# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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# THESIS

**THE ROLE OF ISOLATION IN RADICALIZATION: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?**

by

Erin C. Hug

December 2013

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**THE ROLE OF ISOLATION IN RADICALIZATION: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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# ABSTRACT

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| AZ | Arizona |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| COHORT | Cohesion, Operational Readiness and Training |
| DHS | Department of Homeland Security |
| EU | European Union |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| ICU | Islamic Courts Union |
| NYPD | New York City Police Department |
| PET | Danish Intelligence Service |
| RDT | relative deprivation theory |
| SAFIRE | Scientific Approach to Finding Indicators & Responses to Radicalisation |
| SIT | social identity theory |
| SSBU | National Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry |
| TerRa | terrorism and radicalisation |

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has been a limited amount of research conducted on the specific role of social, emotional, and perceived isolation on the radicalization process. The lack of representation of isolation in radicalization has created a significant knowledge gap in the overall study of terrorism. Numerous models of the radicalization process exist, yet the role of isolation has remained neglected. This thesis focuses on whether or not isolation played a significant role in an individual's process towards radicalization. It is important to understand the role of isolation in the radicalization process in order to effectively counter radicalization and ultimately terrorism.

Currently, homeland security officials target individuals who are already radicalized and may be in the operational phases of conducting or planning an attack. Through the operational aspects of homeland security and law enforcement, individuals who pose a threat are removed from the equation through apprehension or arrest. This current strategy effectively eliminates individuals who pose an immediate threat; however, those individuals are soon replaced by other like-minded individuals intent on causing harm, which creates a continuous cycle of threats. Instead, by viewing radicalization through a social psychological lens, we may be able to effectively change the conditions that contribute to radicalization. By understanding the role that isolation plays in radicalization, we are one step closer to understanding the conditions that promote radicalization.

This thesis was based on the analytic assessment of three case studies of individuals who have committed acts of terrorism. In order to conduct these case studies, this study relied on the personal experiences of the individuals in order to determine if isolation played a role in their radicalization. The case studies of Timothy McVeigh, Anders Breivik, and Omar Hammami demonstrate that isolation does have a role in the radicalization process. Each of these individuals experienced isolation throughout his life and on the path of radicalization, although each manifested in very different ways. The initial involvement phase of radicalization illustrates that each individual experienced all three types of isolation—social, emotional, and perceived isolation. The initial

engagement phase demonstrated that each individual was isolated out of necessity, as means to hide operational activities in preparation for an attack and in order to hide their true intentions by establishing a "parallel life."

The concept of isolation is multifaceted and multi-dimensional. This thesis demonstrates that isolation can manifest in multiple ways and have numerous outcomes. It can be self-imposed or forced upon individuals, resulting in differing outcomes. Peer rejection, the inability to connect with peers and family, and the perceived lack of support from others, all has drastic effects on individuals—demonstrating the negative aspects of forced isolation. However, isolation does not always have negative connotations. Many people who isolate themselves do so for creative, spiritual, and other constructive reasons. Consider artists, writers, or monks who have isolated themselves for clarity and positive reasons. However, when isolation was forced on the individuals in the case studies, it had an impact on them and drastically altered their perspective on life. Isolation played a role in the opportunities these individuals felt they had available to them. Peer rejection, or fear of rejection, also altered the way in which they viewed their life and future. In addition, lack of physical or emotional connections with others impacted the support network they felt they had available to them. The need to belong to a group and the existential need to relate to others also impacted the decisions they made.

This thesis is not intended to argue that isolation is a cause of radicalization; rather, its intent is to use the case studies of McVeigh, Breivik, and Hammami to demonstrate that isolation was a contributing factor in their radicalization. Isolation cannot be used as a standalone concept. Isolation in itself is not a sufficient cause of radicalization. However, isolation in conjunction with individual and situational determinants may have an effect on the path an individual chooses to take. Many people are isolated for many different reasons, the majority of whom never enter into the process of radicalization.

It is imperative homeland security officials fully understand isolation and the effects it has on an individual and how it affects an individual's propensity to become radicalized. It is also necessary for officials to understand the ability of isolation to maintain an individual's true intentions of committing a terrorist attack. Through the

comprehensive understanding of the contributing factors of radicalization, homeland security officials will be better positioned to effectively counter radicalization. This research is meant to highlight isolation as a contributing factor to radicalization, not prove cause and effect. By highlighting the importance of isolation, this study has highlighted future areas of research that may be valuable in establishing predisposing risk factors of isolation. By focusing on intervention and preventative measures in regard to isolation, it may be possible to ultimately prevent radicalization and terrorism. By viewing radicalization as a complex process that encompasses both individual and situational factors, we can attempt to determine how and why individuals move from seemingly normal backgrounds to committing acts of terror. This social psychological viewpoint is beneficial in understanding how individuals move toward a path of violence. Studying human behavior and understanding the motivation behind committing acts of violence can be beneficial in not only terrorism research, but it may also provide insight into individuals other than terrorists who act through violence (school shooters, mass murders, etc.).

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# I. THE ROLE OF ISOLATION IN RADICALIZATION: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

## A. THE PROBLEM

*Thesis Statement:*

This thesis explores whether social, emotional, and perceived isolation is a contributing factor in terrorist radicalization. The varying and sometimes conflicting opinions on radicalization have left counter terrorism officials with the difficult task of finding a comprehensive and effective mechanism to prevent terrorism. This research is an attempt to provide a greater understanding of the contributing factors of radicalization by evaluating the role of isolation. Radicalization is a complex multifaceted concept; the comprehension of which can then be utilized to impact the prevention of radicalization and ultimately terrorism.

Why do some individuals radicalize and others do not? How do seemingly normal individuals arrive at the decision to commit an act of terror? What are the contributing factors of radicalization and what kind of role does isolation play in the phenomena? Numerous theories on radicalization have been posed in an attempt to explain the motivating factors; however, the role of isolation remains neglected. Various disciplines provide useful behavioral explanations, such as sociology, psychology and social psychology, although sometimes providing contradictory results. Numerous theoretical frameworks also exist but do not explore the role of isolation.

What kind of role does isolation play when an individual becomes increasingly dedicated to the terrorist morality and commits an act of terror? Does isolation contribute to the process in any way? If so, what is the extent of its influence? These unanswered questions reflect a significant knowledge gap in the overall study of terrorism. This thesis will examine radicalization as a social psychological process, encompassing both individual and societal influences, in an attempt to further understand the motivating factors, specifically isolation. Contributing to the overall study of radicalization may provide counter terrorism officials the opportunity to utilize a new perspective on prevention strategies. An expansive body of literature exists—all offering differing opinions on the process of radicalization and the subsequent approaches to counter it.

Without first understanding the varying opinions and understanding all of the contributing factors to this phenomena, counter terrorism officials will struggle in effectively intercepting individuals who are intent on causing harm.

## B.     TERRORISM VERSUS RADICALIZATION

Currently, two broad range approaches exist to countering the threat of terrorism. The first school of thought argues counterterrorism efforts should focus on countering terrorism, not the radicalization process.  In his work *The Problem with Radicalization*, author Anthony Richards, assesses that the lack of clear guidance on the radicalization process has created confusion with those who are tasked with counterterrorism responsibilities. Adding, that a person involved in terrorism should undeniably be a concern to homeland security officials, while a radicalized individual may not necessarily be of concern.[1]  While valid points are made in Richards' argument, if homeland security officials focus on studying the radicalization process we may be able to provide opportunities for early intervention.

As author David Canter points out in his work *The Faces of Terrorism*, studying terrorism faces several challenges. For example, when studying terrorists, the only individuals available to interview are those who have been captured or detected, many times through their failures to reach their desired goals.[2]  These individuals may not adequately represent their counterparts who successfully reached their goals of committing violent acts.  This poses a challenge in obtaining accurate information as the individuals' accounts may be distorted as they view their own failures and their current incarcerated status.[3] Regardless of these challenges, these individuals offer insight (however biased) into how individuals radicalize and can afford the opportunity for additional research into the overall process.

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[1]Anthony Richards, "The Problem with 'Radicalization:' The Remit of 'Prevent' and the Need to Refocus on Terrorism in the UK," *International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2011): 143–144.

[2]David V. Canter, *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 3–4.

[3] Ibid.

The second school of thought assesses that determining the root causes of terrorism should focus on the radicalization process alone. In *Fighting Radicalism, Not 'Terrorism:' Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined*, the author postulates the focus on radicalization will help fight the conditions that create terrorism and will more accurately reflect the political and ideological dimensions of the threat.[4] Looking at radicalization will allow for early intervention and by viewing it this way, we are afforded the opportunity to use non-coercive measures.[5]Additionally, the author points out that while all terrorists are radicals, not all radicals elevate to the level of terrorism. Therefore, it is important to focus on radicalization and see it as an opportunity to prevent terrorism at an early stage.[6]

## C.    DEFINITIONS

### 1.    Radicalization

Throughout history, numerous definitions of terrorism have emerged and remained in use by various members of law enforcement, the intelligence community, and academics alike. These disparate definitions have posed problems in countering terrorism. Similarly, numerous governmental and academic definitions of radicalization exist.[7] Currently, within the United States, both the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) possess their own definitions. The FBI defines radicalization as "the process by which individuals come to believe their engagement in or facilitation of nonstate violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified."[8] The DHS defines it as "The process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method

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[4] Ömer Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism, Not 'Terrorism:' Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined," *SAIS Review* 29, no. 2 (2009): 76.

[5] Ibid., 77.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Alex Schmid, *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* (The Hague: International Centre for Counter Terrorism, 2013).

[8] Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York: New York City Police Department, 2007).

to effect social change."[9] Although they may appear relatively similar, the DHS definition emphasizes the "adoption of an extremist belief system," while the FBI's definition refers to non-state violence. In his work, *Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories*, author Randy Borum defines radicalization as "the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs."[10]  Another author, Kris Christmann, suggests "radicalisation is best viewed as a process of change, a personal and political transformation from one condition to another."[11]

The lack of a clear and uniformly accepted definition of radicalization only compounds counter terrorism officials' ability to counter the terrorist threat. Borum also argues that the definition of radicalization used by counter terrorism officials should be related to strategic outcomes.[12]  It is important to understand what we are trying to counter, before being able to launch an effective plan to defeat it.[13] By exploring the role of isolation in the radicalization process and exploring the different types of isolation and how they affect an individual, we may be able to more adequately understand radicalization and offer solutions to counter it.

### 2.      Definitions of the Types of Isolation

In order to understand the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process, we must first define isolation and explore the different types of isolation. This research will address three types of isolation: social, emotional, and perceived isolation. Social isolation is defined as social connectedness or an objective measure of contacts with

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[9] Schmid, *Radicalisation*, 12.

[10] Randy Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories," *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011): 9.

[11] Kris Christmann, "Preventing Religious Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: A Systematic Review of the Research Evidence" (England: Youth Justice Board, 2012), http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/yjb/preventing-violent-extremism-systematic-review.pdf, 10.

[12] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 11.

[13] Ibid.

other people.[14] Emotional isolation is represented by the subjective degree an individual feels emotionally connected with others. Emotional isolation may also represent "a gap between one's ideal level of social relationships and their actual level of social relationships."[15] An emotionally isolated individual may feel distanced and maintain difficulty in relating to others. Perceived isolation is a subjective lack of social support related to the extent one feels isolated.[16] Through the exploration of these varieties of isolation and the effects they have on an individual, we may position ourselves to better understand how they relate to the radicalization process. In turn, this will afford the opportunity to better understand the multifaceted psychological and sociological aspects of radicalization.

## D.    LITERATURE REVIEW

The critical analysis of the extant of literature focuses on two schools of thought that have attempted to examine the root causes of terrorism. The first school of thought focuses on the radicalization process and the different views held by researchers (sociological, psychological, economic, etc.) and the dynamics associated with an individual's path throughout the process. The second school of thought focuses on social psychological factors, such as isolation, contributing to the radicalization process. This review serves as an introduction to the current available literature on radicalization and isolation. A more in depth analysis of this literature will be provided in the coming chapters.

### 1.    Literature Focusing on Radicalization

A significant amount of research on radicalization exists. It is important to note that many individuals have conducted research into the radicalization process, adopting a diversity of perspectives. Some view it from a psychological lens, as is the case of John

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[14] Betty Havens, Madelyn Hall, Gina Sylvestre, and Tyler Jivan, "Social Isolation and Loneliness: Differences between Older Rural and Urban Manitobans," *Canadian Journal on Aging* 23 (2004): 129–140.

[15] Steven Stack, "Marriage, Family and Loneliness: A Cross-National Study," *Sociological Perspectives* 41, no. 2 (1998): 416.

[16] Erin York Cornwell and Linda J. Waite, "Social Disconnectedness, Perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50, no. 1 (2009): 32.

Horgan in his piece *From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspective from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism*. In this, Horgan argues that understanding terrorism is a complex psychological process that needs to find clarity through viewing terrorism as identifiable behaviors coupled with antecedents. Through this type of lens, psychological aspects of terrorism can be more practical and useful than prior attempts of psychological understanding of terrorism.[17]

Others interpret radicalization with an emphasis on economic factors. For example, Alberto Abadie applied a risk variable to address the linkages between terrorism and economic and political variables and their effect on terrorism.[18] Through the risk matrix, Abadie concludes several things: there is limited association between terrorism and economic variables (poverty); that countries with intermediate levels of political freedom are more prone to terrorism; and that certain geographic factors, such as country area, elevation, tropical area and landlock, may favor the presence of terrorism.[19]

Other research, such as *Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU Counter-Radicalisation Strategy*, concludes that radicalization cannot be understood through single explanations, and it attempts to provide insight into the causal factors of radicalization. The article views radicalization as a collective phenomenon, a process of socialization that stems from individual behavior. The authors demonstrate this through their categorization of radicalization into external levels, social levels, and individual levels.[20] An additional sociological approach to radicalization, written by Austin Turk, assesses sociological approaches applied to radicalization and the current knowledge level on the subject, with the intent of pointing out future research issues.[21] Turk's intent

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[17]John Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways and Roots to Routes: Perspectives from Psychology on Radicalization into Terrorism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 618 (2008): 81.

[18] Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," *The American Economic Review* 96, no. 2 (2006): 50–56.

[19]Ibid.

[20] Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, "Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU Counter-Radicalisation Strategy," 2008, Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, http://www.transnationalterrorism.eu/tekst/publications/WP4%20Del%207.pdf.

[21] Austin T. Turk, "Sociology of Terrorism," *Annual Review of Sociology* (2004): 271–286.

is to address the successes and failures of social control, which have been applied in order to counter radicalization. Turk suggests that individuals learn to accept terrorism as a course of political action when they feel they cannot defend their beliefs through non-violent means.[22]

Defining the lens in which the research on radicalization will be conducted can drastically change the outcome of the research. By addressing radicalization from a social psychology standpoint, we attempt to determine the root causes of radicalization and the dynamics that affect an individual's propensity to become radicalized. Numerous frameworks in which to view radicalization also exist.    There are several different perspectives on radicalization models.   Most depend on the lens, as described above, that the researcher views radicalization from.   These models also take different approaches such as, phase models, causal factor models, and dynamic models.

In *Towards a Dynamic Model of Terrorist Radicalization*, author Clara Volintiru argues that terrorist models should be dynamic. Volintiru claims the changing variables, such as the context the individual operates in and the relationship between events and the individual should be represented in a dynamic model of radicalization that shows a reciprocal or dynamic relationship between the two.[23] An additional model consisting of causal factors can be seen through the work entitled *Radicalisation, Recruitment and the EU Counter-Radicalisation Strategy*.  This model indicates that radicalization consists of three dynamics or causal factors that influence radicalization: external, social, and individual.[24]

Additional models of radicalization, such as that of John Horgan, suggest that the radicalization process address at least three distinct phases: becoming involved, being involved (engagement), and disengagement.[25] Similar models, such as that of the New York City Police Department (NYPD), also use the phase model approach to describe an

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[22]Ibid., 282.

[23] Clara Volintiru, "Towards a Dynamic Model of Terrorist Radicalization" (EIR Working Papers No. 27, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 2010).

[24] Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, "Radicalisation," 10.

[25] Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways," 80.

individual's progression through the radicalization process. NYPD uses four distinct phases: pre-radicalization, self-indoctrination, indoctrination, jihadization.[26] Additionally, the Danish Intelligence Service's (PET) model uses a top-down approach to show an external radicalizer plays an important role in influencing the individual through a process of changed behavior, the narrowing of social life, and moral hardening.[27] This is in sharp contrast to that of NYPD, which uses a bottom-up approach meaning that an individual begins to explore radical ideas, intensifies his beliefs, and accepts his duty to participate in jihad.[28] While both of these models use a phase model approach, they differ in whether it is a top-down approach or bottom-up approach. Though all of these models provide a marginal amount of variation in the phases, they all provide a chronological definition of the stage individuals purportedly travel through in the radicalization process. The use of the common phases an individual travels through will allow the study of isolation and radicalization to focus on the phase and will not require the creation of an additional model of radicalization.

## 2. Literature Focusing on Social Psychological Factors

### a. *Isolation*

Very little of the existing research highlights the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process. While an extensive amount of research exists on radicalization and isolation as separate phenomena, most do not address the correlation between the two. The study of the relationship between the two will provide significant insight for homeland security officials when addressing the dynamics and human behaviors that affect radicalization.

A significant amount of research has been conducted from a psychological standpoint on the concept of isolation. In *Measuring Social Isolation in Older Adults* the author defines social isolation as living without companionship or social

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[26] Silber and Bhatt, "Radicalization in the West."

[27] Tinka Veldhuis and Jørgen Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2009), 2.

[28] Ibid.

connectedness.[29] The author suggests an environment of social isolation can lead to poor health and lower levels of satisfaction, well-being, and community involvement.[30] The effects of social isolation, specifically in relation to an individual's level of personal satisfaction, can provide insight into the radicalization process specifically in the first two initial phases of radicalization. In some instances, personal satisfaction is related to an individual's perceived grievances or the absence of opportunities relative to an individual's expectations.[31] A substantial amount of research has been conducted on the concept of relative deprivation and globalization, offering explanations for motivating factors in radicalization.

In *Social Disconnectedness, Perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults*, the authors review the effects of social isolation and perceived isolation on older individuals' health. Their findings show the relationship between isolation and decreased physical health and mental health.[32] These findings, as they specifically relate to coping strategies, self-esteem, depression, and sense of control, may be of particular interest when exploring the role of isolation in radicalization.

In an article entitled "Lonely but Not Alone," the authors define emotional isolation as the absence or loss of an attachment figure, which can only be substituted by an additional intimate bond.[33] In *Introducing Science to the Psychology of the Soul: Experimental Existential Psychology*, the authors explore the role that isolation has in psychological functioning. The authors conclude that an individual has five major existential concerns: death, isolation, identity, freedom, and meaning. Isolation, as an

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[29] Graeme Hawthorne, "Measuring Social Isolation in Older Adults: Development and Initial Validation of the Friendship Scale," *Social Indicators Research* 77, no. 3 (2006): 521.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism," 78.

[32] Cornwell and Waite, "Social Disconnectedness," 31–48.

[33] Berna Van Baarsen, Tom A. B. Snijders, Johannes H. Smit and Marijtje A. J. van Duijn, "Lonely but Not Alone: Emotional Isolation and Social Isolation as Two Distinct Dimensions of Loneliness in Older People," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 61, no. 1 (2001): 119–135.

existential concern, relates to an individual's need to feel connected to others and their need to be able to fully share subjective experiences with others.[34]

The practice of isolation has been utilized by many individuals and groups throughout history. Cults, gangs, and military/police interrogations have all utilized isolation in order to gain and maintain control over an individual. The explicit role isolation plays in cults, gangs and military/police interrogation will be specifically addressed in Chapter III. In addition to exploring how isolation has been used in the past to exert control, there are additional social psychological factors that are relevant to isolation and the radicalization process. These factors include, but are not limited to, the need to belong, social identity theory, internet jihad, and charismatic leaders. These additional factors merit attention and understanding. They will be briefly discussed below, but greater attention will be paid to their applications throughout the case study and analyses portion of this research.

### b.    *The Need to Belong*

Several theories exist, both recent and historic, explaining an individual's need to belong. This existential need can have profound effects on an individual's motivation to join a group and maintain membership in a group. While many of these theories have traditionally been used in psychological or sociological fields, they also have implications for terrorism research. The need to belong theory indicates that while variations may exist from culture to culture or from individual to individual, nearly all humans, to a certain degree, have an innate need to belong.[35] The belongingness hypothesis contends "that human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships." The attachment theory also emphasizes the need to form and maintain interpersonal

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[34] Sander L. Koole, Jeff Greenberg, and Tom Pyszczynski, "Introducing Science to the Psychology of the Soul: Experimental Existential Psychology," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 15, no. 5 (2006): 213–214.

[35] Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, "The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation," *Psychological Bulletin* 117, no. 3 (1995): 499.

bonds.[36] The evaluation of these theories reveal the premise that individuals have an innate need to belong to a group or be accepted can help explain human behavior and the motivation to join a group.

