To what extent and how have counter-terrorism policies in post 9/11 America been focused on the fundamental causes of homegrown Jihadist radicalization?

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“The American People would be surprised at the depth of the homegrown terrorist threat.” – Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert Mueller
ABSTRACT

This thesis explores post 9/11, U.S. counterterrorism initiatives based on homegrown jihadist radicalization. Following the September 2001 terror attacks, homegrown jihadist terrorism and radicalization cases surged across many Western countries. Through a systematically literature review, this thesis conducts an analysis on four prevailing homegrown radicalization models developed after September 2001. This thesis aims to develop an understanding on the facilitators and ‘drivers’ individual’s experience during the radicalization process, particularly those who engage in Salafi-jihadi terrorist plots such as those perpetrated by al-Qaeda and ISIL operatives. The thesis also analyzes U.S. counterterrorism and counter violent extremism initiatives developed after the September 2001 terror attack. It aims to provide an overview of prevailing radicalization models and the growing phenomenon of homegrown jihadist terrorism in order to synthesize and simplify the intricate elements which cause an individual to enter and progress through the radicalization process. The thesis identifies commonalities between radicalization models and analyzes how counterterrorism/counter violent extremism initiatives are based on these facilitators of radicalization. This research is important since it reveals how, and which, CVE initiatives target the main facilitators of homegrown jihadist and whether the goals of these initiatives are achieved. Ultimately, this study discovered that very few CVE initiatives target the facilitators of homegrown radicalization, with some programs being cited by scholars and policymakers as negatively impacting counter radicalization efforts. Due to the many inadequacies and consequences of CVE’s on communities and vulnerable individuals, this thesis suggests future research in order to modifying existing programs and develop frameworks for evaluation.

Keywords: Homegrown, Radicalization, Violent Extremism, Jihadist, Counterterrorism
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1. Introduction

Since the 2001 terror attacks on the World Trade Center and The Pentagon, jihadist terrorist threats have been steadily intensifying throughout the globe, affecting cities in Europe, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States in the past 15 years. Threat assessments since then have indicated a mounting offensive of ‘home-grown’ jihadist terrorism in the United States as the Majority Staff of the House of Homeland Security Committee found in its December 2018, Terror Threat Snapshot (Johnson, 2017; U.S. Congress House Committee, 2018). As jihadist ideologies and terrorist networks have spread throughout Europe, incidents of jihadist terrorism have also significantly increased in many other western countries. Many terrorist attacks or failed plots have been planned and perpetrated by individuals that have radicalized while living in the United States (Johnson, 2018). In the United States, cases of terrorism inspired by radical Islam have spiked in the years following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, with 39 recorded cases of homegrown jihadist across 20 states occurring between 2016-2017 (Johnson, 2017). This surge accounts for 20% of the 209 total recorded cases of homegrown jihadist extremisms which occurred between September 11, 2001 through May 2017 (Johnson, 2017). Since “cases of homegrown Islamist extremism in the US are on the rise”, the federal government has reimagined its substantial counter-terrorism apparatus, developing new divisions such as the Counter Violent Extremism Task Force in 2011 (U.S. Congress House Committee, 2018; Strategic Framework, 2019). Consequently, US government, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement agencies have assessed the most substantial and immediate threat is from terrorism inspired by al-Qa’ida and ISIL ideology, in particular homegrown radicalization. In contrast to transnational or international terrorism, an incident directed on a venue country or civilian population by a foreign national, the United States defines a “homegrown violent extremist” (HVE) as “a person of any citizenship which has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories” (GCFC, 2016). Although incidents of terrorism in the United States are perpetrated by many different ideologically motivated groups, this thesis will specifically focus on the particular combination of extremist Islamic ideologies and homegrown terrorism. More specifically, this thesis endeavors to analyze answer the following research question:
To what extent, and how have counterterrorism policies in post 9/11 America been focused on the fundamental causes of homegrown jihadist radicalization?

Based on a literature review, the thesis examines several prominent radicalization models to better understand the phenomenon and process of homegrown radicalization, jihadist radicalization in particular, and the accompanying psychological factors. The thesis aims to identify similarities and areas of disagreement between radicalization models and post 9/11 US counter-terrorism policies. Various theoretical models have been developed by social scientists, psychologist and scholars in order to develop an improved understanding on the central psychological factors needed to radicalize individuals and perpetrate acts of terrorism on their respective nations. By analyzing these radicalization models, the accompanying techniques, and policies used by law enforcement and intelligence agencies to mitigate radicalization in the United States, this thesis can influence the development and adaptation of contemporary counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization strategies, directly improving prevention methods.

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 2 discusses the methodology of this thesis, describing how articles were selected and the type of data collection method. This chapter also focuses on the advantages and disadvantages of an analytical literature review, and why this methodology was selected for this study. Further elaborated in chapter 3, the thesis establishes the definitions for the guiding concept of homegrown jihadist radicalization which is used throughout the thesis when conducting research and in comparing various cases of terrorism. The chapter also examines a compilation of scholarly articles, empirical studies, and prominent radicalization models developed by the New York Police Department (NYPD), Sageman’s Four Prongs, and Bakker’s Radicalization and Preparatory Process of Dutch Jihadists. Chapter 4 discusses major counter-terrorism policies and strategies developed following September 11, 2001. This includes the development and reorganization of federal agencies commissioned with maintaining homeland security and the implementation of radicalization prevention strategies. Chapter 5 analyzes and discusses if the post 9/11 policies are based on preventing the fundamental causes of homegrown jihadist radicalization. These themes will include psychological factors and recruitment techniques used to radicalize vulnerable individuals. Inversely, this chapter will also identify
policies and strategies which fail to be grounded in empirical studies on the process of radicalization. Finally, the thesis will conclude with Chapter 6, restating the thesis question and suggest further future research into the reoccurring themes throughout radicalization models in order to improve and refurbish national security strategies.

2. Methodology

Jihadist radicalization and homegrown terrorism has received extensive attention from scholars and policy makers, becoming a central topic in recent national security threat assessments worldwide (Johnson, 2017). Due to the vast quantities of available information, many studies have a variety of overlapping themes and discrepancies which can be crucial to the development of effective counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization policies. As a result, the collected data in this thesis will be a qualitative systematic literature review.

2.1 Literature Review

Literature reviews and research literature is used throughout academia for a variety of purposes. A literature review can be used to answer practical questions through analysis of existing literature, develop knowledge on a specific topic of interest, and provide a theoretical background on subsequent research (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). Systematic literature reviews aims to identify, critically evaluate, and integrate large amounts of research produced by various sources, often having conflicting findings. Conflicting findings may be a result from differing sampling variation, study differences, or interpretation of data (Siddaway, 2014). Systematic literature reviews are therefore categorized as being objective, transparent, and systematic. Systematic literature reviews can be conducted by first drafting a research question which will define the purpose and end use of the review. Since systematic literature reviews are reliant on research and studies, the search and selection phase are crucial. The research process can be conducted in various ways, either by using key words or through a “backward search”, utilizing bibliographies and appendices from pertinent articles in order to find other research (Siddaway, 2014). While searching for literature, sources must undergo a practical screening process, removing undesirable sources from the collection process. After a source has undergone a quality appraisal test, the data is analyzed and discussed in the literature review.
A systematic literature review has both benefits and drawbacks as a research method. Since a SLR aims to make the reviewing process as transparent, structured, and exhaustive at possible, it possesses many strengths as a research method. Systematic literature reviews highlight cross disciplinary themes, aiding interdisciplinary. The research method also collects data from a broad range of sources, aiding in the process of synthesis through an increased scope (Nakana & Munz Jr., 2018). SLR’s are also capable of identifying patterns and themes between various publications, highlighting evidence of change, shifts, or gaps between studies. Despite the many advantages to conducting a systematic literature review, there are also disadvantages. Since SLR’s are reliant on available studies, creativity and intuition can become limited. The nature of a literature review is also heavily dependent on databases which and the accuracy of “keyword” searches. As such, literature reviews are prone to overlooked literature and studies which offer important information.

Since the nature of this study is on the radicalization process and homegrown terrorism motivated by jihadist ideology – a systematic literature review was conducted to examine existing studies due to the availability and broad range of sources. The literature was discovered using various online search engines, searching relevant key terms such as ‘homegrown radicalization’, ‘stages of jihadist radicalization’, ‘terrorism’, and ‘counter-terrorism’. Sources were also discovered by using a snowball sampling method, examining references and work cited pages used in these studies.

The literature review in this thesis will examine prevailing radicalization models based on jihadist ideology, from terrorist cases around the globe. The analysis reviews common themes and fragmentations between models, consolidating theories about the radicalization process. By constructing this review, the objective is not to advocate a superior model, but to evaluate counterterrorism policies based on central reoccurring themes in radicalization models. This thesis then differentiates between counterterrorism policies based on reoccurring themes in radicalization models, and policies which are not.

3. Defining Terrorism, Homegrown Jihadist Radicalization, and Counterterrorism

In the past decade, acts of terrorism and the phenomenon of homegrown jihadist radicalization has received massive media attention. A study conducted by Phew in 2017 revealed that citizens around the world perceive terrorism as a leading threat to the preservation of their respective national securities (Poushter & Manevich, 2017). As a result, policy makers
around the globe have invested substantial resources in order to further develop research and studies on the phenomenon of homegrown jihadist terrorism and radicalization models, particularly following the terror attacks perpetrated on September 11, 2001 in the United States and the 2005 London bombings. Intelligence services and law enforcement agencies have dedicated significant attention and invested a substantial amount of funds on homegrown terrorism due to the expanding number of westerners participating in or providing support to Islamic terrorist plots (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009).

Since there is no universally accepted definition for “terrorism” and “homegrown” throughout academia, the subsequent chapters will analyze several definitions of the terms drafted by various policy makers and scholar. The chapter also establish the required elements for an individual to be classified as “homegrown” for the purpose of this thesis. After establishing the definition and elements of “homegrown”, the chapter analyzes the general process of radicalization and the relationship between radicalization and Salafi-Jihadist ideologies. Finally, the chapter concludes after analyzing four different radicalization models developed by Silber and Bhatt, Marc Sageman, Edwin Bakker, and Jytte Klausen.

3.1 Defining Terrorism

Presently, no universally accepted definition exists for the term ‘terrorism’ resulting in strained relations between states, NGO’s, and even law enforcement agencies. In the United States alone, the US Department of State, Department of Defense, and the FBI have differing elements in their respective definition of terrorism (Stuurman, 2019). Establishing unambiguous universal definitions for these terms is also crucial since governments and politicians can manipulate these terms in order to legitimate or sanction conduct against political opponents or in pursuit of political objectives and violate civil liberties. As a result, many diverse definitions and elements exists for the term “terrorism” across both governmental agencies and academia. Failure to achieve a consensus for a universal definition of the terms has negatively impacted international and domestic counter-terrorism initiatives by dampening the detection and prosecution of threats, impeding the safeguarding of national and international security.

