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Testing Radicalization Models in the ISIS-Inspired Landscape

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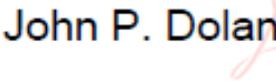
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TESTING RADICALIZATION MODELS IN THE ISIS-INSPIRED LANDSCAPE

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

Sara Jo Whipple

In Partial Fulfillment of the

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of

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Charles Town, WV

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

TESTING RADICALIZATION MODELS IN THE ISIS-INSPIRED LANDSCAPE

by

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The threat of a homegrown terrorist attack is the greatest threat facing the United States. Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)-inspired attacks are more destructive and more dangerous than ISIS-directed attacks because perpetrators are harder to identify. In this study, five cases were applied to the three models of radicalization to determine which best describes the phenomena and how effective they are to help authorities anticipate cases of homegrown radicalization. None of the models tested were flawless in predicting the radicalization process of would-be homegrown terrorists. Silber and Bhatt's (2007) model was the only model in which all elements of the model were observed in the five case studies. However, elements of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's (2009) model were easier to identify and categorize and would be the most effective tool for predicting radical behavior but it also requires family, friends, and alert community members to recognize the shift in behavior and report it. As ISIS becomes more savvy and encourages its followers to become better at evading authorities, these models will become less effective as tools to disrupt plots and prevent future attacks.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the last fifteen years, the threat of a homegrown terrorist attack has eclipsed that of another 9/11-style terrorist attack. Government officials, researchers, and law enforcement officers first began to recognize the threat of a homegrown terrorist attack in the early 2000s following September 11, 2001. Indeed, American lawmakers have debated the best approach to confront homegrown terrorism since September 11, 2001. However, since the start of the Syrian civil war, the threat has become more serious, and this new breed of homegrown terrorists is “even more frightening and unpredictable than its predecessors” (Sageman 2008b, 37).

Scholars have struggled to explain why people become radical and turn against their homelands. There is no one particular reason or cause to explain why a person chooses to become a terrorist. While personality traits, demographics, environment, and family situations can all contribute to the decision, every case and every decision is unique. The path toward radicalization is not linear; multiple factors interact to bring about the decision. Indeed, mosaic theory—taking small bits of information, like puzzle pieces, and organizing them to build a comprehensive picture that provides more value than the sum of the small, disorganized pieces—helps us conceptualize the path toward radicalization (Pozen 2009). Without personally asking terrorists why, and even they may not be able to point to one reason, we are left to examine individual characteristics of cases of radicalization for clues to assemble into the larger analysis to explain why terrorists choose to radicalize. Scholars have hypothesized the reason for turning to terrorism based on interviews with friends and family, analysis of social media and public communication, and court documents.

In recent years, there has been a particular focus on homegrown attacks inspired by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a Salafi jihadist group that emerged in the early 2000s in Iraq. Originally created by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the ISIS predecessor Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'al-Jihad, was the most violent component of the Sunni rebellion, and grew out of resentment and a feeling of underrepresentation of Sunnis in the Iraqi government. Later merging under al-Qai'da as al-Qai'da in Iraq (AQI), the group's primary goals were to expel US troops from Iraq and to establish a Sunni caliphate in Iraq. Between 2006 to 2009, the group conducted a massive suicide bombing campaign that primarily targeted Shia Muslims. The group rebuilt itself in 2013 with the help of the Syrian crisis next door, conducting dozens of attacks per month, and returned to its strongest levels since its peak in 2006 (Katzman 2015).

The group declared its Islamic Caliphate in June 2014 during the Islamic holiday of Ramadan and has issued a series of call to arms for its followers both to travel to Syria to participate in the fight and to conduct attacks locally against "infidels" where they live. For example, ISIS released kill lists in June and July 2016 including more than 8,000 individual American citizens, churches, and synagogue members intended to inspire lone wolf ISIS supporters to carry out attacks (Vocativ 2016). Likewise, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani in May 2016 encouraged supporters to launch attacks against enemies of the caliphate in Europe and the United States during Ramadan (McCurdy 2016). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), US security officials disrupted more than seventy ISIS-inspired plots in the United States in 2015; however, more needs to be done to identify would-be homegrown ISIS-inspired terrorists (Malone 2016). As of September 2016, ISIS-inspired attackers killed sixty-three people in the United States since ISIS declared its caliphate (Lister et al. 2016).

Experts argue that ISIS-inspired attacks can have a more destructive and enduring effect and be more dangerous than an ISIS-directed attack because perpetrators are harder to identify and the group does not have to expend resources to conduct an attack. No one needs to cross borders or transfer money, raising red flags. Instead, local citizens who may be better in tune with local law enforcement practices and who can better blend into local communities are financing and conducting ISIS-inspired attacks. The terror group acts as a force multiplier issuing propaganda support via the internet and provides moral support via chat rooms where needed. And the strategy has been effective. ISIS also has a sophisticated online recruitment apparatus that “includes tens of thousands of social-media accounts, videos, and instructional manuals, all intended to persuade Westerners to give up their comfortable lives, travel to the Middle East, and take up arms for the caliphate” (Schwartz 2015). Likewise, ISIS advises its followers to mask their communications between group members and with other like-minded individuals in the United States. FBI Director James Comey testified in July 2016 that a growing number of ISIS-linked plotters in the United States used encrypted communications, making it harder to detect and disrupt potential attacks (US House 2016a). According to a *New York Times* analysis (July 16), ISIS inspired or executed more than forty attacks on Western interests between September 2014 and November 2016.

ISIS uses social media to advocate for its followers conduct attacks against citizens of countries working with the US-led coalition against ISIS. Attacks in Europe and the United States in 2015 and 2016 catalyzed fears that ISIS was fostering, whether complicit or not, a new breed of lone wolf-style homegrown terrorists. According to the House Homeland Security Committee, thirty-six of the more than 116 ISIS-linked plots to attack Western interests since 2014 were within the United States (US House 2016b). Furthermore, homegrown radicalization

is likely to remain a “permanent feature of western societies that are undergoing profound social, political and economic transformations” (Neumann 2013, 893). Indeed, FBI Director Comey said in July 2016 that ISIS-inspired attacks represented the “greatest threat to the physical safety of Americans today” (US House 2016b).

Despite intense pressure and attention on the problem of homegrown radicalization in the West, terrorist attacks have continued to occur. Experts have studied and analyzed the processes of radicalization to better understand how these deadly attacks happen. In the end, humans are dynamic, behave differently, and are subject to multiple factors that influence their behaviors. At the same time, efforts to model these behaviors have proved inadequate because models are static and simplified versions of a complex issue, idea, or process. Furthermore, homegrown radicalization has and continues to evolve, making models of radicalization stale and out of touch with the behaviors they attempted to predict.

The frequency and lethality of ISIS-inspired homegrown terrorist attacks since 2014 necessitates that we confirm whether existing models continue to accurately and adequately represent the phenomena that they were designed to predict. Furthermore, these attacks demonstrated the need to better understand how the Syria problem affects national security and how it could incite the radicalization process among Muslims in the United States. The specific research question that will be addressed in this thesis is how well existing radicalization models explain cases of homegrown radicalization in the United States since 2014.

This thesis seeks to apply recent examples of homegrown radicalization in the United States to three current models of radicalization to evaluate how effective they are as tools to help authorities anticipate cases of homegrown radicalization in the United States. The radicalization

models from Silber and Bhatt (2007), Sageman (2008c), and Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) were tested in this study by applying the following five case of homegrown radicalization: Aurora, Illinois residents who plotted to join ISIS and to conduct an attack on a National Guard training facility in March 2015; the May 2015 attempted attack on a Garland, Texas “Draw Muhammad” cartoon contest; the June 2015 planned beheading in Boston of the organizer for the Muhammad cartoon contest; the December 2015 shooting at a San Bernardino County, California holiday party; and the June 2016 shootout at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

The three models of radicalization approach the problem from different perspectives, which will serve to illustrate the uniqueness of the problem set and offer evaluations of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the models. Silber and Bhatt’s model of radicalization consists of four linear and progressive stages. In contrast, Sageman’s approach incorporates four overlapping and general themes that influence each other and encourage an individual to become radicalized. Finally, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman propose a framework of six behavioral manifestations that can occur simultaneously or not at all.

This paper will not address cases of homegrown radicalization in Europe, including plots and attacks against European targets. The environmental factors in Europe and the United States are distinct and therefore the most appropriate model for the United States may not be useful for describing the phenomenon of homegrown radicalization in Europe. Likewise, this research will attempt to isolate the individual variables associated with each of the three models by excluding outside noise created by the two different environments in the United States and Europe.

Finally, this paper will address new avenues of research that complement the current study and would help address potential consequences of FBI involvement in radicalization prevention. Ultimately, the most appropriate and effective model depends on the practitioner, as law enforcement authorities have different insights and tools to combat the problem than friends and families.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since September 11, 2001 there has been an abundance of scholarly literature attempting to explain radicalization and broader terrorism trends. Scholarly literature on radicalization encompasses three main areas: why individuals radicalize, how the radicalization process develops, and how to counter the behavior. The literature consistently concludes that radicalization is hard to detect and that there is no single group of characteristics that comprise a would-be terrorist. Neither do terrorists have any certifiable psychological conditions that predispose them to becoming a terrorist, nor any pathway by which they became a terrorist (Danish Ministry of Justice 2007; Jenkins 2010; Silke 2003). However, scholars disagree on what role religion plays in radicalization, specifically whether it is the primary factor, as well as how it should be incorporated into the deradicalization process.

Europe and the United States face distinct threats emanating from the Syria refugee crisis. For Europe, geography necessitates a more active role in receiving Syrian refugees, and its open-door immigration policies and passport-free border crossings have eased the flow of Syrians into the region. The United States, on the other hand, is separated by distance and immigration barriers to entry that have allowed it to experience the crisis in a more virtual way. Likewise, scholars tend to distinguish between the United States and Europe in terms of the factors that contribute to radicalization. In contrast to many Muslim communities in Europe, Muslim communities in the United States tend to be very diverse and are more integrated than their European counterparts, largely because of the United States' positive receptivity to immigrants, well-enforced discrimination policies, and established belief that anyone can achieve the American dream (Presidential Task Force 2009).

At the most fundamental level, scholars are unable to agree on a universal term for the idea of radicalization. While commonly understood as the process of becoming extremist, two main ideas exist about radicalization. On one hand, the idea of cognitive radicalization, or a change in an individual's thinking, suggests a more intellectual process of embracing and espousing extremist beliefs. Behavioral radicalization, in contrast, can include radical thinking but also encompasses increasingly radical behavior or changes in patterns of observable behavior (Neumann 2013). Furthermore, the concept of radicalization is not necessarily bad, and has contributed to many positive elements of US history. However, the term is "inherently context-dependent" and will always require more than a superficial exploration (Neumann 2013). Finally, some scholars such as Borum (2011) argue that radical beliefs do not necessarily translate to radical actions, and the two elements of radicalization should be addressed separately. Indeed, most models of radicalization do not imply that radical ideas are the only explanation for why a person becomes a homegrown terrorist. However, in many cases, it is necessary to examine the ideological assumptions of individuals who use violence to achieve their goals to understand why some people do not take the same pathway (Neumann 2013). For the purposes of this paper, the radicalization process includes "the psychological transformations that occur among Western Muslims as they increasingly accept the legitimacy of terrorism in support of violent jihad against Western countries" (King and Taylor 2011, 603) and homegrown radicalization applies to those who undergo the process of radicalization in the country in which they plan or conduct an attack.

In the years following September 11, 2001, several prominent scholars developed models of radicalization to attempt to understand the motivations of homegrown terrorists, factors that influence the decision to radicalize, and characteristics of those undergoing the process of

radicalization. According to Lave (1975), models are simplified versions of the real event or process they describe, and multiple models exist to explain the same occurrence, often which consider different aspects of the same event. Some models such as those developed by Borum (2003), Moghaddam (2005), Precht (Danish Ministry of Justice 2007), and Silber and Bhatt (2007), are linear and progressive, suggesting that individuals undergoing the radicalization process pass through discrete phases of radicalization. Others contend that each case is unique and individuals progress along the spectrum of radicalization in different ways and instead propose examining observable changes in behavior (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman 2009) or the interaction of a series of factors (Sageman 2008c). Several scholars highlight a key assumption in most models of the radicalization process: most people that espouse radical ideology do not become violent and undertake terrorist acts (Borum 2011; Silber and Bhatt 2007).

