

ARE MUSLIM DIASPORA IN THE U.S. VULNERABLE TO ISLAMIC EXTREMISM?

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

ARE MUSLIM DIASPORA IN THE U.S. VULNERABLE TO ISLAMIC EXTREMISM?, by Major Justin Chronister, 88 pages.

Recent actions in Europe have highlighted the ability of Muslim diasporas to conduct terrorist attacks against their adopted homeland. With an estimated 2.6 million Muslim diaspora in the United States and millions more seeking refuge from current conflicts, there is concern with Islamic extremists utilizing diaspora to conduct future attacks on the United States homeland. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if the Muslim diaspora in the United States are vulnerable to exploitation by Islamic extremists. A qualitative research approach is applied utilizing comparative case study methodology to evaluate select factors of governance, economics, religion, armed conflict, and United States involvement in the homeland of four Islamic extremists who have recently planned or conducted acts of terrorism against the United States.

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## ACRONYMS

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DoS	Department of State
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
NYPD	New York Police Department
U.S.	United States

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

All of us with a memory of the '80s and '90s saw the line drawn from Afghanistan in the '80s and '90s to September 11th. We see Syria as that but an order of magnitude worse. So there's going to be a diaspora out of Syria at some point, and we are determined not to let lines be drawn from Syria today to a future 9/11.<sup>1</sup>

— James Comey

#### Background

The September 11th attacks changed the way America viewed its security. Terrorist activities that had long plagued other parts of the world were suddenly capable of occurring in the U.S. homeland. The U.S. government and civilian agencies implemented significant changes to increase security and counter-terrorism efforts have thus far impeded another large-scale attack on the U.S. homeland. The government created two agencies to confront the complex issue of homeland security, the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of the Director on National Intelligence. Since then, the U.S. has persistently pursued Islamic extremists at home and abroad.

The Global War on Terror<sup>2</sup> taught the U.S. military valuable lessons. It highlighted the importance of addressing the populace as well as the combatant. Concept Plan 7500, the Department of Defense strategy against terrorism, provided two

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<sup>1</sup> Devlin Barrett, "FBI Director Says Syrian Civil War Poses Growing Threat," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 2014, accessed September 23, 2014, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303948104579538062118336596>.

<sup>2</sup> The Global War on Terror is now generally referenced as the Worldwide Campaign against Violent Extremists Networks.

approaches, direct and indirect. The direct approach removed terrorists from the battlefield through kill or capture missions and provided short-term results. The U.S. Government was well equipped to conduct these missions and did so with great success. The indirect approach deterred subtle and active support for terrorists. This approach held the potential to provide long-term results by undermining the extremist narrative and encouraging alternate viewpoints to isolate the terrorists from the population. The technological advantage enjoyed by the U.S. military facilitated tactical operations against combatants, but struggled to address the human aspect. As such, the U.S. found itself competing against Islamic extremists to “win the hearts and minds” of the populace on the battlefields in the Middle East. The U.S. war in Iraq became a destination for Islamic extremists desiring to kill Americans. In a speech to the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington D.C. on October 6, 2005, President Bush stated Iraq was “the central front on our war on terror.”<sup>3</sup>

The challenges faced by the U.S. to garner support amongst the populace required a change of tactics and ultimately a change in military doctrine. Islamic extremists have also exercised a direct and indirect approach in their efforts to advance their ideology. Despite our actions, Islamic extremists have increased their significance on the world stage and leveled the playing field against nations as a result of modern communication capabilities including the internet and social media. Through utilization of their recruitment techniques, extremists influence the actions of states. While they do not pose

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<sup>3</sup> Donna Miles, “Bush Calls Iraq Central Front in Terror War, Vows Victory,” U.S. Department of Defense, October 5, 2005, accessed December 15, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=18145>.

an existential threat to the U.S., extremists pose a threat to our national interest and way of life in the homeland.

Globalization has changed the support that diasporas are able to provide for terrorist organizations. Terrorist groups have developed networks able to act as operational cells and conduct attacks in developed countries by individuals who live there. Recent actions have demonstrated the ability of diasporas to conduct terrorist attacks against their adopted homeland.<sup>4</sup> With an estimated 300 million Muslim diaspora in the world, 2.6 million in the U.S., this area merits further study.<sup>5</sup>

Studies have shown that U.S. Muslims are not a homogenous community. Therefore, grouping Muslim diaspora into clearly defined categories is a difficult undertaking. Understanding the various views of Muslims in the U.S. on political issues and beliefs requires a study of origin-based subcultures.<sup>6</sup> As such, this research paper will analyze certain factors occurring in the homeland of selected case studies.

According to Bruce Hoffman, the current director of the Center for Security Studies and former corporate chair in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency at the RAND corporation, terrorists from Muslim diaspora can fall into one of three categories:

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Johan Galtung, Abbas Aroua, Erika Degortes, Dietrich Fischer, Naakow Grant Hayford, and Karoline Weber, "The Muslim Diaspora In Europe And The USA," *Transcend*, September 2012, accessed December 29, 2014, [www.transcend.org](http://www.transcend.org).

<sup>6</sup> Clark McCauley and Sarah Scheckter, "Reactions to the War on Terrorism: Origin Group Differences in the 2007 Pew Poll of U.S. Muslims," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 1 (2011): 2.

1. converts to Islam, which includes two subcategories: long-term jihadist trained in camps and the self-radicalized individual (lone wolf) which joined the jihadist movement;
2. second generation failed assimilations; and
3. first generation migrants who cannot fit into their new society and live life on the margins.<sup>7</sup>

As Mr. Hoffman discusses in his literature, other than identifying the above-mentioned categories, it is nearly impossible to profile this type of adversary. We are currently facing the difficult challenge of identifying emerging threats within the diaspora community.

The objective of the research is to determine if Muslim diaspora in the U.S. are vulnerable to Islamic extremism. This thesis compares various factors affecting the homeland of recent Muslim diaspora who have planned or conducted acts of terrorism against the U.S. A qualitative research approach is applied utilizing comparative case study methodology, which will enable the researcher to formulate a probabilistic answer to the primary research question. The contribution to the overall body of knowledge will reside in the identification or dismissal of contributing factors of Islamic extremism that reside across selected diasporas.

### Assumptions

First, the U.S. government and UN estimates of diaspora populations are accurate. Second, the U.S. and Islamic extremists will continue to remain in conflict, and for the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

purposes of this paper considered to be at war. Understanding the radicalization process and potential vulnerabilities exploited by extremists allow the formulation of potential solutions to the issue. Therefore, an analysis of the radicalization process that individuals undertake and the factors that make a population vulnerable to radicalization merits further study. Third, given the free and openly accessible society in the U.S., Islamic extremists will pursue terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland by exploiting vulnerabilities in the human terrain. The study considers actions by lone wolf terrorists and references them as an occurrence of terrorism within the appropriate diaspora. This study does not assume that acts of terror occur only from members of a diaspora, nor does it assume terrorism requires the support of state or non-state actors.

### Definitions

Developed Country: a country with high standards of living compared to world standards.

Diaspora: the dispersion of a large group of people from their country of origin to other countries in the world.

Islamic Extremism: a distorted view of Islam that utilizes tactics such as bombing and assassinations in pursuit of regional or global Islamic control and ultimately an Islamic Caliphate.

Non-state Actors: non-sovereign entities who exercise significant economic, political, or social power and influence at a national or international level.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Federation of American Scientists, "Nonstate Actors: Impact on International Relations and Implications for the United States," August 23, 2007, accessed September 28, 2014, [http://fas.org/irp/nic/nonstate\\_actors\\_2007.pdf](http://fas.org/irp/nic/nonstate_actors_2007.pdf).

Radicalization: a process of personal development whereby an individual adopts ever more dogmatic political or political-religious ideas and goals, becoming convinced that the attainment of these goals justifies extreme methods.<sup>9</sup>

Spillover: refers to the spread of violent conflict from its country of origin into neighboring countries.

Underdeveloped Country: a country with low standards of living compared to world standards.

### Delimitations and Limitations

This study focuses only on recent cases of Islamic extremism in diaspora within the U.S. This is due to the prevalence of threats facing the U.S. by known terrorist organizations and the presumption that Islamic extremism poses a threat to the American way of life. Personal bias could influence the interpretation of information in qualitative areas, because of this issue; quantitative components are included in the research design.

### Conclusion

The understanding of “violent extremism, including assessing the threat it poses to the nation as a whole and within specific communities,” is one of the three broad objectives of the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>10</sup> The results of this case study can serve as a point of departure regarding the potential radicalization of future diaspora. As

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<sup>9</sup> Lidewijde Ongerling, *Homegrown Terrorism and Radicalisation in the Netherlands: Experiences, Explanations and Approaches*, Testimony, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Washington, DC, June 27, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> The Department of Homeland Security, “Countering Violent Extremism,” accessed December 16, 2014, <https://www.dhs.gov/topic/countering-violent-extremism>.

further understanding of the radicalization process and effects of overseas conflicts on the Muslim community are understood, this case study could be reexamined or modified to portray a more accurate examination of the diaspora and potential threats to the American homeland.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to determine if Muslim diaspora in the U.S. are vulnerable to extremism. Chapter 1 introduced the topic and discussed why the research question is relevant. Chapter 2 reviews the current literature that pertains to the topic. The work reviewed primarily originated from scientific and security journals, research institutes, historical books, and government publications.

#### The Radicalization Process

Numerous theories exist to how and why individuals are radicalized. The decision to radicalize is a personal process, as such; it is difficult to solidify a “radicalization model” that works across the spectrum of personalities. Michael King and Dr. Donald M. Taylor analyze various radicalization theories in their work, *The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence*. The authors focus on models relevant for examining how Muslims living in western countries are radicalized to conduct violent jihad against their adopted western homeland. The models examined in the research were Borum’s Pathway, Wiktorowicz’s Theory of Joining Extremist Groups, Moghaddam’s Staircase to Terrorism, The NYPD’s Radicalization Process, and Sageman’s Four Prongs.

The literature indicates radicalization is a process or progression that an individual undertakes. Dr. Randy Borum’s *Understanding the Terrorist Mindset*, is the most simplistic of the models reviewed and describes the psychological process of radicalization. The individual identifies an economic or social situation they believe to be

wrong and perceives the wrongdoing as an injustice. This perceived injustice causes the individual to place blame and label the people responsible for the injustice as bad. The labeling of “bad” people dehumanizes and separates them from normal human beings. This labeling can lead to a justified aggression by extremists, as action against ‘bad’ people appears justifiable.