The critical infrastructure of terrorist organizations such as recruitment, command, and control operations, can be perpetrated across jurisdictions by foreign and/or national perpetrators. The surge of terrorism incidents which followed the 9/11 attacks forced countries to establish a working definition for terrorism in order to prosecute and develop effective counter-terrorism
policies. Schmid and Jongman (1988) conducted an analytical study on 109 academic definitions for terrorism and discovered 22 common “definitional elements”. While a universally accepted definition still doesn’t exist, these common definitional elements have allowed policy makers and experts to identify fundamental characteristics of terrorism. Federal law enforcement agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Australian Federal Police Counter-Terrorism, or the National Counter Security Office in England require such definitions in order to implement operational guidelines for task forces. Such agencies commonly utilize definitions that place emphasis on actions and criminal behavior with less focus on motivation and psychology. Agencies prioritize the action above all else, focusing on acts of terroristic violence rather than the threat of violence.

In the United States, terrorism is defined under Title 22 Chapter 38 U.S. Code § 2656f (2004) as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents”. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of terrorism created by the United States under Title 22 Chapter 38 U.S. Code § 2656f (2004) will be used to identify the elements of terrorist acts and radicalization when examining case studies and scholarly articles.

How terrorism is defined has significant implications since politicians and governments may ‘use’ the label of terrorism for political purposes. Some politicians, for example, manipulate the definition in order to influence their electorate into taking appropriate measures of laws and steps of action to combat a distinct threat. Former US president George W. Bush used the expression “War on Terror” in order to legitimize military action against terrorists as a conventional military enemy. Following Bush’s presidency, the Obama administration shifted from a military response to counter-terrorism operations which was later criticized as a “soft” position on terrorism (Shields & Smith, 2015). Secondly, labelling certain behavior or actions as terrorism may be used to legitimize the suppression, repression, and victimization of political opposition, civilians, or religions. Although authoritarian states are frequently accused of suppressing political opposition by classifying opponents as terrorists and legitimizing military operations, some democratic governments have also breached the normal legal systems through ambiguous and wide-ranging definitions of terrorism (Gearon, 2018). Following the 9/11 terror attacks, US policy makers detained “unlawful enemy combatants” suspected to be affiliated with extremist groups in various clandestine detention facilities around the world, beyond judicial review and separated from legal oversight (Kanstroom, 2003). The pervasion of the definition of
terrorism has also occurred in Syria as President Bashar al Assad classified political opponents’ ad civil disobedience as acts of terrorism (Sengupta, 2017). Political violence can be perpetrated by state-actors against unarmed civilians in order to intimidate, oppress, or influence political opponents or other audiences. The misappropriation of the definition of terrorism can have sweeping social and political implications, potentially resulting in the prosecution of political parties and religious groups. As a result, foreign relations and policies can be negatively impacted, threatening a countries social and/or economic stability. Governments can also violate civil liberties, oppressing a population which threatens the governments political security.

3.2 What is Meant by ‘Homegrown’? - Definition, and Elements

Similar to defining “terrorism”, existing definitions for ‘homegrown’ are wide-ranging, differing significantly throughout academia. In many studies, a homegrown terrorist event is classified by elements such as where the plot was conceived as well as the nationality of the individual(s) that had substantial involvement in the plot. The FBI defines “homegrown violent extremists” (HVEs) as “global-jihad-inspired individuals who are based in the U.S., have been radicalized primarily in the U.S., and are not directly collaborating with a foreign terrorist organization” (Wray, 2019). The definition used by the FBI to classify HVE’s is designed to encompass specific characteristics in order to safeguard from the potential immoral manipulation by state or non-state actors. Other intelligence agencies in the United States define a “homegrown violent extremist” (HVEs) as “a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organisation, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organisation” (The GCFC, 2016).

Some scholars, however, define the typical “homegrown” terrorist as individuals born in the West (converts and/or second or third generation immigrants) that embraces an extremist interpretation of an ideology or religion and operates autonomously from an organization (Vidino, 2009; King, 2011). Challenges arise from this definition since it would be difficult to qualify a group as homegrown if they formed autonomously, but later developed ties with foreign organizations. Other definitions of “homegrown” propose a broader perspective, placing less emphasis on the individuals place of birth, and more attention on where the individual
became radicalized. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of “homegrown” will refer to an individual(s) if a) irrespective of their place of birth, the individual(s) has spent most of their life and, most importantly, their radicalization took place in their host country; and (b) the cluster itself was formed in the host country (King, 2011). This thesis will also acknowledge a sub-category of “homegrown” known as “lone wolves”. A lone wolf is identified as an isolated individual, operating and perpetrating a violent act in furtherance of a radical cause or to support a terrorist group, independently and beyond of any chain of command (King, 2011). Lone wolves require particular attention since the United States has experienced numerous cases of homegrown lone wolves compared to cases in Europe which has very few jihadist lone wolves (King, 2011).

The ambiguous term ‘home-grown’ is often used interchangeably with “domestic terrorism” in federal prosecutions and academic studies. Following an exploratory study in 2009, researchers discovered the U.S. federal courts, federal prosecutors, and DOJ’s National Security Division all exercise different elements for determining if a specific incident can be classified as “homegrown”. Accurate estimations of “homegrown” incidents are hindered as many law enforcement agencies have abandoned the ex post facto method since studies revealed that individuals suspected were progressing through the stages of radicalization and committing terrorist acts at a much faster rate (King, 2011). As a result, law enforcement agencies convict suspected terrorists of other crimes such as financial, immigration or other non-terror related law violations in order to neutralize the suspected threat. It is therefore crucial for scholars and policy makers to develop clear definitions and elements in order to classify an individual as “homegrown”.

3.3 Radicalization – Definition and Process

The term ‘radicalization’ was first used as early as the French revolution in the 18th century and has only recently transformed into a widely used term. By the 19th century the term not only referred to the representation of an extreme political party, but often signified the progression of a political agenda through social or political reform. The term has since transformed from political parties using ‘radicalism’ as an expression in order to advocate republicanism over royalism. Similar to the definition of terrorism, a universally accepted definition for radicalization still needs to be developed (Veldhuis & Staun; 2009). The term ‘radical’ is often used inter-changeable with ‘extremism’. Little discussion and conscious
throughout academia endeavors to establish the difference between the terms. The process of radicalization is not specific to any national, political, or religious group. The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) defines radicalization as “the psychological, emotional, and behavioral process by which an individual adopts an ideology that promotes the use of violence for the attainment of political, economic, religious, or social goals” (Jensen et al., 2018). The Expert Group on Violent Radicalization established by the European Parliament in 2006, endeavored to evaluate the position of academic research on radicalization with a particular focus on terrorism. The Expert Group noted that the concept of radicalization is inadequately developed throughout academia and cannot be interpreted conclusively. The study highlighted in 2008 that radicalization “is a context-bound phenomenon” with “global, social and political drivers” possessing as much significance as “ideological and social ones” (Aloso et al., 2008).

In the introduction of their book Processes of Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation, Donatella della Porta and Gary LaFree quoted and developed several diverse definitions of radicalization, concluding that the definition can be very problematic (Aloson et al., 2008). However, in its current form, the term ‘radicalization’ exists with many diverse definitions across governments, regularly used interchangeably with term ‘extremism’. Unlike the European Parliament, the U.S. government has not established a definition for ‘radicalization’ or ‘extremism’ but uses the term ‘violent extremism’ to define the “encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social or economic goals” (FBI, 2019). The primary differences between the EU’s definition of radicalization and the FBI’s definition of violent extremism is the drives and element of the commission of a violent act. Compared to the EU’s definition, the FBI’s includes religious and economic goals as driving factors for commission of the violent act. The other difference between the two definitions is the ‘violent act’ element. The EU’s definition excludes this element, suggesting that individuals can experience radicalization without the “commission or of a violent act”. Since the U.S. government has not established a definition for “radicalization” but has based the term “violent extremism” on the theory of radicalization, it become impractical to properly compare other definitions of radicalization.

Alex Schmid analyzes prevalent definitions produced by scholars, policymakers, and government officials in order to developing a more precise and inclusive definition for the term ‘radicalization’, incorporating the common elements between the terms. Schmid (2013) reconceptualized the term, defining the phenomenon as:
“an individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes”.

Although the definition produced by Schmid is considerably more complex than other definitions, the all-encompassing definition provides a thorough understanding of the abstract phenomenon. It is crucial for a definition to incorporate not only the socio-psychological element involved in the radicalization process, but also the political construct. The revenant understanding of radicalization by Western governments generally incorporates a narrow set of problems which causes the phenomenon to occur in order to counter ‘home-grown’ terrorism from displaced members of Muslim families. For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of radicalization will refer to the definition provided above by Alex Schmid since it acknowledges the many complex elements involved throughout the stages of the radicalization process. The central question when discussing radicalization is when, why, or how, an individual progresses through the radicalization process to the point becoming a perpetrator of terrorist acts.

3.4 Jihadism and the Religious Ideology of Salafi-jihad

In recent years, policy makers, government officials, and executive heads of state across the globe have unified against the emerging threat of terrorism. Despite many forms of terrorism existing, global attention has been predominantly focused on the jihadism movement and the guiding documents of al-Qa’ida and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Heads of state and policy makers struggled to understand the ideology and the scope of the movement in the post 9/11 climate (Maher, 2016). Analysts and scholars alike often refer to the guiding documents of these extremist groups as an ideology (Moghadam, 2008). Although these doctrines have been at the forefront of international affairs, inconsequential attention has been focused on connecting the term “ideology” with Salafi-jihad and its associates. Understanding
the nature of Salafi-jihad doctrines has major implications on counter-terrorism policies. Salafi-jihad is not a conventional secular ideology, but a religious ideology, compounding the complexity of accurately understanding the nature of the doctrine.

Ideologies have several central functions which serve as a connection between thought and action. Groups often utilize ideologies as an instrument of conflict and competition. One of the core functions of an ideology is to raise awareness on a certain issue to a particular group (Moghadam, 2008). Social, economic, and political grievances are introduced to a group of individuals seeking an explanation for a perceived predicament. The second function of an ideology is to attribute the cause of the grievances experienced by a certain group onto an “out-group”. The ideology accredits the threatened welfare of the particular group to the specific behavior of the “out-group”. The third function is the creation of a group identity. As the “out group” is blamed for the perceived grievances, the affected group begins to develop common characteristics and a unique identity. The final function of an ideology is a course of action, offering to rectify the experienced grievances by a particular group through a particular program of action (Moghadam, 2008).

By understanding the core functions of an ideology, it becomes clear that ideologies connect belief with action and are most commonly used as a means to oppose and contest an “out-group” through a perceived tribulation. Ideologies also provide a form of security and comfort to an individual in a time of crisis or level of ambiguity as it reconstructs social realities. These constructed realities are often easier to understand and are perceived as more meaningful. Individuals following the ideology may exhibit a “remarkable ability to ignore, deny, or reinterpret information which is incompatible with tenets of their belief system” (Flood, 2013). Ideologies can produce a profound divide between the “in” and the “out” group, instilling a sense of purpose for the individual’s adherent to a particular cause of the ideology. A shared sense of purposes leads to group identity and, at the same time, heightens conflict and opposition towards individuals that don’t not share the same beliefs.