Theories such as social identity theory (SIT) suggest that the need for a positive and distinct identity will lead people to join groups.[37] SIT can be useful in explaining the relationship between an individual and their membership in groups.[38] According to Brannan and Anders Strindberg, "Belonging to a group is a powerful determinant of the identities of most individuals."[39] SIT is useful in not only understanding the initial motivation for joining a group, but it also explains an individual's continued membership in a group. SIT proposes that an individual's "in-group" must provide a positive sense social identity to their members. If a group fails to provide this, members have motivation to leave the group in order to fulfill this need elsewhere.

The desire for interpersonal attachments and an individual's innate need to belong may play several roles in regard to isolation. These theories provide a greater understanding of the human motivation behind feeling a sense of acceptance and belonging. If an individual is isolated, this may affect his or her propensity to join a group—whether that is a legitimate group or a terrorist organization. The theories also help explain the ability of an organization to retain membership and control over an individual. These theories can be useful in explaining both "lone wolves" and those who act on behalf of terrorist organizations. Understanding these concepts and motivations will prove important in understanding an individual's radicalization into terrorism. Also important to note are the mechanisms by which an individual searching for belongingness may be recruited. The following sections will address internet jihad and charismatic

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[36] Ibid., 497.

[37] Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008), 95.

[38] David Brannan and Anders Strindberg, *Critical Analysis of Terrorism and Terrorist Groups: A Handbook for Practitioners* (Ventura, CA: Agile Press, forthcoming 2014).

[39]Ibid., 32.

leaders. These are not the only means by which an individual becomes radicalized; however, they have become growing phenomena in recent years.

### c. Internet Jihad

The use of the internet may also play a role in isolation and radicalization. Extremists and terrorist organizations have used the internet to recruit, spread propaganda, train, communicate and fundraise.[40] With the growing influence and popularity of the internet, those who are isolated now have the ability to reach outside of their current surroundings. The use of the internet may fulfill the sense of belonging that isolated individuals seek and do not attain elsewhere. Individuals who use the internet to fulfill a sense of belonging, may be inadvertently subject to extremist propaganda or specifically targeted by terrorist organizations for recruitment.

### d. Charismatic Leader

The role of a charismatic leader also plays a multifaceted role in radicalization and isolation. Charismatic leaders have utilized strategies in order to maintain control over individuals by making the individuals as dependent as possible on the charismatic leader. This dependency is often accomplished through isolating individuals and forcing them to cut previously held social ties.[41] An additional role the charismatic leader may play is in the recruitment process. Emotional isolation is sometimes characterized by the absence or loss of an attachment figure, which can only be substituted by an additional intimate bond. [42] Subsequently, those suffering from emotional isolation may be easily influenced by a charismatic leader, in an attempt to fill a void and create a bond that the isolated individual may be missing.

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[40] "Jihad Online: Islamic Terrorists and the Internet," Anti-Defamation League, accessed July 5, 2013, http://archive.adl.org/internet/jihad.asp.

[41] Doyle Paul Johnson, "Dilemmas of Charismatic Leadership: The Case of the People's Temple," *Sociological Analysis* 40, no. 4 (1979): 316–317.

[42] Van Baarsen et al., "Lonely but Not Alone," 119–135.

## E. CONCLUSION

Overall, there is substantial research into the topics of radicalization and isolation. It is important to address the specific lenses in which these concepts are viewed, specifically psychological, sociological, etc. Through the review of the literature, it is evident that a significant knowledge gap exists concerning the complex issue of radicalization in relation to the concept of isolation. By viewing radicalization and isolation as a complex social psychological dynamic, it allows the opportunity to study isolation as a contributing factor of radicalization. In order to prevent and/or counter radicalization, we must first understand it. Through a better understanding of the way in which isolation works, how it evolves, and how it becomes effective, then we are in a better position to prevent radicalization.

## F. THESIS OVERVIEW

### Chapter II—Methodology

Chapter II will address different radicalization models; more specifically the concept of phase models that are used to describe an individual's progression towards terrorism. This chapter will also outline the methodology of this research, which consists of three case studies on known terrorists Timothy McVeigh, Anders Behring Breivik, and Omar Hammami.

### Chapter III—Varieties of Isolation

Chapter III will provide an in depth explanation of three types of isolation: social, emotional and perceived isolation. In addition, the chapter will explore the uses of isolation throughout history and provide an in depth understanding of the varieties of isolation and their relationship to the radicalization process.

### Chapter IV—Case Study on Timothy McVeigh

Chapter IV will provide a detailed life history of Timothy McVeigh, the 1995 Oklahoma City bomber, in order to highlight any isolation he may have experienced throughout his life.

**Chapter V—Case Study on Anders Behring Breivik**

Chapter V will explore the childhood and early adult life of Anders Behring Breivik in order to highlight any periods of isolation he may have experienced before committing the 2011 attacks in Oslo and Utøya, Norway.

**Chapter VI—Case Study on Omar Hammami**

Chapter VI will examine the life of Omar Hammami in order to determine any periods of isolation he may have endured before travelling to Somalia and fighting on behalf of the terrorist organization, al-Shabaab.

**Chapter VII—Analysis**

Chapter VII will synthesize the analysis conducted throughout the case studies and provide an aggregate of the types of isolation experienced throughout their paths to radicalization. This will be accomplished through a comprehensive study of the two concepts of isolation and radicalization as dynamic social psychological factors.

**Chapter VIII—Con**clusio**n**

Chapter VIII will attempt to provide policy makers, academics and counter terrorism officials with a better understanding of how isolation affects an individual in the radicalization process. The final chapter will also highlight the importance of understanding the contributing factors of radicalization through theoretical and policy implications and finally offering suggestions for future research.

## II.    METHODOLOGY

### A.    CHALLENGES OF LOOKING AT RADICALIZATION

This thesis focuses on the radicalization process as opposed to terrorism, in an effort to determine what role isolation plays in the radicalization process. This research has been conducted with the ultimate goal of highlighting a contributing factor to radicalization that may provide an opportunity for early intervention or detection. With that said, when exploring this phenomena, there are several challenges that researchers may face.  It is necessary to explore these challenges so readers, and researchers alike, are aware of challenges that may arise when evaluating the process of radicalization.

In *Fighting Radicalism, Not 'Terrorism:' Root causes of an International Actor Redefined*, the author points out that while all terrorists are radicals, not all radicals elevate to the level of terrorism.[43] Subsequently, radicalization does not necessarily lead to violence.[44] As Veldhuis states, "Terrorism is one of the worst possible, but nevertheless avoidable, outcomes of violent radicalization."[45] Because radicalization is not necessarily a precursor to terrorism,[46] counter terrorism officials must decide if extremist or radical ideologies matter in the absence of violence.[47]

The radicalization process is different for all people at all times.[48]  People become terrorists in many different ways and for many different reasons. In his work *The Problem with Radicalization*, author Anthony Richards explains that there is a lack of clarity on radicalization; specifically on what the parameters of radicalization are. This lack of clarity has caused confusion in radicalization research. Richards explains radicalization is a derivative of "radical" and the term radical historically does not always have negative connotations.   Richards subsequently questions who then becomes

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[43] Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism," 77.

[44] Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, "Radicalisation," 4.

[45] Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*, 6.

[46] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 9–10.

[47] Ibid., 8.

[48] Ibid.

radicalized?  Should counter terrorism officials only be concerned about those who engage in violent actions, or should we be concerned about those who *support* violent extremism.[49]  If answered, these questions can drastically alter radicalization research and the direction taken in future research.

Additionally, the authors of *Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails: The Persistence of a Failed Discourse* describe that the push to understand terrorism has created a need for an "easy to understand" narrative for explaining how an individual becomes radicalized.[50] The authors contend that this easy to understand approach has ultimately set us behind in true radicalization research. Radicalization is not a one size fits all approach and in order to truly understand it, many areas need to be examined. Currently, several schools of thought exist, all offering differing opinions on the contributing factors of radicalization.  These schools of thought include, but are not limited to: psychology, sociology and social psychology.

## B.    DISCIPLINES AND THEORIES OF RADICALIZATION

### 1.    Introduction

Terrorism is a complex multi-dimensional process.  As such, the research on the radicalization process should also be multi-dimensional.  Radicalization research should not simply encompass one specific theory or discipline.[51] Radicalization should be viewed as a dynamic process that encompasses both individual and situational factors. This view, including psychological and social psychological factors, will account for individual aspects but will also consider the context and environment in which an individual operates in.[52]  In the section below, I will discuss traditional psychological and sociological views on radicalization, ultimately explaining that a social-psychological view of radicalization will be the most appropriate view of radicalization in which to

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[49] Richards, "The Problem with 'Radicalization," 144.

[50]Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, "Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails: The Persistence of a Failed Discourse," *International Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2010): 889–901.

[51] Canter, *The Faces of Terrorism,* 1.

[52] Volintiru, "Towards a Dynamic Model," 7.

conduct research on isolation. This is not an attempt to discount previous research, rather to show the value of building off of prior research and conducting research through an inter-disciplinary approach.[53]

## 2. Psychology

As defined by the American Psychological Association, psychology is the study of the mind and behavior.[54] Early psychological explanations of radicalization tended to focus on the individual.[55] Traditionally, psychologists have researched whether mental health issues are a contributing factor to radicalization. Ordinary people have a need to understand how individuals can commit such horrendous acts of terrorism and often suggest that there is something pathologically different about terrorists: something that sets them apart from everyone else. This line of thinking prompted radicalization research to determine if there is a unique terrorist profile based off of individual abnormalities.[56] However, as psychologist Bruce Bongar asserts, interviews with terrorists rarely concluded that terrorists suffer from any disorder listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.*[57]

Additionally, attempts to profile terrorists have failed.[58] Psychologist John Horgan argues that by trying to create a static terrorist profile we neglect the dynamics that shape and develop terrorists.[59] Instead of attempting to develop a profile, Horgan assesses we should develop a list of "predisposing risk factors" and we should view initial involvement in terrorism as a process, which will account for both individual and

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[53] John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[54] American Psychological Association, "American Psychological Association," accessed August 20, 2013, http://www.apa.org/support/about/apa/psychology.aspx#answer.

[55] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 14.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Bruce Bongar et al., *Psychology of Terrorism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 14.

[58] Horgan, From Profiles to Pathways," 80.

[59] Ibid., 84.

situational determinants. By applying social context to the psychological thought processes, research has shown we can more fully account for contributing factors to radicalization.

### 3.    Sociology

Sociology is the scientific study of society, including patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and culture.[60]  In turn, sociologists have explored aspects of economics—most notably poverty and education.  Do areas of poverty and low economic status produce terrorists?  This a polarized debate within the field of radicalization research. Some researchers argue that the struggle against terrorism should focus on social and economic development as the root causes of terrorism.[61] Whereas, a 2003 study, using U.S. State Department data on known terrorist attacks, found no evidence suggesting poverty generates terrorism. The researchers Krueger and Laitin concluded that poor countries do not generate more terrorism than rich countries.[62] While this research suggests that material conditions do not affect radicalization, one important issue to consider is relative deprivation theory (RDT).  Relative deprivation theory, and other similar theories such as just-world theory and equity theory, are concerned with justice and how interpretations of justice and feelings of deprivation then shape thoughts, feelings, and actions.  RDT suggests that it is subjective poverty, rather than actual economic status or worth, which influences an individual's feelings and subsequent actions.[63]

Additionally, researchers have also explored the aspect of educational opportunities, or the lack thereof, as a contributing factor to radicalization. Research has suggested this is not a useful explanation of terrorism.[64] Mohammed Atta, known as the ringleader of the 19 hijackers responsible for the September 11, 2001, attacks on the

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[60] American Sociological Association, "American Sociological Association," accessed August 20, 2013, http://www.asanet.org/introtosociology/documents/Field%20of%20sociology033108.htm.

[61] Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism," 75.

[62] Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," 50.

[63] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations*, 107.

[64] Bongar et al., *Psychology of Terrorism*, 17.

World Trade Center, came from a middle class family and studied architecture in Cairo, Egypt.  Additionally, a 2002 study by Krueger and Maleckova found that in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinians with more years of education tended to support armed attacks against Israeli targets more than Palestinians with fewer years of education.[65] That is not to say that for some individuals, economic opportunity and educational opportunity does not play a role in their radicalization. This may be related to grievances and perceptions of injustice, which would not strictly encompass a sociological school of thought, but rather a social psychological standpoint. However, as a whole, using these sociological concepts as a basis of radicalization is problematic, as they do not fully account for an individual's path into radicalization. The concept of subjective experience and perceived grievances and injustices will play an important role as the discussion of radicalization continues.

### 4.    Social Psychology

Social psychology has emerged as a leading concept in the study of radicalization. Author Randy Borum defines social psychology as "a sub-discipline of psychology concerned primarily with relationships, influences, and transactions among people, and particularly group behavior."[66] By using a social psychological standpoint, researchers can apply social context to psychological schools of thought.  This blended school of thought examines internal and external determinants; more accurately encompassing the contributing factors of radicalization. Author David Canter assesses, the psychological and social psychological processes have been under-represented in the terrorist literature.[67]

Researchers such a psychologist Phillip Zimbardo demonstrate that it is both individual and situational determinants that can drive seemingly normal individuals to

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[65] Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (2005): 162.

[66] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 20.

[67] Canter, *The Faces of Terrorism,* 1.

commit acts of violence.[68]  This type of research can be applicable when evaluating how individuals arrive at the point of committing acts of terror.   Because individuals all radicalize in different ways and at different points, it is important to encompass both individual and external components.  Additionally, contributions from research on social identity theory offer the perspective of how membership in a group influences an individual's behavior. The field of social psychology has emerged as an all-encompassing way of viewing radicalization.  Subsequently, it is necessary to first address the disciplines and theories of radicalization so that we can understand different radicalization frameworks used to describe an individual's progression into radicalization.

## C.    RADICALIZATION FRAMEWORKS

The lack of clarity on the theories and disciplines involved in radicalization, have subsequently caused problems in adequately addressing the problem.  This lack of clarity has hampered the ability to utilize one standard framework for radicalization. Currently, a uniform model of radicalization does not exist.  For the purposes of this strategy, a radicalization model is defined as a framework outlining the path an individual travels throughout the radicalization process, or a framework outlining the causal factors that contribute to an individual's radicalization. Various models of radicalization exist, however, members of state, local and federal law enforcement agencies all utilize different models consisting of varying theories and processes. Moreover, academics and law enforcement agencies all have different ways in which they view radicalization and the path an individual travels into radicalization and potentially into committing a terrorist act.  With the myriad of thoughts on radicalization it is important to get away from a "one size fits all" mentality.[69]

Radicalization researchers use several approaches and sets of terminology to explain the relationship between individual and environmental influences.  One set of

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[68] Philip G. Zimbardo, "A Situationist Perspective on the Psychology of Evil: Understanding how Good People are Transformed into Perpetrators," in *The Social Psychology of Good and Evil*, ed. A. Miller (New York: Guilford, 2004).

[69]Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 8.

terminology is the top down / bottom up approach. The top-down approach assesses the roots of terrorism lie in political, social, economic or even evolutionary circumstances. On the contrary, the bottom-up approach explores the characteristics of individuals and groups.[70] Additional researchers designate macro and micro levels in order to make a distinction between internal and external variables. Macro levels of radicalization encompass societal/cultural influences, whereas micro incorporate individual influences.[71] When looking at the study of radicalization, it is important to encompass both macro and micro levels to provide a comprehensive account of the influences affecting an individual's propensity to become radicalized. Veldhuis and Staun explain that one cannot only account for macro-level context. Rather, we must examine radicalization as a combination of macro and micro level factors influencing an individual's behavior. Without using a blended approach of macro and micro and the interdependencies present between an individual and their environment, we cannot begin to explain why some individuals radicalize and others do not.[72]

Table 1 represents the theories and disciplines of radicalization and have been presented for the sake of clarity on multiple views of radicalization.[73]

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[70] Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 1 (2005): 11.

[71] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 8.

[72] Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*, 19–20.

[73] Karen D. Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process: A Framework for Understanding" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011), 18.

| Level | Discipline | Trajectory | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| Macro-Level | Sociology Socio-Economic | Top-Down | Political, Social, Economic |
| | | | |
| Mid-Level | Social Psychology | Blended (Top-Down/Bottom-Up) | Societal/Individual |
| | | | |
| Micro-Level | Psychology | Bottom-Up | Individual or Group Characteristics |

Table 1.    Comparative Analysis of Radicalization Theories and Processes

When reviewing the radicalization process, it is also important to make a distinction between individual radicalization versus collective radicalization. It is not only important to understand individual versus societal influences that affect an individual's path to radicalization but to also understand the motivations of collective groups of individuals who radicalize. Individuals may radicalize on their own such as a "lone wolf." However, in some instances, radicalization is a collective phenomenon and can involve large scale shifts in attitude or implicit support or empathy for terrorist ideologies. According to Taşpınar, "Radicalized societies are permeated by a deep sense of collective frustration, humiliation and deprivation relative to expectations."[74] The motivations for an individual to radicalize can be different than that of the radicalization of collective groups. Not making a distinction between the two can drastically alter the outcome of radicalization research.

## D.    REVIEW OF CURRENT RADICALIZATION FRAMEWORKS

This section will review several models of radicalization. It is necessary to review these models because, as explained in the previous section, multiple frameworks in which to view radicalization exist. A review of these models will offer insight into exploring a framework that most adequately addresses all of the variables of

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[74] Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism," 77.

radicalization. This review does not, nor attempt to, encompass all of the variations of radicalization models. Rather, this review will focus on radicalization models with promising framework or concepts for researchers to utilize.

### 1. Staircase to Terrorism

Fathali Moghaddam's "Staircase to Terrorism" provides a five phase process that an individual travels through, with the fifth and final stage leading to a terrorist act. His model incorporates a psychological approach to understanding radicalization and terrorism by using a metaphor of narrowing staircase leading to a final act of terrorism.[75] The staircase to terrorism suggests we all begin life on the ground floor of the staircase. The staircase leads to higher floors and individuals move to higher floors dependent on the doors he or she feels are open to them. This phase model is a useful explanation of radicalization because it takes into account the subjective perception of individuals and their situations. On the lower floors, individuals experience perceived injustices and relative deprivation. Important, too, is their perception of their ability to rectify these injustices through legitimate means. If they feel they cannot, they move higher in the staircase and commitment to a terrorist organization may occur. They begin to view terrorism as morally acceptable in order to achieve their goal. As progression to higher floors occurs, recruitment into a terrorist organization occurs. The fifth and final floor is the terrorist act itself wherein individuals have become so committed to the cause they are willing to sacrifice themselves or others. It is important to note the staircase metaphor allows for individuals to remain at any given floor without moving higher; many people will radicalize without ever participating in terrorist behavior.[76]

This theory helps explain why some individuals with seemingly similar backgrounds elevate to the level of terrorism and other individuals do not. Moghaddam's model specifically accounts for both individual and societal influences. This radicalization model is considered a phase model. Phase models show a chronological

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[75] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," 161.

[76] Fathali M. Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What they Experience and Why They Come to Destroy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 173.

definition of the stages individuals allegedly go through in the radicalization process.[77] Phase models offer a linear approach to radicalization—individuals move from one phase to another. This approach allows policy makers the opportunity to make phase specific counter actions in order to deter, prevent, or mitigate radicalization within a specific phase.[78] The use of such phase models has had an impact in radicalization research. For example, Moghaddam's staircase to terrorism model has been adopted by several European Union radicalization prevention and intervention projects such as Terrorism and Radicalisation (TerRa) and Scientific Approach to Finding Indicators & Responses to Radicalisation (SAFIRE).

## 2.    European Union's Strategy

An additional useful model of radicalization is one developed by the European Union.  In 2008, the European Commission financed a study through the research project Transnational Security, Terrorism, and the Rule of Law, to research who becomes radicalized and why.[79]  The model indicates that radicalization consists of three dynamics or causal factors that influence radicalization: external, social, and individual.[80]   It proposes that radicalization cannot be understood through single explanations and attempts to provide insight into the causal factors of radicalization.[81]   The article views radicalization as a collective phenomenon, or a process of socialization, which stems from individual's behavior. The authors highlight this through their categorization of radicalization into external levels, social levels, and individual levels.[82]   These levels encompass all of the differing factors and views on radicalization provided by psychologists, sociologists, homeland security officials, etc.

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[77] Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*, 2.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, "Radicalisation," 5.

[80]Ibid., 10.

[81] Ibid., 9.

[82] Ibid., 10.