Dr. Borum warns the reader that ideology alone is not always the only motive for conducting an extremist act. Rather, individuals who are predisposed to aggressive behavior may use their ideology as a means to justify their actions. Dr. Borum makes a general reference to the long history of extremist ideology but makes no mention of specific examples or case studies in the bulletin to further support the proposed process.

Dr. Quintan Wiktorowicz’s research of the Al-Muhajiroun<sup>11</sup> in 2002 examines the phases an individual progress through to join a radical religious group. Dr. Wiktorowicz identifies a “cognitive opening” caused by various influences depending upon the person; but common causes were economic, social (cultural), political, and personal. Dr. Wiktorowicz introduces religion into the process as a method to seek relief from discontent. The individual can pursue a “self-initiated” religious seeking experience in which they read books, talk to friends and family or explore other available sources. Alternately, an individual may pursue a “guided” religious seeking experience in which they become involved with socialized religious activities.<sup>12</sup> By thoroughly exploring religion by the method of his-her choice, the individual may be able to “frame” the

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<sup>11</sup> The Al-Muhajiroun were a transnational Islamic organization that promoted an Islamic revolution worldwide. They were based in the United Kingdom.

<sup>12</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Joining the Cause: Al-muhajiroun and Radical Islam” (The Roots of Islamic Radicalism Conference, Yale University, May 2004), 9.

religion's views as coinciding with their own. Dr. Wiktorowicz introduces socialization into the latter stages of the radicalization process, as the individual joins the religious group and slowly becomes more involved in the group's activities. While his methodology allows him to thoroughly examine the Al-Muhajiroun group, it lacks breadth across multiple organizations to determine if his findings are transferrable to different societies or cultures.

In *The Staircase to Terrorism*, Dr. Fathali M. Moghaddam examines the psychological interpretation of material conditions, focusing on the perceived level of relative deprivation instead of actual level of deprivation. His research describes how, individuals may live in austere conditions in a poor country, but are content with their situation because it is common to all. Contrarily, individuals living in more suitable conditions may have a higher level of perceived deprivation when they compare their situations to other members of their society.<sup>13</sup>

Moghaddam contends individuals may take out their aggression on a seemingly innocent target when the individual consents to social identity theory and believes it is his group against another group. Individuals may become willing to physically take out their aggression on their perceived enemy and identify with a committed and determined moral stance. Here, extremist organizations persuade individuals to take the moral views of the organization instead of the more familiar morals of the governmental society.<sup>14</sup> The acceptance of extreme thinking and the perceived validity of the terrorist group allow the

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<sup>13</sup> Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism," *American Psychologist* (February-March 2005): 161-169.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

individual to socially affiliate with the organization. Individuals contact only other individuals in their small cell and possess limited knowledge of others in the organization. Depending upon their newly acquired position in the terrorist organization, an individual may proceed through the entire recruitment, radicalization process, and carry out a terrorist act all within 24 hours.

In 2007, members of the New York Police Department Intelligence Department conducted a study to further understand the radicalization process. The methodology uses case studies of both U.S. and European homegrown threats. For each case study, the New York Police Department met with local law enforcement, intelligence and academic professionals to thoroughly understand the details and radicalization process undergone. The study references work by Dr. Wiktorowicz and Dr. Sageman, which this thesis also reviews.

The study concludes an ideology, known as “Jihadi-Salafi Ideology,” drives radicalization in the West. The report defines the goal of Jihadi-Salafi Ideology to “create a “pure” society that applies a literal reading of the Quran and adheres to the social practices that prevailed at the time of 7th century Arabia.”<sup>15</sup> The study states the Salafi version of Islam has grown in diaspora communities within the U.S. as it has received more exposure than other versions of Islam.

The study also finds individuals who carry out an attack often have ordinary lives and are without criminal backgrounds. Although an individual may start the process of radicalization, it does not mean they will pass through all stages and carry out an attack.

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<sup>15</sup> Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, *Radicalisation in the West: The Homegrown Threat* (New York: New York Police Department, 2007), 19.

The individual may stall or terminate the process at any time.<sup>16</sup> Radicalization is a process that occurs over four stages: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination, and jihadization. The pre-radicalization phase encompasses the individual's lifestyles, beliefs and various social factors prior to beginning the radicalization process. The study exposes broad commonalities amongst the U.S. case studies: second generation immigrants into the U.S., male Muslims under 35 years of age, mostly middle class, and most have some level of higher education.<sup>17</sup>

A personal or external crisis removes the individual from his usual life in the self-identification stage. There is no crisis common to all but may include an identity crises or losing a source of income. The individuals gravitate toward Salafi Islam to help manage the crisis and begin socializing with likeminded individuals. Over time, the individuals become extreme in their views and progress toward the indoctrination stage. During this stage, individuals focus on goals to protect or enhance Islam instead of personal goals. Additionally, they begin to see things through more of a political lens, in which current events are viewed as attacks on Islam.

During the final stage, jihadization, the individual makes the personal decision to carry out an attack either individually or in a group. If carried out as a group, it is common for at least one member of the group to travel overseas to a country with known terrorist training camps. Destinations include Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Kashmir.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 45.

Dr. Marc Sageman describes a different reason individuals are radicalized. He states individuals join the radicalization process because of kinship and friendship. The actions of the radicalized individual are a result of how he feels, not how he thinks. Dr. Sageman asserts individuals, mainly young males, radicalize in pursuit of the glory involved with fighting against the West in the undeclared war against Islam.

Dr. Sageman lists key differences in his article that suggest the U.S. is less threatened from its diaspora communities than Europe. The U.S. is viewed as a melting pot, which allows Muslims to retain aspects of their culture and assists in their assimilation into American society. Muslims are generally well off and hold jobs that prevent them from economic hardships. As such, Muslim diaspora largely believe in the American dream. The same is not true with diaspora communities in Europe. As a result, Dr. Sageman indicates a threat against the U.S. homeland could originate from the Muslim diaspora in Europe.

When viewed separately, each model offers an outline for the reader to understand the radicalization process. The most valuable comprehension of the process occurs from a comparison of the models and identifying commonalities. These commonalities indicate where terrorism experts seemingly agree to the most relevant contributors to the radicalization process.<sup>19</sup> All five models indicate social influences and perceptions that could lead to radicalization. The psychological factors that occur most often are those of relative deprivation and identity crises.

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<sup>19</sup> Michael King and Donald M. Taylor, "The Radicalization of Homegrown Jihadists: A Review of Theoretical Models and Social Psychological Evidence," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (August 2011): 602-622.

Relative deprivation is a likely contributor to radicalization based on the findings of numerous experimental studies.<sup>20</sup> The term relative deprivation is tied to the theory humans determine how well off they are by comparing themselves to others around them, instead of a set social standard. Identity related issues are also a commonality in the models studied. Radicalization may stem from managing a dual identity.<sup>21</sup> Such is the case with second and third generation immigrants who are living in a western nation and have a non-western ethnic heritage.<sup>22</sup>

### The Search for an Identity

A common theme in the literature suggests an identity crisis is a key contributor to the radicalization process. A perceived level of isolation can trigger the identity crisis. Muslim cultures in the Middle East allow religion to play a large role in society. There is no separation of church and state as in the U.S. As such, Muslims may feel isolated or excluded in American society since public displays of religion are not commonly

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<sup>20</sup> Martin van Zomeren, Tom Postmes, and Russell Spears, "Toward an Integrative Social Identity Model of Collective Action: A Quantitative Research Synthesis of Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives," *Psychological Bulletin* 134, no. 4 (2008): 504-535.

<sup>21</sup> Mirella L. Stroink, "Processes and Preconditions Underlying Terrorism in Second-Generation Immigrants," *Journal of Peace Psychology* 13, no. 3 (2007): 293-312.

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin Giguere, Richard N. Lalonde, and Evelina Lou, "Living at the Crossroads of Cultural Worlds: The Experience of Normative Conflicts by Second Generation Youths," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4, no. 1 (2010): 14-29.

expressed.<sup>23</sup> The perception of isolation may lead some to further embrace religion as a way of dealing with their situation.<sup>24</sup>

Second and third generation Muslim diaspora face greater challenges when trying to establish their own identity. They are exposed to the cultural and social views of their adopted homeland, while being raised by their family who may have a more traditional view of Islam.<sup>25</sup> This may precede a struggle to assimilate in their new homeland or take a different view of their religion. The effects of globalization can further exasperate this. The accessibility of social and global media enables diaspora to stay relevant with current affairs back home. Given the number of conflicts in the Middle East, some of which have U.S. involvement, an internal conflict can occur as they have ties with different parties involved. The internal conflict could initiate Dr. Borum's "it is not right" stage of radicalization. It is not plausible to accurately document the number of individuals who experience an identity crisis. Certainly, not everyone who does will become radicalized. Therefore, this is only one possible explanation or contributor to the process of radicalization.

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<sup>23</sup> Alex Wilner and Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz, "Homegrown Terrorism and Transformative Learning: An Interdisciplinary Approach To Understanding Radicalization," *Global Change, Peace and Security* 22, no. 1 (2010): 41.

<sup>24</sup> Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 5 (2004): 742.

<sup>25</sup> Dina Al Raffie, "Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora," *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 73.

### Socio-Economic Deprivation

The theory that extremists stem only from poor families or countries, have low-level occupations, and are poorly educated is untrue. While some extremists originate from impoverished environments, this is not a trait common to all. Polling conducted by Zogby International polling in 2001 and 2004 indicates the average Muslim in America earns \$7,000 more per year than the national average. American Muslims also have a higher percentage of advanced education, with 58 percent having a college education compared to 27 percent of the U.S. population as a whole.<sup>26</sup> The same is not true with Muslims in Europe, where immigrants have higher rates of unemployment, live in below average housing compared to non-immigrants, and are not allowed to fully assimilate their customs and religious preferences into their new country.<sup>27</sup> These conditions correlate with the perceived level of relative deprivation. Established U.S. Muslims have a higher standard of living when compared to the rest of the world. However, recent arrivals to the U.S. may struggle to become established. The U.S. government assists newcomers for three months through stipends and federal grant programs. Assistance through food stamps and charitable donations aid newcomers as they settle into U.S.

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<sup>26</sup> U.S. Census Bureau News, “High School Graduation Rates Reach All-Time High; Non-Hispanic White and Black Graduates at Record Levels,” June 29, 2004, accessed January 10, 2015, <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/education/001863.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Jocelyne Cesari, “Terrorism and the Muslim Diaspora in the United States,” *Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik* (2009): 69.

society.<sup>28</sup> The U.S. thus far has relatively few homegrown Muslim extremists in comparison to Europe.