Salafi-jihad, the doctrine guiding al-Qa’ida and associating terrorist groups, have been described by many policymakers and government officials as a religious ideology. Many experts consider Salafi-jihad as a religious ideology due to its historical significance and emergence. Prior to 1960’s the ideology was unfamiliar to Arabs, primarily emerging and intensifying due to the combination of a growing sentiment for Islamic traditions, the demise of Arab Socialism as a result from the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and the rise of industrialization (specifically the rise of oil
The goal of the Salafi-jihadist’s at this time was to raise awareness of the dissipating religious, political, economic, and military strength of Islam. Western-led military conflicts on the ideology of Salafi-jihadism has had a profound effect on the movement. Many scholars argue that the strengthening of the ideology is a direct result of Western policies which attempt to weaken the movement. The most notable example of this is the invasion into Iraq which “brought together all of the various aspects… into a consolidated and coherent belief structure”, described by many scholars as the “crucible of Salafi-Jihadi thought” (Maher, 2016). Salafi-jihadism also resembles a modern ideology since members identify the alleged source of Muslim grievance as the persistent attacks perpetrated by an anti-Muslim alliance.

As an ideology, Salafi-jihadism creates an identity to its members during a time of crisis or ambiguity. A loss of identity or a period of ambiguity experienced by an individual is an integral element in many radicalization models. Scholars and policymakers argue that adherents to Salafi-jihadi frequently occurs during a time of crisis or loss of identity. Membership to Salafi-jihadi allows disoriented and existential individuals the ability to develop a new perspective on reality and a sense of belonging. Salafi-jihadism emphasizes the importance of the only identity as the umma, the global Islamic community, to its members (Moghadam, 2008). The final function of Salafi-jihadi and the parallel to an ideology is the specific program of action known as jihad. Salafi-jihadists proclaim that in order to restore Islam to its former glory, achieved through the misery of adherents. Martyrdom is therefore recognized by Salafi-jihadists as the ultimate expression of action in which jihad can be performed. The ideology of Salafi-jihad resembles an ideology since it creates a severe divide between those that reject the doctrine and its adherents. The adherents in this case commonly identifies these individuals as ‘infidels’ and moderate Muslims as ‘apostates’ (Moghadam, 2008).

Despite the many parallels that exist between Salafi-jihadism and secularism, many scholars attribute its religious backing and significance as the main appeal for potential adherents. The foundational meaning of the word Salafis translates to “pious forefathers”. The meaning of this is referred to by Prophet Muhammad in the Sahih al-Bukhari’s compilation as “the best of my community” (Haykel, 2009). Salafism derives its religious beliefs and practices from not only the Quran but also the hadith. Due to this central characteristic, the content of Salafism becomes just as important as Islamic law and theology. The hadith is used as the main source of justification for the program of action and behavior, referencing to many violent scenes
depicted throughout religious texts. The legitimacy of the Salafism movement is heavily reliant on religious scriptures. Salafists are driven by ideology, pursuant of restoring their faith by reintroducing their idea of a literal and strict interpretation of Islam tenants. Salafi-jihadists habitually refer to religious symbols, scriptures, and values in order to grow and attract individuals. Salafists draw literal guidance from religious texts, attempting to revive “an idealized version of Islam that enshrines both authenticity and purity” (Maher, 2016).

Understanding and properly labeling the nature of Salafi-jihadist doctrines has significant implications in the development of counter-terrorism policies. It is obvious to most that a “war on terrorism” is not a war on religion, but one on ideology, specifically Salafi-jihad. The movement has many aspects akin to an ideology but is significantly more complex due to the religious characteristic. Salafi-jihadists expertly select specific religious passages in order to advance their cause, using religious symbols, values, and passages to sustain and grow. While all Salafists believe in the philosophy of proliferating a revivalist lifestyle, the spectrum of action differs greatly between non-violent activists to extreme violent actions.

3.5 Defining Counter-terrorism

As defined in the chapter above, an act of terrorism is “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents” (Department of State, 2004). As a result, governments have an obligation to mitigate and counter threats of terrorism perpetrated against their population. Generally, counter-terrorism strategies developed by states focus on “1. Addressing the condition conducive to the spread of terrorism. 2. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism. 3. Measures to build states’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism… 4. Ensure respect for human right for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism” (U.N. Office of Counter-Terrorism, 2018). Countries can implement a wide-range of policies aimed at the threat of terrorism. Therefore, the term “counter-terrorism” commonly refers to an approach implemented by a state actor which addresses the threat of terrorism.

As the definition of “counter-terrorism” is heavily reliant on a state or non-state actor’s specific definition for “terrorism”, converging perspective of controversy arise. As a result, counter-terrorism policies are often new legislation, entrusting law enforcement and intelligence agencies with unprecedented powers and abilities in order to monitor and detain suspected individuals. Historically, countries have used the threat of terrorism to justify radical legislative
and legal changes, undermining privacy laws, and other human rights such as legal counsel, use of torture, and detention laws (Wolfendale, 2006). Previous military dictatorships in South America would reference the threat of domestic and foreign terrorism in order to justify the expansion of powers military powers given to government forces resulting in an increase of torture and execution cases (Wolfendale, 2006).

3.5.1 Counter Violent Extremism (CVE)

Since incidents of terrorism increased over the past decade, counter-terrorism initiatives started to focus on understanding how and why individuals engages in acts of terrorism. The result was the emergence of counter violent extremism, a realm of policy focused on the attraction of terrorist recruitment and influence by focusing on strengthening and educating vulnerable individuals (Homer, 2013). CVE programs focus on individuals engaging in violence, motivated by “radical political, social, cultural, and religious ideologies or groups” (Homer, 2013). The classification of CVE as a subset or an evolution of counterterrorism (CT) is dependent on a country’s legal and policy definitions of terrorism. CVE’s are considered by the international and national security policy community as a program to a broader effort of counterterrorism (Homer, 2013). The concept of CVE’s as a prevention program began following the September 9/11 attack and the surge of terrorism attacks perpetrated by lone wolves, self-radicalized groups, and decentralized actors (Homer, 2013). CVE policies focus on understanding the radicalization process and the push and pull drivers of violent extremism. Programs include a broad spectrum of intervention projects, ranging from countering extremist narratives to programs focused on individuals’ vulnerabilities (Homer, 2013). While counterterrorism strategies focus on mitigating and preventing terrorism plots through law enforcement and intelligence policies, CVE focuses on the root causes for individual to enter and progress through the radicalization process, as well as developing strategies which increase resilience from extremist narratives.

3.6 Sub-Conclusion

This chapter focused on establishing definitions and elements of radicalization, homegrown, terrorism, and jihadist. Terms such as “terrorism”, “homegrown”, and “radicalization” are not established universally and differ across academia, countries, and organizations. The then chapter analyzed the history and significance of the Salafi-jihadism
ideology and its role in contemporary terrorism. It then establishes the definition of counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism (CVE). The term CVE is often a subcategory of counter-terrorism, focusing more on preventative then reactive strategies.


In order to accurately analyze U.S. counterterrorism and counter violent extremisms programs, it is necessary to acknowledge the nature and scope of homegrown jihadist terrorism. Understanding the nature of the threat is essential in order to assess which counterterrorism efforts are based on the fundamental causes of homegrown violent extremism. In the chapter below, data is introduced from New America on homegrown jihadist terrorism cases occurring after the September 2001 terror attacks through December 2019 and the citizenship or residency classification of each individual. The chapter also introduces data provided by START on the prevalence of radicalization between different ideologies in the United States. These studies are then analyzed in order to identify the current scope and nature of the homegrown jihadist terrorist threat and scale of radicalization in the United States.

4.1 The Scope of Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism and Radicalization

Since the revitalization of Islamic ideologies following the Arab Spring, the United States has become a fertile recruitment ground as cases of Jihadist radicalization and homegrown terrorist plots have intensified throughout the country in the past decade (Johnson, 2017). According to data discovered by START PRIUS, 943 individuals were radicalized in the United States between 2002 and 2016 with roughly 40% of all cases occurring after 2012 (Jackson, et al, 2019). Figure 1 indicates a shift in percentage of all ideological cases of radicalization in the United States over time. The diagram displays various extremist ideologies, with Islamist radicalization accounting for 47% of all post 2010 cases of ideological radicalization in the United States (Jackson, et al, 2019). The term ‘Islamist’ is used in the START study to refer to “religio-political methodology practiced by Sunni Islamists-Salafists” (Jensen, 2016). The study acknowledges that individuals classified as “Islamists” are commonly “connected to, or inspired by ‘violent Islamists-Salafist’ groups” (Jensen, 2016). Geographical distribution of ideological radicalization derived from the same data collected by the START program indicates that cases
of radicalization are not limited to one particular region of the U.S. since 9/11 (Jackson, et al, 2019). Terrorist attacks motivated by jihadist ideologies are perpetrated throughout the United States in both urban and rural environments.

**Fig 1. Ideological Basis for Radicalization of Individuals in the United States, by Decade (Jackson et al, 2019)**

![Idea](https://example.com/image.png)

SOURCE: Data and ideology categories were drawn from the START PIRUS database. See START, undated(b).

NOTE: Data available at this writing end in 2016 and therefore do not reflect shifts occurring in 2017–2018. KKK = Ku Klux Klan.

Although cases of Islamist radicalization in the United States have steadily decreased in recent years, there have been approximately 429 individuals charged with, or died engaging in jihadist terrorism inside the United States since December 2001, with over 73% of cases occurring in the past decade (Bergen, et al, 2019). Of these 429 jihadist terrorism cases, research indicated that 232 individuals were U.S. born citizens, 104 individuals received naturalization status, and 56 individuals were permanent residence (Bergen, et al, 2019). This study revealed that U.S. citizen and permanent residence account for 84% of all jihadist terrorism convictions in the United States (Bergen, et al, 2019). Despite the large number of individuals charged with or died engaging in jihadist terrorism or related activities, there have only 23 separate incidents of
homegrown attacks perpetrated by radical Islamists between September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017). Of these 23 separate incidents of homegrown jihadist terrorism, 119 individuals were killed (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017). Details on the location and dates of the attacks can be found in appendix I.

4.2 “Watershed in Terrorist Attacks” – The Surge of Homegrown Jihadist Terrorism

Data collected by the START Prius and a New America indicates a surge in Islamic radicalization and cases of jihadist terrorism or related activates in the United States between 2008 and 2009. Brogen and Hoffman (2011) describe the 2009 year as a “watershed in terrorist attacks and plots in the United States”. Between 2008 and 2009, data collected by New America indicates a 400% increase in cases of individuals charged with or died engaging in jihadist terrorism inside the United States (Bergen, et al, 2019). Following the 2009 surge, the total cases of individuals charged with jihadist terrorism fluctuated between year, peaking in 2015 with 80 confirmed cases (Bergen, et al, 2019). Despite a surge of Islamic radicalization and cases of jihadist cases between 2009 and 2015, studies reveal a steady decline in both areas in recent years with only 19 individuals convicted of jihadist terrorism in the United States in 2018. Although collected data maintained by START at the University of Maryland and New America indicates a steady decrease in both cases of radicalization and homegrown terrorist events in recent years, attacks have become increasingly violent, yielding larger civilian fatalities in a fewer number of attacks. The San Bernardino shooting spree committed in December 2015 and the Orlando Night Club Shooting on June 2016 account for 63 fatalities, 53% of all homegrown jihadist terrorism attack between September 12, 2001 to December 31, 2016 (U.S. Government Accountability, 2017). Damage index report and investigations into the case and perpetrators revealed complex and well-thought-out preparations.