Table 2.1: Models of Radicalization

Author	Type of model	Stages or Factors
Silber and Bhatt (2007)	Linear, progressive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-radicalization 2. Self-identification 3. Indoctrination 4. Jihadization
Sageman (2008c)	Non-linear, emergent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense of moral outrage 2. Specific interpretation of the world 3. Resonance with personal experience 4. Mobilization through networks
Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009)	Non-linear, emergent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam 2. Trusting only select religious authorities 3. Perceived schism between Islam and West 4. Low tolerance for perceived theological deviance 5. Attempts to impose religious beliefs on others 6. Political radicalization

Source: Data from King and Taylor 2011, 605; Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman 2009.

This paper focuses on three major scholarly studies, Silber and Bhatt (2007), Sageman (2008c), and Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009), which develop different frameworks for the phases of the radicalization process by examining previous cases of radicalization but all conclude that the reasons for and processes of radicalization are diverse and unique to each individual. However, changes in behaviors can provide indications of individuals' radicalization that can be used as predictors of future cases of radicalization. Brian Jenkins (2010, 7), an expert terrorism scholar and senior advisor at RAND Corporation, concludes that "while it is possible to identify the phases of jihadization, it is not possible to predict who will become a jihadist."

Model 1: NYPD's Four Phases of Radicalization

Perhaps the most prominent radicalization model is that of New York Police Department (NYPD) intelligence specialists Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt (2007). The two developed a four-stage model of radicalization based on extensive field research on six overseas terror plots as well as five domestic cases. They claim perpetrators demonstrated all four phases in each of the eleven cases they reviewed. Ideology is "the bedrock and catalyst for radicalization," which Silber and Bhatt (2007, 16) suggest is the key motivation, acting as a guide, illuminates key grievances, drives recruitment, and is the source of violent actions an individual decides to undertake. Each of the four phases are discrete and sequential; however, Silber and Bhatt clarify that not all individuals complete the four stages and some do not complete the process in perfect linear progression. Those that do, however, "are quite likely to be involved in the planning or implementation of a terrorist act" (Silber and Bhatt 2007, 6).

According to Silber and Bhatt's model, individuals otherwise described as "unremarkable" begin the process in the first phase of pre-radicalization, before they are exposed

to radical ideology. This first phase describes the pattern of behavior and the environment in which an individual is more vulnerable to embracing jihadist ideology. The scholars identify individuals living within Muslim diasporas, particularly males between the ages of fifteen to thirty-five from middle class families, as particularly vulnerable. Individuals also tend to be relatively educated, recent converts to Islam, little or no criminal history, and second or third-generation immigrants. These individuals then begin to explore Salafi Islam in the self-identification phase because of a catalyst or trigger. They are often at a crossroads in their lives and seek validation for the choices they made. They may experience a sense of moral outrage for a given policy and become exposed to social networks, religious figures, and internet sites that provide answers or explanations for their personal identity crisis. The person becomes more isolated from previous activities and family, and surrounds him or herself with likeminded individuals, may give up “Western” habits, start wearing traditional Islamic clothing and grow a beard, and become involved in social activism and or with a local Salafi mosque.

In the third phase, the indoctrination phase, individuals intensify beliefs and adopt the ideology as their own, and the phase culminates with the decision that violent action is the only way to further the Salafi cause. Individuals embrace the concept of jihad, the religious view that condones violence against anything un-Islamic. They may withdraw from the mosque and develop increasingly radical political views. Finally, individuals enter the radicalization phase in which members “accept their individual duty to participate in jihad” (Silber and Bhatt 2007, 7). Of the four phases, Silber and Bhatt define the last as the most difficult to detect and can occur quickly without warning. Individuals may travel abroad, initiate training and attack planning, and seek out literature to support their martyrdom. Silber and Bhatt conclude that there is consistency in behavior of homegrown radicals that can be used to predict future cases.

Model 2: Sageman's Four Themes of Radicalization

Proponents of character-based models emphasize the uniqueness of each individual's process of radicalization and have generally taken the rear-view empirical approach. Scholars examine cases of so-called "homegrown radicalization" looking for patterns in behavior that indicate characteristics of and steps toward radicalization. The most renowned example is that of forensic psychiatrist Marc Sageman (2008c), whose model of radicalization centers around four themes that he says can reoccur throughout the radicalization process. Individuals express a sense of moral outrage, perceive a war against Islam, observe activities that resonate with their own personal experiences, and begin to mobilize through their own networks to act on these grievances. Sageman underscores that the four factors are not steps along a process nor sequential, and that the crucial factor is the role of friendships and kinships in mobilizing young people. The key of the model is the interplay of the factors which drives a person to radicalize.

Sageman argues that a large share of arrested terrorists in Europe and the United States were radicalized in the West. Young Muslims "chasing dreams of glory by fighting for justice and fairness" drive the process of radicalization (Sageman 2008, 225). One of the major factors that Sageman observed among homegrown terrorists is a sense of moral outrage. The primary source of moral outrage is event or issue dependent, such as the Iraq war in the early 2000s, the Syrian civil war, or perceived mistreatment of Muslims in local communities. The second factor is the way in which an individual interprets world events and, specifically, how he or she interprets his or her moral outrage. A common interpretation of Western actions is as a war against Islam. Sageman underscores that the person's feelings about moral outrage are more important than how they think, and therefore discounts ideology as a driving force for radicalization.

The third factor, how the other factors resonate with an individual's personal experience contributes to their willingness to radicalize. On this point, Sageman highlights the differences in the United States and Europe. The myth of the United States as a melting pot creates the perception of inclusion rather than exclusion of Muslim immigrants. Likewise, the idea of the "American dream" runs counter to the interpretation of the world as a war against Islam. European Muslim immigrants tend to buy into the war against Islam viewpoint because they tend to be unskilled and perceive greater discrimination. Finally, the welfare policies in Europe have allowed more young people to not seek employment and provided them greater opportunities to think about jihad.

The last factor, mobilization through networks, used to be much more difficult than it is today. Online radicalization has replaced face-to-face meetings in which like-minded individuals discussed their views about perceived grievances and built up "groupthink" against the government or another target.

Model 3: Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's Behavioral Framework

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Laura Grossman's (2009) framework of six indicators of jihadist radicalization examines what they term as observable manifestations of the radicalization process. The authors' framework is innovative because it examines changes in behavior observed in over 100 case studies and relies on multiple sources of information and terrorists' own rhetoric when available. The framework gains credibility because Gartenstein-Ross, a self-professed former radical Islamist, has written more than twenty books on terrorism.

The first three of the six indicators are more difficult to observe, including adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam, trusting only select religious authorities, and perceived schism

between Islam and the West. The authors describe the first characteristic, adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam, as how an individual interprets what the Qur'an dictates for their rights and obligations. Those that believe in a legalistic interpretation adopt "a rules-based approach in which the Qur'an and Sunnah provide strict guidelines—not just for the practice of the faith, but also for virtually every aspect of one's daily life" (2009, 12). Characteristics include changes in dress and wearing a beard, as well as shifts in daily lives and habits to conform with conservative practices of Islam. The authors note that a legalistic interpretation of Islam can serve as a catalyst for other elements of the model. Likewise, individuals that demonstrate the second characteristic, trusting only select religious authorities, believe only the teachings of a small group of ideologically-rigid religious authorities. Authorities or family and friends could witness this change in behavior as individuals disavow leaders of a more liberal mosque in favor of more hardline leaders on the internet or a more radical mosque that advocates jihad. They may also look to a spiritual leader to interpret their faith and its relevance to how they live their lives. The third manifestation has to do with the idea that it is impossible for Islam and Western cultures to coexist. Individuals may attempt to physically isolate themselves from Western culture, or demonstrate or voice conviction that they can only be loyal to Islam, and may even disavow democracy on the grounds that it violates Islam. Individuals may also feel that they cannot have the same loyalties to another non-Muslim state or entity.

On the other hand, low tolerance for perceived theological deviance, attempts to impose religious beliefs on others, and political radicalization are more readily observable. Those that cannot tolerate an alternate interpretation of Islam may view deviance from their professed religious leaders as personal affronts and as infidels, including friends and family who are practicing Muslims. According to the authors, intolerance is usually directed at other Muslims

and expressed verbally, but can also include violent actions. Furthermore, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman indicate that intolerance needs to be an outward manifestation. The fifth characteristic, attempts to impose religious beliefs on others, includes outward attempts to force their views and version of Islam on others, most likely on friends and family. Finally, the authors include political radicalization as a behavioral characteristic in their framework because many of the homegrown terrorists in their study demonstrated the characteristic. Possible manifestations of this behavior could include expressing the view that Western powers are conspiring against Islam and are to blame for the transformation of the Muslim world.

Of the six indicators, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman found that radical political views was the most common indicator, even in the absence of other indicators, and therefore conclude that radical ideas are a prerequisite to radicalization. Likewise, religion is an important factor, whether from a spiritual advisor, mentor, or another religious figure to sanction behavior and violent actions, which the authors point out is the main divergence from other scholarly literature. Driving the model home, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman provide an extensive case study on al-Qa'ida terrorist Adam Gadahn, who radicalized in Southern California in the late 1990s.

Other Models and Explanations of Radicalization Processes

Other models of radicalization exist that provide insight into the radicalization process. Borum (2003), Moghaddam (2005), and Precht (Danish Ministry of Justice 2007) all built linear and progressive models that have similar features to Silber and Bhatt (2007). However, for the purposes of this study, the models were not specific enough to test using cases (Borum 2003),

not appropriate for the process of homegrown radicalization (Moghaddam 2005), or too similar to other models (Precht 2007).

Randy Borum (2003), a forensic psychologist and University of South Florida professor, first developed his conceptual radicalization model for the FBI to understand how individuals become extremists and how they grow to embrace extremist views. In the first stage, individuals identify an event or condition as incorrect or undesirable. Borum posited that an individual could begin to perceive that an economic or social factor, such as poor living conditions or lack of order or morality was undesirable. The next phase is a slightly more nuanced shift to the recognition that the event or condition is unfair or unjust. Individuals recognize that the condition in which they find themselves does not apply to everyone. In the third phase, target attribution, individuals direct those grievances against a target who they hold responsible for their perceived injustice. Individuals that progress to the last stage label the responsible actors as “evil.” The last step allows individuals to justify action against the target, allows them to dehumanize the target, and absolves the individual from responsibility for future actions to seek “justice” for those perceived victims.

Georgetown University Psychology professor Fathali Moghaddam’s (2005) model incorporates a psychological approach and provides a visual picture that other scholars lack to help conceptualize the radicalization process. In the model, individuals climb a metaphorical narrowing staircase, and the terrorist act is the final floor of the building. Individuals that reach the top of the building believe they have been deprived or unfairly treated and have no “effective voice in society, are encouraged by [terrorist group] leaders to displace aggression onto out-groups, and become socialized to see terrorist organizations as legitimate and out-group

members as evil” (Moghaddam 2005, 161). The key decision at each floor is whether the individual continues to feel a sense of perceived deprivation. The individual goes up a floor if he or she judges that the available opportunities fail to meet the person’s perceived needs. There are fewer and fewer options as individuals climb the staircase, and individuals are left with three options: self-destruction, inflicting violence on others, or both.

Published in the same year as the NYPD study, Tomas Precht (Danish Ministry of Justice 2007) developed a four-phase model similar to the NYPD study: pre-radicalization, conversion and identification with radical Islam, indoctrination and increased group bonding, and actual acts of terrorism or planned plots. Precht underscores that no single determinant factor exists that causes radicalization to progress to violent action. Instead, his model includes three classes of motivational factors: background, triggers, and opportunities. Individuals seek out ways to identify with a group, and may use religion to fulfill that or other goals. As with the NYPD study, Precht suggests that vulnerable individuals are looking for a cause to help cope with a personal crisis.