### Social Interactions

Numerous studies relate to the radicalization process and the social interactions of individuals who commit terrorist acts. The NYPD study, Dr. Wiktorowicz, and Dr. Sageman establish socialization as potential factors in the radicalization process. While radicalization is an individual process, people who possess similar feelings or ideology can motivate one another to become further radicalized. In *Understanding Terror Networks*, Dr. Sageman contends that Muslim youth can become radicalized through relationships with friends, associates or other social networks. In *Radicalization and the Use of Social Media*, Dr. Robin Thompson stresses the importance of understanding social media and how its widespread reach is the ideal tool for extremists to spread their message.

### Political Grievances

According to Al-Lami, in *Studies of Radicalisation: State of the Field Report*, the Western world's foreign policy is an incentive for extremist actions. Europe suffers from their political actions more so than the U.S. In Alejandro J. Beutel's article *Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism in Western Muslim Communities: Lessons Learned for America*, he attributes the lack of assimilation by Muslims in Europe as a partial reason

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<sup>28</sup> Julie Zauzmer, "Syrian Refugees Settle in to U.S. after Unsettling Upheaval," *Washington Post*, January 3, 2015, accessed March 9, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/syrian-refugees-settle-in-to-us-after-unsettling-upheaval/2015/01/03/d558eb74-8a3d-11e4-8ff4-fb93129c9c8b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/syrian-refugees-settle-in-to-us-after-unsettling-upheaval/2015/01/03/d558eb74-8a3d-11e4-8ff4-fb93129c9c8b_story.html).

for this. In 2007, Dr. Jerrold Post and Dr. Gabriel Sheffer asserted experts regard France as having the least-integrated Muslim communities in Europe. As a possible correlation, France recently suffered from its worst terrorist attack at the hands of Islamic extremists.

### What Traits make a Population Vulnerable to Radicalization

Literature pertaining to the vulnerability of a population or diaspora to radicalization is scarcer than the individual radicalization process. In the article *Diasporas and Terrorism*, Dr. Gabriel Sheffer identifies common motivations for diasporas to support terrorism when seeking nationalist goals in their homeland. These motivations include expulsion from their country of origin, a struggle for independence or discrimination in the homeland, legal and political persecution in the homeland, and religious criticism. The important distinction to note is these motivations refer to diasporas seeking some form of change in their homeland, not solely pursuing a religious objective, as is the case with Islamic extremism. An example of diasporas supporting terrorist activities in their homeland is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which existed in Sri Lanka until their defeat in 2009. The stated goal of the organization was to create an independent state for the Tamil people.

In a 2007 joint conference on *The Radicalization of Diasporas and Terrorism* by the RAND Corporation and the Center for Security Studies, Dr. Jocelyne Cesari identifies two ways to view the terrorist threat in the U.S. from Muslim diaspora. The first is sleeper cells that have already radicalized and are simply waiting to carry out an attack. The second is a “hit squad,” or individuals entering the U.S. with a predesignated target.

The issue perceived in Dr. Cesari's viewpoint is the focus on methods utilized by previously radicalized diaspora vice identifying potential vulnerabilities of the diaspora.

### Summary

The potential radicalization process an individual progresses through has been systematically reviewed. There is a limited quantity of research identified that analyzes the potential vulnerable segments of diasporas to radicalize or conduct terrorist attacks against their adopted homeland. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge by the identification or dismissal of contributing factors of Islamic extremism that reside across selected diasporas. In the following chapter, I will discuss the methodology utilized in this study to determine if Muslim diaspora in the U.S. are vulnerable to Islamic extremism.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 explains how the literature analyzed in the previous chapter is used to determine if Muslim diaspora in the U.S. are vulnerable to Islamic extremists. A qualitative research approach is applied utilizing comparative case study methodology. This will enable the researcher to formulate a probabilistic answer to the primary research question.

According to John Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, qualitative research is used when the researcher is studying a group or population and needs to understand the circumstances surrounding why the subjects conducted their actions. Qualitative research is conducted because the researcher needs a detailed understanding of a complex issue, vice a broad and narrow comprehension of the subject. Qualitative research requires time and resources to adequately obtain the perspective required to understand the results.

In *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, Ellen Taylor-Powell and Marcus Renner identify three steps for understanding and examining narrative data. The steps are; knowing the data, focusing the analysis, and categorizing the information. The researcher can then proceed to identify meaning and importance of the data to the research question.<sup>29</sup>

John Creswell defines case study research as a qualitative approach where the researcher “explores a case or cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection

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<sup>29</sup> Ellen Talyor-Powell and Marcus Renner, *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, Program Development and Evaluation, 2003, 2, accessed January 31, 2015, <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/g3658-12.pdf>.

involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case-based themes.”<sup>30</sup> A comparative case study, as used, centers on a single issue investigated across multiple case studies to show different contributors and perspectives to the subject matter. A weakness to the comparative case study methodology is the researcher must select his own cases, thus introducing the potential for bias or tendency to support preconceived notions. Analyzing multiple case studies can reduce the depth of the analysis, since the researcher may dedicate less energy toward each case in a time-constrained environment. Conversely, the advantage of a comparative case study methodology is the potential for a more thorough understanding of the topic, data is drawn from multiple sources, and an extensive range of factors can be analyzed.

#### Selection Criteria and Explanation

Due to the lack of current studies identified in the previous chapter that directly address the primary research question, a probabilistic answer will be formulated by identifying factors occurring in the homelands of diaspora who have recently conducted or attempted to conduct terrorist attacks in the U.S. Credibility is provided to the selection criteria by using factors identified from the individual radicalization process obtained by various authors and sources. The literature indicates radicalization is a personal choice and appears influenced by social and political elements. The factors chosen therefore relate to the social and political atmospheres in the diasporas homeland. The following paragraphs will define each factor and provide an explanation for its selection.

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<sup>30</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 73.

### Type of Government

The type of government in a diaspora's homeland can have drastic effects on the lives of its citizens. Some governments restrict the economic stature or social affiliations allowed by its citizens. These restrictions effectively oppress individuals and foster an environment wherein people actively search for methods of reprisal. Therefore, the government may contribute to the radicalization factors examined in the literature. Governments are listed as either autocratic or democratic.

### Armed Conflict

International humanitarian law identifies two types of armed conflicts: international and non-international. This thesis considers both types in the research. Al-Lami, in *Studies of Radicalisation: State of the Field Report*, identified the Western world's foreign policy as an incentive for extremist actions. The NYPD study referenced in chapter two described a political frame in the radicalization process in which current events are viewed as a war on Islam. While a variety of reasons may cause a political grievance, armed conflict is a criterion due to its ability to affect large groups of people either directly or indirectly.

### Overt U.S. Involvement

Overt U.S. involvement is the political, military, or economic action publicly taken by the U.S. in the diaspora's homeland to protect U.S. interests. U.S. involvement is subject to misinterpretation as imperialism, arrogance, or a war against Islam. Islamic extremists exploit these erroneous beliefs as justification for retaliation. This factor is selected to identify potential grievances toward the U.S. This will be further analyzed to

determine if direct or indirect U.S. involvement is present. If identified, the involvement is categorized by the type of involvement observed.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is “the percentage of the total labor force that is unemployed but actively seeking employment and willing to work.”<sup>31</sup> The inability to work and provide for one’s family or obtain desired material possessions endangers individuals to potentially compromise established standards or beliefs in pursuit of economic gain. This condition exposes a vulnerability Islamic extremists utilize to their advantage. The unemployment rate assesses the overall economic deprivation and potential vulnerability in the diaspora’s homeland. The rate is recorded as a percentage and rounded to one decimal point.

### Broken Family

The Oxford dictionary defines broken family as “a family in which the parents are divorced or separated.”<sup>32</sup> This factor is selected because of the findings of the NYPD report and Dr. Sageman’s research in which mainly young males carried out extremist attacks. Young males typically look toward their father as a male role model. The lack of this male role model could contribute to young men becoming more vulnerable to radicalization. Because Muslim countries do not openly share their divorce rates, the information recorded is for the specific individuals in the case studies.

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<sup>31</sup> Investopedia, “Unemployment Rate,” accessed January 31, 2015, <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/u/unemploymentrate.asp>.

<sup>32</sup> Oxford Dictionaries, “broken family,” accessed February 1, 2015, [http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/broken-home](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/broken-home).

### Known Terrorist Organizations

Lists of known terrorist organizations from U.S. and host nation government agencies will be used to identify terrorist organizations in the diaspora's homeland. Diaspora generally maintain an interest and social acquaintances with their homeland. This factor identifies a possible correlation between members of a diaspora who have carried out an attack in the U.S. and known terrorist organizations in the diaspora's homeland.

### Religious Criticism

Religious criticism is the mistreatment of a group of people because of their chosen religious beliefs. Dr. Sheffer identifies this as a potential contributor to terrorism in diaspora in the article *Diasporas and Terrorism*. Dr. Wiktorowicz's also integrates religion into his model of radicalization. Only the presence of religious criticism by internal sources in the diaspora's homeland will be recorded.

### Selected Case Studies

The next step in the methodology is to analyze the selected factors against known cases of terrorism conducted or planned against U.S. citizens or infrastructure by members of Muslim diaspora. In the selection of these case studies, priority went to recent events, with the oldest case study occurring in 2010. Each case study selected was perpetrated by an individual or individuals belonging to a separate diaspora. The information pertaining to each case study originates from multiple sources to include but not limited to trial documents, news articles, and government sources.

Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, more commonly referred to as the “Boston Bombers” detonated explosive devices near the finish line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013. The attack resulted in the most casualties in the U.S. by a terrorist attack since 9/11. The two brothers were half Chechen and half Avar, an ethnic group in the Caucasus. They were both born in Kyrgyzstan prior to living briefly in Dagestan and relocating to the U.S. The country of Kyrgyzstan is analyzed in this case study, as they were officially citizens of Kyrgyzstan. Tamerlan was killed in a police chase following the bombing. Dzhokhar was found guilty in April 2015 and is currently awaiting sentencing.

Faisal Shahzad was apprehended by law enforcement for a failed car bombing in New York’s Time Square on May 01, 2010. Faisal was born in Pakistan and lived in the U.S. since 1997. He pleaded guilty to the charges in June 2010 and is currently serving a life sentence.

Amine El Khalifi is a native-born Moroccan who moved to the U.S. when he was 16. The FBI arrested El Khalifi in 2012 for attempting to conduct a suicide bomb attack against the U.S. Capital Building. Amine lived in the U.S. for 13 years prior to the attempted attack. He pleaded guilty in a court of law and is currently serving a 30 year sentence.

The final case study selected is Mohamed Osman Mohamud. Mohamed was born in Somalia and moved to the U.S. as a boy. In 2013, Mohamed was found guilty of attempting to detonate a car bomb in Portland, Oregon. Approximately 10,000 people were present at the venue where Mohamed attempted to carry out his attack. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

The chart below displays the various factors utilized in chapter 4 of the thesis.