### 3.    John Horgan "Process Model"

John Horgan, in his work *The Psychology of Terrorism*, uses what he defines as a *process model*. Horgan developed this concept in order to move terrorism away from a complex issue and utilize a model that will clearly account for identifiable behaviors and their antecedents, expected consequences, and outcomes. The process model uses three distinct phases: involvement, engagement, and disengagement.[83] In a separate work, Horgan assesses that a critical implication of these distinctions is the recognition that each of them may contain unique, or phase-specific, implications for counterterrorism.[84]

### E.    METHODOLOGY

Because a common radicalization framework does not exist, it has led to divergent understandings of radicalization.[85] Currently, there are numerous models used to describe the radicalization process in an attempt to understand the root causes of an individual's radicalization. In order to effectively conduct the research on isolation and radicalization, an easy to understand framework for terrorism was applied.  This thesis will use the terminology of John Horgan and categorize radicalization into the three phases: initial involvement, engagement, disengagement.  Radicalization is a complex issue and in order to determine where isolation plays a role in the radicalization process, Horgan's model offers an easy to understand categorization it into one of three phases.

This research incorporates aspects of all of the models listed above, and others not specifically addressed above. The myriad of radicalization research offers many perspective and contributing factors of radicalization.  Elements of each model were taken into consideration when evaluating whether or not isolation played a role in radicalization. For example, Moghaddam's "Staircase to Terrorism" offers insightful views on the mechanisms that affect terrorism. The staircase to terrorism specifically addresses variables applicable to the research on isolation. These variables include perceived grievances/injustices, personal mobility, social identity theory and charismatic

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[83] Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 69.

[84] Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways," 80.

[85] Keys-Turner, "The Violent Islamic Radicalization Process," 12.

leaders.[86]   Additionally, models such as the European Union's (EU) counter radicalization strategy highlight the importance of examining variables from internal, external, and societal levels.[87]   For the sake of this thesis, the terminology of John Horgan will be used in the evaluation of which phase isolation played a role.[88] It is important to note these stages (initial involvement and initial engagement) represent differing sets of factors that exert influence over an individual's movement through the radicalization process.[89]   Additionally, it is important to take all of these factors into consideration when attempting to show the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process.

The primary methodology of this thesis will include case studies of three radicalized individuals in an attempt to determine if each individual experienced a stage of isolation that contributed to their movement throughout the radicalization process. Each case study will chronologically describe the individual's life, including childhood upbringing, young adult life, psychological factors, and, finally, a description of the attack perpetrated by the individual. Each case study will then be evaluated for what type of isolation, if any, the subject experienced. This research is correlational research, and it does not attempt to prove cause and effect but rather show the relationship between two variables (isolation and radicalization).  The goal of this thesis is to, first, look at all of the phases of radicalization that isolation plays a role in and, second, potentially provide an opportunity for intervention or prevention.  Case studies will be conducted on three individuals who at one time were involved and then fully engaged in the radicalization process.   These case studies will be utilized to determine the role that isolation (emotional, social or perceived isolation) played throughout the radicalization process.

Timothy McVeigh, a notorious right-wing domestic terrorist and responsible for the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing, was selected due to the significant amount of data available on his lifestyle and behaviors, and the significant periods of social and

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[86] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism," 161–169.

[87] Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law, "Radicalisation," 10.

[88] Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways," 80.

[89] Ibid., 85.

emotional isolation it is believed McVeigh experienced leading up to the attack. Anders Breivik, responsible for the 2011 massacre in Oslo, Norway, was studied as a significant amount of information is available through his self-published manifesto.[90] Finally, Omar Hammami, believed to have participated in several overseas terrorist attacks, was selected because of the substantial amount of personal reflections Hammani posted online throughout his time fighting with al-Shabaab. Between the three individuals, there is a significant amount of variation including the stages at which each individual moved throughout the radicalization process and whether or not each subject is considered a lone wolf or an Islamic versus non-Islamic extremist. The case studies utilized previously conducted interviews of the subjects and self-accounts of each individual to determine whether or not isolation played a role in their individual process of radicalization.

A standard list of questions was applied to each case study to determine the extent to which the subjects were isolated, as well as the nature of the isolation experienced. The questions include:

- Did the subject experience any type of isolation?
- Did that isolation contribute to the radicalization process?
- At what stage did isolation play a role?
- What type of isolation was present (social, emotional, or perceived isolation)?
- What external factors contributed to an individual's isolation or perceived feelings of isolation?
- Did isolation either introduce or keep an individual involved in the radicalization process?

The following chapter will provide specific detail on the concept of isolation; specifically addressing the historical use of isolation in military interrogation, gangs, and cults. A detailed explanation on the varieties of isolation, including emotional, social, and perceived isolation, will also be provided. The varieties of isolation will be examined to explain the cause of isolation and the known effects of isolation on behavior.

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[90] Raffaello Pantucci, "What Have We Learned about Lone Wolves from Anders Behring Breivik?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5–6 (2011): 27.

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# III. VARIETIES OF ISOLATION

An extensive amount of research has been conducted on the topic of isolation. However, the majority of these studies evaluate the effects that isolation has on personal health (i.e., depression, feelings of loneliness, or coping mechanisms). Very little research has been conducted regarding the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process. A review of isolation and how it has been used in historical connotations will help us understand the many elements of isolation. The study of isolation has numerous implications in the study of radicalization. Isolation can affect anyone—male, female, young, old—how does this change the way we view terrorists? Through the study of isolation, we can potentially highlight a contributing factor of radicalization that seemingly has been unexplored in depth.

In order to understand the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process, we must first examine the different variations of isolation. This thesis will specifically focus on three types of isolation: social, emotional, and perceived isolation. The following chapter will explore the three types of isolation in depth and review the prior research that has been conducted in these areas and the implications these concepts can have on the radicalization process. Additionally, it will explore several other concepts regarding isolation; specifically, the historical use of isolation as a form of social control or punishment, and the innate need of individuals to belong.

## A. SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation is defined as the deprivation of social connectedness or an objective measure of contacts with other people.[91] Social isolation, sometimes referred to as physical isolation, has been widely studied. These studies include the effects of social isolation on personal health, the elderly, widows, and individuals that live in urban areas versus rural areas. By examining the effects that isolation played on the areas referenced above, we will further understand how isolation affects people on a behavioral level.

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[91] Havens et al., "Social Isolation," 130.

Through the understanding of these outcomes and effects, we can further understand how isolation plays a role in the radicalization process.

A 2009 study on social disconnectedness and perceived isolation explained that individuals affected by social isolation, or frequent feelings of loneliness, suffer higher rates of mortality, infection, depression, and cognitive decline.[92] The study continued to explain, socially connected individuals may receive vital support from network members, which may, in turn, assist in active coping mechanisms and ultimately reduce stress. The authors conclude that individuals who seldom experience isolation have more active coping strategies and greater self-esteem and sense of control.[93]

Social isolation has also been related to poorer life meaning, lower levels of satisfaction, wellbeing, and community involvement. It is suggested that maintaining social ties provides one with increased feelings of self-identity and personal control. Indicating that inclusion in social networks provides meaning and purpose to one's life, thus leading to reduced levels of psychological distress.[94] In addition, there are associations between social isolation and mental illness, distress, dementia, premature death,[95] and suicide.[96]

Social isolation has several important implications for radicalization; specifically, social isolation impacts an individual's need to belong to a group and an individual's identity. Brannan and Strindberg explain, "Belonging to a group is a powerful determinant of the identities of most individuals."[97] Social identity theory can help explain the relationship between and individual and their membership in groups.[98] For instance, if individuals no longer fit in their in-group, they then become the out-group and

[92] Cornwell and Waite, "Social Disconnectedness," 31.

[93] Ibid.,31–34.

[94] Jennifer C. Cornman et al., "Social Ties and Perceived Support Two Dimensions of Social Relationships and Health among the Elderly in Taiwan," *Journal of Aging and Health* 15, no. 4 (2003): 620–621.

[95] Hawthorne, "Measuring Social Isolation," 521–522.

[96] Thomas E. Joiner Jr., Jessica S. Brown and LaRicka R. Wingate, "The Psychology and Neurobiology of Suicidal Behavior," *Annual Review of Psychology* 56 (2005): 302.

[97] Brannan and Strindberg, *Critical Analysis,* 32.

[98]Ibid.

can become isolated.  An example may be Oklahoma City bomber, Timothy McVeigh, who desired to be in the Army's Special Forces. McVeigh tried but ultimately washed out of the program and was subsequently isolated from his perceived in-group.

Conformity studies, such of that of Solomon Asch[99] and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann,[100] may also offer insight into the relationship of isolation and radicalization. Their studies on conformity explain that people have a desire for conformity and feel pressure to conform. Noelle-Neumann explains, "As social beings, most people are afraid of becoming isolated from their environment. They would like to be popular and respected."[101] Does this need for conformity influence an individual's decision to belong to a group? If so, to what group do they then chose to belong?

In an additional study conducted on adolescent development, Elliot and Menard found that the majority of adolescents, originally identified as peer-isolates, do not maintain that status over time. Instead, most of these individuals transition from isolation and become members of a larger group.[102] These findings pose significant implications in the study of isolation and behavior.  What groups do these previous isolates find themselves joining?  Additionally, this reinforces the idea that individuals have a need to belong to a larger group and a need to remove themselves from their previously isolated state. Belonging to a group can satisfy physical isolation, but social isolation also has effects on an individual's state of emotional and perceived isolation. The varieties of isolation offer a considerable amount of overlap between the three areas, and it is important to distinguish between them in order to understand the unique influences that each type of isolation exerts over an individual.

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[99] Solomon E. Asch, "Opinions and Social Pressure," in *Reading about the Social Animal*, ed. Elliot Aronson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1955), 17–26.

[100] Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Turbulences in the Climate of Opinion: Methodological Applications of the Spiral of Silence Theory," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1977): 143–158.

[101] Ibid., 144.

[102] Derek A. Kreager, "Strangers in the Halls: Isolation and Delinquency in School Networks," *Social Forces* 83 (2004): 352–353.

## B.    EMOTIONAL ISOLATION

Emotional isolation is represented by the subjective degree an individual feels emotionally connected with others.  Emotional isolation may also represent "a gap between one's ideal level of social relationships and their actual level of social relationships."[103] An emotionally isolated individual may feel distanced and maintain a difficulty relating to others. Emotional isolation is at times characterized with the absence or loss of an attachment figure, such as the relationship that parents provide to children or the relationships that spouses provide each other.  Weiss suggests that emotional isolation can only be substituted by an additional intimate bond.[104]  A study on the importance of emotional isolation suggests that yearning for the loss of an attachment figure, distress, and depression are associated with emotional isolation.[105]  The study focuses on the importance of marital status, the loss of a child, and the loss of a confidant. The loss of a confidant has also been associated with life satisfaction and morale.[106]

## C.    PERCEIVED ISOLATION

Finally, perceived isolation is a subjective sense of the lack of social support relating to the extent one feels isolated.[107] Perceived isolation is based on the subjective experiences of the individual. Perceived support can be viewed in both the satisfaction with support provided and the degree to which one feels they will be supported in the future if needed. Perceived support is indicative of worse psychological distress and higher levels of depression.[108] Positive perceptions about one's support network can also act as a barrier of stress. Cornwell and Waite state, "For some individuals, the actual

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[103] Stack, "Marriage, Family and Loneliness," 416.

[104] Van Baarsen et al., "Lonely but Not Alone, "119–135.

[105] Elizabeth Dugan and Vira R. Kivett, "The Importance of Emotional and Social Isolation to Loneliness among Very Old Rural Adults," *The Gerontologist* 34, no. 3 (1994): 340.

[106] Ibid., 340–341.

[107] Cornwell and Waite, "Social Disconnectedness," 32.

[108] Cornman et al., "Social Ties and Perceived Support," 622–623

amount of social resources available to them is unrelated to the amount of time spent alone."[109] The concept of perceived isolation highlights how an individual's perception can influence their well-being and behavior.

A study on experimental existential psychology, conducted in 2006, focused on the five major existential concerns of individuals: death, isolation, identity, freedom, and meaning.[110] This study investigated the role that these existential concerns play in psychological functioning. The study concludes that isolation is an existential concern and serves as a reminder that each individual is essentially alone and separate from others. The author explains that even when friends and family are physically present, an individual's subjective experience can still leave them feeling isolated. The inability to truly share one's experiences with others is consistent with both emotional and perceived isolation. The desire for shared subjective experiences thus leads people to feel a deep existential connection with others who appear to share their subjective experiences.[111] If isolation is viewed as an existential concern, this can lead individuals to seek out those who share the same feelings as the individual. Does this existential concern compel individuals to relate to others and join groups or make connections with other like-minded individuals?

## D.    CONSIDERATIONS FOR ISOLATION

As we review isolation, there are several important factors to consider. One important distinction to make when researching isolation is to determine whether the isolation was self-imposed or forced upon an individual. Social isolation and loneliness are often correlated. However, those that are socially isolated are not necessarily lonely. Social isolation can be one of personal choice and therefore may not have the negative effects that are often associated with conditions of loneliness.[112] For example, in the tradition of writers such as Henry Thoreau, sometimes people seek isolation as a means

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[109] Cornwell and Waite, "Social Disconnectedness, 33.

[110] Koole, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski, "Introducing Science," 212.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Havens et al., "Social Isolation," 130.

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of personal reflection. But forced isolation is very different and has negative consequences. Subsequently, research on preventing school violence suggests that both forced isolation and peer rejection have adverse effects on individuals. However, not belonging to a group does not have the same detrimental effects on an individual that peer rejection does.[113]

Subsequently, it is important to note that isolation does not always have a negative connotation.  A 2010 article in *Psychology Today* assesses that social isolation in the form of retreat, can be a time of healing, reassessment, and regrouping.[114] If social isolation is utilized in an effective manner, it can be a useful and necessary component in self-evolution.[115]   As the following chapters examine the role isolation played in an individual's radicalization, this was an essential aspect that was considered. Has an individual experienced some type of isolation (social, emotional, perceived)? If so, was this isolation self-imposed or was it forced? Did it have positive or negative connotations? The distinction between self-imposed versus forced isolation and positive versus negative isolation, can drastically alter the outcome of the research when determining if isolation plays a role in the radicalization process.

## E.      HISTORICAL USES OF ISOLATION AND ITS EFFECTS

In the past, isolation has been used by several entities and organizations for a myriad of reasons.  The following will review the use of isolation by these entities and the results that imposed isolation had on individuals.  The use of isolation is often a form of social control, punishment, or compliance.  By evaluating the use of isolation and its effects, we will have a better understanding of it. This review of the uses of isolation by other organizations will offer further insight into the possible use of imposed isolation by

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[113] Karen F. Osterman, "Preventing School Violence," *Phi Delta Kappan* 84, no. 8 (2003): 622.

[114] Michael J. Formica, "Psychological and Spiritual Benefit of Interior Retreat," *Psychology Today*, February 19, 2012, accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/enlightened-living/201002/psychological-and-spiritual-benefit-interior-retreat.

[115] Ibid.

terrorist organizations. Additionally, by studying isolation that was forced upon an individual, we can better understand how social isolation can then translate into emotional and perceived isolation.

### 1.    Isolation as Social Control

Throughout history, cults have used isolation as a form of social control over their members. Numerous cults have exerted forms of social and emotional isolation over their members for numerous reasons; specifically, it is used as a tactic to recruit and retain membership within the cult.  Social isolation also affects the individual's social networks and the support offered by these networks. Through this social isolation, it may in fact additionally impose emotional and perceived isolation.  Cult leaders used isolation to ensure continued membership within the group and also continued belief in the cause by removing external influences.  The isolation ensures the individuals no longer have a source of outside perspective, and will only know perspectives that were offered to them by the cult leader.  This section will briefly review how isolation was used as a form of social control in the Rajneeshpuram Commune in the 1980s and the infamous Jonestown community.

Members of the Rajneeshpuram Commune, located in central Oregon in the 1980s, were disciples of the Indian religious leader Shree Rajneesh. The Rajneeshpuram Commune is an example of how the social isolation of its disciples affected them.  The commune was completely isolated from the outside world and was situated on 60,000+ acres of land.[116]  A 1991 study conducted on the Rajneeshpuran Commune indicated that individuals living on the compound suffered from both physical and psychological isolation.[117]  Residents were cut off from the outside world, and the only perspective they were provided was filtered and negative.  A stark reminder of the impact and control that isolation can have over individuals was provided by a female farm worker on the Rajneesphuran Commune. She described "if one saw someone writing a lot of letters,

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[116] Carl Latkin, "From Device to Vice: Social Control and Intergroup Conflict at Rajneeshpuram," *Sociology of Religion* 52, no. 4 (1991): 364.

[117] Ibid., 372.

something was wrong with that individual. It indicated that his or her energy was no longer focused on the ranch."[118] This form of social isolation additionally affected how the individuals perceived isolation and their emotional isolation.

Similarly, "The People's Temple," led by notorious Jim Jones utilized isolation as a form of social control.  Jones moved the People's Temple to from San Francisco to Guyana in 1977.  Jonestown was five miles away from the nearest settlement, with the only way out in or out by plane or boat.[119] Leaving was difficult and no one was allowed contact with the outside world without permission. Outsiders were not welcome either. By moving Jonestown to Guyana, Jones was afforded the opportunity to isolate his members without the "contaminating" influence of the outside society; furthermore, his followers would not be distracted by the pull of social involvements outside of the group.[120] The use of physical isolation allowed Jones to maintain control over his people and filter the information his members received from the outside world.  Not only did this isolation physically isolate his members, but there were indications of emotional and perceived isolation as well.  There were accounts from former members of Jonestown indicating techniques were used to break down normal family ties, including rewarding children for "telling" on their parents or the use of forced abstinence in married couples.[121]  These techniques created distance and a sense of distrust between family members in an attempt to solidify individual's reliance on Jones.

### 2.    Isolation as Compliancy

Isolation has also been used as a mechanism to elicit compliancy from an individual. Many military, police, and intelligence agencies use isolation as part of their interrogation techniques. By reviewing the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) declassified *Counterintelligence Manual* we can review the effects of imposed

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[118] Ibid.

[119] James T. Richardson, "People's Temple and Jonestown: A Corrective Comparison and Critique," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19, no. 3 (1980): 245–246.

[120] Johnson, "Dilemmas of Charismatic Leadership," 320

[121] Richardson, "People's Temple and Jonestown," 247

isolation.[122] In 1997, the KUBARK manual was declassified and outlines interrogation techniques utilized by the CIA during the Cold War era, many of which are used to day in the Global War on Terrorism.[123] In the context of interrogation, isolation is two-fold. By isolating individuals one prevents them from collaborating with other individuals (i.e., to establish a back-story). Isolation is also used so that the individual feels the discomfort of being separated and does not benefit from the psychological strength provided by socializing with others. The KUBARK manual states, "The symptoms most commonly produced by isolation are superstition, intense love of any other living thing, perceiving inanimate objects as alive, hallucinations, and delusions."[124] The objective to use isolation in interrogation is to leverage the source into a state of compliance in which the individual is willing to answer questions; however, subsequent studies conducted by Lawrence Hinkle suggest that the adverse effects of isolation (hallucination, delusions, fatigue etc.) may reduce the accuracy of the information being provided.[125] While the use of isolation above is associated with sensory deprivation and is an extreme version of isolation, it still shows adverse effects that isolation may have on an individual.

### F.    CONCLUSION

After reviewing the definitions and previous studies on isolation, we have gained a better understanding of the concepts. However, a significant gap still remains on the role that isolation plays in the radicalization process. One challenge when studying the effects of isolation is that it is difficult to measure. Social isolation is easier to measure as it is characterized as social connectedness—a measurable concept. However, perceived isolation and emotional isolation are both subjective experiences. In order to conduct case studies on individuals, this study relied on the personal experiences of the individuals in order to determine if isolation played a role in their radicalization.

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[122] *KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation Manual*, 1963, U.S. Crow, http://www.uscrow.org/downloads/Survival%20Public%20Domain/Kubark_Counterintelligence_Interrogation_torture_manual1963.pdf, 87–90.

[123] Robert A. Fein, Paul Lehner and Bryan Vossekuil, "Educing Information-Interrogation: Science and Art, Foundations for the Future," *Intelligence Science Board Phase 1 Report* (Washington, DC: National Defense Intelligence College Press, 2006), 96.

[124] Ibid., 136–137.

[125] Ibid., 137.

Psychologist John Horgan suggests in the study of radicalization, that it might be beneficial to establish "predisposing risk factors" for involvement in terrorism.[126] Horgan indicates "the presence of some emotional vulnerability, in terms of feelings of anger, alienation and disenfranchisement" could be used as pre-disposing risk factors.[127] Horgan's explanation of emotional vulnerability and alienation may encompass all types of isolation: social, emotional, and perceived. Furthermore, a 1957 article written by Erving Goffman, entitled "Alienation from Interaction," indicates alienation is not a matter of "personality" or "attitude" but rather situational in nature.[128] This reiterates the importance of viewing isolation and radicalization from the social-psychological standpoint and, more specifically, from a situational perspective. Of course, individual (dispositional) factors also play a role, but their role has to be interpreted within the larger context in which behavior takes place. The following three chapters will include the case studies of Timothy McVeigh, Anders Behring Breivik, and Omar Hammami. By viewing the types of isolation (social, emotional, and perceived) as individual entities, we can analyze the unique influences each type of isolation exerted over an individual in regard to their process of radicalization.