Conclusions

Despite years of research and intense focus on the study of radicalization and specifically on the processes that lead to radicalization, there is no clear answer to what drives a person to commit a terrorist act. Indeed, scholars are unable to agree on how to define radicalization. Furthermore, the processes are likely different depending on environmental conditions. Scholars such as Sageman (2008c) argue that Muslim communities perceive greater threats that motivate them to radicalize in Europe than in the United States.

In the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, scholars refocused efforts to understand these motivations. Of the dozens of radicalization models, several similar themes emerge. Individuals perceive a sense of relative injustice or deprivation, and may be outraged at this perceived injustice. As a result, they seek out some way to come to terms with it, whether via like-minded associates or religious figures. Over time, they slowly grow to accept the moral code of these figures or online teachings, and rationalize the use of violence on behalf of these new ideals. The process culminates with the decision that the only response is violence, whether against oneself or others.

The three models in this study attempt to describe the process but all fall short because the process is unique to each individual and the process continues to evolve over time. The concepts and indicators in each of the phases of Silber and Bhatt's (2007) model are useful for examining the process of radicalization. However, the model was published before the Syrian civil war and does not consider the effect of the war on the process of radicalization. It is also rigid and linear, and is not flexible to consider individual circumstances to radicalization. Likewise, Sageman's model does not offer any mechanisms or series of indicators to help identify would-be terrorists, but instead focuses on strategies that downplay thwarted attacks. Borum's model is loosely based on observations of individuals who underwent the radicalization process; however, the author himself later admits that it was a purely conceptual effort to assist law enforcement, and not intended to be used for academic or research purposes (Borum 2011). Furthermore, the model is too general to apply the case studies, particularly because the model relies on the nuanced transition of a person's moral outrage, and most cases of homegrown radicalization lack of data about an individual's thoughts and ideas. Finally, while visually useful, the last two floors of Moghaddam's staircase refer more to the process toward joining a

terrorist organization than becoming a homegrown terrorist. Moreover, the trend in lone wolf-style terrorist attacks also makes the model less practical. The concepts, however, provide a solid foundation for examining how and why individuals become terrorists, particularly the cognitive processes that one would undertake to arrive at the decision to conduct an attack.

While there is an abundance of conceptual models of radicalization, there are relatively few empirical studies on the topic. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's (2009) study was the first comprehensive empirical study examining homegrown radicalization in the United States and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, all of the models of radicalization were published prior to 2011 and all of the empirical research studies that addressed the radicalization process that the author could find were also published prior to this date. Fordham University (2016) has an ongoing examination of demographics of homegrown ISIS-inspired attacks, but does not address the radicalization process. The current study aims to fill the gap in empirical analysis and provide a much-needed test of existing radicalization models to evaluate whether they are effective predictors of the phenomena that they are modeled after.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The preceding chapter outlined some of the most widely regarded models of radicalization, including both linear and non-linear approaches to the radicalization process. While existing models are valuable for describing the phenomena of radicalization, the frequency and lethality of ISIS-inspired homegrown terrorist attacks since 2014 necessitates that we confirm whether existing models continue to accurately and adequately represent the phenomena that they were designed to predict.

Methodology

The specific research question addressed in this thesis is how well existing radicalization models explain cases of homegrown radicalization in the United States since 2014. The hypothesis of this study is: non-linear models are better predictors of the radicalization process because each case of radicalization is unique and there is no specific profile of would-be homegrown terrorists. The type of study, that of model testing, does not lend itself to dependent and independent variables. Instead, each of the five cases was applied to the three models of radicalization to determine which best describes the phenomena and how effective they are as tools to help authorities anticipate cases of homegrown radicalization in the United States.

The three models of radicalization tested in this paper were chosen for their relative applicability to the concept of homegrown radicalization as defined here. To reiterate, for the purposes of this study homegrown radicalization applies to those who undergo the process of radicalization in the country in which they plan or conduct an attack. The processes in the models of Silber and Bhatt (2007) and Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) clearly reflect the steps of a homegrown terrorist. Sageman's (2008c) model could be applied in either context,

homegrown terrorism or joining a terrorist group, but was chosen because Sageman directly addressed the shift in terrorism toward homegrown radicalization. Indeed, Sageman (2008a) wrote a book dedicated to the shift toward a leaderless jihad away from direct command and control of terrorist group leaders to attacks inspired by these groups. Borum's (2003) model was excluded because it is primarily conceptual and lacks detailed steps that an individual could undertake to self-radicalize. It also was not applicable to the cases because of the nuanced differences in the four phases. Precht's model (Danish Ministry of Justice 2007) was too similar to Silber and Bhatt's model, and the latter more directly addresses homegrown attacks in the United States, the focus of this paper. Finally, Moghaddam's (2005) model of a stairway to terrorism has appeared in previous studies evaluating models of radicalization (King and Taylor 2011), but the concepts are more appropriate for individuals joining a terror group than for the lone-wolf style attacks reviewed in this study.

This study employed Lijphart's (1971) comparative method to test the three models of radicalization because it allowed for a more in-depth examination of radicalized individuals. As Lijphart explained, the comparative method uses the same logic as using statistical methods to study a phenomenon but applied to a much smaller data set. Indeed, Lijphart (1971, 684) recommends using the comparative method "when the number of cases available for analysis is so small that cross-tabulating them further in order to establish credible controls is not feasible." Likewise, the topic of this study does not allow for the experimental method for a whole range of reasons. Using the comparative method allowed the author to limit the sample size but not so small that it excluded the ability to generalize across more than one case, as would have been the case with a case study approach. Despite more than forty cases of homegrown radicalization in

the United States since the start of the Syrian civil war, the sample size would have been too small for statistical methods.

The five cases were selected based on the amount of available information and those that provided some explanation why the terrorists chose the path of radicalization. Likewise, in each of the five cases, homegrown terrorists were born in and spent their formative years living in the United States. Lijphart (1971, 687) recommends selecting cases that have similar “important characteristics (variables) which one wants to treat as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables are concerned which one wants to relate to each other.” The five cases were selected from available and documented examples of homegrown radicalization in the United States in order to minimize dependent variables such as isolation and marginalization, which have been cited among Muslim communities in Europe. Furthermore, comparison across cases was limited to the specific variables in the three models in line with Lijphart’s recommendation to focus on key variables.

A methodological approach was used to categorize the data for each case by examining each model independently. Where numerous examples of a particular behavioral manifestation or of a phase in the radicalization process existed, the most poignant example for each individual was selected. The same level of rigor was employed in this study as was used in the original models. For example, an important consideration for testing Silber and Bhatt’s model was that each phase was discrete and progressive. As such, each example from the cases that demonstrated indicators or behaviors from one of the four phases needed to also follow the two prerequisites of the model. Likewise, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman set the evidentiary bar high for two of its characteristics, low tolerance for perceived theological deviance and attempts

to impose religious beliefs on others, which this study also employed to test the model. Finally, because of the similarity among characteristics of the three models, in many cases, specific behavioral examples were duplicated across models.

Data Collection and Limitations

This paper drew on scholarly journals, online newspapers, court proceedings, as well as databases of attacks compiled by universities and think tanks to assemble case studies. Among these data types, court records, particularly affidavits from FBI agents who investigated individuals in each of the cases, provided the most valuable information and detailed examples of manifestations of radical behavior. A wide net was cast to validate information from the cases, particularly from online newspapers, to overcome biases and inaccuracies. A bottom-up approach was used to build the cases, and to categorize the data during the model testing.

As noted above, one important consideration for this study was the limitations of the data. Terrorism research has inherent limitations in that there are always unanswered questions, and in many cases, terrorists are unavailable for a scholar to conduct primary research. Examining the radicalization process takes those limitations one step further in that researchers cannot enter the minds of terrorists to understand their motivations or state of mind during the decision-making process. As such, the biggest constraint for this paper is the lack of primary data on terrorists themselves. There were almost no publicly available personal accounts, and data was based instead on what was known from others who spent time with them. Likewise, this research relied on empirical data collected by others, such as news outlets in the absence of direct interviews. Furthermore, the publicly available information often does not provide the complete picture of the events and media portrayals can be sensationalized. In some of the cases, FBI and police

interviewed the individual or accomplices, and FBI affidavits of interviews with these individuals provided a more authoritative view of their mindset and beliefs at the time of the attack. However, even the FBI accounts were biased toward indictment, and inherently painted the individuals as criminals. Other times, court documents outlined the facts of the investigation and attorneys' statements provided a voice, though second-hand, of the terrorists themselves. Finally, because of long publication timelines, the five cases were too recent to be included in any scholarly or peer-reviewed journals.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

None of the three models of the radicalization process tested in this study were flawless in predicting the radicalization process of would-be homegrown terrorists. Of the three models, Silber and Bhatt's model was the only model in which all elements of the model were observed across the five case studies. It was the most intuitive model to apply to the five cases and the most useful for understanding the process; however, it was too rigid and individuals often did not discretely move from one phase to the next. Sageman's model was the most cumbersome to apply because of the lack of specifics about each of the factors. The most valuable from a forward-leaning preventative perspective was Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's model because the six factors included outward behaviors that are visible by law enforcement and by family and friends. However, some characteristics of the model were too similar to tease out and manifestations overlapped in several cases.

While the three models differ in approach, specificity, and progression, there were several common themes across the models. Two of the three models included an idea that the individual experiences a sense of moral outrage. Sageman's model includes moral outrage as a primary component and Silber and Bhatt include it among manifestations of the second phase, self-identification. Likewise, two models included political radicalization as an important indication, those of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman and Silber and Bhatt (as part of the indoctrination phase). Elements of Silber and Bhatt's self-identification phase included a more legalistic interpretation of Islam (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman), such as a more conservative outward appearance. Finally, the idea of a war against Islam is included within Sageman and Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's models. Therefore, examining the three models from a more holistic approach suggests that adopting a more legalistic interpretation of Islam, perhaps as a

result of moral outrage or because of a perceived war against Islam, could lead to an outward expression of more radical political views and perhaps self-isolation as he or she begins to limit the circle of trust.

The method of testing these models was inherently artificial because of the rear-view approach to examining these cases. Likewise, elements of the models that required insight into the individuals' thoughts or views about US policy or religion were inherently more difficult to test. That said, manifestations of any of the stages or factors of the three models are unlikely to provide enough evidence that an individual is radicalizing. Instead, law enforcement needs to examine using a holistic approach that often requires time and resources that are in short supply.

The FBI was involved in four of the five cases before the attacks occurred or the plots were disrupted. Informants were used in two of the cases, Aurora and Garland; however, the informant with access to Garland attackers Simpson and Soofi was unaware of the timing of the attack and unable to disrupt it. The FBI was actively investigating individuals in the Boston plot and able to disrupt it. Likewise, the FBI had investigated Omar Mateen, the Orlando nightclub shooter, twice before the attack, but closed both investigations without incident. The FBI post-attack investigation into the San Bernardino attackers revealed previous plotting and links to others who the FBI had arrested in 2012. Farook likely changed his behavior to maintain a lower profile and evaded detection for another three years.

Importantly, FBI and other law enforcement actions over the last fifteen years since September 11, 2001 also helped educate would-be homegrown terrorists to improve evasion tactics. They now use private communication means, refrain from posting radical views on social media (and those that do use aliases), and hide radical views from friends and family. For

example, most of the individuals in this study did not outwardly project radical thoughts for friends and family to see. Furthermore, the controversial practice of using FBI informants also may contribute to radicalization and push individuals down the process of radicalization. For example, in the Aurora case, both Edmonds cousins expressed a willingness to join ISIS and conduct an attack, but the FBI informant was the one who encouraged Hasan to travel, provided advice on the best route, and also recommended that the cousins visit the Joliet armory to conduct surveillance.