Table 1. Table for Recording Factors Identified in Case Studies

Factors Analyzed in Homeland of Selected Case Studies	Tsarnaev Brothers (Kyrgyzstan)	Faisal Shahzad (Pakistan)	Amine El Khalifi (Morocco)	Mohamed Osman Mohamud (Somalia)
Type of Government				
Armed Conflict				
Overt U.S. Involvement				
Unemployment Rate				
Broken Family				
Known Terrorists Organizations				
Religious Criticism				

*Source:* Created by author.

### Summary

Chapter 3 explained the methodology used to analyze various factors occurring in the homeland of individuals who either conducted or planned to conduct a terrorist attack on the U.S. The research will focus on analyzing these factors during the perceived time the individual was progressing through the radicalization process. The results of this research will be used to form a probabilistic answer to the primary research question.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the possible motives of radicalization and the current political and social factors occurring in the homeland of the selected case studies. By doing so, the factors identified in chapter three will be examined to identify commonalities across the case studies. The analysis will enable a probabilistic answer to the primary research question.

#### Case Study of Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev

The Tsarnaev brothers are of Chechen ethnicity and were born in Kyrgyzstan, Tamerlan in 1986 and Dzhokhar in 1993. In 1999, their father, Anzor Tsarnaev, moved his family to Dagestan after he lost his job as a prosecutor in the Kyrgyz government.<sup>33</sup> The family would stay in Dagestan until 2002, when Anzor, his wife Zubeidat, and Dzhokhar moved to the United States. Tamerlan would remain in Dagestan with his two younger sisters until 2003. The family reunited in Cambridge, Massachusetts in July 2003 when they obtained political asylum.<sup>34</sup>

The two brothers had very different experiences in America. Dzhokhar, being eight years old when he arrived to America, readily adapted to his new environment. He attended third grade at Cambridgeport School. His academics and grasp of the English

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<sup>33</sup> Janet Reitman, "Jahar's World," *Rolling Stones*, July 17, 2013, accessed April 8, 2015, <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/jahars-world-20130717>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

language improved so much that he skipped the fourth grade.<sup>35</sup> He attended Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, where he had numerous friends and became the captain of the wrestling team. He graduated high school in 2011 and received a \$2,500 scholarship from the City of Cambridge, which he applied toward the pursuit of a nursing degree at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.<sup>36</sup> He became a U.S. citizen on September 11, 2012.

Tamerlan was an average student and graduated from Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School in 2006. He briefly attended two local community colleges following high school, but performed poorly and decided to focus on his boxing career. In 2009, Tamerlan's successful boxing career and dreams of representing the U.S. in the Olympics abruptly ended because of a change in regulations no longer allowing non-U.S. citizens to represent the country in the Olympics. Shortly thereafter, his father became unable to provide for the family with his auto repair business, due to health issues, and the family relied on food stamps and other government assistance.

Tamerlan married Katherine Russell in June 2010, which caused a rift between himself and his father. Katherine grew up as a catholic and was not of Chechen ethnicity but converted to Islam prior to their marriage. They had one daughter, and Katherine was

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<sup>35</sup> Sally Jacobs, David Filpov, and Patricia Wen, "Tamerlan's Dreams in Shards, the Voices Inside Grew Louder," *Boston Globe*, December 15, 2013, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/Page/Boston/2011-2020/WebGraphics/Metro/BostonGlobe.com/2013/12/15tsarnaev/tsarnaev.html>.

<sup>36</sup> CBS News, "Dzhokhar and Tamerlan: A Profile of the Tsarnaev Brothers," April 23, 2013, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/dzhokhar-and-tamerlan-a-profile-of-the-tsarnaev-brothers/>.

the sole provider for the family. She worked upwards of 80 hours per week while Tamerlan stayed at home with their daughter.

Both Tamerlan and Dzhokhar were frequent users of alcohol and marijuana, which did not sit well with their mother. She encouraged them to become more devout Muslims and she became more conservative herself, wearing looser fitting dark clothes and the traditional hijab.<sup>37</sup> However, Anzor was more moderate in his religious beliefs and this caused tension between him and his wife. They divorced in 2011 and Anzor returned to Dagestan. Tamerlan and Zubeidat's devout religious beliefs were allegedly the main factor behind the divorce as Anzor was not involved in religious activities.<sup>38</sup>

In March 2011, the Russian Federal Security Service contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation with concerns over Tamerlan and Zubeidat. The Russians believed Tamerlan and his mother were supporters of radical Islam. They also indicated that Tamerlan was preparing to join Islamic extremists groups in Dagestan and Chechnya.<sup>39</sup> The Federal Bureau of Investigation interviewed Tamerlan but found no links to terrorism. Subsequently, Tamerlan traveled to Dagestan in January 2012, where he stayed until July 2012. The details of his trip to Dagestan are still under investigation by authorities, but Tamerlan likely became increasingly radicalized during this period. While Tamerlan was away, his mother was arrested and charged in June 2012 for

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<sup>37</sup> Jacobs, Filpov, and Wen.

<sup>38</sup> Reitman.

<sup>39</sup> Susan Zalkind, "FBI Admits It Missed Opportunities to Stop Tamerlan Tsarnaev," *Boston Magazine*, April 11, 2014, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/blog/2014/04/11/fbi-admits-missed-opportunities-stop-tamerlan-tsarnaev/>.

shoplifting designer dresses from a department store. She subsequently skipped bail and returned to Dagestan, leaving Tamerlan and Dzhokhar in the U.S. with their two sisters.

After Tamerlan's return to the U.S., he openly displayed radical behavior. He created a YouTube page with links to an Islamist militant group in the Caucasus. He disrupted services at the Islamic Society of Boston Cambridge mosque on separate occasions, arguing with religious leaders over the appropriateness of Muslims celebrating U.S. holidays and the civil rights work of Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>40</sup>

Although Dzhokhar had not displayed radical behavior before this point, it appears he gravitated more toward his brother once his parents returned to Dagestan. In February 2013, the two brothers began preparations for their upcoming terrorist attack. Tamerlan purchased two large firework tubes from a pyrotechnics company in New Hampshire for \$199. The fireworks contained a total of three pounds of black powder, roughly the amount needed to build one of the two pressure cooker bombs they would later detonate.<sup>41</sup> That same month, Dzhokhar downloaded an issue of *Inspire* magazine that provided instructions on assembling a pressure cooker bomb.

The two brothers assembled the bombs in Tamerlan's apartment and originally planned to detonate them on July 4, 2013. However, the bombs were assembled quicker

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<sup>40</sup> CNN Staff, "Timeline: A look at Tamerlan Tsarnaev's Past," April 22, 2013, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/21/us/tamerlan-tsarnaev-timeline/>.

<sup>41</sup> Chelsia R. Marcus, "Boston Marathon Bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev Bought Three Pounds of Black Powder from N.H. Fireworks Store," *Daily News*, April 24, 2013, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/tamerlan-bought-bombs-article-1.1325504>.

than expected, resulting in the two brothers moving up the date of their attack. The Boston marathon was selected as the target just a few days before the race.<sup>42</sup>

The two bombs detonated near the finish line of the Boston marathon at approximately 2:50 p.m. on April 15, 2013. The bombs killed three and injured over 260 people. The two brothers would evade capture until April 19th, when Tamerlan died in a brief shoot-out with police and Dzhokhar was captured while hiding inside a boat at a private residence. Prior to his capture, Dzhokhar wrote a message inside the boat, which prosecutors utilized as a written confession during his trial. The note referenced the U.S. government killing Muslims and how he could not allow that to go unpunished.<sup>43</sup> A federal jury found him guilty on April 8, 2015 and he is currently awaiting sentencing.

#### Analysis of Factors Occurring in Kyrgyzstan

From the analysis of Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's case study, it appears their radicalization began during 2010, after Tamerlan's dream of being an Olympic boxer were dashed. The below information analyzed on Kyrgyzstan is from 2010 through April 2013.

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<sup>42</sup> Steve Almasy, "Sources: Boston Bombs Built in Older Tsarnaev's Home, First Target was July 4," *CNN*, May 3, 2013, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/02/us/boston-attack/>.

<sup>43</sup> Eric Levenson, "Here's the Note Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Wrote Inside the Boat Where He Was Captured," *Boston.com*, March 10, 2015, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2015/03/10/here-the-not-dzhokhar-tsarnaev-wrote-inside-the-boat-where-was-captured/h7xFrSTXKT6L4Euc8N5bEN/story.html>.

## Type of Government

The spring of 2010 was marked by political instability in Kyrgyzstan. The president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, was removed from power due to perceived prejudice, corruption, and excessive power. An interim government was established with Roza Otunbayeva, a key leader in the revolution that ousted Bakiyev, serving as the president. Parliamentary elections occurred in October 2010 and presidential elections occurred the following year. These elections allowed Kyrgyzstan to become the first parliamentary democracy in the region.<sup>44</sup> In August 2012, instability continued to plague the government as the majority coalition in the parliament, consisting of four separate parties, was disbanded.

## Armed Conflict

In 2010, armed conflict broke out between ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan. Many speculations exist on the cause of the conflict, ranging from a political agenda to remove president Bakiyev to the reemergence of hostilities from the 1990 conflict over territorial disputes between the two ethnic groups. The conflict resulted in the deaths of an estimated 500 to 2,000 people and caused widespread destruction of homes and businesses.<sup>45</sup> Tensions between the ethnic groups continued to exist following

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<sup>44</sup> European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, "Kyrgystan," accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/kyrgyzstan>.

<sup>45</sup> Igor Rotar, "Situation in Southern Kyrgyzstan Continues to Smolder Two Years Since Ethnic Riots," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, June 18, 2012, accessed April 18, 2015, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=39507#.VTL6xhstHug](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39507#.VTL6xhstHug).

the hostilities, with numerous volunteer and non-government organizations involved in reconciliation efforts.

### Overt U.S. Involvement

The U.S. was not involved with the 2010 conflict between the Uzbeks and the Kyrgyz. However, the U.S. operated a large airfield at Manas, Kyrgyzstan since the onset of the war in Afghanistan. The airfield served as the primary hub for moving personnel and equipment into the Afghanistan theater, and was a point of contention with the local populace. Kyrgyzstan officials attempted to close the base in 2009, but agreed to extend U.S. operations during contract negotiations. The Kyrgyzstan parliament voted in 2013 to close the airbase and the U.S. subsequently left the facility in 2014.<sup>46</sup> The Tsarnaev brothers did not make any specific mention to U.S. operations in their homeland. However, U.S. involvement in southeast Asia contributed to their desire to conduct a terrorist attack. The note Dzhokhar wrote inside of the boat prior to his capture makes reference to the U.S. government killing innocent Muslims and the need for retaliation against the U.S.