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[126] Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways," 84.

[127] Ibid., 84–85.

[128] Melvin Seeman, "Alienation Motifs in Contemporary Theorizing: The Hidden Continuity of the Classic Themes," *Social Psychology Quarterly* (1983): 172.

# IV.  TIMOTHY MCVEIGH

## A.  INTRODUCTION

This chapter will detail the life of Timothy McVeigh who is responsible for the deadly 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building.[129] McVeigh was 26 years old at the time of the attack, and he is an example of an individual who was described by many as a "loner" who was subsequently radicalized to the point of conducting a terrorist attack.  McVeigh led a secluded life both as a child and throughout different stages of his adult life. This chapter will begin by describing his childhood, early adult life, his military career, and the turning point in his life – life after the military. The different periods of isolation McVeigh experienced will be broken down into the previously discussed stages of radicalization— initial involvement and initial engagement.

## B.  CHILDHOOD

Timothy James McVeigh was born on Tuesday, April 23, 1968, to father Bill and mother Mildred "Mickey" McVeigh.[130]  The McVeigh family lived a middle class life in the towns of Lockport and Pendleton, New York. Timothy was the second born of three children; he had an older sister Patricia and a younger sister Jennifer. Mickey kept a journal detailing Timothy's life, and at nine and a half months old, she described him as having "quite a temper and is very stubborn, but is almost always happy and smiling."[131] In addition, Mickey wrote, "At age 1 ½, [Timothy] seems to be getting into a lot of trouble. A typical Dennis the Menace."[132] Timothy's childhood was that of any child, learning to ride a bike, playing outside, playing cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers with his friends.

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[129] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terror Hits Home: The Oklahoma City Bombing," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed November 19, 2013, http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing.

[130] Lou Michel, Dan Herbeck, and Gary Telles, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Regan Books, 2001), 12.

[131] Ibid., 12.

[132] Ibid., 13.

When Timothy was 10, he played on a baseball team coached by his father. Timothy was scrawny and was subsequently picked on by a bully. The bully punched Timothy, and he fled and wept in the car.[133] He felt like a failure to his father, who was an accomplished softball player.[134] This incident was described by the authors who wrote McVeigh's biography as something that he, McVeigh, would remember forever.[135] Over time, McVeigh developed a hatred of bullies—of any person, institution or even nation that seemed to be picking on the weak.[136]

In 1979, Bill and Mickey McVeigh decided to separate. The parents allowed the children to decide who they wanted to live with. The girls wanted to stay together and live with Mickey. Timothy did not want his father to be alone, so he lived with Bill.[137] Timothy claimed it did not bother him much when his mother left. Although Timothy claimed his parent's split did not bother him, he insisted his childhood was no better or worse than any other children of divorced parents. Throughout the years, McVeigh would lash out repeatedly at the idea of working mothers, blaming them for problems in the American society. At one point, he stated, "In the past thirty years, because of the women's movement, they've taken an influence out of the household."[138] Tim never felt a love for his parents or siblings. There was only one person Tim could say he loved, his paternal grandfather Ed McVeigh. They shared a love of guns and spent a significant amount of time together. When not with his grandfather, McVeigh spent time in solitude on his bicycle riding throughout Niagara County, New York.[139]

McVeigh had a high IQ, but again, he found himself at the hands of bullies when he was in the seventh grade. In junior high, Timothy was attempting to figure out who he was and where he fit in. To that end, he pursued a wide path toward social acceptance,

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[133] Ibid., 19.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 20.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Brandon M. Stickney, *All-American Monster: The Unauthorized Biography of Timothy McVeigh* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1996), (Kindle ed.), 643.

[138] Michel, Herbeck and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 21.

[139] Ibid., 25.

bouncing from one group of friends to the next, making many acquaintances, but building close connections with only a few.[140] As Timothy grew, so did his self-confidence and he was able to fend off bullies. McVeigh's parents' marriage hit another rocky spot and finally split for the third and final time in 1984. Timothy again chose to live with his father.  As a teenager, when he was not working, he was holed up in his bedroom and had developed a love of computers. McVeigh had a group of hacking friends and was recognized by his high school as the "most promising Computer Programmer."[141]   In 1986, Timothy graduated from high school.

## C.    EARLY ADULTHOOD

After graduation, McVeigh was described as to having fallen into a funk.[142]  But this time was later described as a time of personal reflection where McVeigh was determining who he was, how he fit into the world, and where he wanted to go with the rest of his life. McVeigh then used a scholarship to attend a local two-year business college for computer programming, but after a short while he quit attending college classes.[143] McVeigh still indulged in reading about guns and the Second Amendment. This is the point in McVeigh's life where he was introduced to the *Turner Diaries*.[144] The *Turner Diaries* is a fictional book depicting the diaries kept by Ed Turner. Turner, a member of a neo-nazi organization, described how patriotic white Americans were discriminated against by the Jewish controlled government. The government confiscated the weapons of white Americans, encouraged non-white foreign immigration, and encouraged affirmative action, which put minorities in positions of power within society and the government. The *Turner Diaries* depicts the plight of the white patriots and their

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[140] Ibid., 29.

[141] Ibid., 32.

[142] Ibid., 36.

[143] Ibid., 37.

[144] Ibid., 39.

struggle to overthrow the Jewish controlled government through countless acts of violence.[145] This book would prove to be influential later on in McVeigh's life.

Throughout the course of his early life, McVeigh had developed a survivalist instinct, and he wanted to be able to defend and protect himself if necessary. In *American Terrorist*, the authors "People have to protect themselves. We can't just depend on the government to protect us."[146] McVeigh began to prepare for the worst by stockpiling water, investing in guns, etc. In order to finance his survivalist mentality and love for expensive guns, he became an armed security guard. Just shy of his twentieth birthday, he became an armored car driver, where he excelled at his job and was respected by his employers. After a short while, McVeigh again decided it was time for a change in his life.

## D.    MILITARY CAREER

In May 1988, McVeigh decided to join the United State Army. McVeigh scored exceptionally high on the Military Vocational Aptitude Test, only missing one question. The Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Army recruiters all wanted him. McVeigh decided to join the Army because he enjoyed the idea of being an infantryman and honing in on his survival skills.[147] McVeigh set his sights on either the Special Forces or Army Ranger. He attended basic training in Fort Benning, Georgia.[148] Although McVeigh never really felt like he fit in back in Pendleton, but he felt comfortable in the military. In the beginning, McVeigh was assigned to an experimental program called Cohesion, Operational Readiness and Training (COHORT); a unit designed to put new soldiers in small teams to form bonds and lasting friendships. Being part of the COHORT team was a three year commitment and prohibited him for trying out for Special Forces for at least three years.  While disappointed, McVeigh made friendships through the COHORT team

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145 Terence Ball and Richard Dagger, "Inside the Turner Diaries: Neo-Nazi Scripture," *Political Science and Politics* 30, no. 4 (1997): 717–718.

146 Michel, Herbeck and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 40.

147 Ibid., 50.

148 Stickney, *All-American Monster*, 848.

that would impact the rest of his life, namely Terry Lynn Nichols.[149] Nichols was more mature and experienced than many others and became the squad leader for the second platoon, which included McVeigh. The two men quickly bonded.[150] McVeigh thrived in the military showing amazing attention to detail and motivation. Authors Michel, Herbeck and Telles state, "Timothy McVeigh would come to consider his first two years in the military as the finest period of his life."[151] McVeigh's Fort Benning experience came to an end in August 1988, and he had achieved the maximum test score for an infantry trainee.

In September of 1988, McVeigh attended specialized training at Fort Riley, Kansas. At Fort Riley, McVeigh joined Company C, 2/16 Infantry Battalion. Terry Nichols joined McVeigh at Fort Riley.[152] However, shortly afterwards, Nichols abruptly left the Army in 1989 due to family hardships. In Nichols' absence, McVeigh forged a bond with Michael Fortier, an Army recruit from Arizona. While most recruits went out and partied on their weekends off, McVeigh did not indulge in the bar scene. Many times he was alone in the barracks checking equipment and reading manuals.[153] Having excelled at Fort Riley, McVeigh reenlisted in the army for an additional four years in 1990. McVeigh finally received the news he had been waiting for, the Army petitioned him to try out for Special Forces. He was to report to Fort Bragg, North Carolina in November of 1990.[154] Weeks before trying out for Special Forces, McVeigh was sent to war in the Middle East.

McVeigh's company prepared for combat duty and was stationed in Saudi Arabia in January 1991. They were part Operation Desert Storm, where the Allied forces were intent on pushing Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. During his time in Kuwait, McVeigh received the rank of sergeant and later the "Army Commendation

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[149] Michel, Herbeck and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 53–54.

[150] Stickney, *All-American Monster*, 857.

[151] Michel, Herbeck and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 56.

[152] Ibid., 58.

[153] Ibid., 61.

[154] Ibid., 65.

Medal." McVeigh subsequently received four other medals during his service in the Persian Gulf. His experience in the Gulf brought out many emotions. It bothered McVeigh to be part of a war that involved no direct threat to the US, and he felt deep regret for the killing of Iraqi soldiers. Finally, President Bush ordered a cease fire on February 28, 1991. In late March of the same year, the Army Special Forces reached out to McVeigh, and he was to travel back to the U.S. and report to the Special Forces Selection and Assessment Course at Fort Bragg.[155]

When McVeigh reported to Camp McCall (the Special Forces Assessment Facility at Fort Bragg), it was just what he had been looking for, only one problem— McVeigh was not ready.[156] His time in Desert Storm had broken him down physically and emotionally. He was physically out of shape and had endured several months of unrelieved stress. Commanders at Camp McCall immediately recognized the difficulty of the soldiers who were just returning from Desert Storm. The commanders offered to defer the tryouts and have the individuals come back when they were better prepared. However, McVeigh did not seize the opportunity to defer training, which would later become a costly mistake. Through the first exercises of the Special Forces Assessment, McVeigh realized he was not going to make it through the program. Shortly after arriving, McVeigh withdrew from the training program. This was difficult for McVeigh, as he had spent his time excelling in the military and now was not going to make it in the coveted Special Forces. The commander offered to have McVeigh try out again at a later time, but this never came to fruition.[157]

When McVeigh returned to his station at Fort Riley, his demeanor had changed. McVeigh still excelled at his duties, especially gunnery. However, he no longer had his gung-ho attitude towards the military. Instead it turned into bitterness, anger, and a desire

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[155] Ibid., 80.

[156] Ibid., 84.

[157] Ibid., 86.

for isolation.[158] McVeigh seemingly began to grow disenchanted with Army life. Additionally, he was upset with the lack of cohesion among and lack of commitment to excellence of those in his unit, Charlie Company.

Although questioning his decision to reenlist, McVeigh still excelled at his duties and received excellent evaluations from his superiors. At the end of 1991, after learning of an Early Transition Program, McVeigh left the Army altogether; he received an honorable discharge.[159] McVeigh considered the months he spent in the Army the best times of his life. However, at the end, he looked back on his career, and it was overshadowed by disappointments—the lies told in Desert Storm, and, worse, the killing of Iraqi soldiers that he had committed on behalf of the American government. He felt the American government was trying to so hard to take away individual liberties and the Second Amendment. He no longer wanted to work for a government he was beginning to hate.[160]

## E.    LIFE AFTER THE MILITARY

After leaving the Army, McVeigh returned to his father's home in Pendleton, New York where he thought the skills he had developed in the Army (leadership, marksmanship, etc.) would help him land a job. That was not the case, and the next 13 months proved disappointing. He attempted to get jobs doing computer programming but eventually settled on a security guard position. To supplement his low income, McVeigh joined a National Guard unit only 15 miles from home. McVeigh found himself back as a security guard and back in the military. He felt as if he was moving backwards, not forwards.[161] He eventually took an armed security position with the same company. McVeigh, while living on his father's couch, tried to get several other jobs including one with the United State Marshals Service, but he was never offered the position. While working long hours and sleeping on his father's couch, McVeigh came to the realization

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[158] Ibid., 87.

[159] Stickney, *All-American Monster*, 1235.

[160] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 92.

[161] Ibid., 96.

that he did not fit in in New York anymore.[162] One evening McVeigh had an emotional breakdown and immediately went to his grandfather's house, the only place he felt he belonged. When he arrived at his grandfather's house McVeigh was at rock bottom, but he eventually moved forward. In 1992, McVeigh resigned from the Army Reserve unit. At the same time, his disdain for the government was building. He was writing letters to newspapers, congressman, and he was reading more and more anti-government material. McVeigh believed the federal government was going to disarm the American people and take away their right to bear arms.

In 1992, McVeigh decided he was leaving the state of New York. McVeigh was in a search for a more free state, where taxes were not so high and there was less government regulation.[163] When the standoff in Waco, Texas occurred and the Branch Davidian compound was under siege, McVeigh traveled there. He was interviewed by a student reporter and said, "I believe we are slowly turning into a socialist government. The government is continually growing bigger and more powerful, and the people need to prepare themselves against government control."[164] After leaving Waco, McVeigh went on the road travelling from gun show to gun show, selling books and survival items.

Over the next months, McVeigh travelled throughout the United States spending time in Kingman, Arizona (AZ) with his old Army friend Michael Fortier and time in Michigan with Terry Nichols.[165] While staying at the Nichols' farm in Michigan, the events of Waco, Texas unfolded with the compound catching fire and the deaths of many people. McVeigh viewed the tragedy at Waco as another example of the government acting as a bully. A month after the deaths at Waco, McVeigh was back in Kingman with Mike Fortier. Here he considered the idea of forming a militia and typed up eight pages

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[162] Ibid., 102.

[163] Ibid., 116.

[164] Ibid., 120.

[165] Ibid., 128.

of quotes on subjects from gun control to taxation.[166] In October 1993, McVeigh wrote a letter to his sister Jennifer, he stated he had "an urgent need for someone in the family to understand me."

In February 1994, McVeigh rented a house in Golden Valley, AZ, only a few miles away from Mike Fortier.[167] Fortier began noticing changes in McVeigh, and it seemed as if McVeigh believed the New World Order was going to attack him personally. His home in Golden Valley, looked like a bunker. It was also during this period that McVeigh began experimenting with small homemade explosives. Around the same time, McVeigh's beloved grandfather became ill, so he travelled home to visit his grandfather. This was a tumultuous time in McVeigh's life, and when he returned back to Arizona, he took measures to distance himself from yet another confidant—his childhood friend Steve Hodge.[168]

## F.    PLANNING THE ATTACK

September 1994 proved to be a turning point for McVeigh. Up till this point, he had been travelling throughout the U.S. for gun shows, which afforded him the opportunity to discuss his love of guns and survival skills with other like-minded individuals. However, when a new Federal Assault Weapons Ban became law, and rumors for additional gun legislation circulated, McVeigh made a decision—he was going to commit an act of violence against the government.[169] He subsequently spent the next several months developing a plan and acquiring supplies in order to conduct his attack. McVeigh had decided to bomb the Alfred P. Murrah building on the second anniversary Waco, April 19, 1995.[170] Throughout the course of his radicalization, McVeigh had considered several targets, finally deciding on the Murrah building, which

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[166] Ibid., 141.

[167] Ibid., 151.

[168] Ibid., 153.

[169] Ibid., 161.

[170] Ibid., 166.

housed 14 different federal agencies, as it comprised a cross section of many federal agencies who McVeigh believed had at one point or another mistreated the public.[171]

On Sunday October 16, 1994, Ed McVeigh, Timothy's grandfather passed away. McVeigh was already on the road and his family had no way to reach him. McVeigh did not find out his grandfather had passed away until two days after he had already been buried. McVeigh went home to help his father handle his grandfather's estate, and he stayed in New York through early December 1994.[172] After leaving Pendleton, for months McVeigh continued to acquire supplies and make plans in order to coordinate his attack. On March 31, 1995, he left the Fortier's home in Kingman for the last time. He rented a room at a nearby motel and spent the following days alone in his motel room.[173] McVeigh checked out of the motel on April 12, 1995—one week prior to the attack.[174] The next week was spent logistically acquiring the necessary items in order to conduct the attack—retrieving the components to make the bomb, acquiring the rental truck, and establishing a get-away vehicle.

## G.    ISOLATION

McVeigh's life was full of ups and downs. He went through periods where he excelled and was widely accepted by his peers; though in other instances, he displayed the drastic effects that rejection by his peers had on him. The extreme incidents in McVeigh's life demonstrate the effects that isolation has on an individual, both self-imposed isolation and that which was forced upon him. This highlights the importance of perceptions and how McVeigh perceived his relationships with others. In several instances throughout his life, McVeigh perceived that he no longer connected with an individual, so he took drastic steps to dissolve that relationship. Through the analysis of McVeigh's life, we can see how isolation drastically affected him and his path through radicalization, ultimately deciding to conduct a terrorist attack. Significant periods of

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[171] Ibid., 168.

[172] Ibid., 171–185.

[173] Ibid., 202.

[174] Ibid., 206.

isolation throughout McVeigh's life can be seen through his radicalization process, both in the initial involvement phase and the initial engagement phase. McVeigh experienced all types of isolation: emotional, perceived and social isolation. The following section will detail these periods of isolation and the profound affect that it had on McVeigh.

## 1.　　Initial Involvement

McVeigh's isolation began early in life as he spent significant periods of time alone as child. By the age of 10, his parent's had separated. While Bill McVeigh worked hard to support his family, this left Timothy at home by himself for long periods of time. McVeigh spent a significant amount of his childhood raising himself. At one time, McVeigh jokingly remarked "They were never there when I came home from school, hell, I was one of the original latch-key kids, long before the term became popular."[175] McVeigh was left socially isolated and spent long hours in solitude in his bedroom or outside. These hours of solitude left McVeigh longing for an emotional connection.

Throughout his childhood, McVeigh also suffered from emotional isolation and perceived isolation where he did not feel a connection with his parents. With both of his parents working full time jobs, he felt like he never had a parent to talk with when he came home from school.[176] Tim said he did not ever really feel close with either of his parents, "I can't attribute anything I am now to any lack of my parent's presence in the home. I don't know why I go off on that, but I do say that I have very few memories of interactions with my parents."[177] McVeigh's childhood and lack of parents in the home shows signs of all three types of isolation; social, emotional, and perceived.

McVeigh's encounter with bullies throughout his childhood also continued his emotional isolation. Peer rejection has profound effects on children. In the book *Secrets Worth Dying For,* the authors describe that McVeigh had "become more of a loner, where he would escape into a world of fantasy and make believe. Like the heroes form

[175] David Paul Hammer and Jeffery William Paul, *Secrets Worth Dying for: Timothy James McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2004), 15.

[176] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, American Terrorist, 21.

[177] Ibid.

his comic books, he would create scenarios of revenge to atone for past moments of weakness and to defeat his enemies."[178] This rejection in turn caused McVeigh to develop a hatred for bullies—a hatred that would continue throughout his life.

McVeigh's time in the military was a confidence booster. It was a place where he excelled and felt accepted; however, at times throughout his military career, McVeigh isolated himself from his peers. While the majority of his peers spent their downtime going out to bars, McVeigh spent a considerable amount of time isolated in his room playing video games, and reading equipment manuals.[179] McVeigh's military career also showed signs of perceived isolation. After a successful military career, McVeigh abruptly left the Army, citing one of his reasons as the lack of cohesion he felt like the Charlie Company had developed. McVeigh also became disenchanted because he dropped out of the Special Forces program. While this was a personal choice on McVeigh's behalf, Special Forces was what he aspired to be—a team working together on important operations. Social identity theory can help explain the relationship between an individual and their membership in groups.[180] For instance, if individuals no longer fit in their in-group, they then become the out-group and can become isolated. By McVeigh washing out of Special Forces, he was subsequently isolated from his perceived in-group. He then became even more disenchanted with the lack of cohesion of the Charlie Company and ultimately left the Army all together.

This perception of isolation from the military then pushed McVeigh deeper into isolation. People tend to rectify rejection by becoming part of a larger group. After ending his military career, McVeigh spent the majority of his time travelling throughout the United States attending gun shows. Gun shows were a place where McVeigh felt at home. They provided him the opportunity to connect and talk with other like-minded people—gun enthusiasts. While the gun shows did allow McVeigh the opportunity to connect with others, he spent a considerable amount of time on the road alone. Additionally, even in the gun show circuit, McVeigh would experience rejection. Over

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[178] Hammer and Paul, *Secrets Worth Dying For,* 14.

[179] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, American Terrorist, 87.