4.3 Sub-Conclusion

The chapter above discusses the scope and nature of homegrown jihadist terrorism in the United States after the September 2001 terror attacks. The chapter introduces data collected by New America which details the number of individuals charged with engaging in jihadist terrorism per year in the United States, and the citizenship status at the time the individual was charged. Although the citizenship of 16% of the individuals charged with jihadist terrorism in the
United States are classified as “non-residents or unknown”, it is unclear if these individual radicalized or spent a majority of their lives in the United States (Bergen, et al, 2019). The chapter also introduced data provided by START, revealing the prevalence of radicalization between each ideological basis in the United States over time. The START data indicates an increase in Jihadist radicalization in the United States in recent years, supporting the New America’s study. The chapter also introduces a data on 23 incidents of homegrown terrorism cases in the United States which resulted in 119 fatalities, perpetrated on September 12, 2012 through December 31, 2016. The chapter concludes by acknowledging a decrease in both jihadist radicalization and cases of homegrown jihadist terrorism, however recent attacks have become increasingly deadlier and complex suggesting a potential change in the nature and scope of homegrown jihadist terrorism.

5. Jihadist Radicalization Models

Similar to the perpetually modifying status of Jihadism, the process and explanations for the radicalization has also varied throughout history. Prior to the September 2001 terror attacks, the public traditionally associated terrorist as foreign-born individuals, training in foreign countries in order to covertly enter and attack a Western country (King, 2011). As the understanding of terrorism evolved from a foreign threat to a radicalized second and third generation of immigrants, so too did the explanations for radicalization. Empirical studies conducted on homegrown radicalization notably differentiate in their opinions on the role of religious ideologies during the radicalization process.

The question is not only why individuals enter the radicalization process, but also when and how certain factors contribute to an individual’s radicalization. This chapter will discuss and analyze various radicalization models which highlights the stages an individual experience as they progresses through the radicalization process. The chapter focuses on four influential radicalization models, selected on a basis of, empirical data, jihadist ideology, and number of examined cases. Since the process of radicalization is not restricted to any single nationality, radicalization models were selected irrespective of the country in which it was developed. Created by Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, The New York City Police Department in 2007 produced a model as a response to surging terrorism incidents in New York City. Marc Sageman also developed a radicalization model which focuses on the key role of social networking on
international terrorism and the radicalization process. Edwin Bakker also developed a model on the radicalization process which, similar to Sageman’s model, conducts a demographic analysis revealing trends between individuals accused of perpetrating or supporting terrorist acts. Although there has been a surge in the research and development of radicalization models throughout the globe, many models lack sufficient empirical support and are therefore used as subsidiary information.

**Table 1: Radicalization Models**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author and Title</th>
<th>Type of Model</th>
<th>Stages or Causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silber &amp; Bhatt, 2007 (NYPD)</td>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>1. Pre-Radicalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The NYPD’s Radicalization Model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Self- Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Indoctrination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Jihadization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Sageman, 2008</td>
<td>Non-linear</td>
<td>1. Sense of moral outrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Four Prongs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. World interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Mobilization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin Bakker, 2007</td>
<td>Non-linear</td>
<td>1. Structural cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Facilitator (accelerator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Motivational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Triggering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jytte Klausen, 2016</td>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>1. Pre-Radicalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radicalization Trajectories</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Lifestyle Adaptation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Extremist Engagement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Plan and Execute Act</td>
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5.1 The NYPD’s Radicalization Model

In the rubble of 9/11 terror attacks, the New York Police Department (NYPD) commissioned its Intelligence Division to develop a radicalization model in order to strengthen counter-terrorism strategies. Being the most populated city and culturally diverse city in the
United States, New York City experiences more homegrown terrorist attacks than any other city in the United States and continues to rank as a principle target of terrorist attacks worldwide. A report published by the NYPD intelligence department revealed that since 2009, approximately 19 terror attacks were formulated—11 since ISIS declared themselves as the caliphate in 2014. The report also indicated that 13 of the 14 lone-actor terrorist attacks or plots in New York City involved “Salafi-jihadist” violent extremists (Miller, 2019).

As a result, the NYPD sponsored a research project, investigating the elements and stages an individual experience’s during the process of radicalization. While other radicalization models are based on cases of terrorism motivated by a compilation ideologies, The NYPD model exclusively analyzes terrorism cases motivated by jihadist ideologies. The model suggests an individual progresses through four-stage during the radicalization process by conducting investigations on five notorious homegrown terrorist cases in North America and Europe. The model was constructed from various reported models of radicalization and is comprised of four specific and unique phases. Silber and Bhatt later applied their model to ongoing homegrown terrorism cases and extremist groups in the United States supporting the presence of four distinguishable stages of radicalization. Although the model follows a sequential progression, not every individual follows a linear path and may potentially stopping the process at different stages. Some individuals also may not pass through every stage of the model and may abandon the process at different stages (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). The model, developed as a result of intensifying terror Jihadist terror attacks, establishes Jihadist or jihad-Salafi ideology as the principle driver which motivates individuals to progress through each phase of the radicalization process. The model posits that if an individual progresses through each stage, they are “likely to be involved in a terrorist act” (Silber & Bhatt, 2007).

The first stage of the model, “pre-radicalization”, investigates an individual’s personal background prior to their initiation into the radicalization process. Silber and Bhatt indicate the existence of several commonalities between an individual’s vulnerability to entering the radicalization process and the individual’s past. Although no specific psychological profile exists in the model, Silber and Bhatt suggest that an individual can be increasingly susceptible to the radicalization process based on their age, education, social status, lifestyle, and religion. In the “pre-radicalization” stage, the model suggests that individuals are more susceptible to radical message if they are male, Muslim or recent converts, under the age of 35, middle class, and have received at least a high school level of education. In the “pre-radicalization” phase the model
also analyzes an individual’s environment, taking into account the countries demographic and vulnerability to the introduction and growth of radical ideologies.

The second stage of the model, “self-identification”, is often initiated through a cognitive event or crisis, leading to an individual to migrate away from their former identity to one which is redefined by Jihadist ideologies and values. The stage identifies the most vulnerable individuals as those who are experiencing a stalemate in life and are seeking direction or an identity. Economic, social, political, and personal conflicts are some of the hardships an individual in this phase may experience. Political or personal conflicts are often the most influential crises which affects an individual’s personal identity. The most common political crisis an individual may experience in this phase is either by an extremist highlighting a political grievance that Islam has with the West or by the individuals own government. Although there are many influencers during this phase of religious seeking, the central are entrusted social networks such as the internet, media, literature, family, and friends (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). As an individual experience’s a crisis in this phase, they begin to seek out other like-minded individuals experiencing the same conflicts, ultimately alienating themselves from their former identity. Progression through the radicalization continuum are suggested by the gravitation towards Salafi Islam and an individual’s regular attendance to a mosque. Individuals may begin to depart from their former identity, distancing themselves from former friends and family. Becoming more involved in community issues, and dressing in traditional Islamic clothing is another indicator of an individual progressing trough this stage.

Indoctrination is the third stage of the NYPD radicalization model. In this phase an individual gradually intensifies their religious belief and values until Jihadi ideology is entirely adopted and circumstances exists which requires military jihad as a means of action to further their cause. Individual’s in this stage legitimize, justify, and support the use of violence through the acceptance of a political-religious view (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Two indicators progression through this stage of radicalization are withdrawal from the mosque and politicization of new beliefs. The individual becomes indoctrinated into a life which has a redefined sense of purpose, departing from a life with mainstream motivation to one with non-personal, radical goals. An individual often withdrawals from the mosque in this stage as their level of extremism surpasses that of the mosque (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Individuals may also be perceived as liabilities to the mosque or may experience conflict with other worshipers or mosque officials due to their radical beliefs. Ideology begins to transform into a personal cause as individuals transfer their new
radicalized identity to the real world. Individuals in this stage begin to view others as either enlightened believers or unbelievers. The NYPD distinguishes individuals progressing through this phase if they join like-minded extremist and/or have increasingly private radical meetings.

The final stage, “jihadization”, occurs when an individual self-declares themselves as a holy warrior or a part of the mujahedeen. These individuals become committed to a violent course of action, developing operations to commit a terrorist attack or jihad. In this stage “group-think” becomes a compelling force, driving individuals to seek action. Target selection and operational planning may occur during this phase, along with military training and mental reinforcement activates (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Silber and Bhatt highlight that while other phases may gradually occur over multiple years, the jihadization phase can occur quickly and without warning. Silber and Bhatt also note that if an individual progresses into the final stage, it becomes exceedingly difficult for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect and prevent a terrorist plot.

5.2 Marc Sageman’s, *Understanding Terror Networks*

Former CIA case officer and forensic psychiatrist Marc Sageman examined international terrorism in various publications, advocating the necessity of a scientific method in the field of terrorism. Sageman criticizes other authors radicalization models and study assessments, attesting that most models are exceedingly dependent on case studies and are therefore inherently flawed. In the book *Understanding Terror Networks* (2004) and *Leaderless Jihad* (2008), Sageman denotes that models developed from investigating single events are led astray and therefore need to use a scientific approach in order to develop on available data (Sageman, 2008). Sageman asserts that his model is derived from a sample of 172 jihadists. From this database, Sageman includes over 500 profiles containing information on “people and their relationships with other terrorists, non-terrorists, and ideas, as well as the social, political, cultural, and techno-logical contexts” (Hellmich, 2008).

Similar to the NYPD radicalization model, Sageman’s demographic analysis revealed that terrorists in the “global Salafi jihad” are predominately middle class, married, and generally have at least a high school level of education. Sageman’s investigation also reveals that social bonds are more influential to the radicalization process then ideology. Although the model shares a similar demographic analysis to the NYPD radicalization model, Sageman arrives at a different conclusion regarding the role ideology and religion on the radicalization process (Hellmich,
Sageman’s *Leaderless Jihad* (2008) concludes “the terrorists in Western Europe and North America were not intellectuals or ideologues, much less religious scholars. It is not about how they think, but how they feel”. From this conclusion, Sageman (2004) believes less attention should be focused on ideology and religion and instead concentrate on the emotions of vulnerable individuals (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009). Sageman’s study effectively challenges conventional perceptions on demographic profiling and vulnerability to radical ideologies but also stimulates the need for more developed research on the role of religious ideology in the radicalization process.