### Unemployment Rate

The Kyrgyzstan unemployment rate was approximately 10.0 percent in 2010, down from a high of 18.0 percent in 2004.<sup>47</sup> While income was not specifically identified

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<sup>46</sup> Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Military to Leave Kyrgyzstan," *Wall Street Journal*, October 18, 2013, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304864504579143984176263364>.

<sup>47</sup> Index Mundi, "Unemployment Rate," January 1, 2011, accessed April 18, 2015, <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=kg&v=74>.

as a motivational factor in the Boston marathon bombing, the Tsarnaev family struggled financially. Both Anzor and Zubeidat worked jobs to support their family. After Anzor fell ill and lost the ability to work, the family relied upon government assistance. Tamerlan's wife supported him and their daughter by working numerous hours per week. The financial struggles likely served to further aggravate other grievances against the U.S.

### Broken Family

Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's parents divorced in 2011. Shortly thereafter, both parents would return to Dagestan. Both brothers were close to their mother, who was the primary religious influence in their lives.

### Known Terrorist Organizations

The ethnic clash in 2010 resulted in an onset of terrorist related incidents that would continue into 2011. The Hizb ut-Tahrir terrorist organization, also known as the Islamic Liberation Party, increased its operations inside the country because of the conflict. The discontent among the Uzbek population made them a target for Hizb ut-Tahrir recruitment.<sup>48</sup>

The influential terrorist groups in Tamerlan's life were those more closely involved in Chechnya and Dagestan. After returning from Dagestan in 2012, he posted links to the Abu Dujana terrorist group. The group was a small, secretive terrorist

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<sup>48</sup> Jacob Zenn, "Islamic Movement Grows Stronger in Kyrgyzstan," Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, January 23, 2013, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://old.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5912>.

organization that operated out of Dagestan. His awareness and following of this little known group hints to some level of interaction on his part.

### Religious Criticism

Approximately 75 percent of the population in Kyrgyzstan are Muslim and 20 percent are Christian. The government of Kyrgyzstan enacted strict regulations on religious organizations in 2008 that continued through the time of the Boston marathon bombing. The regulations required religious groups to have a minimum of 200 adult members before they could be registered and legalized by the government. Additionally, it restricted the venues where religious material could be distributed and the material had to be screened by the government.<sup>49</sup> The government argued the law did not restrict religious freedom, but was merely an attempt to prevent radical religious groups from becoming established. Kanibek Osmonaliyev, the head of the Kyrgyzstan government's commission on religion, believed the regulations would prevent future attacks by Hizb ut-Tahir and other militant organizations. In summary, Kyrgyzstan prevented religious activity not approved by the government.

### Summary

Tamerlan Tsarnaev's radicalization displays characteristics of Dr. Borum's and Dr. Wiktorowicz's models discussed in chapter 2. Tamerlan's abrupt end to his boxing dream due to his citizenship status appears to be the catalyst for his actions. The social deprivation he experienced and the urging of his mother resulted in him becoming more

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<sup>49</sup> Eurasianet.org, "Kyrgyzstan: Human Rights Activists Condemn New Religion Law," January 15, 2009, accessed April 19, 2015, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav011609c.shtml>.

religious. The devout Muslim beliefs expressed by Tamerlan and his mother contributed greatly to the divorce of his parents, which further exacerbated his internal struggles. He openly displayed extremist behavior following his six-month trip to Dagestan and posted links to videos of terrorist organizations. He aligned his beliefs with radical Islamic organizations and seemingly convinced Dzhokhar to do the same. The note written by Dzhokhar inside the boat on the night of his capture indicated they blamed the U.S. for the deaths of innocent Muslims around the world and sought retaliation through their terrorist plot.

The primary contributor from their host nation is more difficult to discern. It likely stems from the prejudice acts committed against ethnic Chechens, such as the removal of their father from his government job that forced the family to relocate to Dagestan. This inequality was permanently rooted in Tamerlan's mind and his inability to pursue his dream of being an Olympic boxer because of his citizenship stimulated a response to his perceived discrimination.

#### Case Study of Faisal Shahzad

Faisal Shahzad was born on June 30, 1979 in Karachi, Pakistan. The son of a successful retired Pakistani air force pilot, he lived in three Pakistani cities during his childhood: Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Mohib Banda. Although unknown if his parents are still married, it is presumed they are since according to a friend, Faisal asked his father for permission to go fight in Afghanistan. His father disapproved of the request and told

his son “Islam doesn’t allow a man to abandon his wife or children.”<sup>50</sup> Rehman Malid, the Pakistani Interior Minister, stated Faisal was not from a radical or illiterate family.<sup>51</sup> However, his family had lived in Peshawar, which was the site of frequent terrorist attacks from the Taliban.

Faisal arrived in the United States in 2000 where he attended the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut and graduated with a Master’s in Business Administration. In 2004, he married Huma Mian in Pakistan and eventually had two children. Born in Colorado, Huma often traveled to Pakistan for summer vacations and had lived in Qatar with her family for an undetermined period.<sup>52</sup>

Shortly after getting married, Faisal and his wife bought a new house in Shelton, Connecticut for \$273,000. Faisal obtained an H-1 visa and worked as an account analyst for Elizabeth Arden, a cosmetic company, for approximately five years and as a financial analyst for Affinion Group, a marketing company, for an additional three years.<sup>53</sup> There is no record of his wife working while they owned the house. According to a New York

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<sup>50</sup> James Barron and Sabrina Tavernise, “Money Woes, Long Silences and a Zeal for Islam,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2010, accessed March 9, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/06/nyregion/06profile.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/06/nyregion/06profile.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>51</sup> Kamran Haider, “Faisal Shahzad Background Gave No Hint Of Radicalism,” *San Francisco Sentinel*, May 4, 2010, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.sanfrancisco-sentinel.com/?p=71897>.

<sup>52</sup> Barron and Tavernise.

<sup>53</sup> *United States of America v. Faisal Shahzad*, 10-CR-541 (United States District Court Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010).

Times article, a neighbor commented that she was surprised they could afford the house on Faisal's income.<sup>54</sup>

Faisal and his wife began to have financial trouble in 2008. A former Bridgeport University classmate commented that Faisal had "become more introverted and he became more opinionated on things while having a stronger religious identity."<sup>55</sup> The house was eventually foreclosed and repossessed.

Faisal became an U.S. citizen in 2009 and shortly thereafter traveled to Peshawar, Pakistan where he stayed with his parents for six months prior to traveling to Waziristan to meet the Taliban. He was in Waziristan, Pakistan from December 9, 2009 through January 25, 2010 where he received bomb training from the Taliban for five of those days. Faisal asked the Taliban for cash before he left Pakistan because he only had \$4,500.00.<sup>56</sup>

Upon returning to the U.S., Faisal acquired the necessary items to build three bombs from February 2, 2010 through the end of April 2010. He built a fertilizer bomb, which was placed in a gun cabinet inside the trunk of a Nissan Pathfinder, the secondary bomb was a gas cylinder, and the final bomb was a gas bomb designed as a tertiary measure to create a fire in the vehicle, should the other two fail to detonate. He built all three bombs by himself at his residence and drove them to New York City. At approximately 6:00 p.m. on May 1, 2010, he drove the vehicle to Times Square where he

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<sup>54</sup> Barron and Tavernise.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> *United States of America v. Faisal Shahzad*, 10-CR-541 (United States District Court Southern District of New York, June 21, 2010).

attempted to detonate them, but for reasons unknown to Faisal, none of the bombs detonated. He left the car at Times Square and walked to Grand Central station where he took the train back to Bridgeport. His stated intentions were to damage the buildings in the area and injure or kill people.<sup>57</sup>

After a few days in Bridgeport, Faisal realized authorities were closing in. He attempted to catch a flight from John F. Kennedy International Airport and return to Pakistan. He was arrested on the plane before it departed.

According to court documents, Faisal considered himself a Muslim soldier. Faisal stated he was “part of the answer to the U.S. terrorizing the Muslim nations and the Muslim people, and on behalf of that, I’m avenging the attacks, because only—like living in U.S., the Americans only care about their people, but they don’t care about the people elsewhere in the world when they die.”<sup>58</sup>

Faisal pled guilty in the Southern District of New York Court for attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction. He stated, “I want to plead guilty and I’m going to plead guilty a hundred times forward because until the hour the U.S. pulls it forces from Iraq and Afghanistan and stops the drone strikes in Somalia and Yemen and in Pakistan and stops the occupation of Muslim lands and stops killing the Muslims and stops reporting the Muslims to its government, we will be attacking U.S., and I plead guilty to that.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

### Analysis of Factors Occurring in Pakistan

From the analysis of Faisal Shahzad's case study, it appears his radicalization occurred during 2008 to 2010. Therefore, the below information gathered on Pakistan is from the same period.

#### Type of Government

The government in Pakistan from 2008 to 2010 is the same as it is today, a federal republic. However, Pakistan has struggled in maintaining an elected government and has alternated between a federal republic and an authoritarian government throughout its existence. In March 2008, the two ruling powers in Pakistan, the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League Party, formed a coalition government with the newly elected Prime Minister, Yusuf Raza Gilani.<sup>60</sup> The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in Kampala restored Pakistan into the council of the Commonwealth on May 12, 2008 after the government of Pakistan took the necessary steps to be reinstated.<sup>61</sup>

Corruption was a widespread problem within all levels of government in Pakistan. In 2008, Pakistan scored a 2.5 on the corruption perceptions index, which ranks countries on the perceived levels of corruption, with a score of zero being highly corrupt and a

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<sup>60</sup> Transparency International, "Overview of Corruption in Pakistan," *The Daily Journalist*, 2013, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://thedailyjournalist.com/theinvestigative/overview-of-corruption-in-pakistan/>.

<sup>61</sup> Commonwealth Network, "Withdrawals and Suspension," accessed March 12, 2015, [www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/commonwealth-membership/withdrawals-and-suspension/](http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/commonwealth/commonwealth-membership/withdrawals-and-suspension/).

score of 10 being no corruption, ranking 134 out of 180 countries.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, the government of Pakistan is listed as a democracy for purposes of this study.

### Armed Conflict

Armed conflict has existed within Pakistan for several decades. There were ongoing conflicts present in 2008 between the government security forces and militants in the North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. These conflicts predominately stem from the Pakistani government's general support to U.S. operations against terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and known safe havens inside Pakistan. In the southwest, the Baluchistan conflict continued between Baloch nationalists and the governments of Pakistan and Iran in their search of increased autonomy and incentives from natural resources.<sup>63</sup> Also ongoing was the Pakistani's support to the Kashmir insurgency in the disputed region between Pakistan and India.