[180] Brannan and Strindberg, *Critical Analysis*.

his years of attending gun shows, McVeigh had forged a friendship with Roger Moore and Karen Anderson, a couple from Arkansas. They allowed McVeigh to sell his survivalist items at their booth. McVeigh had become increasingly paranoid of government control, an incident occurred at one show where McVeigh confronted an individual he believed to be a police officer. After the confrontation, McVeigh left the booth unattended for a couple hours. When McVeigh returned, he and Moore got into a confrontation, and both were asked to leave the gun show. McVeigh viewed Moore's reaction to the incident as one of rejection. He believed Moore was more interested in making money than supporting the Patriot Movement.[181] McVeigh and his accomplice were believed to have significant ties to the antigovernment Patriot Movement, participating in citizen militias and common law courts.[182]

While McVeigh was trying to fill a void by attending guns shows, it was clear that he still felt emotionally isolated. Even after the incident at the gun show, McVeigh continued to travel from show to show, and his path towards radicalization evolved. McVeigh wrote a letter to his sister Jennifer in October 1993. McVeigh wrote he had "an urgent need for someone in the family to understand me."[183] This letter described the evening when McVeigh had his breakdown and went to his grandfather's house almost in a state of suicide. The letter then attempted to explain his "lawless behavior and attitude."[184] This is an example of how McVeigh perceived injustices perpetrated upon him by the federal government. These perceived injustices by the United States government pushed McVeigh to the edge. He also felt as if no one would understand him—he once again was isolated as he felt like no one understood him, and no one else had the commitment to rectifying these injustices alongside him.

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[181] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, *American Terrorist*, 144.

[182] Thompson Smith, "Patriot Movement: Refreshing the Tree of Liberty with Fertilizer Bombs and the Blood of Martyrs," *Valparaiso University Law Review*, 32 (1997): 299.

[183] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, American Terrorist, 144–145.

[184] Ibid., 145.

## 2.    Initial Engagement

In July of 1994, McVeigh cut off contact with his close confidants. McVeigh dissociated himself from his boyhood friend, Steve Hodge, by sending a 23-page farewell letter to him. McVeigh felt as if he and Hodge no longer shared the same interests and that he and Hodge had hit a "philosophical impasse over McVeigh's hatred of the federal government."[185]   In this letter, McVeigh proclaimed his devotion to the United States Declaration of Independence. Explaining:

> Those who betray or subvert the Constitution are guilty of sedition and/or treason, are domestic enemies and should and will be punished accordingly. It also stands to reason that anyone who sympathizes with the enemy or gives aid or comfort to said enemy is likewise guilty. I have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic and I will. And I will because not only did I swear to, but I believe in what it stands for in every bit of my heart, soul and being. I know in my heart that I am right in my struggle, Steve. I have come to peace with myself, my God and my cause. Blood will flow in the streets, Steve. Good vs. Evil. Free Men vs. Socialist Wannabe Slaves. Pray it is not your blood, my friend.[186]

This shows McVeigh's perception of being isolated and not having a support network available to him. Because he perceived himself as not relating to anyone, McVeigh took the drastic step of self-imposing isolation by cutting contact with those he believed no longer understood him.

At this point, his beloved grandfather, Ed McVeigh passed away—the one person who McVeigh felt a bond with. McVeigh was already on a path of radicalization and missed his grandfather's funeral because he was on the road getting ready to conduct an attack. At this point, McVeigh was operationally involved in conducting an attack by gathering supplies, doing reconnaissance etc. None of his family members had a way of making contact with McVeigh. Even after his grandfather's funeral, McVeigh further isolated himself in order to coordinate his attack.

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[185] Ibid., 153.

[186] Ibid., 154.

Months before the attack, McVeigh socially isolated himself for operational reasons. He spent time on road, hopping from place to place. This was evident in a subsequent letter he wrote to his sister Jennifer in which he stated, "Of course you must realize, then, that I'm not living in Arizona. Why am I running? I am trying to keep my path 'cool,' so in case someone is looking to 'shut up someone who knows too much' I will not be easy to find."[187] Additionally, weeks prior to the attack McVeigh rented a motel room in Arizona. The authors of *American Terrorists* write, "He spent the next twelve days in lockdown mode—almost completely alone thinking and planning."[188] This seclusion before the attack may have served two purposes. One, McVeigh was operationally hiding out.  However, McVeigh may have used this time as one of personal reflection in order to prepare himself for the attack.

Even in the end, McVeigh was isolated. His friends, Terry Nichols and Mike Fortier, who served in the Army with him and who shared the same ideologies as him no longer wanted to be part of his larger plot.  Mike Fortier refused to take part in the attack.[189] Days prior to the attack, Terry Nichols did not show up for a planned meeting in order to stash McVeigh's getaway car. On the day planned to assemble the bomb, Nichols was late. While waiting on Nichols to show, McVeigh was determined to carry out the attack even if that meant doing it on his own. However, Nichols finally did show, and they assembled the bomb together on Tuesday, April 18, 1995. His friends' lack of commitment to the cause infuriated McVeigh and affected the way he perceived himself. However, this did not stop McVeigh. On Wednesday April 19, 1995 Timothy McVeigh drove to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

## H.     TERRORIST ACT

On Wednesday, April 19, 1995, at 9:02 am, Timothy McVeigh detonated a device in the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The building housed 14

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187 Ibid., 196–197.

188 Ibid., 202.

189 Ibid., 201.

different federal agencies and numerous other state government offices.190 The bomb consisted of 5,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate and nitromethane and was placed in the back of a Ryder rental truck. McVeigh lit the five minute fuse, drove the truck to a drop off zone, parked the truck, and exited the area on foot. The blast left a U-shaped hole in the north side of the building and killed 168 individuals, including 19 children.[191] In addition, the blast injured approximately 500 others. The attack is the deadliest act of homegrown terrorism in the history of the United States.[192]

## I. CONCLUSION

Through the examination of McVeigh's life, it is evident that he experienced numerous stints of isolation. Through the ups and downs of McVeigh's life, one thing remained constant——he suffered from significant episodes of social, emotional, and perceived isolation. These occurrences had a considerable impact on the way in which McVeigh perceived his life, and the options McVeigh felt he had. Throughout McVeigh's radicalization there were episodes of both forced isolation and self-imposed isolation—each exerting unique influences on the choices he made. In his youth, McVeigh was forced into isolation through the rejection of his peers and the lack of his parent's presence. However as an adult, McVeigh preferred seclusion most of the time. McVeigh's inability to make it in the Army's Special Forces program left him searching for a new purpose in life. McVeigh thought he found it within the gun show circuit and the friends he made; however, at times that too led to disappointment. McVeigh felt as if his attack on the Alfred P. Murrah building was a statement that could not be ignored.

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[190] Carol W. Lewis, "The Terror that Failed: Public Opinion in the Aftermath of the Bombing in Oklahoma City," *Public Administration Review* 60, no. 3 (2000): 201.

[191] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Terror Hits Home: The Oklahoma City Bombing."

[192] Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Today's FBI: Facts & Figures 2013–2014*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed September 23, 2013, http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/todays-fbi-facts-figures/facts-and-figures-031413.pdf/view, 24.

# V. ANDERS BEHRING BREIVIK

## A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will detail the life of Anders Behring Breivik, who was responsible for the 2011 attacks in Oslo and Utøya Norway, which left 77 people dead. Breivik, 32 at the time of the attack, led a secluded existence throughout different stages of his adult life. This chapter will begin by describing his childhood, early adult life, and the turning point in his life. The different periods of isolation Breivik experienced will be broken down into the previously discussed stages of radicalization—initial involvement and initial engagement.

## B. CHILDHOOD

Anders Behring Breivik was born in February 1979 in Norway to Jens Breivik and Wenche Behring, and the three of them spent the first year of Anders' life living in London as his father was a diplomat for the Royal Norwegian Embassy in London. His parents divorced when Anders was one year old. His father and new stepmother remained in London for a short period of time but ultimately moved to Paris, France. Breivik's mother, along with Anders and his half-sister Elisabeth, moved back to Oslo, Norway.[193] The first few years of his life were marked with instability.[194]

Breivik's mother, Wenche, had a difficult time employed as a nurse and raising Anders and Elisabeth. When Anders was two years old, Wenche applied for a weekend home for her son. In the application Breivik was described as a demanding child who exhausted his mother both physically and psychologically.[195] The application was approved and Breivik spent several weekends with another family. In 1983, Anders, Wenche, and Elisabeth spent a month in a national center for children and youth

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[193] Andrew Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence*, 2011, Federatio of American Scientists, http://www.fas.org/programs/tap/_docs/2083_-_A_European_Declaration_of_Independence.pdf, 1386.

[194] Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile of Anders Behring Breivik," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 3 (2012): 6.

[195] Ibid., 6–7.

psychiatry. At this point, Jens Breivik filed for custody of Anders. The custody case was presented to the court who ultimately decided for custody to remain with his mother, Wenche. A year after the court's custody decision, Norwegian child welfare filed a letter expressing concern with the family conditions, which again lead to an investigation in which the authorities considered moving Breivik into foster care. This was eventually deemed as an unnecessary step and the case was closed with custody of Breivik remaining with Wenche.[196]

Breivik visited his father and stepmother in Paris often as a child. He also visited his father and stepmother at their summer homes in Normandie, France and Notodden, Norway until they divorced when he was 12 years old. Until the point, Breivik published his compendium in 2011, he still remained in contact with his stepmother Tove Overmo.[197] Breivik's stepfather, Tore, was a major in the Norwegian military and Breivik described him as a very likable and good guy. In his compendium, Breivik states, "all in all, I consider myself privileged and I feel I have had a privileged upbringing with responsible and intelligent people around me."[198] In his *2083 A European Declaration of Independence*, he writes, "I haven't really had any negative experiences in my childhood in anyway. I had way too much freedom though if anything."[199]

Breivik continues by describing his relationship with his four half siblings as good, especially with his sister Elisabeth. Growing up, Breivik's best friend was a Muslim. Breivik describes his friend Arsalan as failing to integrate, like many Norwegian-Pakistani's, into the Norweigan community. According to Breivik, after failing to integrate, Arsalan became involved in Pakistani gangs that became involved in targeted violence against ethnic Norwegians. After seeing this, Breivik cut off contact

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[196] Ibid., 7.

[197] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1386.

[198] Ibid., 1387.

[199] Ibid.

with him.[200] This mentality and these actions would drastically affect Breivik in his later years and the way in which he formed opinions of minorities and the push for multiculturalism in Norway.

## C.    TEENAGE YEARS

Breivik's teenage years were somewhat troubled as well.  Breivik immersed himself into a hip-hop community in Oslo. Years after leaving the movement, in his compendium, Breivik reflects on the negative aspects of the hip-hop movement.  He assesses the hip-hop movement propagates anti-social and antiauthority views: it glorifies drug use, it propagates anarchistic attitudes through the graffiti movement, and it glorifies violence and gang mentality. In addition, he estimates that he inflicted property damage, through "tagging" of approximately 2 million Euro.[201] At age 14, he was charged twice with graffiti and vandalism.  Later the same year, he was caught with 43 aerosol spray cans as he was arriving from Denmark.  His mother did not know he had taken the trip to Denmark, which prompted talks between the Breivik family and child welfare. Wenche expressed concerns that her son was turning towards a criminal path.[202] This is the point in Breivik's life in which his father cut off contact with him.[203]

Breivik suggests in his compendium that he noticed all of the individuals in the hip-hop movement were "academically weak." At age 16, Breivik decided to focus more on his studies so that he did not end up like them, and he departed from the hip-hop movement in Oslo.[204] Also at the age of 15, Breivik chose to be baptized and confirmed in the Norwegian State Church.  Around the same time, Breivik delayed his military service because his mother fell ill and Breivik cared for her.

At age 16, Breivik began high school. He disliked it and after the first year, so he changed schools. He spent one more year in a second school, but he did not like it either

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[200] Ibid., 1376–1377.

[201] Ibid., 1206–1209.

[202] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 7.

[203] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1386.

[204] Ibid., 1390.

and dropped out for good.[205] Although Breivik discontinued his formal education, he considered himself very ambitious. Early on, he had decided to choose economics as his main academic direction because he wanted to pursue a career in business or finance. Breivik contends he excelled his first year in high school, and the second year he completed extra credits towards his third year of schooling. He explains, "This left me with a lot of spare hours during my last year, which was a bit frustrating. There were no high school courses for gifted individuals who wanted to take the courses in two years." Additionally, the Norwegian schooling system did not offer a degree that he wanted (the U.S. equivalent of a Bachelor of Business Administration). This is the point when Breivik decided to pursue his higher education informally.

Additionally, when he was around 16 or 17, Breivik joined the Progress Party Youth Organization. The party was regarded as anti-immigration and pro-free market and was a "moderate cultural conservative youth movement."[206] This is the time in which Breivik decided he wanted to dedicate his life to politics in order to change the system. It appealed to Breivik, as it was the only party who opposed multiculturalism. He was active in the Progress Party/Progress Party Youth from the age of 16 to 21. He eventually concluded it would be impossible to change the system democratically and left conventional politics in hopes to find another way.[207]

## D. EARLY ADULTHOOD

Around 2000, Breivik stated he realized the democratic struggle against the Islamisation of Europe, European multiculturalism was lost. He contends that the democratic means were fruitless and that in another 50–70 years, that the Europeans would be the minority. As soon as Breivik realized this, he decided to explore other means of opposition—ultimately armed resistance. He describes his decision in these terms, "Protesting is saying that you disagree. Resistance is saying you will put a stop to

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[205] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 7.

[206] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1396.

[207] Ibid.,1377–1378.

this.  I decided I wanted to join the resistance movement."[208] This proved to be a pivotal decision in Breivik's life; ultimately, altering the path he chose.

Breivik spent the next few years working on his curriculum consisting of economics, finance, sales and marketing.  By composing his own curriculum, this allowed him to focus on areas he deemed relevant to his entrepreneurial focus.[209]  He decided not to formalize his education because when he was 21 or 22 years old (2001 or 2002), he claimed to have joined the Armed European Resistance Movement.  At this point, he had made no concluding decisions in reference to conducting an operation or not, and he still felt as if he had more to learn. He decided that if he had formalized his education, this would only sidetrack his plans for futures operations.  Registering at a formal institution, he decided, would be counter-productive for his future intentions. He also acknowledged that there would not be any professors who would approve of his thesis at a master's or PhD level. He said that attending a university is all about prestige and that he cared very little about prestige and, therefore, had no incentive to formalize his education.[210]

Throughout this time, Breivik remained close with several of his childhood friends.  He states, "I've always been good at socializing, getting to know new people."[211] Breivik spent many weekends with his friends and maintained close contact with them throughout the years.  Although he admits that when he began planning his operation, he had to limit the amount of contact he spent with them. Also, when Breivik was 22 years old, he tried to re-contact and establish a relationship with his father.[212]  His father was not willing to establish a relationship with Breivik because as the father explained, he was not mentally prepared for a reunion due to various reasons. This was the last time Breivik attempted to contact his father.[213]

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[208] Ibid., 1378.

[209] Ibid., 1396–1397.

[210] Ibid., 1400.

[211] Ibid., 1409.

[212] Ibid., 1386.

[213] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 6–10.

In 2001, Breivik moved out from his mother's home. He lived in a shared flat for a year. Between 2002 and 2006, Breivik lived by himself in an apartment.[214] During this period, sometime around 2002 or 2003, Breivik claims to have decided to go ahead with an armed resistance operation. Also around 2002, Breivik claims in his compendium to have met with a group of other like-minded individuals in London. He had made contact with these individuals over the internet and claims to have eventually met with them in 2002 and several other subsequent occasions. These internet and in person contacts, Breivik claims, would ultimately lead to the founding of the PCCTS Knights Templar. Breivik claims after the last meeting, all contact with these individuals was cut off completely. He claims these meetings were more like training courses in order to plan an attack and that everyone was encouraged to manifest their resistance in their own way. Although Breivik claims these meetings existed, throughout the course of the subsequent criminal investigation and his trial, the prosecution disputed that these meetings ever took place and were unable to find any solid network connections between Breivik and others.[215]

## E.    PLANNING THE ATTACK

While living by himself in Oslo, Breivik began to operationally plan an armed resistance in 2002. Breivik started up several business ventures in order to finance his operation. He founded several companies to act as legitimate surrogate companies to raise the finances needed to conduct an attack. His first business focused on outsourcing of programming services (with six employees in multiple countries). His goal was to earn five million dollars for startup money in order to conduct an advanced operation. Breivik began earning money; however, the recession in 2005 and 2006 lowered his income margins.[216]

In 2006, Breivik's mother suggested he move back in with her in order to save money, as his companies were no longer as successful. Breivik agreed, and it is at this

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[214] Ibid., 7.

[215] Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "A Post-Trial Profile of Anders Behring Breivik," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 10 (2012): 18.

[216] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1380.

time he claims the idea of martyrdom struck him. In addition, he decided to take a year off and play videogames as a gift to himself, as it is something he had always wanted to do.[217] While living with his mother, he played a year's worth of World of Warcraft. He additionally spent the next three years writing his compendium, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence*. After 2006, between playing videogames and writing his compendium, Breivik slowly withdrew from his former life. He distanced himself from almost everyone in order to write and plan his operation in secrecy. He admits that it was very difficult to avoid the temptation of telling his closest friends about his plans.[218] However, he knew that as a Templar Knight that if he told his friends, this would be in violation of his oath. Breivik stated, "I have almost lived a normal life up until now. I still have close relationships with my friends and family, just not as tight as it used to be."[219] He describes his time as having been able to do things someone would not normally do (i.e., play World of Warcraft for a year). He describes rituals and meditations he took part in in order to remain motivated and committed to the cause. Breivik's most common ritual was taking long walks on a daily basis and listening to his favorite "motivating" music on his iPod. This time provided him an opportunity to reflect and stay motivated.[220]

After his compendium was complete in late 2009 or early 2010, Breivik began to more operationally prepare himself for the attack. Breivik began purchasing firearms, tactical equipment, and bomb making components. During this time, he travelled throughout Europe in order to acquire firearms from known criminal networks; however, he would later determine it was easier to legally purchase his weapons in Norway. During 2011, Breivik once again moved from his mother's home and moved all of his equipment to a farm he had rented in Asta where he would ultimately assemble the bomb.

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[217] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 7.

[218] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1381.

[219] Ibid., 1383.

[220] Ibid.

## F. ISOLATION

Breivik's life shows instances of perceived isolation (the subjective lack of social support), emotional isolation (the lack of emotional connections), and social isolation (the lack of physical connections). Breivik shows signs of perceived isolation and emotional isolation in the early years of his childhood and adult life, within his initial involvement phase. He then self -imposed isolation in the initial engagement portion of his radicalization as a form of a parallel life, which was necessary in order to hide his true intentions. The following section will provide greater depth and detail into the periods of isolation throughout Breivik's life.

### 1. Initial Involvement

Breivik's childhood was deeply scrutinized in a 243-page forensic psychiatry report prepared by two experts nominated by Norwegian courts.[221] Breivik's parents separated when he was a young child and he was raised primarily by his mother. According to Ravndal, "The first years of Breivik's life were marked by instability and an absent father figure."[222] Although Breivik claims in his compendium to have a privileged childhood, he also extensively writes of super-liberal matriarchal societies and fatherless societies. Breivik writes when referring to his upbringing by his mother ,"I do not approve of the super-liberal, matriarchal upbringing though as it completely lacked discipline and has contributed to feminise me to a certain degree."[223] He also spent a considerable amount of time referencing what fatherless civilizations create. He writes:

> The absence of fatherhood has created a society full of social pathologies, and the lack of male self-confidence has made us easy prey for our enemies. If the West is to survive, we need to reassert a healthy dose of male authority. In order to do so we need to roll back the welfare state. Perhaps we need to roll back some of the excesses of Western Feminism[13], too.[224]

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[221] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 6.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1387.

[224] Ibid., 363.

The extensive amount of time Breivik dedicated to these topics in his compendium suggests that he felt a lack of connection with his parents and slightly disapproved of the way in which he was raised.

Breivik belonged to Progress Party, a political party from the ages of 16 to 21. He left the group not because of their ideological views, but because of the means in which they chose to accomplish their views. Breivik decided the democratic means in which the Progress Party chose to accomplish their mission was fruitless, and he wanted to be part of an armed resistance with the same ideology. Breivik's decision to leave the group in terms of social identity theory offer considerable insight into his mentality. Breivik considered the Progress Party as his "in-group." However, after determining the party would continue with democratic means and not take up an armed resistance, Breivik felt as if the party no longer provided a positive sense of self-worth. Breivik then used social mobility in order to leave the political party and join the "armed resistance;" the path that he felt was necessary. Breivik perceived himself to be isolated in that the party did not share the same vision that he did (because they were not going to take up arms). This instance in Breivik's life highlights his need for support from those sharing the same views as he did. Perceived isolation plays a large role in one's outlook.

Another important aspect in Breivik's life was his compendium, in which he spoke extensively of the Knights Templar. Breivik formulated a group of like-minded individuals and wrote of meetings between them. The investigation and trial of Breivik concluded that it is unlikely that the Knights Templar ever existed, and this was a misguided attempt of Breivik to cover another failed business venture. If viewed from a psychological standpoint Breivik's creation of the Knights Templar highlights his need for acceptance and a support network.

