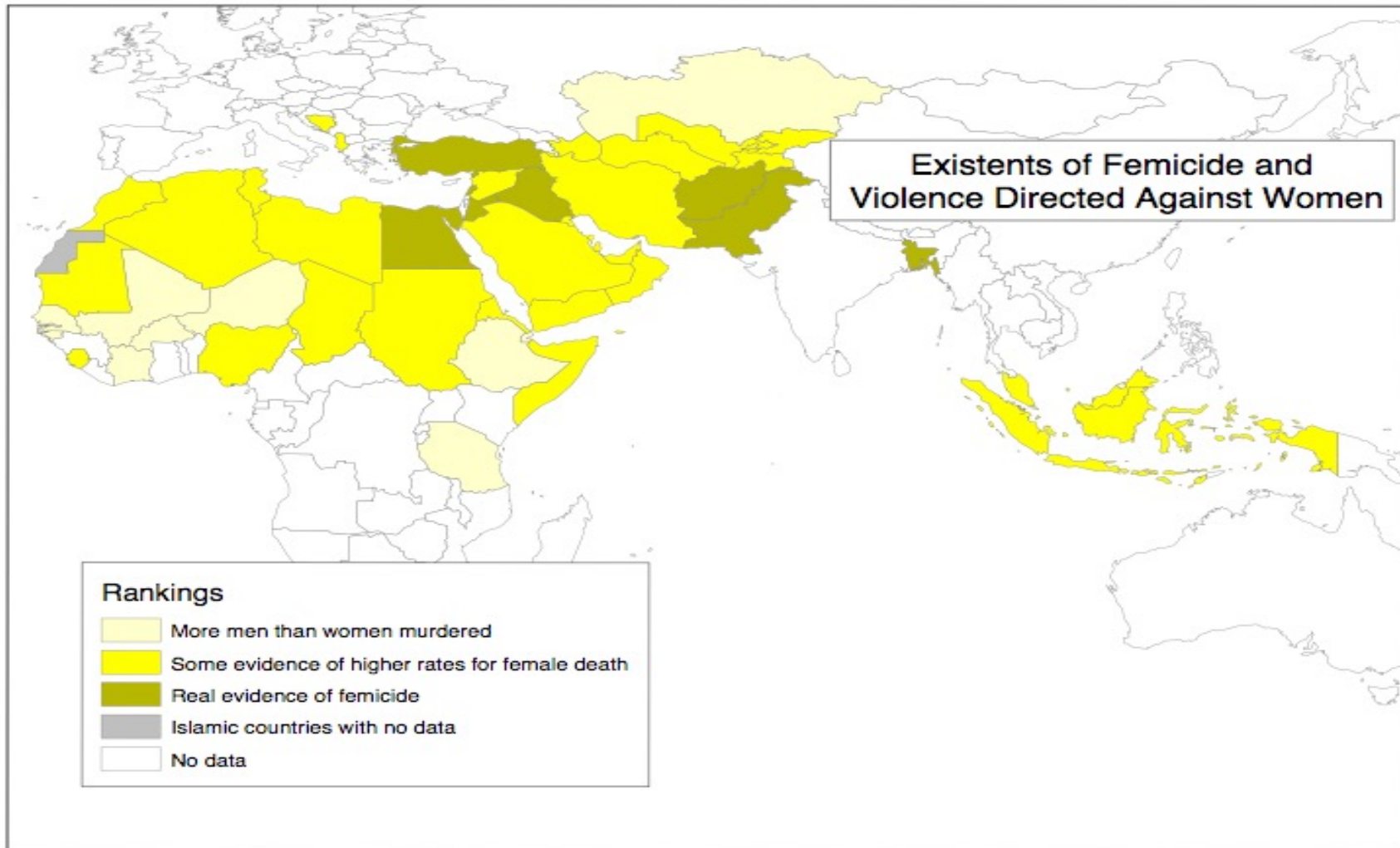
What We Have Found to Happen in Mitigated Male Dominance Hierarchies

- ★ More peaceful relations with neighbors
- ★ Less intrastate violence
- ★ Less likely to go to war with another state
- ★ Lower levels of authoritarianism
- ★ Greater compliance with international treaties and norms
- ★ Lower levels of corruption

. . . . even in Islamic societies!

Mitigation of MDHs in the Islamic World

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Conclusion . . .

- ★ It's as much about SEX as it is about power, culture, and politics
- ★ Export of sexual (i.e., gender equality) norms may be more important than the export of political norms such as democracy
- ★ States must pay attention to marriage markets and adjust them as needed; states should also be greatly concerned with the prevalence of polygyny
- ★ Population control very effective counter-terrorist policy--this requires real reproductive choice by women
- ★ Using sex to combat suicide terrorism may be as or even more effective than conventional means
(Thayer and Hudson, Malcolm Potts, Bruce Hoffman)