5.3 Edwin Bakker – The Puzzle of Jihadi Terrorist in Europe

Building on Sageman’s study in 2004, Edwin Bakker examined jihadist terrorist cases in Europe and the role of social networking in the radicalization process. The study explored key characteristics of terrorist networks and individuals in Europe, along with the motivators which coerced individuals to becoming involved in jihadist radicalization. Although not all individuals in Bakker’s study are cases of homegrown terrorism, the majority of the 242 individuals analyzed in the study were born and raised in Europe and directly supported or committed an act of terror in European countries. Bakker’s demographic analysis on European jihadists differs from Sageman’s study since Bakker focuses on European jihadists. Unlike Sageman’s study, Bakker (2008) examined a group of European jihadists comprised of “mostly single males that are born and raised in Europe; they are not particularly young; they are often from the lower strata of society; and many of them have a criminal record”. Despite Bakker’s dissimilar demographic analysis, the study concludes that there is “no standard jihadi terrorist” (2006). As a result, Bakker protests many modern counter-terrorism strategies such as the use of profiling by law enforcement agencies and even critiques socio-economic opportunities which attempt to proliferate employment and educational opportunities to Muslim communities. Bakker not only suggests that socio-economic opportunities for immigrant and Muslim communities might not reduce jihadist radicalization but could potentially have an inverse effect. Bakker asserts that policies focused on these communities can result in negative stereotypes, labeling Muslim communities as jihadi terrorists, pronouncing the existing cultural polarization between those that are Muslims and those that are Non-Muslims.
5.4 Jytte Klausen – Radicalization Trajectories

Using the NYPD's radicalization model as a starting point, Jytte Klausen developed a contemporary dynamic approach to preventative risk assessments by analyzing American terrorism related cases inspired by Al Qaeda for 16 years following the September 2001 attacks. The reconceptualized radicalization model was designed due to an urgent demand for evidence-based protocols which were able to assist intelligence and law enforcement agencies to identify extremist individuals which were likely to pose a threat to public safety and national security. The study also focuses on identifying specific behaviors associated with Salafi-Jihadist radicalization and linear behavioral progressions which anticipate criminal activity.

Similar to the NYPD radicalization model, the first phase is referred to as the pre-radicalization or cognitive awakening phase (Klausen, Hung, & Jayasumana, 2018). This period occurs before an individual begins progressing through the radicalization process. Many behavioral indicators often seem significant in retrospect, revealing themselves when more serious behavioral changes occur. In Klausen’s study of 135 terrorism related cases, 125 individuals showed signs of exploration as they learned extremist theories and absorbed new belief systems (Klausen et al., 2018). Although there are many early indicators of pre-radicalization, information and authority seeking are among two of the most common indicators. Individuals explore religion, specifically Salafi-Jihadism, and may educate themselves on newfound authority figures. Klausen discovered that these ‘pull’ variables, occurred more frequently in his sample sets biographies then did push factors. Unlike the NYPD’s and Sageman’s biographical findings, Klausen found that ‘push’ factors such as personal crisis, trauma, and disillusionment, were not as significant and frequent as pull variables (Klausen et al., 2018).

The second stage identified by Klausen involved lifestyle adaptation. This stage involves some sense of behavioral transformation in the individual’s personal identity. Adhering to new ideologies and expressions of piety such as growing a beard, wearing traditional or religious clothing, or renouncing alcohol and infidelity are some examples of lifestyle adaptation. Klausen’s study revealed that 79% of the cases studied displayed some outward change in their appearance, however noted that early identifies in this stage are often difficult to detect (Klausen et al., 2018). Similar to Sageman’s model, leaving school prematurely or “dropping out” was not common in Klausen’s sample set. While most individuals in the sample set were well educated, some would manage to stay in school while developing extremist tendencies. Another possible
indicator for an individual in the lifestyle adaptation stage is if an individual separates from occupational responsibilities. Klausen’s study revealed the relationship between these indicators of social alienation and radicalization is complex and often difficult to notice. Many American jihadists are well educated and remain in school during their period of radicalization.

Extremist engagement, the third stage in Klausen’s model, may include deviant behavior. Behavioral alterations in this stage are often life altering and is therefore more easily noticeable by family and friends (Klausen et al., 2018). Peer-immersion and secularized societal disengagement are the most noticeable indicator, often appearing at a predictable point in each individual’s radicalization process. In Klausen’s sample set, 97 percent of all cases demonstrated a peer-immersion indicator, all at a similar point in each individual’s radicalization process. Individuals during this phase seek out like-minded extremists and develop a group identity. Individuals experiencing peer-immersion would often attempt to recruit classmates or friends in an attempt to create a “pop-up” cell around them (Klausen et al., 2018). Secularized societal disengagement was also a common indicator of an individual participating in this phase. Biographical analysis from Klausen’s study revealed individuals would reject civil obligations of democracy or, more broadly, western culture. This behavioral indicator signifies an advanced stage of radicalization. Individuals in this phase express anger and animosity towards western political systems, advocating utopian statements from the Qur’an and caliphate about the “good life” under jihadist authority (Klausen et al., 2018).

Finally, the fourth phase in Klausen’s radicalization model generally results in criminal action. Behaviors exhibited in this stage are nearly all criminal offences which lead to arrest, departure, or surveillance by a law enforcement agency. Joining a foreign insurgency or plotting a terrorist act are all behavioral indicators of an individual in this phase. Similar to both Silber and Bhatt, and Sageman’s radicalization models, individual in this final phase of radicalization rarely reverted to second-tier activities and regressed down the model. The only exception found in Klausen’s study was examples of nonviolent criminal activates such as material support, efforts of recruitment, and raising funds. Individuals accused of only committing nonviolent criminal activities were able to regress through the model easier than those that committed violent terrorist acts. Similar to all radicalization models, Klausen’s finding revealed that although the pathway and length of time in each stage varied between individuals, a majority followed a common segment of paths. The study revealed common and highly frequent
behavioral traits and social cues which often indicate emerging extremism and indoctrination into the radicalization process (Klausen et al., 2018).

5.5 Differences Between European and U.S. Radicalization Models

In many academic studies, scholars identify several fundamental characteristics used to explain divergent behavior between radicalization models inspired by Islam in Europe and the United States. One of the fundamental differences between European radicalization models and US models is the significantly better economic condition American Muslims have compared to European Muslims. Demographic analysis in European radicalization models generally rank European Muslims at the bottom of economic integration ranking. Comparatively, the average American Muslims ranks significantly higher, generating an income equal to, if not more, than the average American (Vidino, 2009). Although many studies have identified that economic integration is not always a defining characteristic for radicalization as many terrorist plots have been perpetrated by individuals from economically privileged backgrounds, it is common for radical ideologies to flourish in environments with high unemployment and an isolated youth. The deficiency of economic integration has terraformed areas of European cities with a high concentration of poor Muslim immigrants and refugees into ideological sanctuaries, guiding radical messages, freely spreading across Europe. The sustainable economic conditions experienced by American Muslims has prevented, for the most part, the formation of concentrated ideological sanctuaries (Vidino, 2009). The prevention of extensive recruitment and propaganda networks in the United States has been credited to tougher immigration policies, and geographical dispersion. Scholars highlight the juxtaposition between the United States and Europe, citing the rise of homegrown networks in European cites to lax immigration policies and geographic concentration. There are however, undeniable areas in the United States that have experienced extensive jihadist radicalization such as Brooklyn’s al Farooq mosque or Tucson’s Islamic Center. Analysts however view this activity as next to negligible when compared to the intense European recruiting networks of London’s Finsbury Park, Hamburg’s al Quds mosque, or Milan’s Islamic Cultural Institute (Vidino, 2009). The final difference between European-Muslims and American-Muslims is the ethnicities of these populations. Researchers have denoted that the American-Muslim community has traditionally adopted moderate forms of Islam rejecting, for the most part, radical Islamic ideologies.
Although substantial studies and evidence supports the existence of these fundamental differences between European radicalization models and U.S. models, they are not absolute. Several case studies on terrorist incidents in the United States indicated that economic integration does not permanently preclude American Muslims from radical ideology. Irrespective of economic security, individuals can become more susceptible to radical ideologies from other factors such as frustration towards U.S. foreign policy, or as a result of discrimination between ethnic groups. Experts and scholars have conducted studies on the growing alienation of American Muslims, cautioning politicians and policy makers of a potential surge in homegrown radicalization and recruitment (Vidino, 2009). Silber and Bhatt (2007) also reached a similar conclusion in the NYPD’s radicalization model, suggesting that “religious roots and identity” can supersede “the nature of American society”. Recent terrorist cases such as Fort Dix or the Taheri-azar also reveal that areas which radicalization is rare are still susceptible. Some scholars argue the emergence of an extensive virtual network, spreading propaganda through the Internet, replacing physical recruiting networks. Cyber security initiatives have uncovered social network cites which reveal a significant presence of American citizens glorifying Salafi-jihadism and al-Qa’ida doctrines (Vidino, 2009).

5.6 Sub-conclusion

The above chapter analyzed why and how individuals enter and progress through various radicalization models, specifically models developed by Edwin Bakker, Jytte Klausen, Marc Sageman, and Silber et el. The NYPD radicalization model, Bakker’s study on jihadist radicalization, Sageman’s scientific method on international terrorism, and Klausen’s study on American Jihadist cases all have similar core features. Although there are main disparities in the demographic analysis between some models, they all emphasize the absence of a standard jihadist terrorist. Each model also posits that progression through a radicalization model is more fluid then fixed. Despite the difference in the sample size and selection between each model, they all arrive at similar conclusions, acknowledging that there is no standard jihadi terrorist and protesting profiling strategies used by law enforcement. Each study also advocates the need increased information sharing due to the substantial gap between academic research and intelligence collection agencies. The next chapter (5), investigates American counter-terrorism strategies developed following the September 2001 terror attacks, evaluating the formation of
new federal agencies and if counter-terrorism policies as developed to be preventative or reactive.

6. Counter-terrorism and Counter Violent Extremism Strategies in Post 9/11 America

In the past 18 years, investigative techniques and policies on terrorism in the United States has undergone substantial revamping, reimagining the robust counterterrorism apparatus. The result has been the implementation of counter violent extremism initiatives and a CVE task force with the primary mission of preventing homegrown radicalization. The following chapter discusses the counterterrorism and counter violent extremism strategies created following September 2001 terror attacks. The first part of the chapter discusses the development of major intelligence collection policies and the establishment of new federal agencies immediately following the September 2001 terror attacks. The chapter then discusses the 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, focusing on current counterterrorism strategies which target immigration laws, travel bans, preparing infrastructures, and targeting terrorism. Finally, the chapter focuses on the four-core counter violent extremist strategies outlined in the Department of Homeland Security Strategic Framework for Counterterrorism and Targeted Violence (2019) which aim at preventing violent extremism.