Table 4.1: Results of Model Testing

	Aurora	Garland	Boston	San Bernardino	Orlando
Silber and Bhatt					
Pre-radicalization	√	√	√	√	√
Self-identification	√	√	√	√	√
Indoctrination	√	√	√	√	√
Jihadization	√	√	√	√	√
Sageman					
Sense of moral outrage	√	√	√	√	
Specific interpretation of the world	√	√	√	√	√
Resonance with personal experience	√	√	√		
Mobilization through networks	√	√	√	√	√
Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman					
Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam	√	√	√	√	
Trusting only select religions authorities	√	√	√	√	
Perceived schism between Islam and the West	√	√	√	√	
Low tolerance for perceived religious deviance		√	√	√	
Attempts to impose religious beliefs on others	√			√	
Political radicalization	√	√	√		√

SELECTED CASES OF HOMEGROWN RADICALIZATION

Aurora, Illinois: Cousins Hasan and Jonas Edmonds (22 and 29 respectively at the time of their arrests on March 25, 2015) plotted to have former Army National Guardsman Hasan join ISIS in Syria and for Jonas to attack the Joliet National Guard training facility. Both Jonas and Hasan are US citizens that grew up in Aurora, Illinois. Both initially pleaded not guilty but subsequently changed their pleas to guilty. In September 2016, Hasan received a 30-year sentence and his cousin Jonas received 21 years (Schutle 2016).

Garland, Texas: On May 3, 2015, Nadir Soofi (34) and Elton Simpson (31) attempted to storm an event in Garland, Texas featuring provocative cartoons of Muhammad. Wearing body armor, the pair arrived at the Curtis Cullwell Center bearing assault rifles. An alert off-duty police officer injured the two men, stopping their attack, and a SWAT team killed them before there were any fatalities. In the hours following the attack, ISIS claimed responsibility, marking the first time it claimed responsibility for an attack on US soil (CBS News 2015b). Following the attack, Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem (43) was arrested and later convicted of plotting with Soofi and Simpson.

Boston, Massachusetts: On the morning of June 2, 2015, the FBI and Boston police approached Usaama Abdullah Rahim (26) to question him about his plans to behead a police officer on behalf of ISIS. Rahim reportedly drew a large military-style knife he had purchased to behead conservative blogger Pamela Geller, the organizer of the Muhammad cartoon contest in Garland. When asked to put down the weapon, Rahim told police to drop their weapons and approached them. Officers retreated and fired their weapons, killing Rahim. Over the course of the investigation, police and FBI identified and arrested two others, David Daoud Wright (25), Rahim's nephew, and Nicholas Alexander Rovinski (24), who had been conspiring with Rahim to provide material support to ISIS and to commit attacks and kill individuals on US soil on behalf of ISIS since May 2015. In September 2016, Rovinski pleaded guilty to all charges which carries a minimum sentence of 15 years (Valencia 2016).

San Bernardino, California: Syed Rizwan Farook (28) and his wife, Tashfeen Malik (29) brutally gunned down 14 people on December 2, 2015 at a holiday party for San Bernardino County, California health workers. The couple left a six-month-old baby with Farook's mother the morning of the shooting. They met on an online dating site, and in person in 2013 in Saudi Arabia where the two were for Hajj. Enrique Marquez Jr. (24) has also been implicated alongside Farook. While it does not appear that Marquez was directly involved in the San Bernardino shooting, Farook and Malik used weapons that Marquez bought for Farook for attacks the two men planned in 2012.

Orlando, Florida: The June 12, 2016 attack on an Orlando, Florida gay nightclub carried out by Omar Mir Sidique Mateen (29) was the deadliest mass shooting to date in modern US history. Mateen regularly attended a local mosque and was married with a three-year-old son. His first marriage failed when his wife left him in 2011 alleging physical and emotional abuse (Peralta 2016). During the siege in which Mateen killed 49 people, he called 9-1-1 to pledge his allegiance to ISIS (Zambelich and Hurt 2016).

The four stages of Silber and Bhatt’s (2007) linear and progressive model of radicalization were clear for many of the individuals in the five case studies. Some elements of the phases, however, did not occur in linear progression as the model dictates. Likewise, in some cases it was not possible to distinguish discrete shifts from one stage to the next. Rather, individuals displayed behaviors that overlapped two stages or shifted back and forth before clearly demonstrating behaviors consistent with the next stage in the model. Of the three models, this model was the easiest to observe the progression of an individual’s radicalization and for understanding the process. Therefore, it has the most utility for practitioners and law enforcement officers to better understand the enemy, particularly if employing informants to penetrate a group or befriend an individual undergoing the radicalization process. The major shortcomings, however, are that it is too rigid to accurately represent the individuality of each case and that authorities often lack big pieces of the puzzle to be able to accurately determine which phase of the model a suspect is at.

Table 4.2: Silber and Bhatt’s Four-Phase Radicalization Model

Pre-Radicalization	Characteristics and environment prior to initiating the radicalization process: Individuals unremarkable; live, work, or socialize within diaspora communities; men 15 and 35; converts to Islam; middle-class.
Self-Identification	Individuals at cross roads, suffering identity crisis, or experiencing moral outrage. Influences include family, friends, religious leaders, internet. Indicators: Exploring Salafi Islam and attending Salafi mosque; outward signs of conservative dress and facial hair
Indoctrination	Individuals wholly adopt Salafi ideology and accept jihad call for action. Indicators: Withdrawal from mosque and politicization of views
Jihadization	Initiate operational planning or join terrorist group.

Source: Silber and Bhatt (2007)

During the first phase of Silber and Bhatt’s (2007) model, pre-radicalization, all of the twelve individuals in this study were Muslim, and half of the group were converts. Several individuals had good jobs, including Syed Farook, a county health inspector, and Hasan

Edmonds, a member of the Illinois National Guard. All of the individuals were regular or occasional congregants at local mosques. All but one, Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, were between fifteen and thirty-five years old (see Appendix 2). In the self-identification phase, all of the individuals in the study explored Salafi Islam, however not all outwardly displayed signs of their radicalization. Usaamah Rahim, one of the three individuals in the Boston plot, became more radical and started following several radical Muslim clerics online. He grew a beard, began carrying the Koran and wearing traditional Islamic clothing, and began praying five times per day (WCVB 2016). Despite the FBI informant first-hand accounts, no publicly available information was uncovered indicating that any of the individuals began attending a Salafi Islam mosque.

Individuals in all five cases demonstrated some aspects of the third phase, particularly demonstrating politically radical views. The most poignant case of indoctrination was that of Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the San Bernardino shooters. Both progressed through the phase independently and well before the December 2015 attack. By late 2011, Farook was reading, listening to, and watching radical Islamic content, such as al-Awlaki's English language magazine *Inspire* (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Before moving to join Farook in 2014, Malik attended an 18-month course on the Qu'ran at al-Huda in Pakistan, which preaches a more conservative approach to Islam (Masood and Walsh 2015). However, she did not pray at the mosque with her husband. Another indicator of the third phase, withdrawal from the mosque, was observed in only one case, the Garland, Texas shooting, by Elton Simpson and Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem. Simpson stopped going to the mosque that he had previously practiced around 2010 and Kareem stopped attending services at the mosque about December 2014 (CBS News 2015a; Shoichet and Pearson 2015). Limited information precludes a complete picture and the others may have

stopped attending their mosques as well. Evidence of the fourth phase, jihadization, was clear in all five cases. All individuals initiated operational planning and seven of the twelve discussed joining a terrorist group. Simpson was somewhat unique among the individuals in the cases in that he likely was in the last phase for about six years and discussed plans to join two different terror groups before conducting the Garland attack.

Table 4.3: Sageman’s Themes of the Radicalization Process

Moral Outrage	Tied to specific event or foreign policy, such as Iraq war, the Syrian civil war, or perceived mistreatment of Muslims.
Specific Interpretation of Islam	Feelings or expressions of the world as a war against Islam.
Resonance with Personal Experience	Tied to an individual’s environment and relative acceptance, openness, and assimilation of Muslims in the area.
Mobilization Through Networks	Shift to online radicalization in place of face-to-face meetings as way to share perceived grievances and build “groupthink.”

Source: Sageman (2008c)

Contrary to Silber and Bhatt, the four elements of Sageman’s (2008c) model are not progressive and can overlap and influence each other. Court records and press reports suggest that individuals in all cases except Omar Mateen expressed some form of the first element, moral outrage. A majority expressed support for ISIS via social media, as well as to FBI informants. For example, all three individuals in the Boston case expressed support for ISIS and against the United States’ role in trying to stop ISIS from building a caliphate. Rovinski said he supported violent resistance against “crusader governments,” and he was in favor of ISIS’ well-publicized beheadings (Levenson 2015). Likewise, individuals in all cases expressed some indications of a perception of a war against Islam. For example, during conversations with an FBI informant in 2009, Simpson said that non-Muslims were fighting against Allah and that his taxes were going to support infidel powers (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). Court cases and press reports, however, did not provide much insight on how much the perception of war against Islam resonated with the

individuals' personal experiences. Disagreements over religion was among the reasons for Garland attacker Nadir Soofi's divorce and subsequent custody battle. In the fourth area, mobilization through networks, all of the individuals relied on the internet to share views with like-minded extremists, but some also held face-to-face meetings with co-conspirators. Two of the Boston plotters, Wright and Rovinski, met via Facebook. Rahim and Simpson were in direct contact with an ISIS hacker via Twitter.

Table 4.4: Characteristics of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's Radicalization Model

Adopting a Legalistic Interpretation of Islam	Rules-based approach in which the Qur'an and Sunnah provide strict guidelines for the practice of the faith, and virtually every aspect of one's daily life.
Trusting Only Select Religious Authorities	Trust only interpretations of select, ideologically rigid religious authorities.
Perceived Schism Between Islam and the West	Impossible for Islam and Western cultures to coexist.
Low Tolerance for Perceived Theological Deviance	Inability to tolerate alternate interpretation of Islam; may view deviance as personal affronts and as infidels, including friends and family who are practicing Muslims.
Attempts to Impose Religious Beliefs on Others	Imposing legalistic beliefs on family, friends, or acquaintances.
Political Radicalization	View that Western powers conspired against Islam; Muslims worldwide lost their faith and only response is military action.

Source: Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009)

Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's (2009) framework identifies six manifestations of behavior common among individuals in the process of radicalizing. Several of the manifestations are similar to those of the two preceding models. Of the five cases, Orlando shooter Omar Mateen demonstrated the fewest manifestations of the framework. Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam was also observable in the self-identification phase of the NYPD model. Elements of this behavior were observed four cases, though some more pronounced and visible than others. For example, all three men in the Boston case wore beards. Rahim and Rovinski wore traditional Islamic clothing, and Rahim went from praying once to five times per day

(WCVB 2016; CBS Boston 2015). Likewise, in four of the five cases, at least one of the individuals expressed some shift to more extreme religious authorities. Garland attacker Soofi said he was inspired by al-Awlaki and all three followed ISIS propaganda online and had watched videos since at least 2014 (Serrano 2015; *US v. Kareem* 2015).

Both the NYPD and Sageman models have similar elements to the third element, perceived schism between Islam and the West. Individuals in four of the five cases displayed manifestations of this belief. For example, Simpson denounced efforts to bring democracy to the Middle East, suggesting the two were incompatible (*US v. Simpson* 2010). Given the high evidentiary bar for low tolerance for perceived theological deviance and attempts to impose beliefs on others, the former was present in only three cases and the latter in only two of the five cases. As with many of the elements of the three models, data for the low religious tolerance primarily came from FBI affidavits. For example, Rovinsky told the FBI that Muslims who do not embrace jihad as part of their religion are not true Muslims and do not adhere to the word of Allah. He included his family in that category (*US v. Wright* 2015b). The most poignant example of imposing beliefs on others was that of Farook and his neighbor Enrique Marquez. Farook introduced Marquez to Islam in 2005 and helped him convert in 2007 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). They prayed together and discussed Islam and by 2007 were discussing radical Islam. Farook introduced Marquez to radical Islamic propaganda including to al-Awlaki in 2010 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Together the two began plotting an attack in Riverside and Farook convinced Marquez to purchase weapons and supplies on his behalf (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Finally, consistent with Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's findings, individuals in four of the five cases expressed some form of radical viewpoints. Based on available information, Farook and Malik were the most guarded in publicly expressing their political views.

Examining how each of the three models explained the process of radicalization for individuals in the five cases is also instructive. There was no clear model that best explained the processes of radicalization of all individuals. Instead, the best fit depended on individuals' outward behavior and available information, particularly data from statements to FBI or that of informants.