### 2.      Initial Engagement

Although it is questionable when Breivik did in fact decide to conduct an attack, he spent a considerable amount of time isolated in years prior. Breivik is a classic example of an individual creating a parallel life in order to hide his true intentions and avoid detection. He speaks extensively of operational necessities in creating a project or

an alibi to provide to family and friends that will "at least partly justify your 'new pattern of activities' (isolation/travel) while in the planning phase."[225] Breivik diminished his interactions with family and friends during his planning phase and explains he did not have a desire to create or preserve social connections. He explains:

> I spent three years were I focused on writing the compendium, 2083. During a 12 month period in the beginning, I also played World of Warcraft part time (which had been a dream for some time—hard core raiding:). I lived very ascetic and relatively isolated in the period. These three years would also contribute to detach myself from my 'old life'. It's a process I used in order to isolate myself from most of my network, in preparation for the coming operation. I feel that this period was needed in order to completely 'detach myself from 'the game', my 'former shallow consumerist lifestyle' in order to ensure full focus on the matters at hand.[226]

Breivik's compendium also highlights the need for individuals to feel accepted and their existential need to be able to share their life experiences with others. You can see this through his regret to have diminished relationships with his friends. He explains:

> I left several aspects of my old life behind and had to completely re-establish myself on an existential level. It was hard because everyone I used to know felt I had abandoned them. I never burned any bridges though which might explain why many of them are still pressuring me to 'come back.' Obviously, I do not intend to. If they knew my real intentions my cover would be blown and I would risk being exposed. I cannot allow that to happen.[227]

This example taken from Breivik's compendium also highlights his dedication to his cause that no one else felt the same about.

The court proceedings also questioned why Breivik gave up his financial activities as early as 2006. His compendium claims it was because of the recession and that he was only doing it as startup money for the operation. However, the prosecution also believes that Breivik did not decide to become a terrorist until 2009 or 2010; which differs drastically from the information in his compendium. Is his compendium a means

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[225] Ibid., 841.

[226] Ibid., 1380.

[227] Ibid., 1406.

to cover the fact that he failed as an entrepreneur? Several of Breivik's close friends believed that Breivik suffered from depression (perceived isolation) and that is why he began to isolate himself. Although we do not know and probably never will know the answer to this, it shows that Breivik perception was important.

When viewing Breivik's path to radicalization, psychologist Fathali Moghaddam explains in his *Staircase to Terrorism* model that an individual's perception of mobility greatly affects the path in which an individual travels. Moghaddam explains:

> Those who reach the first floor seek ways in which to improve their situation and achieve greater justice. But if they do not see possibilities for individual mobility and do not feel that they can adequately influence the procedures through which decisions are made, they are more likely to keep climbing.[228]

Breivik saw targeted violence on Ethnic Norwegians throughout his childhood, which shaped his view on multiculturalism in Norway. Breivik attempted to pursue a career in politics by joining the Progress Party who was anti-immigration; however, when Breivik realized his struggle against the Islamisation of Europe could not be accomplished through democratic means, he chose an armed resistance. This can see through his compendium in which he states, "We do not want to do this, but we are left no choice."[229]

## G. TERRORIST ACT

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik detonated a 2,100 pound car bomb in the Norwegian Government Quarter (including the Prime Minister's Office) killing eight people and injuring another 98.[230] Within hours of the bombing in Oslo, he travelled to the island of Utøya approximately 25 miles away. Breivik took a ferry to the island, dressed in police attire (including a fake identification badge), and presented himself as a police officer to gain access to the island under the ruse that he was there to protect the

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[228] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism," 162.

[229] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 837.

[230] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 6

island because of the day's previous bombing.[231] In subsequent interviews, Breivik claimed that Utøya was not his initial target. He originally intended to attack a Norwegian Press gathering, or the headquarters of the Norwegian Labor Party. When Breivik was unable to make three bombs (as initially intended), he decided on an armed assault at Utøya.  Utøya was selected both because he considered it an indoctrination of young adults supporting multiculturalism and because of the prominent Labor Party politicians who were scheduled to attend.[232] At Utøya, he killed another 69 individuals and injured another 60;[233] an act he claims was driven by his love for Europe, European culture and all Europeans.[234] Anders Behring Breivik was apprehended on the island of Utøya on July 22, 2011. He was subsequently tried and convicted of these crimes and sentenced to 21 years in prison.

**H.    CONCLUSION**

Through the psychiatric evaluations of Breivik, his 1,500 page compendium, and the criminal trial, a significant amount of information was learned about Breivik, although a lot still remains unanswered.  Breivik was not the typical loner.[235] He acted alone, but was not socially isolated.  In fact, the trial revealed that Breivik was well liked and considered a caring individual amongst his close network of friends.[236] Breivik's compendium suggests he had a wonderful family life and was successful in life and business, all of which has since been proven otherwise.  However, Breivik's perception of ideological support shows that an individual's perception of support available to them (perceived isolation) is an important factor the path that someone chooses to take. Breivik stopped viewing democratic means as a viable option to alter the course of

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[231] Richard Orange, *The Mind of a Madman Norway's struggle to understand Anders Breivik*, (Kindle Single, 2012), (Kindle ed.), 6.

[232] Ravndal, "A Post-Trial Profile," 17.

[233] Ravndal, "A Pre-Trial Profile," 6.

[234] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1382.

[235] Ravndal, "A Post-Trial Profile," 20.

[236] Ibid., 16.

multiculturalism in Norway.  He felt as if he no other choice and lacked support in his path.  Ultimately, this perception led him to the path he chose in committing a terrorist attack.

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# VI.   OMAR HAMMAMI

## A.   INTRODUCTION

Omar Hammami, a former resident of Daphne, Alabama, was originally indicted by the Southern District of Alabama in 2007 on terrorism violations. On December 13, 2007, a federal warrant was issued for Hammami's arrest.[237] A superseding indictment was returned against Hammami in September of 2009, in which he was charged with providing support to terrorists, conspiring to provide material support to a State Department-designated foreign terrorist organization (al-Shabaab), and providing material support to al-Shabaab.[238] Al-Shabaab, designated by the State Department as a foreign terrorist organization on February 26, 2008,[239] has committed attacks throughout Somalia. Al-Shabaab has recently attempted to align themselves with the al-Qa'ida network[240] and are dedicated to expanding the reach of al-Shabaab outside of Somalia.[241]

Hammami, also known as Abu Mansur al-Amriki or "The American,"[242] adopted a conservative Salafi school of thought and pursued *da'wah*—calling others to Islam.[243] Hammami's ultimate path of radicalization took him from being an average American

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[237] Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Most Wanted Terrorists—Omar Shafik Hammami* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation).

[238] U.S. State Department, "Rewards for Justice: Reward Offers for Information on Omar Hammami and Jehad Mostafa," accessed October 9, 2013, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/03/206565.htm; United States v. Omar Shafik Hammami, Grand Jury Indictment of Omar Shafik Hammami, 1 (Southern District of AL, Southern Division 2009), http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1357.pdf, 1.

[239] Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Designation of Al-Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," *Federal Register* 73, no. 53 (2008), U.S. Department of State, accessed October 10, 2013, http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/102446.htm.

[240] Andre Le Sage, *Somalia's Endless Transition: Breaking the Deadlock* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2010), 2.

[241] *Security and Governance in Somalia: Consolidating Gains, Confronting Challenges and Charting the Path Forward, before the Subcommitte on African Affairs, Foreign Relations Committee, U.S. Senate*, (2013), (testimony of Andre Le Sage), http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Le_Sage_Testimony.pdf, 2–14.

[242] Christopher Anzalone, "The Evolution of an American Jihadi: The Case of Omar Hammami," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 6 (2012): 11.

[243] John M. Berger, *Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go to War in the Name of Islam* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, Inc., 2011), (Kindle ed.), 3341.

teenager to travelling abroad to fight for a foreign terrorist organization in Somalia. This chapter will provide an overview of Hammami's life in order to address the specific phases throughout his radicalization in which he experienced isolation.

## B.    CHILDHOOD

Omar Shafik Hammami was born on May 6, 1984 to Debra Hadley and Shafik Hammami.   Omar's father, Shafik, was a Syrian immigrant who came to the United States as a teenager in 1972. Shafik came to the United States on a visa to study medicine in southern Alabama. Southern Alabama's historically conservative culture appealed to Shafik's conservative Arab upbringing. He settled in this area and met Debra Hadley through mutual friends.[244] Debra was described by her son as a "typical southern protestant girl" who appealed to his father's conservative background.[245]   Hammami continues to explain his father's conservative background was from his Arab culture, not his Islamic faith.[246] Debra and Shafik married and had two children: Dena, who is three years older than her brother Omar.  Shafik did not become a doctor; rather, he became a successful civil engineer, and Debra became a primary school teacher.[247]   In his autobiography released in 2012, Hammami regards his upbringing as being "like most of the privileged children in America."[248]

Shafik Hammami was not raised in a strict religious family, but his home with Debra was culturally Muslim.[249]  Shafik tried to teach the children Arabic and Islam, but it did not resonate. Debra would take the children to church with her, which at first was without her husband's knowledge.[250] Hammami regards going to church with his mother

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[244] Andrea Elliott, "The Jihadist Next Door," *New York Times*, January 27, 2010.

[245] Abu Mansur al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 2012, Word Press, http://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/omar-hammami-abc5ab-mane1b9a3c5abr-al-amrc4abkc4ab-22the-story-of-an-american-jihc481dc4ab-part-122.pdf, 4.

[246] Ibid

[247] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[248] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 5.

[249] Ibid., 4.

[250] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

as a child to be a shaping influence in his life.[251] At age six, Hammami was baptized in the Perdido Baptist Church. In an interview with Hammami's sister Dena, she refers to the differences in culture, "It was like two different schools of thought under one roof, thunder and lightning."[252]

As a young child, Hammami spent time going to church and bible study with his mother and sister. He memorized all of the names of the books of the bible and attended bible camp. He spent time celebrating holidays with his mother's side of the family and would hunt and spend time outdoors. In his autobiography, Hammami regarded this time as "an escape to the quaint country from my snobbish suburban atmosphere."[253]

Hammami had a very close relationship with his sister growing up. He explains, "My sister and I were pretty close. She likens it to us being a bit like twins."[254] They were both active soccer players and spent a lot of time together. Hammami was regarded as having a very active mind and a very intelligent, charismatic child. He was put into advanced classes at a young age. As children, Shafik led a strict household, but as the children became adolescents, Shafik found it more difficult to keep the children on a modest path.[255] The children changed grade schools around the time Hammami was in sixth grade.[256] Hammami regards this as a turning point in his life. He states, "I went from being one of the most popular children in school to being a virtual no body. For the first time in my life I was standing at the break area without a single friend."[257] But by the seventh grade at his new school in Daphne, Alabama, he was able to make friends and became the class vice-president. Hammami regards himself as the "most popular guy in school" by the eighth grade. He said he was a social butterfly who used to hop from circle to circle and associate with all types of people.[258]

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[251] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 6.

[252] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[253] al-Amriiki, "The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One," 6.

[254] Ibid., 9.

[255] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[256] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 9–10.

[257] Ibid., 10.

[258] Ibid.

As Hammami grew into his teenage years, he began studying Islam. He was conflicted with his traditional Baptist upbringing and Islam. Around the same time, his father Shafik had a renewed sense of faith after having drifted away from practice in his college years. Shafik began attending a mosque in Mobile and became an active member in the growing Muslim community in the area.[259] As Hammami was entering his high school years, he became more devout in his newly found faith.

## C.    HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

In his autobiography, Hammami refers to his ninth grade year at Daphne High as a transitional year. Hammami began praying at school, and for the first time, he had to pray in front of all of his friends "despite being the only Muslim in a southern suburban town."[260] Despite all of his internal conflict, Hammami was very popular.

Hammami was elected his sophomore class president, and he described his tenth grade year as one of clarity. He visited Syria the summer before his tenth grade year and spent more and more time attending the mosque. When he began his tenth grade year, he had different classes than most of his friends. When Hammami had available time to socialize with his friends (lunch break or midday break), he spent his time praying. This distance from his friends made him re-evaluate those friendships. As prayer was beginning to take up more and more of his free time, he referred to this time as an upward battle. Hammami then became friends with another student at Daphne High named Bernie Culveyhouse, who became interested in Islam. In a documentary of Hammami's life, Culveyhouse reflects on the time when Hammami came back from Syria and began praying at school and the subsequent distance this created with his friends. He relayed, "Omar expected to be the cool kid. He didn't expect too many things to change. When he saw that he wasn't in the in-crowd and people didn't get him, it messed with him."[261]

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[259] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[260] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 14.

[261] Christof Putzel, Cerissa Tanner and Tom Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi* (Documentary, 2010), mins. 9:38–9:48.

When Hammami went back to school in the eleventh grade, he dreaded it. In his autobiography, he reflected on this time stating: "Of course, I still had good grades, and so forth, but I tried to limit my relationships with the disbelievers that surrounded me. At times it was very depressing."[262] This year, Hammami also began to attend the Friday prayer at the mosque. Around this time, there was also an incident that occurred where Hammami choked a classmate who he felt was being disrespectful to his religion. Hammami was suspended from school because of this incident.[263] Hammami finished out the eleventh grade at Daphne High. Hammami, with high grades and a score in the ninety-third percentile on his ACT and was able to skip the twelfth grade. Hammami enrolled in nearby University of South Alabama.[264]

## D.   COLLEGE YEARS

In 2001, Hammami attended the University of South Alabama, which he viewed as a breath of fresh air compared to high school.[265] He could wear his Islamic clothes, he was not in class with the same old people, and he was just minutes away from the local mosque. Hammami was also president of the Muslim Student Association. After the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, occurred Hammami, as president of the Muslim Student Association, was interviewed reference the attacks. In the school's newspaper, Hammami was quoted as saying, "It's difficult to believe a Muslim could have done this." [266] Friend, Bernie Culveyhouse, reflects on this time saying it was sometimes tumultuous, "I've never felt that much rejection on a public level in my life."[267]

Hammami and Culveyhouse had adopted a non-militant *salafi* view of Islam. They began practicing their faith with greater devotion. They began living by a very strict code; they were unable to look at women, listen to music, be photographed, or sleep with

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262 al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 15.

263 Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

264 Ibid.

265 al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 16.

266 Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

267 Putzel, Tanner, and Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi*, min.18:43.

their backsides facing Mecca.[268] Shafik found some of his son's new beliefs as "theologically debatable." In addition, around this time, Hammami also had a falling out with his father due to ideological interpretations. Hammami refused to pose for a family portrait, and he was not welcome back into their family home. Hammami lived in a storage unit for two weeks without electricity or water. Bernie and Omar eventually moved in together in a low-income housing structure where their commitment to Islam only intensified.[269]

Bernie and Hammami worked several odd jobs, but they soon found it was difficult to find employment that aligned with their newfound religious beliefs. Bernie and Hammami had also begun travelling throughout the country attending Islamic conferences. Hammami had decided he did not want to attend a secular college; rather, he wanted to study religion. Hammami began reading *salafi* books and articles. Hammami became disillusioned with the Western lifestyle and wanted to get married as soon as possible.[270] Hammami had also decided not to pursue his degree in medicine. One day, he disenrolled from the university.[271]

Around the same time, Hammami travelled back to Syria with his father to meet his uncle Rafiiq, who had been released from prison. Hammami writes that this experience gave Hammami more of a hatred for the disbelieving rulers of the Muslim countries. He claims it also gave him an urge to free Muslim prisoners from around the world. [272] When Hammami came back to America without employment and without school, he decided it was time for a change. He proclaimed, "I had become so averse to America that I wanted to leave."[273] Bernie had left the United States for Canada and had gotten married to a Somali woman. A year later, Hammami followed him to Toronto.

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[268] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[269] Putzel, Tanner, and Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi*, mins. 17:48–18:10.

[270] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*.

[271] Ibid., 18.

[272] Ibid., 22.

[273] Ibid., 24.

## E.     ON THE MOVE

### 1.     Canada

Drawn to freedom and acceptance of the big city after being marginalized in Daphne—Hammami decided to move to Toronto, Canada. After arriving in Toronto, Hammami immediately found employment delivering milk to the Somali community. Delivering milk did not last too long, and he then began delivering pizzas in the Somali community. While in Toronto, Bernie and Hammami immersed themselves in the accepting Somali community. Bernie then introduced Hammami to his sister-in-law Sadiyo Mohamed Abdille.[274]

While in Toronto, Hammami and Bernie discovered an Islamic bookstore in which they spent hours. Hammami recalls reading Islamic books "from morning till night."[275] Now in a culture that Bernie regarded as "openly critical of the west,"[276] Hammami's political views were growing more extreme. Hammami was introduced to Amir Khattab, a legendary jihadist who fought in Chechnya.[277] Bernie reflects, "I think Omar related to him. He saw him as a really inspiring guy. He was sincerely devoting his life to furthering the cause of Muslims. I could just see it in his eyes, Omar had found a new hero."[278]

In March of 2005, just two months after having met, Hammami and Sadiyo were married in a small ceremony. Hammami had invited his father, mother, sister, and brother-in-law to the wedding, who all attended.[279] Hammami found it increasingly difficult to live amongst Muslims he deemed less devote than himself.  While at the wedding, Hammami announced to his father that he was making *hijra*—or migration to a Muslim land. Culveyhouse had suggested they travel to Egypt so they could study Islam

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[274] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[275] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 28.

[276] Putzel, Tanner, and Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi*, min 25:00.

[277] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[278] Putzel, Tanner, and Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi*, min 26:03.

[279] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 28.

at the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo.[280] Between the wedding and the move to Egypt, Hammami's wife had become pregnant. After less than a year in Toronto, they would land in Egypt in search of a pure Islamic existence.

## 2. Egypt

In 2005, Hammami along with his pregnant wife, and the Culveyhouse family travelled to Alexandria, Egypt. While there, they had a difficult time finding adequate housing and found Egypt to be more secular than expected. Hammami and Culveyhouse's applications at the university fell through. Hammami found odd jobs in hopes of earning enough money to find a decent place to live. After having several odd jobs, their time in Egypt changed. Bernie decided to move his family back to the United States and Hammami's pregnant wife became very lonely without the Culveyhouses. Hammami worked to get money for a new apartment but had a difficult time supporting his family. Hammami also spent a considerable amount of time at an internet café.[281] He became increasingly pre-occupied with events unfolding in Somalia. The Islamic Courts Union was on the brink of seizing control of Somalia and had promised to unite the country under the banner of Islam.[282] In an email interview corresponded through an intermediary, Hammami wrote he was yearning to live in a country "where Shariah was being implemented completely."[283]

While in Alexandria, Hammami eventually met another American convert living in Egypt, Daniel Maldonado, or Abu Muxammad al-Amriiki.[284] Maldonado and Hammami began studying together and reportedly began attending "underground mosques."[285] Hammami had decided he wanted to move to Somalia; however, his wife did not want to make the move. Hammami's wife then gave birth to their baby girl. Hammami's parents came to visit Egypt during the month of Ramadhaan. While there,

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[280] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[281] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 32.

[282] Putzel, Tanner, and Maroney, *Vanguard: American Jihadi*, min. 31:18.

[283] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[284] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 33.

[285] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

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Hammami was busy finishing his plans to move to Somalia. In 2006, Hammami told his family he was travelling to Dubai for a couple days in order to look for work. Instead, Hammami went to Somalia as several other Americans have done.[286] Over the past years, upwards of 20 U.S. persons have travelled to Somalia to fight and train with al-Shabaab.[287]

### 3.    Somalia

In 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) seized control of portions of Somalia, after it had been dominated by competing warlords and clan based conflicts since 1991. The ICU promised to unite the country under the banner of Islam, and it brought a sense of peace to the country, after years of chaos.[288] Al-Shabaab or "the youth" became the self-appointed vanguard force within the ICU and was believed to have ties with al-Qa'ida.[289]  Soon after, thousands of Ethiopian forces gathered at the Somali border, with backing from the United States. The Ethiopian troops eventually invaded Somalia and gained control of the capital city, Mogadishu.[290] An insurgency was born as a call for a *jihad* was issued to drive out the Christian invaders.[291] In 2007, al-Shabaab emerged as a movement independent from the ICU.[292]

In November of 2006, Hammami arrived in Somalia and lived for a short period of time with relatives of his wife, Sadiyo.  Hammami contacted his wife, who still in Egypt, and told her that he travelled to Somalia to visit her relatives, but that his passport had been stolen and he could not return home immediately.[293] Hammami reflects in autobiography that when the news of his travel to Somalia made it back to his father, his

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[286] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 38.

[287] *Nine Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland, statement before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee* (2010) (statement of Michael Leiter), Federation of American Scientists, http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2010_hr/092210leiter.pdf, 5.

[288] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[289] Le Sage, "Security and Governance in Somalia," 3.

[290] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Anzalone, "The Evolution of an American Jihadi," 10.