### Overt U.S. Involvement

The most controversial involvement of the U.S. in Pakistan during Faisal's radicalization was the use of unmanned drone airstrikes into the tribal regions along the Pakistan and Afghanistan border. There were approximately two dozen drone strikes into

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<sup>62</sup> Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2011," 2015, accessed March 13, 2015, [http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi\\_2008/0/](http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2008/0/).

<sup>63</sup> Project Ploughshares, *Armed Conflicts Report*, February 25, 2014, accessed March 12, 2015, [http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/armed\\_conflict\\_report/Pakistan.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/eoir/vll/country/armed_conflict_report/Pakistan.pdf).

Pakistan during 2008.<sup>64</sup> Faisal specifically mentioned the drone strikes as a motivator for his actions during his court appearance in 2010.

#### Unemployment Rate

According to index mundi, a country profile website that obtains its data from the CIA world fact book, the Pakistani unemployment rate in 2008 was 6.2 percent, the same as it was in 2007 and 2009. There is no mention of Faisal's family suffering from financial issues. His father was retired from the Pakistani air force during the time of Faisal's radicalization. Faisal did receive money from the Taliban while in Pakistan, but it appears related to his travel expenses to return to the U.S.

#### Broken Family

Faisal's parents are presumed married during the period of his radicalization and subsequent planned attack. According to a friend, Faisal asked his father for permission to fight in Afghanistan. His father disapproved of the request and told his son "Islam doesn't allow a man to abandon his wife or children."<sup>65</sup>

#### Known Terrorists Organizations

According to the Department of State's foreign terrorist organizations, there were two known terror organizations operating in Pakistan in 2008, Al-Qaida and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan.<sup>66</sup> Although Tehrik-e Taliban did not obtain their listing as a terrorist

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Barron and Tavernise.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," accessed March 12, 2015, <http://m.state.gov/md123085.htm>.

organization until September 1, 2010, the referenced court documents from Faisal's case indicates that he trained with the organization and acknowledged their existence within Pakistan. Therefore, the author will refer to them as such. Osama bin Laden founded Al-Qaida in the late 1980s and they maintained a consistent presence in Pakistan. The occurrence of terrorist attacks within Pakistan has grown significantly during the 21st century. In 2003, there were 164 reported casualties from terrorist attacks compared to 3,318 in 2009.<sup>67</sup>

### Religious Criticism

The Pakistani constitution defines Islam as the official religion of the country. It also declares that other religions shall be able to practice their faiths freely. However, it appears to be acceptable to criticize and hinder some minority religions. There are laws in place to limit free speech for the protection of Islam. It is illegal to defile Islam or its prophets or damage a Koran in any manner. The Ahmadis, which share many beliefs with Sunni Islam, are specifically denounced from being referred to as Muslims. They also cannot hold public gatherings to support their faith. The government funds Muslims trips to conduct the Hajj, but no other funding exists to support minority religious activities.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Peace Kashmir, "Growing Terrorism in Pakistan," 2012, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.peacekashmir.org/views-articles/2012/1216-growing-terrorism-in-pakistan.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> Department of State, *Pakistan: International Religious Freedom Report*, September 19, 2008, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108505.htm>.

## Summary

Faisal Shahzad's radicalization most closely resembles the model proposed by Dr. Quintan Wiktorowicz. A personal financial crisis, which resulted in the repossession of his house, appears to have initiated Faisal's cognitive opening. After this incident, he began to take a more active religious stance. He began to view the world through the lens of extremists groups; believing the U.S. was at war with Muslim countries and their people. He blamed the U.S. for conducting a war on Muslims and believed it was his duty as a mujideen to stop the U.S. Finally, he socialized with the Tehrik-e Taliban in Pakistan and actively sought them out for explosives training while in Pakistan.

The terrorist organizations within Pakistan simplified the process for Faisal to obtain the training needed to conduct his attack since he frequently returned to visit his family. The most prominent factors identified in Pakistan which contributed to Faisal attempting a terrorist attack against the U.S. was overt U.S. involvement in Pakistan with drone strikes and the relative ease that Faisal was able to obtain training from known terrorist organizations in the region.

### Case Study of Amine El Khalifi

Amine El Khalifi was born in Morocco in 1983. He came to Orlando, Florida for a family vacation with his parents in June 1999 on a B-2 tourist visa that expired the same year. While it is unclear why his parents returned to Morocco and El Khalifi remained behind, he stayed in the U.S. illegally for the next 12 years.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> CBS Washington, "United States of America v. Amine El Khalifi," February 17, 2012, accessed March 17, 2015, [https://cbswashington.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/khalifi\\_court\\_documents.pdf](https://cbswashington.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/khalifi_court_documents.pdf).

He eventually moved from Kissimmee, Florida to Virginia, where he worked low-level jobs as a cook, busboy, and salesman.<sup>70</sup> While living in the D.C. area he worked in retail and became known on the local club scene for the music he produced. During his time in the D.C. club scene, he obtained a marijuana charge in 2007 and a misdemeanor assault charge after an argument in a club.<sup>71</sup> The charges greatly affected him and he began following his mother's advice to live according to the Quran.<sup>72</sup> He subsequently taught himself radical interpretations of Islam and found propaganda on the internet that solidified his extreme views. El Khalifi became remorseful over the lifestyle he had lived and saw terrorism as a way of removing his past sins.<sup>73</sup> His comments on social media drew the attention of a friend, which informed the FBI and initiated the undercover investigation against El Khalifi.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Del Quentin Wilber, "Inside an FBI Anti-Terrorist Sting Operation," *Washington Post*, November 25, 2012, accessed March 16, 2015, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/inside-an-fbi-anti-terrorist-sting-operation/2012/11/25/0838eee0-2f55-11e2-a30e-5ca76eeec857\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/inside-an-fbi-anti-terrorist-sting-operation/2012/11/25/0838eee0-2f55-11e2-a30e-5ca76eeec857_story.html).

<sup>71</sup> Matthew Barakat, "Capitol Bomb Plot Suspect Amine El-Khalifi Promised 'Martyrdom Payments,' Court Papers Say," *Huffington Post*, September 11, 2012, accessed March 16, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/10/amine-el-khalifi-bomb\\_n\\_1871971.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/10/amine-el-khalifi-bomb_n_1871971.html).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> The Associated Press, "Amine El-Khalifi Sentenced to 30 years in Capitol Bomb Plot," *Daily News*, September 14, 2012, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/amine-el-khalifi-sentenced-30-years-capitol-bomb-plot-article-1.1159847>.

<sup>74</sup> U.S. Attorney's Office, "Virginia Man Sentenced to 30 Years in Prison for Plot to Carry Out Suicide Bomb Attack on U.S. Capitol," September 14, 2012, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2012/virginia-man-sentenced-to-30-years-in-prison-for-plot-to-carry-out-suicide-bomb-attack-on-u.s.-capitol>.

In January 2011 at a residence in Arlington, Virginia El Khalifi met, and subsequently agreed, with a number of individuals who believed the U.S. war on terror was a war on Muslims. After a prolonged period of no recorded contact, the FBI would re-engage with El Khalifi in December 2011. While meeting with an undercover officer in Baltimore, Maryland El Khalifi expressed the desire to target a U.S. military building and personnel in Alexandria, Virginia. Specifically, he wanted to target an Army general and began researching where Army generals lived in the area.<sup>75</sup>

On December 22, 2011, El Khalifi conducted surveillance on a restaurant in Washington D.C. and revealed his plan to place a bomb in his jacket at the restaurant during lunch. On January 7, 2012, El Khalifi met a man he believed to be an Al-Qaida operative and discussed a plan for El Khalifi to detonate a bomb at the restaurant while other Al-Qaida operatives would target a military installation. El Khalifi agreed to purchase items for the attack on the military installation. He purchased these items the following day.<sup>76</sup>

On January 15, 2012, El Khalifi changed his desired attack venue from the restaurant to a martyrdom mission at the U.S. Capital Building in Washington, D.C. El Khalifi's parents were struggling financially after losing their store in Casablanca, which constituted their primary source of income. He believed it was his duty to take care of

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<sup>75</sup> CBS Washington, "United States of America v. Amine El Khalifi."

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

them.<sup>77</sup> He mandated a \$1,000 per month martyrdom payment be given to his parents after he committed the attack on the U.S. Capitol Building.<sup>78</sup>

That same day, El Khalifi provided the undercover law enforcement officer with the materials for the attack on the military installation and practiced detonating a device similar to the one he wished to utilize on the U.S. Capital Building. During this time, the Joint Terrorism Task Force concluded that El Khalifi was working alone, unaffiliated with any other terrorist organization, and was determined to move forward with the attack.<sup>79</sup>

On January 28, 2012, El Khalifi reconnoitered the U.S. Capitol Building. He also informed the undercover officer he declined to create a martyrdom video because he did not want people to know who blew up the U.S. Capitol Building. El Khalifi would later change his position, believing Al-Qaida leadership desired it and asked to be referred as “al-Maghrabi” in the video.<sup>80</sup>

While El Khalifi did not regularly attend any mosque in the area, he did pray at the mosque of Dar al-Hijrah on the morning of the attack. The mosque is known for having anti-American cleric Anwar Al-Awlaki as an imam in 2001. Additionally, Nidal

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Barakat, “Capitol Bomb Plot Suspect Amine El-Khalifi Promised ‘Martyrdom Payments,’ Court Papers Say.”

<sup>79</sup> John Miller, “Inside the Plans of Capitol Bomb Suspect,” *CBS News*, February 18, 2012, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/inside-the-plans-of-capitol-bomb-suspect/>.

<sup>80</sup> CBS Washington, “United States of America v. Amine El Khalifi.”

Hasan worshiped at the mosque that same year.<sup>81</sup> On February 17, 2012, El Khalifi entered a van driven by two undercover law enforcement officers. He received what he believed to be a functional suicide vest and MAC-10 automatic weapon and proceeded toward the U.S. Capitol Building. Officers arrested El Khalifi before he reached the building.<sup>82</sup> He was 29 years old at the time of the attempted attack. He is scheduled for release and deportation to Morocco in 2042, at which time he will be 59 years old.

#### Analysis of Factors Occurring in Morocco

From the analysis of Amine El Khalifi's case study, it appears his radicalization occurred during 2007 to 2011. Therefore, the below information gathered on Morocco is from the same period.