Aurora, Illinois

The patterns of behavior of Hasan and Jonas Edmonds closely followed the three models of radicalization. Of the three, Silber and Bhatt's model most clearly demonstrated the progression of their radical behavior. For example, during the pre-radicalization phase, Hasan Edmonds lacked positive parental role models. Both Hasan and his cousin converted to Islam at a young age. Jonas served five years in prison for attempted armed robbery and was released in 2010 (Meisner, Wurst, and Ziezulewicz 2015). Hasan began showing signs of the self-identification phase after the FBI took an interest in the duo. He told an FBI undercover officer that he stopped following a Sheik online when the man preached against jihad and tried to dissuade his followers from engaging in jihad (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Jonas wore a long beard, but neither dressed in traditional Islamic attire. Both men probably advanced to the indoctrination phase after beginning to follow ISIS' teachings in June 2014. By December 2014, they began communicating online with FBI employees and confidential sources who they believed were ISIS fighters and sympathizers to join ISIS (*US v. Edmonds* 2015b). Hasan purchased a plane ticket on March 13 and was arrested at Midway Airport attempting to travel to Syria to fight on behalf of ISIS.

The data painted a more imprecise picture of the radicalization process by applying Sageman's methodology. Both clearly disagreed with US policy in the Middle East and specifically with the treatment of Muslims in Syria (moral outrage). They also appeared to embrace the idea of a war against Islam. Both expressed a desire to relocate their families to the Middle East to get away from the apostate US government. To some extent, Hasan's troubled childhood probably provided a means for resonance with personal experience. Both cousins converted to Islam seeking identity and a sense of unity (Meisner, Wurst, and Ziezulewicz 2015). Hasan posted about French soldiers deserting the military to join ISIS, which probably resonated with him as a soldier himself (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Finally, the last factor, mobilization through networks, was the most visible, particularly because of affidavits detailing the cousins' relations with FBI informants and undercover officers. From January to March 2015, Hasan and Jonas communicated online with FBI employees and confidential sources who they believed were ISIS fighters and sympathizers to join ISIS (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

As noted at the outset, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's framework was the most effective for identifying behaviors during the individuals' radicalization. The first characteristic, adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam, was the most illustrative of the fourteen elements across the three models. For example, Jonas wore a beard and professed his life to Allah. He told an informant that the best Muslims were the mujahedeen, and he was prepared to be one (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Hasan told the FBI undercover officer that it was his duty to support ISIS or be martyred in the attempt. He also stated "I pray to just one time step foot in the land ruled by the law of the Qur'an but I am content to fight and die here in the cause of Allah wherever the target is set and the order is given" (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Jonas also reportedly imposed his religious beliefs on Hasan, and according to Hasan's attorney, Hasan would likely have continued as an

honorable member of the military had Jonas not influenced him (Meisner 2016). Consistent with Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's study, both cousins displayed outward political radicalization. Both publicly supported ISIS and clearly disagreed with US policy in the Middle East and specifically treatment of Muslims in Syria.

Garland, Texas

Silber and Bhatt's model was somewhat clumsy to apply to the three individuals in the Garland case, largely because the three men entered the phases at different times. The three men's pre-radicalization environments were also different. Two of the three, Simpson and Kareem, were converts and had no apparent overseas exposure, while Soofi was raised Muslim and lived abroad in Pakistan for six years. Details about Soofi's life suggest he probably shifted to the self-identification phase sometime after dropping out of college in 2003. His business and marriage failed and he had been frustrated by the lack of access to his child (Wake and Ahmed 2015). Soofi and Kareem probably entered the indoctrination phase sometime in 2014 when the three started watching jihadi propaganda and torture videos (Serrano 2015). For his part, Simpson told an FBI informant in July 2007 that Allah loved jihadis that fought and made sacrifices, and that the ultimate sacrifice was to martyr oneself (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). Whereas Soofi and Kareem began the last phase in mid-2014, Simpson probably entered the last phase about 2009. Beginning in May 2009, Simpson discussed going to Somalia to join al-Shabaab with an FBI informant (*US v. Simpson* 2015b).

As with the Aurora case, identifying elements of Sageman's model in the Garland case was imprecise. Kareem, Simpson, and Soofi since 2014 had expressed moral outrage for US military actions in the Middle East (*US v. Kareem* 2015). As noted earlier, Simpson was tired of

living under “non-Muslims” (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). He felt that non-Muslims were fighting against Allah and that his taxes were going to support infidel powers (specific interpretation of the world). The war against Islam may have resonated with Simpson and Kareem, who were converts to Islam. Soofi struggled with his religion as well, after moving back to the United States from Pakistan after high school (Fox News 2015b). All individuals showed efforts to mobilize via the internet. Leading up to the attack, Simpson communicated with an ISIS hacker and asked people to follow the hacker on Twitter. In private discussions, Simpson and the hacker discussed the “Draw Muhammad” contest and the hacker advocated for attacks similar to the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, France (McLaughlin 2015).

The three men demonstrated five of the six characteristics of the Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman framework. All three men’s social media pages reflected strict devotion and legalistic interpretation of Islam (*US v. Kareem* 2015). Signaling a limited group of trusted religious authorities, all three were not frequent attendees at the mosque and preferred ISIS propaganda online (Tracy 2015). Again, Simpson demonstrated the third and fourth elements, perceived schism between Islam and the West and low tolerance for perceived theological deviance, clearly in discussions with an informant. He denounced efforts to bring democracy to the Middle East, suggesting the two were incompatible and mentioned he could not live under non-Muslims any longer (*US v. Simpson* 2010). There were no indications that any of the three men attempted to impose beliefs on an outsider. Finally, Simpson expressed support via social media for ISIS and reposted ISIS videos. Likewise, Soofi had strong opinions about the Middle East for a long time and expressed strong political views on Facebook (BBC 2015).

Boston, Massachusetts

As with the Garland case, individuals in the Boston case exhibited all the variables of the Silber and Bhatt and Sageman models, and five of the six characteristics of the Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman model. Data from court documents and press reporting detailed behaviors consistent with the self-identification and jihadization stages of Silber and Bhatt's model; however, there were no clear indications of the indoctrination phase. Rahim grew up in Boston except for one year of high school in Saudi Arabia. Importantly, Rahim struggled with his own identity as a teenager and reportedly hated his first name and preferred to go by his last name because of the negative association with Usama bin Ladin (WCVB 2016). For his part, Rovinski grew up in Warwick, Rhode Island and converted to Islam in 2013. Transitioning to the self-identification phase, in 2009 Rahim began using his first name again, grew a beard, began carrying the Koran and wearing traditional Islamic clothing, and began praying five times per day (WCVB 2016). By February 2015, the trio had become indoctrinated. Wright convinced Rahim and Rovinski to follow ISIS and it was after that point that the three men began discussing ways to kill infidels in the United States (WCVB 2016). Almost immediately, Rahim was in direct communication with ISIS members, and was also in direct communication with ISIS hacker Junaid Hussain, who told him to kill Geller. Wright also downloaded a manual on building a sleeper cell in the United States (WCVB 2016).

The four elements of Sageman's model were visible based on available data. All three individuals expressed support for ISIS and against the United States' role in trying to stop ISIS from building a caliphate. Rovinski said he supported violent resistance against "crusader governments," and he was in favor of ISIS' well-publicized beheadings (Levenson 2015).

Rahim's world view as a war against Islam was clear in a conversation he had with an old friend. He told her that freedom of speech in the United States was only on Western terms and true Muslims left punishment to Allah (Zalkind 2015). As with other cases, resonance with personal experience was inferred based on Rahim's struggle with using his first name. All three men regularly communicated with each other via social media. Wright met Rovinski via Facebook and they communicated with ISIS members via the internet as well (*US v. Wright* 2015b). The three men also conducted internet searches on how to build weapons and becoming a sleeper cell in the United States (*US v. Wright* 2015a).

As with the other cases, elements of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's were more readily identifiable. All three men wore beards. Rahim and Rovinski wore traditional Islamic clothing, and Rahim went from praying once to five times per day (WCVB 2016; CBS Boston 2015). When the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood were not conservative enough, Rahim and Wright branched out on their own. Rahim became more radical during his time in Miami and followed several radical Muslim clerics online (Bidgood and Phillips 2015). In line with low tolerance for religious deviance, Rovinsky told the FBI that Muslims who do not embrace jihad as part of their religion are not true Muslims and do not adhere to the word of Allah, and included his family in that category (*US v. Wright* 2015b). As with other cases, evidence of political radicalization was visible via social media. Both Rahim and Wright posted extremist views on social media. Wright and Rovinski criticized freedom of speech in the United States following announcements of another Draw Muhammad event planned after the failed Garland attack (*US v. Wright* 2015b).

San Bernardino, California

Of the twelve individuals in this study, Syed Farook most clearly demonstrated the four phases of radicalization in Silber and Bhatt's model; however, as with other individuals, behaviors seemed to overlap across phases. That said, none of the phases were visible by outsiders, including his coworkers, until the FBI conducted interviews with his neighbor, Enrique Marquez. Farook had a difficult family life. Farook's mother filed at least two restraining orders against his father because of physical and mental abuse (Gibbons-Neff, Brittain, and Fisher 2015). Farook was known to be devoutly religious, prayed the obligatory five times per day, and regularly attended two different mosques. FBI interviews with Marquez revealed that Farook entered the self-identification phase around 2007 when he began to explore Salafi Islam (*US v. Marquez* 2015). By late 2011 (indoctrination phase), Farook was reading, listening to, and watching radical Islamic content, such as al-Awlaki's English language magazine *Inspire* (*US v. Marquez* 2015). As early as 2011, Farook and Marquez were plotting two attacks in Southern California, including shootings at a local community college and along a California interstate (*US v. Marquez* 2015). The two had conducted extensive planning and purchased two weapons to use in the attack, as well as smokeless powder for pipe bombs. They spent time at a firing range using the weapons over the course of several months and reviewed al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula instructions for making improvised explosive devices (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Farook and his wife demonstrated only three of Sageman's elements of radicalization, and the three that they demonstrated were not publicly visible. No examples of resonance with personal experience were apparent in the available data. Farook privately expressed frustration

about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and over non-conscientious objectors and disdain towards Muslims in the US military who killed other Muslims (*US v. Marquez* 2015). In 2010 Farook began following the teachings of al-Awlaki and listened to the series “The Hereafter.” He also started following Imran Hosein, an Islamic scholar who advocated for living under Sharia law in a commune away from Western ideals (*US v. Marquez* 2015). There are clear indications that Farook relied on the internet to radicalize as early as 2010. He also met his wife via the internet and had private communications with her about martyrdom operations prior to their marriage (Goldman and Berman 2015). Farook followed several radical clerics, terrorist leaders, and Malik had researched ISIS on the morning of the San Bernardino attack.

Once again, FBI interviews with Marquez shed the most light on elements of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman’s model, in particular, Farook’s efforts to impose his religious views on Marquez (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Farook grew a beard and followed Imran Hosein. In 2011, Farook followed radical Muslim clerics including al-Awlaki, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, and videos from al-Shabaab, who all professed the notion of the impossibility for the two to coexist (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Likewise, Farook introduced Marquez to Islam in 2005 and helped him covert in 2007 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). They prayed together and discussed Islam and by 2007 were discussing radical Islam (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Farook introduced Marquez to radical Islamic propaganda including to al-Awlaki in 2010 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Together the two began plotting an attack in Riverside and Farook convinced Marquez to purchase weapons and supplies on his behalf (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Orlando, Florida

Despite clearly violent and radical expressions, Omar Mateen displayed the fewest elements of the three models. His behavior did not follow the linear progression of Silber and Bhatt's model. He displayed disruptive and disturbing behavior in elementary through high school, which included thirty-one disciplinary actions (Weiss and Bynum 2016). As a possible indication of the self-identification phase, he made derogatory comments about homosexuals and made racial comments against several races and religions (Montgomery, Howard, and LaForgia 2016). As early as 2001, high school classmates noted that as the second World Trade Tower was attacked on September 11, 2001, Mateen smiled and joked that Usama bin Ladin was his uncle (Sullivan and Wan 2016). Mateen made two religious trips to Saudi Arabia in 2011 and 2012 (Sullivan and Wan 2016). Likewise, possibly suggesting the indoctrination phase, he made comments at a county courthouse about having ties to al-Qa'ida and to Hizballah, and that he had wanted to become a martyr and hoped the police would kill his wife and child so that he could do so (Peralta 2016). He did, however, display several behaviors of the jihadization phase. Mateen purchased ammunition and had previously visited the Pulse nightclub on several occasions. He also had reportedly scouted out other locations for an attack. He visited the range in the lead up to the attack as well. The day of the attack, he told his wife that he was going to visit a friend, and left her with \$1000 in cash for a visit to her family (Goldman 2016). He also stopped by his parents' house to visit them (Montgomery, Howard, and LaForgia 2016).