[293] Elliott, *The Jihadist Next Door*.

father called Sadiyo's relatives so that he could speak to his son. Shafik Hammami was distraught over his son's decision and told him to come home, as it was not his war to fight. Hammami states that he eventually told his father that he was there for *jihad*. Around the same time, Hammami's wife and daughter moved back to Canada.[294]

The day Hammami found out his wife and daughter had moved back to Canada, Hammami writes about chance encounter with Daniel Maldonado. Maldonado took Hammami to a house with other men who said they were "the Shabaab." Hammami states in his autobiography:

> I was extremely excited once again, but I found it very ironic. I had been charged with preparing the way for Abu Muxammad and his family and I had been trying to save him from the airport and so forth. However, the reality of the situation was that he had saved me from this frustrating lifestyle (living with non-religious people in a bad area) and prepared the way for me to realize the dream of joining the Jihaad.[295]

After some time in Somalia, Hammami was preparing to be married for a second time. Around the same time, the men told them they would be travelling to Kismayo. Kismayo, a port city in southern Somalia, proved to be an important area for al-Shabaab to control. Control of Kismayo and its port are believed to have provided al-Shabaab with a considerable amount of revenue in order to finance its operations.[296] It was on the way preparing for the trip to Kismayo that Hammami was given his AKM and a magazine full of bullets.[297] Hammami then disappeared, his whereabouts and activity unknown.

Hammami reappeared in the fall of 2007 when a story, featured by Al Jazeera the Arabic news channel, interviewed al-Shabaab fighters from the field. Hammami appeared in this video with his face half covered and spoke in English. Since then, Hammami has appeared in numerous on-line videos, three of which were officially released by al-Shabaab's media department. Hammami became known as the English

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[294] al-Amriiki, "*The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*," 44.

[295] Ibid., 45.

[296] Rob Wise, *Al Shabaab* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), 1–13.

[297] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 46.

speaking Western face of al-Shabaab. Hammami, "The American" can also be heard rapping in al-Shabaab videos and became an important part in the recruitment of young westerners to the cause of jihad.[298]

## F.    ISOLATION

Throughout his life, Omar Hammami experienced numerous instances of isolation.  Through his autobiography, Hammami provides his perspective on his childhood and subsequent periods of isolation that he experienced. Hammami experienced all three types of isolation studied; social, emotional, and perceived isolation. The following section will provide an in depth look at these periods of isolation and how they affected Hammami's propensity to become radicalized.

### 1.    Initial Involvement

During his childhood, Hammami appeared to have a typical relationship with his family and friends.  Though Hammami was raised in both a Christian and Muslim home, this appears to have caused internal conflict for Hammami when deciding what religion to pursue. When Hammami ultimately decided to become Muslim, this caused him to experience emotional, perceived, and social isolation.

When Hammami began praying at school he experienced what he perceived as rejection by his peers.  Hammami began spending more time praying at school, which reduced the amount of available time he had to spend with his friends causing social isolation.  In his autobiography, he wrote:

> This distance from those 'friends' caused me to realize a lot of things. Those 'friends' only cared about me so long as I was in their face making them laugh.  They also only cared about me so long as I was a Christian or something close to it. That led me to use more of my lunch time for prayer and remembrance of God.  The last resort I had to socialize was break time and by that point I had become so alienated that I began praying during that time as well.[299]

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[298] Anzalone, "The Evolution of an American Jihadi," 10–13.

[299] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 14.

The social isolation he experienced also came coupled with a sense of perceived isolation and rejection. He perceived isolation can be seen through his reaction to an incident in high school in which he felt his religion was being made fun of. Hammami physically assaulted another student he felt was rejecting both he and his religion. While Hammami struggled to fit in in high school because of his decision to become Muslim, he suffered from a profound sense of emotional isolation as well as feeling as if he did not have anyone that understood him or supported him. Hammami wrote, "I was already fed up with school and no one, not even my Muslim father, understood me."[300]

This sense of emotional and perceived isolation can also be seen in his decision to leave high school a year early. Hammami recalls struggling with his decision to leave high school early when a counselor attempted to talk to Hammami about staying in high school and getting a scholarship. Hammami wrote, "I felt like crying out of my loneliness." Hammami was in search of a place where he felt he fit it—the University of South Alabama became the answer. There, Hammami was able to wear his Islamic clothes, he was just minutes away from the mosque, and he became president of the Muslim Student Association. While attending the University of South Alabama seemed as a breath of fresh air for Hammami, its appeal did not last long. After the terror attacks of 9/11, Hammami again felt a sense of rejection from the community.

> When Hammami and his friend Bernie Culveyhouse moved to Canada, he felt a sense of kinship with the Somali community. When reflecting on the Somali community, he stated "The Somaalis were really the best community I had come across—whether it was the ones in Atlanta or Toronto—and I found serenity in those Masaajid the most. But the Somali community was also not without its Western defects."[301] These Western defects proved to again isolate Hammami from his dream of living in a pure Islamic society. When referring to his decision to ultimately leave Canada for Egypt he says: The fact that I was now living in a multicultural metropolis really helped my attempt of trying new things and melting down the artificial barriers. I was happy for quite a while until I realized that even this is not enough. Obviously it was never a pure Islaamic

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[300] Ibid., 16.

[301] Ibid., 114.

society by any stretch of the imagination, but it served as a temporary haven for me while I digested new information and formed new plans for my future.[302]

### 2.    Initial Engagement

While Hammami and Culveyhouse were in Egypt attempting to study at a religious university, they again became disillusioned with the lifestyle they found in Egypt. Culveyhouse made the decision to move his family back to Canada from Egypt, while Hammami continued to immerse himself in internet forums.  While radicalizing online, Hammami also began to lead a parallel life and isolate himself from his family and friends.  Hammami and Daniel Maldonado began secretly planning to leave Egypt for Somalia. Hammami kept his plans a secret and left Egypt under the guise of looking for work in Dubai.  Hammami states:

> They had no idea that this would probably be the last time to see their child. I wanted to inform them, but I knew that if I did they would do anything in their power to keep their, and their new granddaughter away from the war zone in Somaalia.[303]

Hammami's eventual move to Somalia led him to a place where he finally felt accepted—with al-Shabaab. His sense of perceived and emotional isolation had been fulfilled with people who supported the same ideas that he did.  While in Somalia, Hammami continued to lead a parallel life and began cutting himself off from his former lifestyle and continuing to radicalize.  Hammami went underground for a period of time and then re-emerged as a charismatic leader. Hammami used the internet and western ways (speaking English and rap songs) in order to recruit other young western individuals. Through this, he was able to offer the support to others that he longed to have throughout his adolescence and young adult life.

In his autobiography, Hammami answers questions regarding his experiences in Somalia. He confirms that the move to Somalia fulfilled his sense of perceived and emotional isolation. He explains,  "I also gained a lot of acquaintances and relationships

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[302] Ibid., 110–111.

[303] Ibid., 38.

that are priceless and I have had the honor of knowing some of the most righteous men of our times."[304]  Although Hammami had been satisfied in Somalia fighting for al-Shabaab, that too came to an end.  In a public release of a Youtube video dated March 16, 2012, Hammami stated he feared for his life following a dispute with al-Shabaab over "*shari'a* and strategy."[305]

## G.   TERRORIST ACT

The FBI added Hammami to their Most Wanted List in November 2012.[306] On July 29, 2011, Hammami was additionally added to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's U.S. Government's Specially Designated Nationals list, which provides authority to block the property of and prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with, individuals and entities whose actions threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia.[307]  Hammami is believed to have been involved in the organizing of a suicide bombing carried out by Somali-American from Minnesota who travelled to Somalia with the intent of joining al-Shabaab. The attack (conducted in October 2008) and four additional attacks, believed to be organized by Hammami, killed more than 20 people.[308]

## H.   CONCLUSION

Despite the attention Hammami received in the media, his role within al-Shabaab has been widely debated and unclear.[309] Hammami has been referred to as a military tactician, recruitment strategist, financial manager, and, most recently, a strategist.[310] Regardless of Hammami's exact role in the organization, he played an important part in al-Shabaab's ability to recruit young English speaking individuals to their call for *jihad*.

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[304] Ibid., 105.

[305] Christopher Anzalone, "Al-Shabab's Tactical and Media Strategies in the Wake of its Battlefield Setbacks," *CTC Sentinel* 6, no. 3 (2013): 14.

[306] U.S. State Department, "Rewards for Justice."

[307] Ibid.

[308] U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Omar Hammami" press release, July 29, 2011, Department of the Treasury, http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20110729_Somalia.pdf.

[309] Anzalone, "The Evolution of an American Jihadi," 10.

[310] Ibid.

After Hammami's public split from al-Shabaab in 2012, rumors of an attack on Hammami and his associates from al-Shabaab spread rapidly.  In several subsequent interviews with Hammami, he stated he was hiding out from al-Shabaab forces intent on killing him.  A tweet posted on September 15, 2013 on the account of @abumamerican, (an account believed to be used by Omar Hammami) stated, "We confirm the martyrdom of Omar Hammami in the morning of Thur 12 2013. Shafik's family please accept our codolences."[311] The review of Omar Hammami's life can provide insight into the stages of isolation Hammami experienced throughout his life, in an attempt to understand how an average American boy can turn to fighting for a foreign terrorist organization.

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[311] John M. Berger, "Omar and Me," *Foreign Policy*, September 16, 2013, accessed October 17, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/09/16/omar_and_me?page=0,4.

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# VII.   ANALYSIS

## A.      INTRODUCTION

"The life of the true, political terrorist is a hard and lonely one"[312]

This chapter will address the commonalities in regards to isolation seen throughout the case studies of Timothy McVeigh, Anders Behring Breivik, and Omar Hammami.  Each individual experienced isolation throughout their lives.  Although each individual's isolation was manifested in different ways, each individual continued on his path to radicalization, also continuing to be isolated throughout their path.  The following will outline the episodes of isolation each individual has faced, whether that is social, emotional, or perceived isolation.  In order to provide a better understanding of how isolation impacts the radicalization process, this chapter will outline the type of isolation each individual experienced specific to whether it was during the initial involvement phase or the initial engagement phase.  By categorizing the isolation into one of these phases, it will allow homeland security officials the opportunity to better understand the radicalization process and the time during someone's life that isolation played a role. By comparing three very different individuals, with three different upbringings and three different ideologies we can view the commonalities in regards to isolation that exist throughout the path of radicalization.

## B.      INITIAL INVOLVEMENT

The initial involvement phase of radicalization showed that each individual suffered from social isolation, emotional isolation, and perceived isolation.   These periods of isolation drastically affected each individual and their perspective, their outlook on life, and the choices they felt they had.  Rejection by their peers or family and lack of emotional connections had profound effects on each individual.  The following section will outline in detail specific instances of isolation that each individual faced during the initial involvement phase of their radicalization.

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[312] Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 44.

### 1.    Social Isolation

Each individual experienced episodes of social isolation throughout his adolescent years.  Social isolation can be defined as social connectedness or an objective measure of contacts with other people.[313] Timothy McVeigh spent a significant amount of time alone as a child.  His parents both spent considerable amounts of time away from the home while they focused on their careers.  After his parents divorced, McVeigh chose to live with his father, who was forced to work in order to support the family. His mother also spent a significant amount of time at work as a travel agent.  Between their two careers and the divorce, Timothy spent countless hours by himself, which conditioned him to be a loner.[314]  As McVeigh grew older he still isolated himself, even when he was amongst peers.  McVeigh's time in the military shows that he again was socially isolated; he spent countless hours reading equipment manuals and playing video games while the rest of his unit was out partying on the weekends.

Anders Behring Breivik too had a troubled childhood.  The divorce of Breivik's parents left him in the custody of his mother.  Psychological documents from Breivik's early childhood indicate his mother was having a difficult time raising her son.  After a month long stay in the National Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (SSBU), the psychologist suggested Anders be removed from his mother's care.  The psychologist also described Anders as "avoiding contact, a passive and anxious little child, with a manic defense characterized by restless activity and a fake, deprecating smile."[315] During a post-incident interview with Breivik's former stepmother, she reflects on an incident when Breivik was young.  She recalled receiving a telephone call from the neighbors of Breivik in Oslo.  The neighbor said that the kids spent too much time alone, and there was too much trouble there. It was after this incident that Breivik's father and

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[313] Havens et al., "Social Isolation," 130.

[314] Nathan R. Springer, "Patterns of Radicalization: Identifying the Markers and Warning Signs of Domestic Lone Wolf Terrorists in our Midst" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), 71

[315] Orange, *The Mind of a Madman,* 606.

stepmother attempted to gain custody of Breivik, which ultimately did not occur.[316] Breivik's path to violence still remains unclear. In Breivik's compendium, he claims to have started the planning of an armed resistance around 2002 or 2003, and that in 2007 he decided to become a martyr. However, the subsequent investigation shows that he may have started planning the attacks as late as 2009 or 2010. During this time, Breivik went through a significant period of self-imposed isolation by moving back into his mother's home and playing World of Warcraft while also distancing himself from friends. Breivik claims this period of isolation was to prepare himself for his attack, however, the possibility exists that this too was a misrepresentation on Breivik's behalf. He may have moved back home because of his failed business ventures and was distraught over his inability to be successful; isolating himself instead, in an attempt to save face.

Omar Hammami also spent time alone during his adolescent years. Hammami seemingly had a normal childhood, despite living in a household encompassing two very different cultures. Hammami was intelligent, charismatic, and popular amongst his peers. He was active in sports and school functions. However, when Hammami converted to Islam, he became socially isolated from his peers. As Hammami became more stringent in his faith, he began praying at school, which took up more and more time of his free time. The time he would have to socialize with his friends, Hammami spent praying by himself. As he became distanced from his peers, he spent more and more time isolated.

The social isolation of these individuals varies considerably. While McVeigh spent a lot of time alone as a child, Breivik has been regarded by his peers as very social, and Hammami was not socially isolated until his convert to Islam. The social isolation of these individuals does not appear to have contributed to their radicalization as much as their emotional and perceived isolation did. However, their social isolation directly corresponds with the emotional and perceived isolation these individuals experienced. It is difficult to completely separate the types of isolation into distinctive categories. There

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[316] Torgeir Husby and Synne Sørheim, "Anders Behring Breivik Psychiatric Report 2011-11-29," accessed October 27, 2013, https://sites.google.com/site/breivikreport/documents/anders-breivik-psychiatric-report-of-2011#2.6.1,2013.

is a considerable amount of overlap between the types of isolation and the three types of isolation have a causal relationship. The social isolation these individuals experienced also affected their emotional isolation and perceived isolation. Because they were socially isolated and became distanced from others, this contributed to their emotional isolation and ultimately their perceived isolation.

### 2. Emotional Isolation

Emotional isolation is represented by the subjective degree an individual feels emotionally connected with others. Emotional isolation may also represent "a gap between one's ideal level of social relationships and their actual level of social relationships."[317] Each individual also suffered from emotional isolation throughout his life. Timothy McVeigh's case study displayed the drastic effects emotional isolation had throughout his life. Because of his parents working, this caused McVeigh emotional isolation. He felt as if he never had a parent to talk to when he came home from school. He commented that he had very few memories of interactions with his parents.[318] McVeigh's experiences with bullies throughout his life also drastically altered his view and made it difficult for him to emotionally connect with people. As McVeigh's life progressed he continued to have difficulty connecting with people. Even as he became an adult McVeigh struggled to connect with women and friends on an intimate level. As McVeigh became more radical, his emotional isolation could be seen through a letter he wrote to his sister in 1993, stating he had "an urgent need for someone in the family to understand me."[319]

Anders Breivik experienced emotional isolation throughout his life as well. Although Breivik claims in his compendium to have a privileged childhood, this has been disputed by the courts and psychologists who performed interviews with Breivik. His lack of connection with his parents can also be seen in his compendium in he writes extensively writes on super-liberal matriarchal societies and fatherless societies. Breivik

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[317] Stack, "Marriage, Family and Loneliness," 416.

[318] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, American Terrorist, 21.

[319] Ibid., 144–145.

felt as if the way in which his mother raised him lacked discipline and the super-liberal matriarchal upbringing feminized him. [320] He also writes of fatherless societies that have created societies full of males who lack the confidence needed, which has in turn made them easy prey for the "enemies."[321] The extensive amount of time Breivik dedicated to these topics in his compendium suggests that he felt a lack of connection with his parents and disapproved of his upbringing.

Omar Hammami's emotional isolation can be seen through several quotes from his autobiography. During his conversion to Islam, he felt isolated from his peers and his family. He writes, "I was already fed up with school and no one, not even my Muslim father, understood me."[322] As Hammami became more and more socially isolated by spending all of his free time praying, this also caused him to experience emotional isolation. His lack of connection with his peers can be seen when he stated, "Of course, I still had good grades, and so forth, but I tried to limit my relationships with the disbelievers that surrounded me. At times it was very depressing."[323]

### 3.      Perceived Isolation

Perceived isolation is a perceived lack of social support and is based on the subjective experiences of the individual.[324] Perceived support can be viewed in both the satisfaction with support provided, and the degree to which one feels they will be supported in the future if needed. The perceived isolation these individuals experienced drastically altered the way they perceived the options they had available to them. They felt as if they did not have adequate support in their lives or their belief systems, which affected the path they choose. As shown through previous terrorism research and the preceding case studies, the path to radicalization manifests differently for all individuals. However, one central theme is the perceived isolation or lack of support these individuals felt they had available to them. Perceived isolation can encompass emotional isolation or

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[320] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 1387.

[321] Ibid., 363.

[322] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 16.

[323] Ibid., 15.

[324] Cornwell and Waite, "Social Disconnectedness," 32.

the lack of emotional connections these individuals had with others. However, perceived isolation also encompasses many things other than emotional connections. Perceived isolation can be related to the lack of support they felt for perceived injustices perpetrated against them and lack of support in their belief systems. Perceived isolation has shown to play an important role in the initial involvement phase of radicalization.

Despite being referred to as the best time in his life, Timothy McVeigh's military career also showed signs of perceived isolation. In 1991, McVeigh abruptly left the Army, citing one of his reasons as the lack of cohesion he felt like Charlie Company had developed. McVeigh had also become disenchanted with Army life after he dropped out of the Special Forces program. While this was a personal choice on McVeigh's behalf, Special Forces was what he aspired to be—a team working together on important operations. By washing out of Special Forces, he was subsequently isolated from his perceived in-group. He then became even more disenchanted with the lack of cohesion of Charlie Company, and finally left the Army all together.

As McVeigh progressed into radicalization, his perceived isolation became more prominent. McVeigh began to disassociate himself with people he felt did not share his same beliefs or path; most notably his childhood friend Steve Hodge. McVeigh wrote:

> Those who betray or subvert the Constitution are guilty of sedition and/or treason, are domestic enemies and should and will be punished accordingly. It also stands to reason that anyone who sympathizes with the enemy or gives aid or comfort to said enemy is likewise guilty. I have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic and I will. And I will because not only did I swear to, but I believe in what it stands for in every bit of my heart, soul and being. I know in my heart that I am right in my struggle, Steve. I have come to peace with myself, my God and my cause. Blood will flow in the streets, Steve. Good vs. Evil. Free Men vs. Socialist Wannabe Slaves. Pray it is not your blood, my friend. [325]

This step to disassociate himself with anyone who did not believe what he believed was a major turning point for McVeigh.

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[325] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, *American Terrorist,* 154.

Anders Breivik's perceived isolation also played a large role in his outlook and opportunities, he felt were available to him. Breivik was a member in the Progress Political party and mentions in his compendium a desire to have a future in politics. Breivik decided the democratic means in which the Progress Party chose to accomplish their mission was fruitless, and he wanted to be part of an armed resistance with the same ideology. However, after determining the party would continue with democratic means and not take up an armed resistance, Breivik felt as if the party no longer provided a positive sense of self-worth. Breivik perceived himself to be isolated as the party did not share the same vision that he did (because they were not going to take up arms). This instance in Breivik's life highlights his need for support from those sharing the same views as he did. Breivik's self-presentation of his life in his compendium also suggests he had an inflated self-esteem. Breivik spent a great deal of time trying to prove his self-worth to his family and friends. He dressed in expensive clothes and placed a very high importance on his physical appearance. Breivik also invested a good portion of his time on his business ventures to prove his intelligence and self-worth. He writes of a good family situation and upbringing, which the courts eventually determined not to be true. Breivik's business ventures were not as successful as he had anticipated, and Breivik also considered having plastic surgery to enhance his appearance. The amount of time in his life and compendium Breivik dedicated to prove his self-worth displays Breivik need for notoriety and acceptance.