#### Type of Government

The constitution of Morocco establishes a monarchy with a democratically elected Parliament. The current king of Morocco is Mohammed VI, who assumed the role of King on July 23, 1999 after the death of his father, who was king of Morocco for 38 years. Morocco enacted a constitutional referendum on July 1, 2011, which ensured the party with the majority of parliament is able to select the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is able to appoint government officials and dissolve the parliament. The King

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<sup>81</sup> NBC Washington, "Falls Church Mosque Praises Would-Be Bomber's Arrest," February 19, 2012, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Falls-Church-Mosque-Praises-Would-Be-Bombers-Arrest-139634603.html>.

<sup>82</sup> CBS Washington, "United States of America v. Amine El Khalifi."

still holds absolute power in military, security, and religious affairs. In 2011, Morocco scored a 3.4 on the corruption perceptions index, ranking 80th out of 182 countries.<sup>83</sup>

#### Armed Conflict

Although the Arab spring of 2010 created protests and arguably led to the constitutional referendum of July 2011 to reduce some of the power held by the King, the events were largely calm compared to neighboring countries. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb established an insurgency in northwest Africa in 2002. While the group had training camps in Morocco during the period of El Khalifi's reported radicalization period, there were no conflicts between the group and Morocco security forces or other organizations that the author could identify.<sup>84</sup>

#### Overt U.S. Involvement

The U.S. and Morocco have a solid diplomatic relationship. Morocco and U.S. military forces conduct bilateral exercises on a yearly basis.<sup>85</sup> U.S. involvement is considered positive, with the only concerns identified by the author related to human rights and religious freedom.

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<sup>83</sup> Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2011."

<sup>84</sup> Camille Tawil, "Morocco's Stability in the Wake of the Arab Spring," Combat Terrorism Center, May 23, 2013, accessed March 13, 2015, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/moroccos-stability-in-the-wake-of-the-arab-spring>.

<sup>85</sup> Alexis Arieff, *Morocco: Current Issues* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, October 18, 2013), accessed March 13, 2015, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21579.pdf>.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Morocco in 2011 was 8.9 percent, which is the lowest rate it has been since 2006.<sup>86</sup> However, Faisal's family lost their business in Morocco. The unemployment of Faisal's parents during 2011 was a concern to him and was the decisive factor in him desiring to act as a martyr and procure monthly payments for his family.

### Broken Family

Khalifi's parents are presumed married during the time of his radicalization and planned attack. They were struggling financially after losing their store in Casablanca and Khalifi believed it was his duty to support them. His arranged for them to receive martyrdom payments after his death.

### Known Terrorist Organizations

The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group originated in the 1990s from Moroccan recruits who traveled to Afghanistan to train in Al-Qaida training camps. The goals of the organization were to assist its members in assimilating into Morocco and Western Europe. Most of their members were from Moroccan diaspora in Western Europe.<sup>87</sup> The group displayed the capability to conduct terrorist attacks in the 2003 Casablanca attack and the 2004 metro bombings in Spain. The organization was placed on the Department

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<sup>86</sup> Index Mundi, "Unemployment Rate," accessed March 14, 2015, <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=mo&v=74>.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations, Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1889 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities, December 14, 2009, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQDe089E.shtml>.

of State's Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations list on October 11, 2005 and delisted on May 28, 2013. According to the State Department, the group became inactive after being placed on the list and most of their leadership are in jail, awaiting trial, or deceased.

Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb is primarily based in Algeria and was placed on the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list on March 27, 2002. Members of the organization were captured in 2010 moving hundreds of pounds of cocaine through the region. The arrest alerted the Moroccan government of the network established throughout the country.<sup>88</sup> Despite the presence of known terrorist organizations in El Khalifi's home country, the Joint Terrorism Task Force concluded he was not receiving any outside support. He did, however, study extremist material he obtained via the internet.

#### Religious Criticism

The Morocco constitution allows its citizens to practice the religion of their choosing. However, Islam is the official religion of Morocco and the Moroccan Penal Code Law prohibits someone from converting a Muslim to a non-Muslim belief. Christians are the largest population affected by the law. In 2010, 150 Christians from 19 countries were removed from Morocco.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Global Post, "Morocco battles Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," November 2, 2010, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/morocco/101101/morocco-battles-al-qaeda-the-islamic-maghreb>.

<sup>89</sup> Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, November 17, 2010, accessed March 17, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148834.htm>.

## Summary

Amine El Khalifi's radicalization bears a resemblance to Faisal Shahzad's and the model proposed by Dr. Quintan Wiktorowicz. The motivation behind El Khalifi's attack appears to be deeply religious. Although an article found by the author indicated he was evicted from his residence in 2007, he was more concerned with wiping away his previous sins by acting as a martyr and taking care of his parents with the martyrdom payments. His arrest in 2007 served as his awakening moment, after which he developed and cultivated an extremist ideology through self-instruction. Extremist material he viewed on the internet reinforced his beliefs.

The primary contributor from his host nation appears to be the poor financial state of his parents. Although he initially wanted to carry out an attack against U.S. military, he became interested in conducting a suicide attack in order for his parents to receive a monthly martyrdom payment of \$1,000 for the rest of their lives. Without these payments, it is doubtful he would have further pursued the terrorist attack. Interestingly, El Khalifi lived in the U.S. without his parents for 12 years prior to the planned attack. The author could not find any reference to him attending college, obtaining a high school diploma, or returning to Morocco to visit his family during this time. Given the low paying jobs he performed and a presumed lack of higher education, it appears El Khalifi lacked the means to provide support to his family in Morocco and found martyrdom as the solution to erase his past sins and provide financial assistance to his struggling family.

### Case Study of Mohamed Osman Mohamud

Mohamud Osman Mohamud was a naturalized U.S. citizen who was born in 1991 to Osman and Mariam Barre in Mogadishu, Somalia. His parents led successful lives in

Somalia; his mother was a businesswoman and his father was a professor in computer engineering and fluent in five languages.<sup>90</sup> As the country turned into turmoil, his family traveled to Kenya where Mohamud and his mother became separated from his father in the Kenyan refugee camps. His father managed to become the sponsored guest of an Oregon church and moved to Portland in 1992. Intel hired him as an engineer in 1995 and he proceeded to bring his wife and Mohamud to live with him in the U.S.<sup>91</sup>

Mohamud appeared to have a normal teenage life. He attended Westview High School in Beaverton, Oregon and was interested in basketball, girls, and rap music.<sup>92</sup> He attended mosque at the Islamic Learning Center in Beaverton with several of his friends. However, Mohamud began to change during his sophomore year in high school. He took religion more seriously and portrayed an interest in the various qualities of martyrdom.<sup>93</sup> In his physics class he chose to describe the mechanics of an RPG, while his classmates chose simpler items such as a stapler. Later, while fighting over a locker with another

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<sup>90</sup> Terry Lynne, “Family of Portland’s Bomb Suspect, Mohamed Mohamud, fled chaos in Somalia for new life in America,” *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, December 4, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/12/suspect\\_in\\_portland\\_bomb\\_plot.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/12/suspect_in_portland_bomb_plot.html).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, Criminal Complaint and Affidavit. Clearing House, November 26, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, [http://media.oregonlive.com/portland\\_impact/other/USAFFIDAVIT.pdf](http://media.oregonlive.com/portland_impact/other/USAFFIDAVIT.pdf).

student, Mohamud stated he hated Americans. The perceived hatred toward Americans was serious enough for the student to report it to school officials.<sup>94</sup>

He graduated from high school in June 2009 and proceeded to take pre-engineering classes at Oregon State University. During that summer, Mohamud's parents divorced and his father soon remarried a woman from Minneapolis.<sup>95</sup> While in college, he was known as a partier who drank alcohol and smoked marijuana. His irresponsible behavior quickly landed him in trouble as a fellow student accused him of date rape in October 2009. Mohamud maintained his innocence and charges were eventually dropped after an investigation.<sup>96</sup>

Mohamud's behavior did not please his family. They became concerned over his radical rhetoric during this time and his father reported him to authorities in late 2009 or early 2010.<sup>97</sup> In May 2010, Mohamud was recorded in an Oregon State University dorm room making negative comments about westerners and their actions in Muslim countries. "You know what the whole West thing is? They want to insult our religion. They want to

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<sup>94</sup> Bob Drogin and April Choi, "Mixed Portraits of Oregon Terrorism Suspect," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/nov/29/nation/la-na-oregon-bomb-plot-20101129>.

<sup>95</sup> Lukas Alpert, "Neighbors say Wannabe Christmas Bomber Mohamed Mohamud Embraced Extremism after Parents Split," *Daily News*, November 28, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/neighbors-wannabe-christmas-bomber-mohamed-mohamud-embraced-extremism-parents-split-article-1.456308>.

<sup>96</sup> Allan Brettman, "State Police Investigated Mohamed Mohamud for Alleged Date Rape Last Year on Oregon State Campus," *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, November 29, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, [http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/11/state\\_police\\_investigate\\_moham.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/11/state_police_investigate_moham.html).

<sup>97</sup> Lynne.

take our lands. They want to rape our women while we're bowing down to them. This is what they want. This country and Europe and all those countries, that's all they want."<sup>98</sup>

Authorities believed Mohamud was corresponding with an Islamic extremist recruiter in Pakistan and contemplating traveling overseas to obtain training. The authorities proceeded to initiate contact with Mohamud and met with him from August through November 2010. During this time, Mohamud developed a plot to bomb the Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland, Oregon.<sup>99</sup> Mohamud believed he was not worthy of martyrdom after his college experiences, so he planned to travel overseas after his attack to continue operations.

In September 2010, undercover officers provided Mohamud money to purchase equipment to build a bomb. Having no experience or training with explosives, Mohamed purchased the required items and mailed them to an undercover officer who assembled the fake bomb, consisting of six 55-gallon drums, inside of a van. Mohamud was later recorded on November 4, 2010 stating, "did you think you could invade a Muslim land, and we would not invade you, but Allah will have soldiers scattered everywhere across the globe."<sup>100</sup>

On November 26, 2010, Mohamud drove the van to the Pioneer Courthouse Square where approximately 10,000 people were in attendance for the ceremony. After

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<sup>98</sup> Michael Stone, "Portland Bomber Mohamed Mohamud Caught on Angry Cell Phone Video Rant," *Examiner*, December 2, 2010, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.examiner.com/article/portland-bomber-mohamed-mohamud-caught-on-angry-cell-phone-video-rant>.

<sup>99</sup> United States of America v. Mohamed Osman Mohamud, Criminal Complaint and Affidavit.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

parking the van and departing the area, he tried to detonate the bomb with a cell phone and was arrested at Portland's Amtrak and Greyhound bus station. His arrest warrant stated he authored documents under a penname Ibn al-Mubarak for radical Islamic magazines *Jihadist Recollections* and *Inspire*. In one of the articles, he wrote about getting in shape to conduct violent jihad.