Despite his vocal outbursts, there were no outward signs of moral outrage or resonance with personal experience. In the weeks leading up to the attack, Mateen posted on Facebook that US airstrikes in Syria killed innocent children and that ISIS would avenge those deaths (Yan,

Brown, and Perez 2016). During conversations with hostage negotiators, Mateen said the attack was in retaliation for the US airstrike against ISIS leader Abu Wahib (Frosch and Hong 2016).

The only element of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's model that Mateen outwardly displayed was political radicalization. Throughout his childhood and adult life, Mateen's radical thoughts were directed across all races and genders. In the weeks leading up to the attack, Mateen posted on Facebook that US airstrikes in Syria killed innocent children and that ISIS would avenge those deaths (Yan, Brown, and Perez 2016).

Testing the three models of radicalization revealed important considerations for authorities seeking to prevent terrorist attacks. Although Silber and Bhatt's model was the only one of the three to explain all five cases, it was unclear how authorities would clearly identify stages of radicalization as they were occurring. Indeed, for some of the five cases, it was difficult to apply the model even using a rear-view approach where the conclusion was given. Likewise, it raises questions such as at what point it becomes necessary to intervene. The FBI was following individuals in three of the five cases, and was unable to prevent two of those attacks without loss of life. Authorities did stop the Boston and Garland plotters from killing innocent people, but the individuals were killed in the attempts.

Sageman's model would also be difficult for authorities to clearly identify radicalization as it was happening. Three of the cases displayed all four elements of the model but would likely have been insufficient to conclude that a person would carry out an attack without inside information. That said, manifestations of a few of the elements could help authorities prioritize individuals to start a further investigation. But with limited resources, the model alone would not be enough to determine if a person radicalized.

Finally, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's model was the most effective model of the three to potentially identify a person undergoing the process of radicalization because it includes a series of outwardly alerting behaviors that could be identified as the radicalization was underway. However, the model requires people close to the individuals in question to be familiar with potential indicators, identify abnormal behaviors in their friends or relatives, categorize them as alerting, and then make the difficult decision to tell authorities about the behaviors. The "whistle-blower" risks losing friends and family, particularly if the hunch does not bear out.

In light of the trend toward ISIS-inspired attacks, testing the models did reveal shortcomings that scholars should address in future models, and that authorities must consider during preventative actions. First, would-be terrorists are getting smarter. ISIS provides guidance about limiting communication and hiding radical views. The San Bernardino case provided an excellent example of the shift in tactics. Likewise, using informants is effective, but they appeared to incite radical behavior and therefore distort how the models would be applied. Finally, community engagement is fundamental in preventing terror attacks because a majority of the characteristics of the three models require friends, family, community and religious leaders, as well as law enforcement to understand the process and champion the efforts to prevent attacks and reverse the radicalization process.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Understanding how individuals become radical and embrace the Salafi Islam principle of violent jihad is important to US national security and to the safety and well-being of people around the world. Scholars have long noted that the key to counterterrorism is understanding the motivations of terrorists. During the last fifteen years, the threat of homegrown terrorism has eclipsed that of “traditional” terrorist groups. Indeed, the FBI considers the threat of ISIS-inspired homegrown terrorist attacks the greatest threat to the US homeland.

ISIS-inspired attacks are becoming more prevalent and harder to detect because ISIS is using the internet to expand its message and provide instructions for conducting attacks. The group has inspired hundreds of disgruntled and vulnerable individuals in the United States alone. The FBI estimated in May 2016 that some 80 percent of its homegrown terrorism investigations are related to ISIS (US House 2016b).

At the same time, experts have studied and analyzed the processes of radicalization to better understand how these deadly attacks happen. In the end, humans are dynamic, behave differently, and are subject to multiple factors that influence their behaviors. Efforts to model these behaviors have proved inadequate because models are static and simplified versions of a complex issue, idea, or process. Furthermore, homegrown radicalization has and continues to evolve, making models of radicalization stale and out of touch with the behaviors they attempted to predict.

This study examined three major models of radicalization to confirm whether they continue to accurately and adequately represent the phenomena that they were designed to predict. The three models approach the process differently reflecting both the complexity of the

problem and the uniqueness of each individual's process of radicalization. The most renowned model of radicalization, that of Silber and Bhatt (2007), grew out of the need for the NYPD to better understand their targets and to prevent future attacks. The four-stage model follows would-be terrorists through the progressive and linear process of radicalization, beginning with the environmental and demographic factors that make an individual more vulnerable, through the gradual acceptance of the practices of Salafi Islam, until the final stage when they plot an attack or join a terror group. In sharp contrast, Sageman's (2008c) model is general and non-linear, including four themes that overlap and influence each other. The foundation of Sageman's model is a sense of moral outrage, likely in response to perceived moral violations, which frames an individual's thinking into a war against Islam, and can expand as these same individuals perceive similar injustices at home or find ways to commiserate via the internet. Finally, Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's model outlined six behavioral manifestations of the radicalization process. Behaviors include major shifts in how an individual views their own religion and that of others, outspoken political radicalization, and the selection of religious role models that encourage jihad as a necessary response.

Several important results emerged from testing the three models against the five case of homegrown radicalization in the United States. First, none of the models perfectly explained homegrown radicalization. Silber and Bhatt's model was the only one of the three models in which the four stages were apparent across the five ISIS-inspired attacks. However, the model was too rigid and many examples of radical activity spanned more than one phase of the model. Sageman's four themes were too general and the model lacked explanation, and made coding radical behavior observed in the five cases difficult. Furthermore, the model would not help authorities proactively identify radical behavior because of the lack of specificity. The elements

of the last model, that of Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009), were easier to identify and categorize from the available data because the characteristics of the model included shifts in behavior. As such, the last model would be the most effective tool for predicting radical behavior but also requires family, friends, and alert community members to recognize the shift in behavior and report it.

Reviewing the five cases of radicalization against Silber and Bhatt's model produced results consistent with the cases that the NYPD examined. That is, individuals in each of the five cases demonstrated elements of each of the four phases of the process. However, in most cases, insights into their behavior were only visible from court proceedings drawn from private conversations with FBI informants. Indeed, Omar Mateen, the Orlando nightclub shooter, carried out the deadliest attack in US modern history without drawing the attention of the FBI. He displayed a lengthy history of inappropriate comments and disciplinary actions, but convinced most around him, including the FBI, that he was not a threat. Indeed, coding the four phases of the Orlando shooter's radicalization was difficult in the absence of insights from court documents and FBI affidavits.

Sageman's model was more challenging to test because the four themes were general concepts that required interpreting individuals' statements and actions. Like Silber and Bhatt's model, most of the insights for the cases were derived from court records. The model also suggested that Omar Mateen was an anomaly because he was the only one who did not express visible moral outrage. Individuals in all cases expressed some indications of a perception of a war against Islam, however, available data did not provide much insight on how much the perception of war against Islam resonated with the individuals' personal experiences. The model

had one unique feature in that it was the only one to examine the role of the internet in the radicalization process as a separate element of radicalization.

Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's model was the most valuable tool of the three models for identifying observable shifts in behavior of the twelve individuals in the five cases because the design of the model is based on manifestations of observable behavior. It was also easier to examine the behaviors without considering a linear progression. Of the five cases, Orlando shooter Omar Mateen demonstrated the fewest manifestations of the framework, only one of the six behaviors: political radicalization. Of the unique variables not visible in the other two models, all were related to strict interpretations of religious behavior: trusting only select religious authorities, low tolerance for perceived religious deviance, and attempts to impose religious beliefs on others. Three of the cases involved at least one member of the group imposing views on another, and in some cases, on outsiders as well. Consistent with Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's findings, individuals in four of the cases expressed some form of radical viewpoints. Based on available information, Farook and Malik were the most guarded in publicly expressing their political views.

Examining the cases also shed light on the major challenge facing authorities. In each of the models, friends, family, or law enforcement officials need to identify shifts in behavior as they occur. Coding the cases was straightforward when drawing on court proceedings and examining the progression of an individual's radicalization from the rear-view. But as terror groups such as ISIS become more savvy and encourage their followers to become better at evading authorities, these models will become less effective as tools to disrupt plots and prevent future attacks. Syed Farook, one of the San Bernardino shooters, is a prime example. Based on

all three models, he had been radicalized for at least five years prior to the December 2015 assault on the holiday party for his co-workers. Despite extensive planning in 2011 and 2012 and ties to a group of men arrested in 2012 for conspiring to join a terrorist group, Farook evaded detection and planned, trained, and carried out a deadly terrorist attack in which fourteen people died.

This thesis focused exclusively on past ISIS-inspired plots in the United States since 2014. Additional research should examine a larger group of cases in the United States during the timeframe with the purpose of developing a new model to represent the phenomena of ISIS-inspired attacks. As the way terror groups interact with their followers evolves and the effectiveness of inspired attacks increases, existing models may no longer prove useful for authorities as tools of prevention. Likewise, examining how the Syrian civil war and Syrian refugee crisis affects European and US Muslim populations would also be helpful in evaluating the larger security issue of ISIS-inspired attacks. As this study has illuminated, examining how FBI informants contribute to the radicalization process is another potential area of study. Finally, future research could include improving the first hand understanding of the radicalization process by visiting those radicalized and convicted in prison, particularly those who have disavowed radical views, who may be open to discussing how they came to embrace the radical views. For example, Hasan Edmonds and Nicholas Rovinski both disavowed ISIS and their previous radical views since their convictions (Meisner 2016; Palumbo 2016). Between March 1, 2014 and June 30, 2016, ninety-four individuals were indicted in federal courts, offering a substantial pool of potential candidates to interview (Fordham University 2016).

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APPENDIX 1: DETAILED MODEL TESTING RESULTS

Model 1: NYPD's Four Phases of Radicalization

Aurora, Illinois

Pre-radicalization: Hasan Edmonds had a difficult childhood growing up, and lacked positive parental role models. Hasan's father had reportedly mentally and physically abused him as a child, and his father had been a drug addict and gang member (Meisner, Wurst, and Ziezulewicz 2015). Hasan converted to Islam after his father converted, between September 2011 and 2014. Hasan's former National Guard colleagues described him as a mild-mannered, but dedicated soldier (Meisner 2016).

Not much is known about Jonas Edmonds' background. He dropped out of high school during his senior year in 2004, and then spend five years in prison for attempted armed robbery and was released in 2010 (Meisner, Wurst, and Ziezulewicz 2015). He has a common-law wife and baby son, as well as several step children who live near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (*US v. Edmonds* 2015b). At an unknown point in time, Jonas converted to Islam (Pistone et al. 2015).

Self-identification: Hasan stopped following a Sheik online when the man preached against jihad and tried to dissuade his followers from engaging in jihad (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Jonas wore a long beard, but neither dressed in traditional Islamic attire.

Indoctrination: Jonas introduced Hasan to ISIS around the time the group declared its caliphate on June 29, 2014, and both started following the group's teachings.

Jihadization: From January to March 2015, Hasan and Jonas communicated online with FBI employees and confidential sources who they believed were ISIS fighters and sympathizers to join ISIS (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). The two men and an informant conducted surveillance outside of Joliet Armory, where Jonas planned to attack after Hasan left for Syria (*US v. Edmonds* 2015b). Hasan purchased a plane ticket on March 13 and was arrested on March 25 at Midway Airport attempting to travel to Syria to fight on behalf of ISIS.

Garland, Texas

Pre-radicalization: Nadir Soofi was born in Garland but moved around a lot as a child. His mother is American and father is Pakistani. Soofi lived in Pakistan for six years as a teen, where he was surrounded by Muslims and people of similar culture, and studied in an affluent school (Tracy 2015). When his parents divorced in 1998, he returned to the United States to live with his mother. He was one of a small minority living in Utah, where he attended University of Utah from 1998 until fall 2003 (Wake and Ahmed 2015). He was arrested several times for traffic-related crimes and for drugs and alcohol use (Dobner 2015).