Hammami's perceived isolation was evident in his decision to leave high school a year early. Hammami felt as if he longer "fit in" at his high school and felt as if neither he nor his new religion was accepted by his peers or teachers. Hammami choose to attend a university where there was a larger Muslim population and where he was able to meet new individuals supportive of his new faith. Hammami's desires to have his faith supported led him from community to community. He eventually was in search of a pure Islamic society. Not fitting in anywhere ultimately led him to Somalia for this perfect society. He then became engaged in a terrorist organization. In his autobiography, Hammami answers questions regarding his experiences in Somalia. He confirms that the move to Somalia fulfilled his sense of perceived isolation by stating, "I also gained a lot

of acquaintances and relationships that are priceless and I have had the honor of knowing some of the most righteous men of our times."[326]

## C.    INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

As explained above, each individual experienced a sense of perceived isolation immediately before they entered the initial engagement phase. Fathali Moghaddam explains the most important transformation in an individual's path to radicalization is his or her engagement with the morality of terrorist organizations, where he or she begins to see terrorism as a justified strategy.[327]   Being unable to rectify the perceived isolation that they experienced consequently pushed these individuals deeper into radicalization on the final path of committing an act of violence. During the initial engagement phase, each individual experienced self-imposed isolation in the form of a parallel life.  Parallel lives are developed by individuals in order to hide their true intentions through secrecy and isolation. Individuals leading parallel lives keep this a secret from even their closest family or friends. The use of parallel lives serves multiple purposes. It not only hides individuals for operational reasons, but it also reinforces individual's commitment to the cause.  When individuals isolate themselves so completely from friends and family and their former lives, they have no outside perspective or competing values.  They become more deeply immersed in the cause and anchored solely to their ideology.328   While individuals remained dedicated to the cause, this time period also presents contradictive motivations. On one hand they must maintain secrecy in order to avoid detection. Yet on the other hand, these individuals seek recognition and acknowledgement for their "heroic" acts. These individuals must find a balance between remaining secretive and fulfilling their need for recognition. The foreknowledge of the recognition they will receive for committing an act seemingly helps them maintain secrecy in order to finally receive the recognition that they desire. In the initial engagement phase, each individual

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[326] al-Amriiki, *The Story of an American Jihaadi Part One*, 105.

[327] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism," 162.

[328] Ibid., 165.

also made a final outreach to others in hopes of expressing their ideology and gaining support for their cause—again making a plea for recognition.

### 1.    Parallel Lives

Months before the attack, Timothy McVeigh socially isolated himself for operational reasons. This is evident in a letter he wrote to his sister Jennifer in which he stated:

> Of course you must realize, then, that I'm not living in Arizona. Why am I running? I am trying to keep my path "cool," so in case someone is looking to 'shut up someone who knows too much' I will not be easy to find.[329]

Additionally, weeks prior to the attack McVeigh rented a motel room in Arizona. The authors Michel, Herbeck and Telles, explain, "He spent the next twelve days in lockdown mode—almost completely alone thinking and planning."[330] This seclusion before the attack may have served dual purposes. One, McVeigh was operationally hiding to avoid detection, but he may have used this time as one of personal reflection in order to prepare himself for the attack and further his devotion to the cause.

Although it is debatable when Anders Breivik did in fact decide to conduct the attack, he spent a considerable amount of time isolated in years prior, hiding his intentions and avoiding detection. Breivik spoke extensively of the operational necessity in creating a project or an alibi to provide to your family and friends that will "at least partly justify your 'new pattern of activities' (isolation/travel) while in the planning phase."[331] Breivik diminished his interactions with family and friends during his planning phase and explains he did not have a desire to create or preserve social connections.

Omar Hammami initially moved to Egypt to live in an Islamic society. However, once there, he became disenchanted with his surroundings.  Furthermore, Hammami did

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[329] Michel, Herbeck, and Telles, American Terrorist, 196–197.

[330] Ibid., 202.

[331] Berwick, *2083 A European Declaration of Independence,* 841.

not view Egypt as a pure Islamic society, and found it to be more secular than expected. In addition, Hammami had moved to Egypt to attend an Islamic University; however, he was not accepted into the program. He also had a difficult time finding adequate employment and housing for his family. As Hammami became more and more disenchanted with their new life in Egypt, he began attending underground mosques and spending a significant amount of time in internet cafés. At the same time, he became more enthralled by what was occurring in Somalia. Hammami had found a place where he could live in a pure Islamic society. He kept his true intentions and desires of moving to Somalia a secret from those closest to him. Eventually, Hammami began to lead a parallel life. Hammami and Daniel Maldonado began secretly planning to move to Somalia. Hammami left his wife and child under the guise of looking for work, and he moved to Somalia.

### 2. Final Outreach

Each of the individuals in the case studies longed for his voice to be heard and longed for others to support his cause. Throughout his radicalization and subsequent status as a terrorist, each man made final attempts to rally support. These acts reinforce the perception of isolation that each felt. For example, Timothy McVeigh was extremely concerned with how he would be remembered after the bombing of Oklahoma City. He pushed to get his biography, *The American Terrorist*, published before his death in order for him to tell his story. Hours before his attack, Anders Breivik sent a mass email to thousands of individuals containing his compendium *2083 A European Declaration of Independence*. Omar Hammami spent years following his radicalization online promoting his story and his cause. In the end, Hammami produced Part One of his autobiography, *The Story of an American Jihadi*. Each act displaying each man's final attempt to be understood.

## D. COMMON THEMES

The above chapter shows that each individual experienced significant periods of isolation that greatly affected their radicalization process. There are however, several theories that can be useful in explaining the social psychology behind the choices each

individual made.  These theories deserve further explanation in order to provide context to these individuals' lives and the choices they made.

Social identity theory (SIT) provides a framework for understanding the dynamics behind the individual membership in a group and group behavior. According to SIT, "The experience of belonging to a group is a powerful determinant of the identities of most individuals."[332] Therefore, individuals who are isolated, whether that is social, emotional or perceived isolation, are then driven to belong to a group. The concept of existential psychology also shows that individuals have an innate need to be understood and relate to others.  Although Timothy McVeigh and Anders Breivik are considered "lone wolves," as they did not work on behalf of a terrorist organization, SIT can be helpful in understanding their motivations. Group membership becomes part of our identity as an individual. Subsequently, the values associated with a group then have implications for our feelings of self-worth. Membership in a group, whether that group is small or large, must provide a positive sense of self-worth to an individual.  Timothy McVeigh left the Army when it no longer provided him the cohesion amongst peers that he longed for. McVeigh then immersed himself in the gun show circuit and anti-government ideologies—areas he deemed as providing him a positive sense of self-worth. Anders Breivik left the Progress Party when they no longer provided him with a sense of self-worth. The Progress Party would only use democratic means to push out multiculturalism, whereas Breivik wanted an armed resistance. Breivik searched for other like-minded individuals, eventually finding them online. He additionally fabricated the Knights Templar—displaying his need for acceptance in a group.  Omar Hammami acted on behalf of a terrorist organization, al-Shabaab. He joined their fight for a true Islamic Society—one that Hammami had been in search of.  These individuals had visions of ideal societies and refused to conform to real societies. Their avoidance of conformity shows that real societies had become their out-group and they were in search of a new in-group—their ideal societies. McVeigh wanted less government intrusion, Breivik wanted multiculturalism driven out of Norway, and Hammami wanted a pure Islamic society.

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[332] Brannan and Strindberg, *Critical Analysis*, 32.

They sought to find an in-group that provided them with support and a positive sense of self-worth. SIT is useful in explaining the individuals' needs to find their in-group.

It is important to mention an individual's need for personal mobility. As individuals, the majority of people all occupy the same foundational level—terrorists and non-terrorists alike. It is the perception of their environment, relationships and influences that drive some people towards radicalization while others do not move down that path. An important piece in radicalization is the perception of opportunities people feel they have open to them. Isolation plays a large role in that specifically perceived isolation and the lack of support felt. If individuals do not feel that they can rectify their perceived isolation through normative means, will they then move towards non-normative means in order to find support? Prior research suggests, "that when paths to individual mobility are seen to be open, there is far less tendency to attempt non-normative actions."[333] When these individuals began to become morally engaged with a terrorist mentality, they felt as if this was the only viable option, and they could no longer accomplish their goals without violence.

## E. CONCLUSION

The concept of isolation has many different roles throughout the radicalization process—many of these roles are overlapping and intertwined. This chapter demonstrated the complexity and importance of isolation within the radicalization process. Each individual experienced social, perceived, and emotional isolation throughout their lives. By thoroughly evaluating these roles and the effects they have on an individual's propensity to become radicalized, this offers additional opportunities for early detection or intervention. It is important to recognize that isolation is necessary in the radicalization process in order to maintain secrecy; however, isolation is not sufficient as a cause of radicalization. Many individuals self-impose isolation as a means of creativity or self-reflection; therefore, it is important to focus on forced isolation with negative

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[333] Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism," 164.

connotations and isolation as a means of secrecy. The final chapter will outline the information discussed within this thesis including theoretical and policy implications along with suggest areas of future research.

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# VIII. CONCLUSION

## A. INTRODUCTION

Previously, a limited amount of research had been conducted on the specific role of social, emotional, and perceived isolation on the radicalization process. The lack of representation of isolation in radicalization has created a significant knowledge gap in the overall study of terrorism. Numerous models of the radicalization process exist, yet the role of isolation has previously remained neglected. This thesis focused on whether or not isolation played a significant role in an individual's process towards radicalization. It is important to understand the role of isolation in the radicalization process in order to effectively counter radicalization and ultimately terrorism.

Bruce Hoffman, a renowned terrorism expert, explains that new terrorist organizations learn from their predecessors.[334] These groups learn lessons from former comrades who have been killed or apprehended by counter terrorism officials in order to avoid detection.[335] He continues to explain the success of terrorists is dependent on their ability to keep one step ahead of authorities.[336] As our adversaries change, so must our response. However, this has created a continuous cycle of cat and mouse between authorities and adversaries. Currently, homeland security officials target individuals who are already radicalized and may be in the operational phases of conducting or planning an attack. Through the operational aspects of homeland security and law enforcement, individuals who pose a threat are removed from the equation through apprehension or arrest. This current strategy effectively eliminates individuals who pose an immediate threat; however, those individuals are soon replaced by other like-minded individuals intent on causing harm—creating a continuous cycle of threats. Instead, by viewing radicalization through a social psychological lens, we may be able to effectively change the conditions that contribute to radicalization. If we change the conditions that

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[334] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (rev.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 250.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid., 252.

contribute to radicalization, we may be able to stop the cycle. By understanding the role that isolation plays in radicalization, we are one step closer to understanding the conditions that promote radicalization.

Without first understanding the radicalization process and understanding all of the contributing factors to radicalization, counter terrorism officials may struggle in effectively intercepting individuals who are intent on causing harm. Instead by understanding pre-disposing risk factors, we may be able to effectively change the environment that promotes radicalization. Through the case studies, it has been shown that each of these terrorists experienced isolation (perceived, emotional or social) throughout their radicalization process—highlighting an important factor in the radicalization process.

## B.    SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

This thesis was based on the analytic assessment of three case studies of individuals who have committed acts of terrorism. The case studies of Timothy McVeigh, Anders Breivik, and Omar Hammami demonstrate that isolation does have a role in the radicalization process. Each individual experienced isolation throughout his life and on his path of radicalization, although each manifested in very different ways. The initial involvement phase of radicalization illustrates that each individual experienced all three types of isolation—social, emotional and perceived isolation. The initial engagement phase demonstrated that each individual was isolated out of necessity, as means to hide operational activities in preparation for an attack and in order to hide their true intentions by establishing a "parallel life." Isolation is difficult to measure. Social isolation is easier to measure as it is characterized as social connectedness—a measurable concept. However, perceived isolation and emotional isolation are both subjective experiences. In order to conduct these case studies, this study relied on the personal experiences of the individuals in order to determine if isolation played a role in their radicalization.

Radicalization is not a one-size-fits-all approach and terrorism is a complex multi-dimensional process. Currently, several schools of thought exist, all offering differing

opinions on the contributing factors of radicalization. Radicalization research should not simply encompass one specific theory or discipline.[337] Radicalization should be viewed as a dynamic process that encompasses both individual and situational factors. Veldhuis and Staun note, "Only if we account for the dependencies between the individual and his environment can we begin to explain why some people radicalise, while others do not."[338] This view, including psychological and social psychological factors, accounts for individual aspects but also considers the context and environment in which an individual operates in.[339] A social psychological and inter-disciplinary view of radicalization and isolation was used in order to research the relationship between the two. Although there are varying opinions on radicalization and numerous radicalization models, the case studies conducted show differing phases of isolation within the radicalization process. Because isolation was identified as a common theme throughout the radicalization of these individuals, we may now be positioned to effectively bridge the gap between the varying opinions on radicalization by highlighting contributing factors.

The concept of isolation is multifaceted and multi-dimensional. This thesis demonstrates that isolation can manifest in multiple ways and have numerous outcomes. It can be self-imposed or forced upon individuals, each resulting in differing outcomes. Peer rejection, the inability to connect with peers and family, and the perceived lack of support from others, all has drastic effects on individuals—demonstrating the negative aspects of forced isolation. However, many people who isolate themselves do so for creative, spiritual, and other constructive reasons. Isolation does not always have negative connotations. Consider artists, writers, or monks who have isolated themselves for clarity and positive reasons. However, when isolation was forced on these individuals it had an impact on them and drastically altered their perspective on life. Isolation played a role in the opportunities these individuals felt they had available to them. Peer rejection or fear of rejection, also altered the way in which they viewed their life and future. Lack of

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[337] Canter, *The Faces of Terrorism,* 1.

[338] Veldhuis and Staun, *Islamist Radicalisation*, 20.

[339] Volintiru, "Towards a Dynamic Model," 7.

physical or emotional connections with others impacted the support network they felt they had available to them. The need to belong to a group and the existential need to relate to others also impacted the decisions they made. The concept of isolation should be viewed from a social psychological standpoint and consider the overall context of individual and situational factors. This thesis is not intended to argue that isolation is a cause of radicalization; rather, its intent is to use the case studies of McVeigh, Breivik and Hammami in order to demonstrate that isolation was a contributing factor in their radicalization. Isolation cannot be used as a standalone concept. Isolation in itself is not a sufficient cause of radicalization. However, isolation in conjunction with individual and situational determinants may have an effect on the path an individual chooses to take. Many people are isolated for many different reasons, the majority of which never enter into the process of radicalization.

## C.    THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Ultimately, the radicalization process is different for all people at all times and individuals become terrorists in many different ways and for many different reasons.[340] In order to effectively counter radicalization, we must decide if radicalization matters in the absence of violence.  In the overall study of terrorism and radicalization, one critical question remains: Why does one individual become a terrorist and the other does not? Psychologist John Horgan suggests in the study of radicalization that it might be beneficial to establish "predisposing risk factors" for involvement in terrorism. These predisposing risk factors may be beneficial serving as a prelude to a formal risk assessment for actual involvement in terrorism. Horgan indicates, "the presence of some emotional vulnerability, in terms of feelings of anger, alienation and disenfranchisement" could be used as pre-disposing risk factors.[341]   A sense of dissatisfaction or disillusionment with the individual's current persona or activity may be helpful in understanding how an individual progresses into radicalization and ultimately

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[340] Borum, "Radicalization into Violent Extremism," 8.

[341] Horgan, "From Profiles to Pathways," 84–85.

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terrorism.[342] The case studies in prior chapters show that each individual was dissatisfied with their current status. Can the establishment of predisposing risk factors, to include isolation, be beneficial in counter radicalization?

Theoretically speaking, Bruce Hoffman suggests there are five objectives of terrorism. Terrorists seek to fulfill these objectives in order to eventually affect political change. The five objectives to terrorism are "Attention, Acknowledgement, Recognition, Authority and Governance."[343] He contends that some terrorists have been successful in attaining the first three objectives: attention, acknowledgement, and recognition. However, very few have been able to obtain the last two.[344] By focusing on the first three objectives, can this provide insight into who becomes a terrorist? If terrorists seek attention, acknowledgement and recognition can the aforementioned "predisposing risk factors" be used to attempt to provide a profile of those that might engage in terrorism? Does an individual's dissatisfaction with their level of support and interaction with others make them more open to influence? If individuals who are isolated, seek attention, acknowledgement and recognition do they view their only opportunity to achieve these objectives through terrorism?

If answered, these questions can drastically alter radicalization research and the direction taken in future radicalization research. Determining the balance between theoretical implications and policy implications in regard to radicalization is challenging. If counter terrorism officials have the objective to prevent terrorism through the interception or apprehension of individuals who are already radicalized, who then can attempt to change the environments that promote radicalization? It is not illegal to be isolated, nor is it illegal to be "radical." Therefore, isolation cannot be viewed as a standalone indicator of radicalization or terrorism. It is imperative the symptoms of isolation be coupled with other indicators of radicalization and not just specifically focus on isolated individuals. Bringing in the factor of isolation as a "pre-disposing" factor, has not previously been involved in the radicalization process or in homeland security

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[342] Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, 89.

[343] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism,* 255.

[344] Ibid.

operations. Through the study of isolation in relation to the radicalization process, we have provided additional insight into the overall study of radicalization. Contributing to the overall study of radicalization may provide counter terrorism officials the opportunity to utilize a new perspective on countering radicalization. However, before this can be done, additional research on the topic of isolation and radicalization is necessary.

## D.    FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis was conducted to demonstrate that isolation does have a role in radicalization. It is clear that isolation as a form of secrecy or parallel life is part of the radicalization process. Determining the exact role and influence of social, emotional, and perceived isolation is difficult. However, if future research is conducted in determining the motivations behind committing an act of terrorism and additional research is conducted on the exact effects of isolation on an individual, it may help determine whether or not social, emotional and perceived isolation affects and individual's propensity to become radicalized. Additional research is necessary in this area to determine exactly what role isolation does play. If additional research, such as sociological, psychological, or biological research, is conducted on this topic, it may have many implications in the future. This additional research may provide additional insight into the driving factors of radicalization and may assist in moving one step closer to changing the environment that promotes terrorism.

This thesis highlighted several additional areas in need of research. As we move further into the information age, the role of isolation and the internet needs to be explored more in depth. Does the internet provide a means of communication for those isolated individuals whose voices are not typically heard? Does an isolated individual find comfort and support on the internet? How does this affect social identity theory and an individual's need to belong? Are isolated individuals more susceptible to charismatic leaders? If future research is conducted on these topics, it may drastically alter how we view radicalization and our response to it. By having a more comprehensive

understanding of the contributing factors of radicalization and the environments that promote radicalization, we may be able to alter policy strategies in order to more effectively counter terrorism.

## E.    POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Currently, the United States does not have a standard radicalization framework utilized by all agencies involved in homeland security efforts.  The lack of a standard framework throughout the intelligence community and law enforcement poses a significant issue and knowledge gap within agencies tasked with countering terrorism. With the intention of more effectively countering terrorism, we must first understand the radicalization process. In order to better recognize the role of factors such as isolation and to use it as a "pre-disposing risk factor," agencies need a more effective framework around which to organize their collaboration.   Without a standard radicalization framework guiding the intelligence community and law enforcement, it makes the task of countering radicalization and terrorism quite challenging. The efforts of establishing pre-disposing factors and integrating them into a standard framework may eventually provide an opportunity for early intervention in the radicalization process.

By viewing the effects of isolation coupled with other indicators of radicalization, we may be able to effectively reach individuals before they enter into a point of engagement or full radicalization. An effective outreach campaign may better position homeland security officials to prevent future terrorist attacks from occurring. Understanding the role of isolation in radicalization may also afford the United States the ability to create a counter-radicalization strategy. When viewing the counter-radicalization strategies of other countries, the United States can learn lessons on the benefits of having a standard radicalization framework used throughout the country. This may also afford the opportunity for not only a counter-radicalization strategy, but a disengagement strategy as well.  The suggested future research may have drastic effects on the current homeland security policy strategies, with the momentous goal of trying to eventually reach early intervention, in order to disrupt the cycle of terrorism.

## F.    CONCLUSION

This thesis displayed the multifaceted roles that isolation plays in the radicalization process.  It demonstrated that the initial involvement phase displayed signs of social, emotional, and perceived isolation. The initial engagement phase demonstrated the ability of individuals to live in secrecy through "parallel lives."  It is imperative homeland security officials fully understand isolation and the effects it has on an individual and how it affects an individual's propensity to become radicalized. It is also necessary for officials to understand the ability of isolation to maintain an individual's true intentions of committing a terrorist attack.  Through the comprehensive understanding of the contributing factors of radicalization homeland security officials will be better positioned to effectively counter radicalization.  This research is meant to highlight isolation as a contributing factor to radicalization; not prove cause and effect. By highlighting the importance of isolation, this study has brought up future areas of research that may be valuable in establishing predisposing risk factors of isolation. By focusing on intervention and preventative measures in regard to isolation, it may be possible to ultimately prevent radicalization and terrorism. By viewing radicalization as a complex process that encompasses both individual and situational factors we can attempt to determine how and why individuals move from seemingly normal backgrounds to committing acts of terror.  This social psychological viewpoint is beneficial in understanding how individuals move towards a path of violence.  Studying human behavior and understanding the motivation behind committing acts of violence can be beneficial in not only terrorism research but may also provide insight into individuals other than terrorists who act through violence (school shooters, mass murders, etc.).

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