6.1 Post 9/11 Counterterrorism Policies

Policy makers and scholars largely attribute the incapacity for law enforcement officials to detect and dismantle homegrown terrorist networks and plots to the many post 9/11 legal limitations. In the years following the September 2001 terror attack, legal impediments were evaluated and reconceptualized as U.S. authorities urgently began searching for terrorist networks and sympathizers within its borders. The expansion of legal limitations, investigative techniques, and evaluation frameworks have been widely criticized by scholars and human rights activists (Barbari, 2018). Despite the many challenges faced by the FBI and the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys concerning investigative and prosecutorial procedures, the most significant challenges have been a result from counterterrorism initiatives which focus on the emerging threat of homegrown jihadist terrorism (Shields et al., 2015).
Immediately following the September 2001 terror attacks, the US administration established the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, commonly referred to as the 9/11 Commission. The independent, bipartisan commission endeavored to complete a full report of the incidents occurring on 9/11, including a thorough investigation into the preparation, and the jihadist ideology motivating the attack. The commission was also tasked with the development of an emergency response management program in the event of another large scale jihadist terrorist attack in the United States. In 2004, the commission released its public report, citing 41 policy recommendations intended to mitigate the threat of future terrorist attacks, focusing on both the homegrown and foreign terrorist threat (Kaczmarek & Lazarou, 2018). The implementation of key legislation and intelligence reforms created the foundation for current counterterrorism and CVE initiatives in the United States. In 2001, The USA Patriot Act: Preserving Life and Liberty was among one of the many significant legislation’s changes approved by federal courts (Kaczmarek & Lazarou, 2018). The act facilitated the dissemination of information and cooperation between federal law enforcement agencies, drastically improving early detection and reaction time of many law enforcement operations. The act also expanded legal limitations, enabling law enforcement and intelligence agencies to use new forms of surveillance and other intelligence collection systems to investigate individuals with or developing extremist tendencies. The USA Patriot Act has been used extensively by intelligence agencies in order to detect homegrown jihadist networks and prevent attacks (Bjelopera, 2017). Shortly after, the National Commission recommended the integration of 22 autonomous federal departments and agencies into a single cabinet department, forming the now Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002 (Kaczmarek & Lazarou, 2018). The DHS was tasked with addressing many of the missions proposed by the 9/11 commission including critical infrastructure protection, import and export security, and intelligence and information sharing. Since its inception, the federal department is currently the 3rd largest in the United States, addressing a wide range of national security threats. Working in part with the FBI, the DHS has designed an extensively intelligence collection systems and specialized task forces with the sole purpose to conduct intelligence operations against individuals suspected of being a homegrown jihadist terrorist. The DHS is now the main federal agency which detects, disrupts, and prevents homegrown jihadist radicalization and terrorism.
Legislative reform also introduced the Intelligence Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act of 2004 (IRPTA). The act has been regarded by many scholars as the most significant legislation affecting the US intelligence community since the National Security Act of 1947 which established the Central Intelligence Agency (Bjelopera, 2017). The IRPTA received a large amount of media attention following the establishment of a Director of National Intelligence (DNI), the administrative head of intelligence collection and presidential advisor. Although the creation of a DNI received mass attention, other significant aspects of the IRPTA have been largely overlooked. The act also amends the Foreign Intelligence Service Act of 1978 (FISA), expanding FBI investigatory powers while reducing judicial oversight. From the act, the FBI was able to easily obtain wiretaps and conduct clandestine investigations against suspected terrorist actors with no relationship to a foreign organization. The controversial expansion of power was motivated by the Zacarias Mousaoui case, an accused conspirator that was involved in the September 11 attacks (Jacobson, 2004). The act formed following an investigative report revealed the FBI was unable to obtain a FISA wiretap due to a lack of evidence linking Mousaoui to a foreign terrorist organization (Jacobson, 2004). Architects of the act viewed this case as a significant national security failure, influencing massive political support to authorize the act. The FBI also supported the amendment to FISA, referencing a surge of lone wolf and homegrown terrorist cases who sympathize with Jihadi terrorist organizations and similar ideologies (Kaczmarek, 2018). While many experts in the intelligence community support the implementation of the act, civil rights groups argue the act is used to explicitly target American-Muslim communities, infringes on many civil liberties, the most egregious being the Fourth Amendment (Bjelopera, 2017). The IRPTA also made significant changes to prosecution standards of suspected terrorists. The act modifies the “material support” clause of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, making it illegal to knowingly aid or abet individuals connected with terrorist attacks. The modification under Title 18 USC Section 2339B (2009) stipulates the individual must “knowingly” provide material support, expanding the list of prohibited support to include financial assets, training, material assets, or “expert service and assistance”. In recent years, the amended provision has allowed the Justice Department to prosecute numerous suspected terrorists, disrupting many potential attacks. As of May 2004, the judicial courts prosecuted fifty suspects in seventeen different districts under this revised statute (Jacobson, 2004). Although the IRPTA has added significant judicial expansion, allowing counter-terrorism efforts to effectively disrupt and prevent terrorism plots, many human
rights activists protest the unconstitutional nature of the policy. Following many landmark cases such as the Humanitarian Law Project, et al. v. John Ashcroft, et al., judicial courts concurred with plaintiffs that the phrase “expert advice and assistance” was unreasonably vague and infringed on the First Amendment (Jacobson, 2004). Federal Judges in New York and California also agreed that phrases “communication equipment” and “training” used in the statute were vague and subsequently dismissed. The IRPTA was later modified to include detailed definitions for actions and the elements which represent “knowingly provided”, “expert advice or assistance”, or “training” (Jacobson, 2004).

6.1.2 Targeting the Source of the Terrorist Threat

One of the primary counter-terrorism strategies employed by the U.S. government against terrorism since 9/11 has been targeting the threat at the source. Local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies pursue suspected terrorist threats in the United States while improving information sharing between departments. The initiative focuses on disrupting illegal trade activity used to fund foreign and homegrown jihadist networks. Law enforcement efforts endeavor to enhance visibility on supply chains and collaborate across the private sector in order to enhance collection methods and detect financial operations among the millions of daily transactions (National Strategy, 2018). Economic authorities will disrupt funding and support to terrorist networks, denying essential materials which may be used to further the commission of a terrorist attack. The National Strategy for Counterterrorism also aims to effectively use Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) as a counterterrorism strategy. LOAC permits the United States to detain potentially dangerous threats and enhances the “ability to collect intelligence from captured terrorists” (National Strategy, 2018). The National Strategy (2018) preserves the ability of U.S. officials to hold individuals at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility in Cuba in order to remove terrorist threats.

6.1.3 Countering Terrorism Through Travel Bans and Immigration Laws

One of the main priorities outlined in DHS’s Strategic Framework (2019) is the prevention of suspected terrorist from entering or traveling through the United States. The vetting process is enhanced through the establishment of a National Vetting Center (NVC), operated by the Department of Homeland Security (Kaczmarek & Lazarou, 2018). Created by a national security memorandum signed by president Trump, the center enhances the identification
process of suspected national and potential security threats. This priority is noticed through Trumps ‘travel ban’, an executive order intended on the denying entry into the United States to specific non-US nationals from Yemen, Libya, Chad, Syria, Somalia, Iran, and North Korea (Newell, 2019). The Executive Order (EO) 13780 (2018) raised the baseline for vetting and screening operations and improved legal abilities to prevent potential terrorist actors from entering US customs. The executive order also expands cooperation and information sharing with foreign countries in order to enhance identification operation and detect potential threats traveling into the United States (Strategic Framework, 2019).

6.1.4 Preparedness and Hardening Defenses

The final counterterrorism initiative outlined in the National Strategy (2018) is the enhanced preparedness to a terrorist attack. This includes enhancing defensive measures such as cyber security and improving physical defensive for critical infrastructure. The initiative ensures that private and public companies are informed of any potential terrorist threats against their respective facilities in order to bolster defenses and cooperation (National Strategy, 2018). Providing state and local law enforcement with guidelines and exercises on how to respond to terrorist scenarios is also part of the preparedness initiative. The U.S. government plans to train emergency responders and all levels of the government on programs which focus on how to respond and recover from a terrorist attack (National Strategy, 2018).

6.2 U.S. Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Strategies

Although terrorism as a tactic has been perpetrated throughout history, the study of the radicalization process has become revitalized in academia following the 2005 London Bombings and the 9/11 terror attacks. Jihadist radicalization is not limited to one source of influence, but may occur through the internet, social media, prisons, neighborhood, in both domestic and foreign territories. The Obama administration adopted the term “counter violent extremism” (CVE) in 2011, establishing several programs which endeavor to prevent and respond to the explicit phenomenon of homegrown radicalization, and by association, terrorist threats (Bjelopera, 2014). Although counter violent extremism strategies are designed to target all types of extremist ideology in the United States, some programs have been criticized to almost exclusively focuses on radicalization inspired by Al Qaeda ideology. Many CVE strategies
endeavor to provide assistance to vulnerable individuals and communities, strengthen social resistance, and develop more research on the radicalization process (Bjelopera, 2014).

6.2.1 Increase Awareness and Social Resistance

Preventing radicalization and terrorism in the United States is a top priority for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The U.S. strategy to enlist community resources to contest violent extremism was first revealed in the 2011 White House Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States (Mirahmadi, 2016). The DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) provides support to the department's mission by sponsoring scientific data collection and analysis programs (Strategic Framework, 2019). Empirical data on behavior research conducted by the S&T revealed that providing education to the public on early indicators and sign of radicalization is the “best foundation for preventing terrorism” (“Strategic Framework”, 2019). In the Strategic Framework (2019), the DHS focuses on providing awareness briefings, and outreach programs in order to assist social workers, teachers, friends, and family on the signs of radicalization and how to respond to incidents of radicalization. The partnership prioritizes community awareness and education by disseminating portals and databases on past investigations of radicalization cases conducted by the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnership (OTPP) was established in 2017 in order to support educational programs which teach community leaders the precursors of radicalization, as well as ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors experienced throughout the process. Behavioral research conducted by the S&T indicates the need to implement youth resilience programs, designed to influence individuals throughout their adolescence. The Strategic Framework (2019) achieves this increase of awareness and resilience by forming partnerships with community leaders and key stakeholders, as well as creating a standardized approach to radicalization awareness briefings. These positive relationships between key stakeholders and the DHS hope to improve the exchange of information for prevention and protection missions. The initiative strengthens and connects civil partners with intelligence and law enforcement agencies in order to shield vulnerable communities from extremist ideologies (National Strategy, 2018).
6.2.2 Recidivism Reduction Programs in Correctional Facilities

The DHS strategy to counter violent extremisms also focuses on incarcerated individuals, implementing and developing awareness briefings and reintegration programs for correctional facilities. The strategy aims to coordinate with the Department of Justice in order to disseminate intelligence and information regarding the best practices to correctional official on the threat of terrorism in the United States (“Strategic Framework”, 2019). These recidivism reduction programs equip incarcerated individuals and correctional officers with information about facilitators and identifiers associated with the radicalization process. The strategy also supports studies on recidivism programs and the impact of incarceration on an individual’s vulnerability to radicalization (Strategic Framework, 2019).