Elton Simpson was born in Illinois and moved to Phoenix with his family as a child. He began attending prayer services at the Islamic Community Center of Phoenix ten years prior to

the attack (Weiss and Krause 2015). Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He changed his name from Decarus Thomas and converted to Islam in 2013 (Fox News 2015b). He had been attending the same mosque as Simpson and Soofi for four years prior to his arrest (Fox News 2015b). Kareem was arrested eleven times between 1991 and 2004 and had struggled with substance abuse (Associated Press 2015).

Self-identification: Soofi dropped out of school in 2003 and then became increasingly vocal on social media against US policy in the Middle East (BBC 2015). In the absence of more moderate peers, Soofi likely began to identify with online personalities more than those around him. About 2010, the two attended the same mosque and Simpson also worked at Soofi's pizza restaurant, allowing them time to share views. Soofi's failing business and marriage also probably contributed to seeking out alternatives to confront his identity crisis. Soofi was forced to close his restaurant after a legal battle in 2012 (Wake and Ahmed 2015). Then in September 2013, Soofi's ex-wife won custody of their son and the court ordered Soofi to pay child support. One acquaintance said that Soofi had been frustrated by the lack of access to his child (Wake and Ahmed 2015). Court files also suggested that differences of opinion over religion may have influenced Soofi's divorce (Wake and Ahmed 2015). At the same time, both men spent significant time on extremist websites. In a letter to his mother, Soofi said he had been inspired by Anwar al-Awlaki's writings (Serrano 2015).

Indoctrination: Simpson had been under investigation by the FBI since 2006, based on his ties to a person the FBI believed was establishing a terrorist cell in Arizona (Watson 2015). During that investigation, Simpson told an FBI informant in July 2007 that Allah loved jihadis that fought and made sacrifices, and that the ultimate sacrifice was to martyr oneself (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). Simpson stopped going to the mosque that he had previously practiced around 2010 (Shoichet and Pearson 2015).

For his part, Soofi's mother described her son as "politically active," particularly on issues related to the Middle East but did not believe he was radical (Weiss and Krause 2015). Soofi was exposed to Salafi jihadi teachings via the internet and via Simpson. Court documents indicate that Kareem, Soofi, and Simpson had watched jihadi propaganda and torture videos since at least 2014 and met privately to discuss support for ISIS since at least June 2014 (Serrano 2015). Kareem stopped attending services at the mosque about December 2014 (CBS News 2015a).

Jihadization: Whereas Soofi and Kareem began the last phase in mid-2014, Simpson probably entered the last phase about 2009. Beginning in May 2009, Simpson discussed going to Somalia to join al-Shabaab with an FBI informant (*US v. Simpson* 2015b). Simpson was attempting to travel to Somalia when he was arrested in January 2010 (*US v. Simpson* 2015b). Simpson, Soofi, and Kareem had been attempting to travel to Syria since June 2014, actively plotting an attack since January 2015, and began plotting the attack at the Garland event in February 2015 (*US v. Kareem* 2015). The three men trained on weapons in the desert for months before attack.

Boston, Massachusetts

Pre-radicalization: Usaama Abdullah Rahim was the youngest of five children growing up in Boston. His mother was a nurse and his father was an English teacher who taught overseas for extended periods (WCVB 2016). His older brother was 20 years his senior and an Imam in California, who had spoken out against the Boston marathon attackers (WCVB 2016). Rahim lived in the Boston area as a child, except for his freshman year of high school from 2003 to 2004, in which he lived in Saudi Arabia with his father (WCVB 2016). He struggled with his own identity as a teenager and reportedly hated his first name and preferred to go by his last name because of the negative association with Usama bin Ladin (WCVB 2016). When his parents divorced around 2007, Rahim stayed in Boston with David Wright's family for a year before moving to join his mother and siblings in Miami (WCVB 2016).

Boston native David Wright is a daunting and imposing figure, weighing some 400 pounds and at least 6'5" tall. He reportedly lived with a woman and two children in a small apartment in a Boston suburb (Bidgood and Phillips 2015). Wright briefly attended community college from 2010 to 2011 (CBS Boston 2015). Nicholas Rovinski grew up in Warwick, Rhode Island and converted to Islam in 2013. At the time of his arrest, he lived with his mother and brother. He attended a mosque near his house in Warwick (Schieldrop 2015).

Self-identification: In 2009 Rahim began using his first name again and a friend from Rahim's mosque in Miami said that he became more radical and started following several radical Muslim clerics online. He grew a beard, began carrying the Koran and wearing traditional Islamic clothing, and began praying five times per day (WCVB 2016). According to the FBI investigation, Rahim liked an ISIS Facebook page in 2012 (*US v. Wright* 2015b).

Rahim was two years older than his nephew David Wright and served as a religious mentor to Wright. When the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood were not conservative enough, the duo began branching out on their own (Bidgood and Phillips 2015). Rahim convinced Wright to grow a beard as well (WCVB 2016). Wright met Nicholas Rovinski online via Facebook about November 2014 (*US v. Wright* 2015b). Rovinski reportedly had also grown a beard, began wearing traditional Islamic clothing, and had started acting "weird," according to his neighbors (CBS Boston 2015).

Indoctrination: By January 2015, Rovinsky was posting radical comments on social media and was watching and downloading ISIS propaganda. Rovinsky told the FBI that he was drawn to ISIS because he believed the group's teachings were the purest form of Islam (*US v. Wright* 2015b). He changed his name to Nur Amriki so that ISIS members would be able to recognize him and be more comfortable interacting with him (*US v. Wright* 2015b).

Jihadization: Beginning in February 2015, Rahim was in direct communication with ISIS members, and was also in direct communication with ISIS hacker Junaid Hussain, who told him to kill Geller (*US v. Wright* 2015b). Wright also downloaded a manual on building a sleeper cell in the United States (WCVB 2016). From April 2015, Rovinski started watching videos about becoming a martyr and he subscribed to YouTube channels about building weapons and those of hate clerics (*US v. Wright* 2015b; Schieldrop 2015). Rahim purchased three knives online; however, the morning of his death, Rahim decided he could not wait to behead Geller and

instead was going to behead a police officer (Bidgood and Phillips 2015; *US v. Wright* 2015b). Rovinski pledged allegiance to ISIS and to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on the back of the criminal complaint against him and he and Wright continued to plot an attack on US soil from prison (*US v. Wright* 2015a).

San Bernardino, California

Pre-radicalization: Born in Chicago, Illinois, Syed Farook had a difficult relationship with his family. Throughout the last decade, Farook’s mother filed at least two restraining orders against his father because of physical and mental abuse (Gibbons-Neff, Brittain, and Fisher 2015). Those close to Farook consistently said he was shy, withdrawn, and slightly socially awkward, but none mentioned any radical political views or pronouncements. He was known to be devoutly religious, prayed the obligatory five times per day, and regularly attended two different mosques (Crilly 2015). Farook’s wife Tashfeen Malik was born in Pakistan, but had lived some time in Saudi Arabia, including from June to October 2013 (Crilly 2015).

Self-identification: Both Malik and Farook entered this phase long before the San Bernardino attack. Malik had developed more radical religious views when she moved to Saudi Arabia with her father, where she lived during her formative years (Reuters 2015). She was a conservative Muslim woman who wore a veil to cover her face (Gosk, Rappleye, and Connor 2015). Farook likely began to explore Salafi Islam in 2007. Enrique Marquez told the FBI that Farook in 2007 expressed “distain toward Muslims in the US military that killed other Muslims” and began discussing and studying the extremist views of al-Awlaki (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Indoctrination: From 2010 to late 2011, Farook followed Imran Hosein, “an Islamic scholar, who espoused ideas about living in a Muslim commune ruled by Sharia law.” By late 2011, Farook was reading, listening to, and watching radical Islamic content, such as al-Awlaki’s English language magazine Inspire (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Before moving to join Farook in 2014, Malik attended an 18-month course on the Qu’ran at al-Huda in Pakistan, which preaches a more conservative approach to Islam (Masood and Walsh 2015). However, she did not pray at the mosque with her husband.

Jihadization: As early as 2011, Farook and Marquez were plotting two attacks in Southern California, including shootings at a local community college and along a California interstate (*US v. Marquez* 2015). The two had conducted extensive planning and purchased two weapons to use in the attack, as well as smokeless powder for pipe bombs (*US v. Marquez* 2015). They spent time at a firing range using the weapons over the course of several months and reviewed AQAP instructions for making an IED (*US v. Marquez* 2015). In August 2011, Farook told Marquez that he planned to join AQAP (*US v. Marquez* 2015). In the months leading up to the December 2015 attack, Farook and Malik conducted training on weapons at firing range and were dry firing the weapons in their back yard (Fox News 2015a).

Orlando, Florida

Pre-radicalization: Omar Mateen was a US citizen born in New York of Afghani descent (Zambelich and Hurt 2016). He spent most of his formative years in Florida. His father has a satellite TV program that offers politically charged views of Afghan politics and is

considered a polarizing figure within the local Florida Afghan community (Sullivan and Wan 2016). News agencies uncovered a string of anecdotal stories about Mateen's disruptive and disturbing behavior in elementary through high school, which included 31 disciplinary actions (Weiss and Bynum 2016).

Self-identification: Mateen struggled with his identity and sexuality. Several people told authorities that Mateen had made derogatory comments about homosexuals and made racial comments against several races and religions (Montgomery, Howard, and LaForgia 2016). As early as 2001, high school classmates noted that as the second World Trade Tower was attacked on 9/11, Mateen smiled and joked that Usama bin Ladin was his uncle (Weiss and Bynum 2015). Mateen made two religious trips to Saudi Arabia in 2011 and 2012 (Sullivan and Wan 2016).

Indoctrination: The FBI investigated Mateen twice, once in 2013 when he made comments at a county courthouse about having ties to al-Qa'ida and to Hizballah, and that he had wanted to become a martyr and hoped the police would kill his wife and child so that he could do so (Peralta 2016). During an FBI investigation in 2014 into acquaintances of American Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha, a suicide bomber who conducted an attack in Syria on behalf of ISIS that year, a witness said Mateen had watched radical videos by al-Awlaki before 2011 (Peralta 2016).

Jihadization: Mateen purchased ammunition and had previously visited the Pulse nightclub on several occasions (Goldman 2016). He also had reportedly scouted out other locations for an attack. He visited the range in the lead up to the attack as well (Goldman 2016). The day of the attack, he told his wife that he was going to visit a friend, and left her with \$1000 in cash for a visit to her family (Goldman 2016). He also stopped by his parents' house to visit them (Montgomery, Howard, and LaForgia 2016).

Model 2: Sageman's Four Themes of Radicalization

Aurora, Illinois

Sense of Moral Outrage: Both Edmonds cousins clearly disagreed with US policy in the Middle East and specifically with the treatment of Muslims in Syria. Hasan posted comments to articles on social media relating to Western soldiers deserting their ranks to join ISIS.

Specific Interpretation of the World: The Edmonds cousins expressed a desire to relocate their families to the Middle East to get away from the apostate US government.

Resonance with Personal Experience: As noted above, Hasan's childhood was difficult and he lacked role models to guide him and teach him right and wrong. Both cousins converted to Islam seeking identity and a sense of unity (Meisner, Wurst, and Ziezulewicz 2015). Hasan posted about French soldiers deserting the military to join ISIS, which probably resonated with him as a soldier himself (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

Mobilization Through Networks: Hasan expressed his desire to travel to Syria to fight with ISIS via social media (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). From January to March 2015, Hasan and Jonas communicated online with FBI employees and confidential sources who they believed were ISIS fighters and sympathizers to join ISIS (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Hasan also watched ISIS propaganda videos to prepare for his travel to Syria (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

Garland, Texas

Sense of Moral Outrage: Kareem, Simpson, and Soofi since 2014 had expressed moral outrage for US military actions in the Middle East (*US v. Kareem* 2015). Simpson and Soofi displayed direct grievances via social media. Simpson also told the FBI informant in his previous investigation in 2006 that he disagreed with encouraging Muslims to have a democracy (*US v. Kareem* 2015).

Specific Interpretation of the World: During conversations with an FBI informant in 2009, Simpson decried a speech by former President Bush about the Islamic Caliphate, and that he was tired of living under “non-Muslims” (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). He felt that non-Muslims were fighting against Allah and that his taxes were going to support infidel powers.

Resonance with Personal Experience: Simpson and Kareem were converts to Islam. Soofi struggled with his religion as well, after moving back to the United States from Pakistan after high school. Soofi was forced to close his restaurant and had struggled with steady employment (Wake and Ahmed 2015). Soofi’s custody battle with his ex-wife also probably fueled the moral outrage he felt about the United States, as religion was one of the custody issues (Wake and Ahmed 2015). Kareem also had a history of substance abuse and trouble holding down a job (Fox News 2015b).

Mobilization Through Networks: The FBI learned as part of its 2006 investigation that Simpson used ties to those he met at a local mosque to inquire about martyrdom operations (*US v. Simpson* 2010a). Simpson, Soofi, and Kareem relied heavily on online communications and ISIS propaganda to reinforce their beliefs. They met privately at Kareem’s house and collectively discussed ways to carry out ISIS’ teachings in the United States (*US v. Kareem* 2015). Leading up to the Garland attack, Simpson communicated with an ISIS hacker and asked people to follow the hacker on Twitter. In private discussions, Simpson and the hacker discussed the “Draw Muhammad” contest and the hacker advocated for attacks similar to the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, France (McLaughlin 2015).

Boston, Massachusetts

Sense of Moral Outrage: All three individuals expressed support for ISIS and against the United States’ role in trying to stop ISIS from building a caliphate. Rovinski said he supported violent resistance against “crusader governments,” and he was in favor of ISIS’ well-publicized beheadings (Levenson 2015).

Specific Interpretation of the World: Rahim told an old friend that freedom of speech in the United States was only on Western terms and true Muslims left punishment to Allah. He

believed that the tenets of democracy opposed punishments dictated in the Qu’ran because sovereignty was given to public opinion rather than Divine Revelation (Zalkind 2015).

Resonance with Personal Experience: Rahim struggled with his religious identity and his name. Rahim spent a year living in Saudi Arabia with his father, where he probably was exposed to Salafi or Wahhabi forms of Islam (WCVB 2016). Rovinski converted to Islam, and extremist propaganda may have resonated with him because his family was not Muslim.

Mobilization Through Networks: All three men regularly communicated with each other via social media. Wright met Rovinski via Facebook and they communicated with ISIS members via the internet as well (*US v. Wright* 2015a). An ISIS hacker told Rahim to go after Geller (*US v. Wright* 2015b). The three men also conducted internet searches on how to build weapons and becoming a sleeper cell in the United States (*US v. Wright* 2015a).

San Bernardino, California

Sense of Moral Outrage: Farook expressed frustration about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and over non-conscientious objectors and disdain towards Muslims in the US military who killed other Muslims (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Specific Interpretation of the World: In 2010 Farook began following the teachings of al-Awlaki and listened to the series “The Hereafter” (*US v. Marquez* 2015). He also started following Imran Hosein, an Islamic scholar who advocated for living under Sharia law in a commune away from Western ideals (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Resonance with Personal Experience: No outright examples were visible.

Mobilization Through Networks: There are clear indications that Farook relied on the internet to radicalize as early as 2010. He also met his wife via the internet and had private communications with her about martyrdom operations prior to their marriage (Goldman and Berman 2015). Farook followed several radical clerics, terrorist leaders, and Malik had researched ISIS on the morning of the San Bernardino attack (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Orlando, Florida

Sense of Moral Outrage: No outward signs of moral outrage.

Specific Interpretation of the World: In the weeks leading up to the attack, Mateen posted on Facebook that US airstrikes in Syria killed innocent children and that ISIS would avenge those deaths (Yan, Brown, and Perez 2015). During conversations with hostage negotiators during attack, Mateen said the attack was in retaliation for the US airstrike against ISIS leader Abu Wahib (Frosch and Hong 2016)

Resonance with Personal Experience: No outward signs.

Mobilization Through Networks: Comments Mateen made to hostage negotiators during the siege at the nightclub indicate that he had been an avid consumer of ISIS propaganda.

He also said his attack was in retaliation for US airstrikes and had used Facebook to convey his opposition to them (Frosch and Hong 2016).

Model 3: Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman's Behavioral Framework

Aurora, Illinois

Adopting a Legalistic Interpretation of Islam: Jonas wore a beard at his trial and mentioned it was required as part of his faith in his sentencing statement (*US v. Edmonds* 2015b). Jonas also professed his life to Allah and said the best Muslims were the mujahedeen, and he was prepared to be one (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Hasan told the FBI undercover officer that it was his duty to support ISIS or be martyred in the attempt (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). He also stated "I pray to just one time step foot in the land ruled by the law of the Qur'an but I am content to fight and die here in the cause of Allah wherever the target is set and the order is given" (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

Trusting Only Select Religious Authorities: Hasan used to follow a Sheik online but desisted when the man preached against jihad and tried to dissuade his followers from engaging in jihad (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

Perceived Schism Between Islam and the West: Both cousins clearly disagreed with US policy in the Middle East and specifically with treatment of Muslims in Syria. Hasan posted comments to articles on social media relating to Western soldiers deserting their ranks to join ISIS (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a). Both men discussed traveling to Syria because they did not want to be in the United States any longer and Jonas wanted to take his family with them (*US v. Edmonds* 2015a).

Low Tolerance for Perceived Theological Deviance: None observed.

Attempts to Impose Religious Beliefs on Others: Hasan's attorney suggested that Jonas imposed views on his cousin, and that Hasan would likely have continued as an honorable member of the military had Jonas not influenced him (Meisner 2016).

Political Radicalization: Both cousins clearly disagreed with US policy in the Middle East and specifically treatment of Muslims in Syria. Both expressed public support for ISIS.

Garland, Texas

Adopting a Legalistic Interpretation of Islam: Simpson mentioned wanting to get out from under non-Muslim rule. All three men's social media pages reflected strict devotion and legalistic interpretation of Islam (*US v. Kareem* 2015). Simpson on two occasions attempted to travel to join a terror group as part of the Salafi Islam responsibility (Somalia and Syria) (Ross et al. 2015).

Trusting Only Select Religious Authorities: Soofi said he was inspired by al-Awlaki. All three were not frequent attendees of the mosque in which they belonged, and stopped attending in the weeks leading up to the attack (Tracy 2015). Instead, they followed ISIS propaganda online and had watched videos since at least 2014 (*US v. Kareem* 2015).

Perceived Schism Between Islam and the West: Soofi and Simpson discussed leaving to live under Sharia law (*US v. Kareem* 2015). Simpson also denounced efforts to bring democracy to the Middle East, suggesting the two were incompatible (*US v. Simpson* 2010). In the weeks leading up to the attack, Simpson tweeted “Soon you won’t be able to live in America as a Muslim. The noose is tightening” (Ross et al. 2015).

Low Tolerance for Perceived Theological Deviance: Simpson mentioned he could not live under non-Muslims any longer (*US v. Simpson* 2010). Soofi’s younger brother lived with them and moved out because could not handle the weapons and propaganda (Serrano 2015). Simpson also had “grave differences of opinion” with his father. Soofi’s custody battle with his wife reportedly stemmed from religious differences (Holstedge and Casey 2015).

Attempts to Impose Religious Beliefs on Others: None observed.

Political Radicalization: Simpson expressed support via social media for ISIS and reposted ISIS videos. Soofi had strong opinions about the Middle East for a long time and expressed strong political views on Facebook (BBC 2015).

Boston, Massachusetts

Adopting a Legalistic Interpretation of Islam: All three men wore beards. Rahim and Rovinski wore traditional Islamic clothing, and Rahim went from praying once to five times per day (WCVB 2016; CBS Boston 2015).

Trusting Only Select Religious Authorities: When the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood were not conservative enough, Rahim and Wright branched out on their own. Rahim became more radical during his time in Miami and followed several radical Muslim clerics online (Bidgood and Phillips 2015).

Perceived Schism Between Islam and the West: Rahim told an old friend that freedom of speech in the United States was only on Western terms and true Muslims left punishment to Allah. He believed that the tenets of democracy opposed punishments dictated in the Qu’ran because sovereignty was given to public opinion rather than Divine Revelation (Zalkind 2015).

Low Tolerance for Perceived Theological Deviance: Rovinsky told the FBI that Muslims who do not embrace jihad as part of their religion are not true Muslims and do not adhere to the word of Allah. He included his family in that category (*US v. Wright* 2015b).

Attempts to Impose Religious Beliefs on Others: None observed.

Political Radicalization: Both Rahim and Wright posted extremist views on social media. Wright and Rovinski criticized freedom of speech in the United States following

announcements of another Draw Muhammad event planned after the failed Garland attack (*US v. Wright* 2015b).

San Bernardino, California

Adopting a Legalistic Interpretation of Islam: Farook grew a beard and followed Imran Hosein, an Islamic scholar who advocated for living under Sharia law in a commune away from Western ideals (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Malik was a conservative Muslim woman who wore a veil to cover her face (Gosk, Rappleye, and Connor 2015). Before moving to join Farook, she had been attending an 18-month course on the Quran at al-Huda in Pakistan, which preaches a more conservative approach to Islam (Masood and Walsh 2015).

Trusting Only Select Religious Authorities: In 2010, Farook began following the teachings of al-Awlaki and listened to the series “The Hereafter” (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Perceived Schism Between Islam and the West: In 2011, Farook followed radical Muslim clerics including al-Awlaki, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, and videos from al-Shabaab, who all professed the notion of the impossibility for the two to coexist (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Low Tolerance for Perceived Theological Deviance: Malik and her father had cut off ties with the rest of her family in Pakistan when they moved to Saudi Arabia (Reuters 2015).

Attempts to Impose Religious Beliefs on Others: Farook introduced Marquez to Islam in 2005 and helped him convert in 2007 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). They prayed together and discussed Islam and by 2007 were discussing radical Islam (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Farook introduced Marquez to radical Islamic propaganda including to al-Awlaki in 2010 (*US v. Marquez* 2015). Together the two began plotting an attack in Riverside and Farook convinced Marquez to purchase weapons and supplies on his behalf (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Political Radicalization: Neither Farook or Malik expressed radical views on any public social media forum. However, Farook had expressed his disapproval of US policies to Marquez (*US v. Marquez* 2015).

Orlando, Florida

Adopting a legalistic interpretation of Islam, trusting only select religious authorities, perceived schism between Islam and the West, low tolerance for perceived theological deviance, and attempts to impose religious beliefs on others were not observed in this case.

Political Radicalization: Throughout his childhood and adult life, Mateen’s radical thoughts were directed across all races and genders. In the weeks leading up to the attack, Mateen posted on Facebook that US airstrikes in Syria killed innocent children and that ISIS would avenge those deaths (Yan, Brown, and Perez 2016).

APPENDIX 2: INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH CASES

Case	Individual	Age	Religion	Convert	Background	Overseas Travel
Aurora	Hasan Edmonds	22	Muslim	Yes	African American	None
	Jonas Edmonds	29	Muslim	Yes	African American	None
Garland	Nadir Soofi	34	Muslim	No	Pakistani	Pakistan
	Elton Simpson	31	Muslim	Yes	African American	Unknown
	Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem	43	Muslim	Yes	African American	Unknown
Boston	Usaama Abdullah Rahim	26	Muslim	No	African American	Saudi Arabia
	David Wright	25	Muslim	No	African American	Unknown
	Nicholas Rovinski	24	Muslim	Yes	White	Unknown
San Bernardino	Syed Rizwan Farook	28	Muslim	No	Pakistani	Saudi Arabia Pakistan
	Tashfeen Malik	29	Muslim	No	Pakistani	Saudi Arabia
	Enrique Marquez	24	Muslim	Yes	Hispanic	Unknown
Orlando	Omar Mir Seddique Mateen	29	Muslim	No	Afghan	Saudi Arabia

Sources: Associated Press 2015; BBC 2015; CBS Boston 2015; Meisner 2016; Palumbo 2016; Reuters 2015; Sullivan and Wan 2015; *US v. Marquez* 2015.