6.2.3 Disinformation Campaigns and Online Influence

The Strategic Framework (2019) also focuses on countering the influence of extremist ideologies on the internet and disinformation campaigns which meticulously select information with the intention of misleading vulnerable individuals. The strategy endeavors to strengthen relations between the DHS and private companies in the technology sector, including internet providers and social media companies. The strategy aims to raise awareness and disseminate information on how to recognize and react to violent extremist content shared on their platforms (“Strategic Framework”, 2019). The initiative also endeavors to equip social media companies with “counter-messaging campaigns”, blocking messages of religious tenants which condone methods of extreme violence and championing moderate and credible voices (“Strategic Framework”, 2019). The DHS also strives to promote initiatives which raises awareness on media literacy and disinformation campaigns created to promote the mobilization of violence. The DHS will also support state, local, territorial, or tribal actors if a terrorist disinformation campaign targets a specific community in order to mitigate the effects on the community.

6.2.4 Research and Evaluation

The Federal government also plays a significant role in data collection, analysis, and dissemination in the field of terrorism. Understanding the nature and scope of the homegrown jihadist threat is instrumental in the development and evolution of guidelines, and training programs for government and law enforcement officials (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017). The strategy outlined by the DHS is to provide data, funding, and support to
related research projects in order to implement more effective CVE and counterterrorism strategies. The CVE task force, a permanent interagency task force hosted by the DHS, was created by the DHS in order to support ongoing and future research on CVE as well as liaise with researchers. The task force has supported 98 CVE related research projects since 2011 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2017). The task force also focuses on preventing duplicate studies, maximizing research on various topics within the scope of counter violent extremism. The objective of the task force is to also evaluate current CVE programs in order to determine the effectiveness, and if programs require adaptation. The task force continued support, research, and evaluation on intervention programs, national surveys, and recidivism reduction programs in order to better understand the effect of radicalization and the mobilization to violence (Jackson, 2019). Similar to the CVE task force, the National Institute of Justice’s Domestic Radicalization to Terrorism has also developed prevention and intervention strategies by conducting and supporting empirical studies on the effect of radicalization to terrorism in the United States. Established in 2012, the institute has provided grants to related studies across the country, identifying and analyzing substantial behavioral and psychological indicators in order to reveal overlapping facilitators between radicalization models (Challgren et al., 2016).

6.3: Sub-conclusion

This chapter introduced and began to answer the second part of the research question, identifying post 9/11 counter-terrorism and counter violent extremist strategies focused on mitigating the homegrown jihadist radicalization and terrorist threat in the United States. The chapter discusses the robust counter-terrorism apparatus which was constructed immediately following the September 2001 terror attacks and the progression of policies as threat assessments changed its focus from the foreign terrorism threat to the homegrown jihadist terrorism threat. The chapter then analyzes the current CVE initiatives outlined in the DHS 2019 Strategic Framework, addressing four core objectives: increasing civil awareness, implementing recidivism reduction programs in correctional facilities, tackling the virtual threat and disinformation, and sponsoring future and on-going research projects.
7. From Radicalization to Counter-Terrorism

Understanding why an individual radicalizes in order to engage in violence is essential to the development of counterterrorism policies. However, when the focus of counterterrorism policies is prevention, rather than reaction, attention must be placed on the psychological transformation resulting from extremist ideologs. Since its inception in 2011, the federal government has devoted increasing support and funds to the research and development of CVE initiatives. The program focuses on vulnerable individuals and endeavors to increase resilience against extremist ideologies and the fundamental facilitators of radicalization. Based on available public information outlining existing CVE initiatives, counterterrorism strategies, and homegrown jihadist radicalization models, this thesis has established a credible data set for analysis. In the chapter below, a comparison is conducted between each radicalization model discussed in Chapter 5, in order to reveal similar facilitators or ‘pull’ factors of radicalization. Once these common facilitators are established, the chapter then analyzes how post 9/11 counter-terrorism policies discussed in Chapter 6 are based on these fundamental causes of homegrown jihadist radicalization. Finally, the chapter discusses the criticisms and impact caused by these CVE initiatives, ultimately failing to address the fundamental causes of homegrown jihadist radicalization.

7.1 Facilitator of Radicalization: Similarities Between Models

As an individual begins accepting the legitimacy of an extremist ideology or terrorist organization, various psychological transformations occur. Scholars often refer to this process as ‘radicalization’. This thesis reviews four homegrown jihadist radicalization models that were developed between 2007-2016. Although each model reveals insight into the radicalization process, two models (Sageman and Klausen) used some of the empirical data and results from the NYPD’s Radicalization Model (Silber & Batt, 2007) as a foundation. Each model offers a significant contribution to the field of homegrown jihadist radicalization. Demographic analysis on various data points reveals ‘push’ and ‘pull’ facilitators experienced by individuals throughout the radicalization process. Commonalities and discrepancies between radicalization models also reveals unique insight for future research on homegrown jihadist radicalization and the development of new counter violent extremism strategies. Based on a comparison between
these radicalization models, three key themes emerge between each model. The first similarity between radicalization models is the management of personal identity. Each radicalization model identified a self-identification phase which involved the psychological transformation of an individual’s identity. Unlike Silber and Bhatt, Sageman, Klausen, and Bakker acknowledge this self-identification phase as a shift in ideological beliefs for an individual. Sageman (2008) refers to this phase as “moral outrage” whereas Bakker (2007) refers to this period as “structural cause”. Klausen (2016) demonstrates this period of exploration and learning extremist ideologies in the pre-radicalization or ‘cognitive awakening’ phase. Cases across radicalization studies demonstrate a change in ideological belief or authority system, resulting in a personal identity change. The second similarity between radicalization models is the individual’s level of resilience during the radicalization process. Cases in each radicalization model (Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Sageman, 2008; Bakker, 2007; Klausen, 2016) revealed that individuals progress through the radicalization process at different rates, with some individuals stopping their radicalization all-together. Each study also reveals that individuals progressing through the radicalization process become increasingly resilient to de-radicalization and intervention strategies. This suggests that as individuals progress through the radicalization process, different strategies may need to be employed later in the process. The third major similarity supported by empirical data between studies is the role of group dynamics in the radicalization process. The radicalization models (Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Sageman, 2008; Bakker, 2007; Klausen, 2016) analyzed in Chapter 5 revealed that individuals belonging to a group were more likely to either accept other group members views or view group member (in-group) positively and others (out-group) negatively. Group dynamics play an integral role throughout an individual’s radicalization process, in both communities and correctional facilities. An additional research focus which emerges in each radicalization model’s data analysis is the role of the internet. In each case analyzed by Bakker (2007), Silber & Batt (2007), Sageman (2008), and Klausen (2016), the internet had some role in every terrorist plot since 2002, either through the cognitive awakening phase or the coordination and mobilization period of a terrorist attack. In the past decade the role of the internet has only recently emerged as a part of the radicalization process, enabling radicalized individuals to connect and share extremist ideologies with other individuals across the globe (King, 2011).
7.2 Counter Violent Extremist (CVE) Strategies Based on Facilitators

CVE programs are designed to educate and prevent radicalization before an individual engages in a terrorist act. Very few current CVE initiatives are based on common facilitators and ‘push’ factors of radicalization discussed in section 7.1. Presently, only one CVE initiative is based on a major fundamental cause of homegrown jihadist radicalization. The main counter violent extremist initiative which is based on a major fundamental cause of homegrown jihadist radicalization are the social awareness and intervention programs. These programs are designed to increase individual and community resilience to extremist ideologies. The programs are help provide interventions for individuals experiencing an identity crisis or ideological change. These intervention programs target individuals in the pre-radicalization or moral outrage phase. Social awareness programs also include inter-agency websites such as the FBI’s “Don’t Be a Puppet: Pull Back the Curtain on Violent Extremism” (2016) which focuses on educating teenagers on how to identify violent extremist ideologies and how to increase resilience to these messages. Since the internet play a role in almost every case of homegrown jihadist radicalization, CVE social awareness programs use the platform in order to educate vulnerable individuals (King, 2011).

7.3 Impact of CVE Initiatives

Despite the primary objective of CVE strategies, many current initiatives are not supported by empirical data, and are widely criticized by law-makers and advocacy groups as being dated, and discriminatory towards American-Muslim communities. Many CVE programs have been directly affected by budget cuts, resulting in dated strategies which do not focus on the evolving threat. Presently, there is no evidence that the CVE task force has engaged in any social awareness initiative which has helped communities become more resilient to extremist ideologies (Barbari, 2018). More broadly, CVE initiatives currently lack an empirical support on their effectiveness and there is no framework for evaluating these programs (Shcnzer & Eyerman, 2019). Recidivism reduction programs outlined by the DHS Strategic Framework (2019) have not been a top priority of the federal government.

One of the gravest flaws accredited to current CVE initiatives is the disproportionate focus on a singular threat and the lack of attention given by the federal government to public grievances. Although the DHS Strategic Framework (2019) strives to address the entire range of
violent extremist ideologies in the United States, current CVE initiatives prioritize programs which predominantly targets American-Muslim and American-Arab communities (Barbari, 2018). Various human-rights and community-based organizations issued memos in 2014 to the federal government expressing concerns and grievances caused by CVE programs (ACLU, 2014). Many critics cite these programs as the main cause for the increased hate crimes against American-Muslim’s and the rampant anti-Islamic rhetoric across the United States. Grievances raised by scholars and community leaders about the inadequacy of prevention and intervention programs have largely remained ignored in the Strategic Framework (2019). As a result, community leaders and stakeholders view CVE programs as illegitimate and damaging. The unintended consequence of these narrowly focused CVE programs is racial profiling and increased hate crimes against American-Muslims rise throughout the country (Barbari, 2018). Racial profiling has delegitimized CVE efforts while simultaneously, negatively affecting law enforcement effectiveness.

Despite the positive intention of CVE programs, the initiative has been accused of having an inverse impact on homegrown radicalization, even being cited by scholars and policymakers as a facilitator towards an individual’s radicalization process. The initiatives lacked clearly defined goals and definitions of key terms such a ‘radicalization’ and ‘extremisms’ (Schenzer, 2019). The initiative also fails to target group dynamic drivers as there is no evidence that recidivism reducing programs have been implemented in any correctional facility. CVE initiatives also currently does not have a framework for targeting individuals late in the radicalization process, neglecting attention on two major common facilitators between radicalization models. The lack of transparency, and evaluation frameworks combined with civil rights concerns reveals that CVE programs have innate strategic flaws and requires massive mortifications in order to properly address the homegrown threat.

7.4 Sub-Conclusion

This chapter answers the research question by first establishing the commonalities between the four radicalization models discussed in chapter 5. The three similarities existing between radicalization models are experienced identity crisis, group dynamic, and resilience to deradicalization as an individual progresses through late stages of radicalization. The chapter then assess if, and how, any of the four current CVE initiatives are based on these three fundamental causes experienced through the radicalization process. Finally, the chapter then discusses the impact of these CVE initiatives on counterterrorism and the public revealing that
recent CVE initiatives predominantly target American-Muslim communities, resulting in stigmatization, racial profiling, and even developing into a driver for radicalization.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

Many scholars and politicians have regarded the events perpetrated on September 11, 2001 as the most important and influential actions in the extensive history of terrorism. In the past decade, the threat of Jihadist homegrown terrorism, as discussed in section 4.2, has become a top priority in U.S. national security debates and terror snapshots. Through a systematic literature review of open source information, this thesis endeavored to answer the following questions:

8.1: To what extent and how have counterterrorism policies in post 9/11 America been focused on the fundamental causes of homegrown Jihadist radicalization?

Counter Violent Extremisms initiatives developed by the United States following the September 2001 terror attack exclusively focus on targeting American-Muslim communities. After analyzing and comparing radicalization models discussed in this thesis, the three major commonalities experienced by individuals during the radicalization process are identity crisis, role of group dynamic, and increased resilience to deradicalization during their progression. The only fundamental cause of homegrown jihadist radicalization which CVE initiatives target is the experienced identity crisis. Through increased social awareness and resilience, CVE programs endeavored provide information on moderate religious ideologies and promote practices in order counter extremist ideologies and assist individuals during a period of personal identity management. Outlined in the DHS Strategic Framework (2019), CVE’s strive to disseminate knowledge to communities about the drivers and indicators experienced during the radicalization process. Despite the significant research and funds devoted to the field of counter terrorism and CVE in the past decade, CVE programs have received substantial criticism, cited by scholars and policy makers to result in an unintended consequence which pushes individuals towards extremist ideologies.

8.1.2 How have these CVE initiatives impacted counterterrorism efforts?

Despite the significant research and funds devoted to the field of counter terrorism and CVE in the past decade, CVE programs have received substantial criticism, cited by scholars and
policy makers to result in racial profiling, stigmatization, and hate crimes. The unintended consequence of these CVE initiatives is an inverse effect, driving vulnerable individuals towards extremist ideologies. The initiative fails to provide community leaders and members such as parents, teacher, religious leaders, and councilors, guidelines on how to collaborate with law enforcement officials for the purpose of referring suspected individuals of progressing through the radicalization process or how to conduct independent interventions. Despite the commitment outlined in the Strategic Framework created by the DHS (2019), communities remain unequipped in terms of funding, resources, and knowledge on the facilitators and signs of an individual progressing through the radicalization process. Also, there is no evidence that recidivism reduction programs which focus on incarcerated individuals has been implemented. Grievances by community members have also been remained unnoticed by the federal government as there have not been significant changes in CVE strategies since they were implemented. The culmination of all these flaws had delegitimized counterterrorism and preventative efforts which endeavored to foster relationships with communities and increase resilience to vulnerable individuals across the United States.

The subsequent section presents a discussion, reflecting on the methodological limitation of the study and suggesting future research for the field of homegrown jihadist radicalization and counter violent extremism strategies.

8.2: Methodological Limitations

This thesis is subject to several limitations which must be acknowledge in order to interpret the collected data and analysis appropriately. The first limitation is the scarcity of empirical data and studies conducted on homegrown jihadist radicalization cases after 2017. Since the decrease in homegrown jihadist radicalization and jihadist terrorism cases in recent years, little to no empirical data has been conducted or released to the general public following 2017. Due to the evolving threat landscape of homegrown jihadist terrorism, research should be devoted to recent cases of homegrown jihadist radicalization and terrorism. This research could reveal new facilitators or drivers of radicalization, impacting current counterterrorism initiatives and intervention programs.

The second limitation which applies to this study and all other studies related to the field of terrorism is the significant dependence on open source intelligence and information.
disseminated by government agencies. Due to the sensitive nature of terrorism and counter-terrorism, collected information and reports generated by federal agencies are heavily evaluated, before being released to public domain. Information which is determined as classified, or sensitive by federal agencies is withheld from the public and only available to individuals possessing a security clearance. It is also important to consider that some studies and reports on homegrown terrorism and radicalization may over or under exaggerate data in advance personal agendas.

This study is also affected by the “dark figure” of terrorism. The “dark figure” is a term commonly used by sociologists and criminologists to refer to the number of crimes that are either unreported or undiscovered. Many terrorist networks possess communication encryption capabilities, evading detection from intelligence agencies, contributing to the “dark figure” of terrorism. Due to the scope of jihadist terrorism networks in the United States, many individuals that aid and abet perpetrators of terrorism through financial or physical means remain undiscovered and are therefore unreported. Other sympathizers which aid and abet perpetrators of terrorism or perpetrators themselves may be arrested for crimes unrelated to terrorism. Law enforcement agencies may arrest suspects of terrorism for other non-violent due to a lack of evidence. This technique is employed by law enforcement agencies in order to prevent an imminent terrorist attack. Although these individuals could potentially be categorized as homegrown terrorist, they are reported and classified for a different crime.

Since the data collection for this study is based on a systematic literature review, key word analysis was used and has several potentially negative drawbacks. Since the nature of the study significantly relies on a list of keywords in a particular year, the comparative weight of a particular topic can be affected by other authors that use comparable keywords to highlight a similar topic such as “jihadist”, “homegrown”, or “radicalization”. Although this potential issue can influence data collection throughout the study, the overall scope is still expected to be a realistic representation of literature since the issue applies to all articles analyzed. Other limitation which can negatively influence data collection is the misappropriation or failure to assign a keyword by authors, removing these studies from the scope of search.

A fourth limitation for this study is the extensive range of outlets for research on terrorism and counter-terrorism. Although this study is comprised of a large dataset, it is not all-inclusive. Data on terrorism and radicalization exists in books, volumes, and reports created by private intelligence collection departments. Silke and Schmidt-Parsen reveal in a study that
several of the most influential articles on terrorism do not appear in principle journals related to the field (Silke, 2017). Another limitation related to the study is the definitional issues of key terms. Defining what terrorism, homegrown, or radicalization is, and the elements required in order to be classified as such differs across studies. Limitations also exists across radicalization models. Researchers and policy makers acknowledge the practical challenges associated with the study of radicalization. As the root causes for an individual to enter and progress through the radicalization process is difficult to trace, researchers become reliant on whiteness testimony and information provided first hand by radicalized individuals. Since many radicalized individuals refuse to assist with research and information regarding their process of radicalization, primary source data is very limited.

8.3: Future Research

Since the phenomenon of homegrown radicalization is a relatively new field, and constantly adapting to the socio-political landscape, a significant amount of future research should be devoted to the development of updated homegrown radicalization models. This research should focus on the relationship between psychological changes and observable changes experienced by individuals as they progress through the radicalization process. These psychological and observable changes are instrumental in the development of effective counter terrorism and radicalization initiatives. Only recently have studies focused on the fundamental causes of homegrown terrorism and accompanying prevention strategies and therefore more empirical data is needed. As new U.S. counter violent extremism strategies are developed and implemented, future research should also analyze if cases of homegrown jihadist terrorism decrease or increase and which combination of programs or outside factors are responsible for this effect.

Further research should also be devoted to in-depth studies on the facilitators of radicalization, and the sequence of these facilitators an individual may experience leading up to, and throughout, the radicalization process. Although some radicalization models reveal cases of individuals stopping during the radicalization process, little research is devoted to why this phenomenon occurs. By identifying what these “push’ factors are, and when they are experienced in the radicalization process, could lead to the development of enhanced training for intervention programs.
Due to the limited information disseminated by the DOJ on its policies and programs, sparse open source information about the implementation and results of CVE programs exists. This limitation, combined with the current flaws of CVE initiatives, demand that research should also be devoted to studies on the effectiveness and impact of CVE initiatives. These studies should develop an evaluation framework based on empirical support in order to properly evaluate CVE initiatives and how these programs are affecting cases of radicalization. Whether CVE initiatives will be terminated or undergoes dramatic changes is still unknown. At the moment, the federal government has demonstrated little attention to the negative impacts and grievances produced by these CVE initiatives. Counter violent extremism programs have had a negative effect on radicalization, transforming into the very thing the initiatives set out to diminish. Only time will tell if the federal government will dedicate more attention to preventing radicalization and terrorism or eliminate prevention policies all together.
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18 USC Sec. 2339B., 01/05/2009
10. Appendix

Violent Extremist Attacks in the United States that Resulted in Fatalities Between September 12, 2001 to December 31, 2016

Table 1: Radical Islamist Violent Extremist-Motivated Attacks that Resulted in Fatalities, September 12, 2001, through December 31, 2016, as reported in the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Victim Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in state of Washington</td>
<td>2/16/2002</td>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Arizona</td>
<td>3/19/2002</td>
<td>Tucson</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Islamist violent extremist killed 2 at Los Angeles International Airport Ei Al ticket counter</td>
<td>7/4/2002</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>9/21/2002</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Montgomery, AL, 19 hours after attack in Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>9/21/2002</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Baton Rouge, LA</td>
<td>9/23/2002</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/2/2002</td>
<td>Wheaton</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/3/2002</td>
<td>Rockville</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/3/2002</td>
<td>Aspen Hill</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/3/2002</td>
<td>Silver Spring</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/3/2002</td>
<td>Kensington</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/9/2002</td>
<td>Manassas</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/11/2002</td>
<td>Spotsylvania County</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/14/2002</td>
<td>Fairfax County</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack</td>
<td>10/22/2002</td>
<td>Aspen Hill</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator kills 1 at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle</td>
<td>7/28/2006</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator kills 1 and injures 18 in hit-and-run driving spree in San Francisco and Fremont, CA</td>
<td>8/29/2006</td>
<td>Fremont</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT Trolley Square Shooting</td>
<td>2/12/2007</td>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator killed one army soldier outside of a military recruiting center in Little Rock, AR</td>
<td>6/1/2009</td>
<td>Little Rock</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nidal Malik Hasan kills 12 soldiers and 1 civilian at Fort Hood, TX</td>
<td>11/5/2009</td>
<td>Fort Hood</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev helped murder 3 persons four years before Boston bombing</td>
<td>9/11/2011</td>
<td>Waltham</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of ECDB Incident Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Number of Victim Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reshad Riddle, a convert to Islam, murdered his father</td>
<td>3/24/2013</td>
<td>Ashtabula</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston bomber brothers Tamerlan Tsarnaev and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev planted two bombs at the Boston Marathon, killing 3</td>
<td>4/15/2013</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsarnaev brothers shot and killed a Massachusetts Institute of Technology security officer</td>
<td>4/15/2013</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident 1 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed a man in a drive by shooting</td>
<td>4/27/2014</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident 2 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed 2 men in Seattle leaving a gay club</td>
<td>6/1/2014</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident 3 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed a man in a drive by shooting and killed a college student</td>
<td>6/25/2014</td>
<td>West Orange</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Nojan Sullivan, a convert to Islam, murdered his neighbor</td>
<td>12/18/2014</td>
<td>Morganton</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator opened fire on two military installations in Chattanooga, TN, killing 5</td>
<td>7/16/2015</td>
<td>Chattanooga</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino, CA shooting spree: Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik shot up office party, killing 14 and injuring 22</td>
<td>12/2/2015</td>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando Night Club shooting, Omar Mateen killed 49</td>
<td>6/12/2016</td>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Incidents: 23
Total Victims: 119