### Analysis of Factors Occurring in Somalia

From the analysis of Mohamed Osman Mohamud's case study, it appears his radicalization occurred during his sophomore year in high school in 2006 through his planned attack in 2010. Therefore, the below information gathered on Somalia is from the same period.

#### Type of Government

The government of Somalia was in a fledgling condition during 2006. The Council of Islamic Courts, a loose affiliation of 11 courts formed in 2000 that attempted to enforce rule across clan lines, had seized control of the capital of Mogadishu and the majority of southern Somalia.<sup>101</sup> The Ethiopian supported Transitional Federal Government regained control of the capital in December 2006 and the Council of Islamic Courts surrendered nine days later. However, Al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups retaliated against the Transitional Government and regained control of the majority of

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<sup>101</sup> Stanford University, "Mapping Militant Organizations," July 18, 2012, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/107>.

southern Somalia by the end of 2008.<sup>102</sup> They would control the capitol until August 2011.

#### Armed Conflict

Somalia has encountered persistent conflict since the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991.<sup>103</sup> These conflicts span from armed conflicts between warlords, Islamic extremists, and external sources. In December 2006, Ethiopian troops entered Somalia in support of the Transitional Federal Government to remove the Council of Islamic courts from Mogadishu and southern Somalia. However, Al-Shabaab continued to fight against the supporters of the Transitional Federal Government and reclaimed most of southern Somalia by the end of 2008.<sup>104</sup> In 2009, Al-Shabaab solidified itself as the preeminent extremist group in southern Somalia following the removal of their rival, Hizbul Islam, from the key port of Kismayo.

#### Overt U.S. Involvement

The African Union Mission in Somalia is a United Nations approved regional peacekeeping mission by the countries of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra

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<sup>102</sup> BBC News, "Somalia Profile–Overview," October 21, 2014, accessed March 30, 2015, [www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094503](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094503).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> GlobalSecurity.org, "Somalia Civil War," October 5, 2013, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>.

Leone and Uganda inside of Somalia. The U.S. supported the mission with military equipment and supplies. It was created in 2007 and is still active today.<sup>105</sup>

In September 2009, the U.S. carried out a strike with Special Operations Forces that killed Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a terrorist leader who played a role in the 1998 attacks on two American embassies in East Africa.<sup>106</sup> Although future U.S. drone strikes would occur, they did not initiate until June 2011, when the U.S. targeted members of Al-Shabaab.<sup>107</sup>

Mohamud was openly frustrated with the involvement of the U.S. and other western nations in the affairs of Muslims. He makes no direct mention of Somalia, but refers to the U.S. invading a Muslim land and justifies his attack as a means of retaliation. Throughout his interaction with authorities, Mohamud seemed to support a global jihad against the West.

### Unemployment Rate

The lack of a functional Somali government over the past few decades has made unemployment rates difficult to obtain for the period of Mohamud's radicalization. However, an United Nations Development Programme report released in 2012 estimates the unemployment rate among people aged 15 to 64 at 54.0 percent. This is up from the

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<sup>105</sup> African Union Mission in Somalia, "AMISOM Background," accessed March 30, 2015, <http://amisom-au.org/amisom-background/>.

<sup>106</sup> Jeffrey Gentleman and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Militant in Southern Somalia," *New York Times*, September 14, 2009, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/africa/15raid.html>.

<sup>107</sup> Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Expands Its Drone War Into Somalia," *New York Times*, July 1, 2011, accessed March 30, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/02/world/africa/02somalia.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/02/world/africa/02somalia.html?_r=1).

report's estimated 47.0 percent unemployment rate in 2002. This data indicates the Somali unemployment rate is one of the worst in the world. Additionally, the report indicates the unemployment rate for youth aged 14 to 29 is 67.0 percent. This age group corresponds to the age of Mohamud during his radicalization.<sup>108</sup>

### Broken Family

Mohamud's parents divorced in the summer of 2011. He became more radical in his Islamic beliefs following the divorce and began emailing an Islamic extremist recruiter in Pakistan. It is unknown if Mohamud continued to have a relationship with his parents following the divorce.

### Known Terrorists Organizations

Numerous Somali clans and warlords implemented terrorist techniques in an effort to obtain power and establish primacy following the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991. The primary terrorist organization in Somalia is Al-Shabaab. The organization was listed on the Department of State's Foreign Terrorist Organizations list in March 18, 2008.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development*, September 28, 2012, accessed April 1, 2015, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/Somalia-human-development-report-2012.html>.

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," accessed March 12, 2015, <http://m.state.gov/md123085.htm>.

## Religious Criticism

An estimated 99 percent of Somalis are Sunni Muslims with less than 1 percent being Christian.<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, the neighboring countries of Somalia are predominately Christian. This was used by Al-Shabaab in 2008 as a motive to fight against the Ethiopians in their support of the Transitional Federal Government. Al-Shabaab implemented Sharia law in the areas that it controlled and actively sought to remove non-Muslims from the country. According to Open Doors, an evangelical Christian ministry, Somalia ranks only behind North Korea regarding Christian persecution.<sup>111</sup>

## Summary

It appears the troubled relationship between Mohamud's parents may have been the initiator for his extremist views as his contact with the Pakistan terrorist recruiter initiated around the same time. Mohamud failing to acknowledge his mother during his plea hearing on November 29, 2010 further supports this. It is plausible that Mohamud directed his anger through the pursuit of terrorist actions. This methodology best aligns with Borum's radicalization model. Although the reasons behind his parent's divorce are unknown, Mohamud seems to resent and direct blame toward the U.S. Mohamud was an only child, which infers a close relationship with his mother and father. His socialization online with Islamic extremist allowed him to demonize the U.S. as the enemy, align

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<sup>110</sup> U.S. Library of Congress, *Religion*, accessed April 1, 2015, <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/44.htm>.

<sup>111</sup> Open Doors, "Somalia," accessed April 1, 2015, <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/worldwatch/somalia.php>.

himself with their views of extremism, and retaliate through a terrorist attack against American citizens.

Table 2. Table of Factors Identified in Case Studies

Factors Analyzed in Homeland of Selected Case Studies	Tsarnaev Brothers (Kyrgyzstan)	Faisal Shahzad (Pakistan)	Amine El Khalifi (Morocco)	Mohamed Osman Mohamud (Somalia)
Type of Government	Democratic	Democratic	Autocratic	Autocratic
Armed Conflict	Yes, between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz	Yes, government forces vs. militant groups	No	Yes, between rival clans, warlords, and external forces
Overt U.S. Involvement	Yes, Manas airfield to support operations in Afghanistan	Yes, drone strikes	No	Yes, raids and support to peacekeeping force
Unemployment Rate	10.0%	6.2%	8.9%	54.0%
Broken Family	Yes, parents divorced in 2011	No, parents presumed to be still married	No, parents are still married	Yes, parents divorced in 2011
Known Terrorists Organizations	Hizb ut-Tahrir	Al-Qaida and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan	Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb	Al-Shabaab
Religious Criticism	Yes, religious activities and organizations must be approved by the government	Yes, primarily on non-Muslim religions.	Yes, against the Penal Code to convert a Muslim to a non-Muslim religion	Yes, against Christians

Source: Created by author.

## Summary of Analysis

### Type of Government

Through the analysis of the selected case studies, the type of government in the diaspora's homeland was equally divided between democratic and autocratic systems. This broad classification implies the entire country was under the control of the recognized government. However, it should be noted in the case of Pakistan, areas exist that are not under the control of the recognized government. In the case of Somalia, the control of the country was largely held by either the Islamic Council of Courts or Islamic extremist organizations.

The analysis of the selected case studies does not reveal any characteristics of government that were common to all. They differ not only in type, but also in the degree of stability and influence. The government of Kyrgyzstan was unstable, from removal of the president to the disbandment of the majority coalition in the parliament. In Somalia, the powers of government shifted between the Islamic Council of Courts, Transitional Federal Government, and Al-Shabaab. Only Pakistan and Morocco held a stable government during the period analyzed.

Albeit stable, the Pakistani government was not able to exude control over the entire country. This created areas within the country governed by local tribes or other entities. Morocco, on the other hand, was a stable government and appeared to exercise sufficient control of the country during the period examined. The analysis shows that diaspora from an instable or weakened democracy or from a stable autocratic government can be vulnerable to Islamic extremism.

## Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts were present in 75 percent of the diasporas' homeland during the radicalization period. The only country that did not experience armed conflict was Morocco. However, Morocco did experience significant protests during the period as a result of the Arab Spring. There were deaths from police brutality suffered by the protesters; however, the protests did not escalate into armed conflict as in other Arab countries.

The armed conflicts ranged from internal ethnic conflicts, government forces against militant groups, to conflicts between clans and warlords against the military force of another country. Somalia is the only case study in which Christians were involved in the armed conflicts. This occurred as a result of the predominately-Christian country of Ethiopia sending troops into Somalia in support of the Transitional Federal Government to remove the Islamic Council of Courts and extremist organizations. In the other case studies, the armed conflicts involved Muslims against other Muslims; however, the reasons behind the conflicts were primarily political and not religious in nature. The groups involved in the armed conflicts carried out terrorist type attacks on their opposition. Bombings, kidnappings, and extortion were techniques used in the various conflicts. The conflicts ranged from short and intensive to more persistent conflicts.

## Overt U.S. Involvement

The U.S. was overtly involved in 75 percent of the diaspora's homeland. The involvement identified was militaristic in nature and consisted of a staging base, drone strikes, and raids by Special Operations Forces. U.S. military action was identified as a grievance in each case study. However, the case studies refer to the U.S. War on Terror

as a war on Muslims. Only Faisal Shahzad referenced specific U.S. action in his homeland; the use of drone strikes in Pakistan. The other individuals analyzed did not refer specifically to U.S. involvement in their homeland, but rather refer to actions taken against the collective Muslim community.

#### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate was at least 6.2 percent in the selected case studies, with Somalia suffering from an astronomical 54.0 percent unemployment rate. In the case of El Khalifi, the unemployment of his parents in Morocco was the deciding factor in his decision to pursue martyrdom in return for monthly payments to his parents.

#### Broken Family

The analysis reveals that 50 percent of the case studies were from broken homes. Incidentally, the divorce of the Tsarnaev's and Mohamud's parents occurred relatively close to their decision to conduct terrorist attacks. The divorces likely contributed to their radicalization as they dove deeper into extremist ideology after they occurred. At the time of the divorces, the young men who carried out their acts were out of high school and preparing to make their own way in life. Yet, the separation of their parents still had a significant impact upon their lives.

#### Known Terrorist Organizations

The presence of known terrorist organizations in the diaspora's homeland was one of two factors present in each case study. Faisal Shahzad returned to his home in Pakistan and received training from the Tehrik-e Taliban prior to his foiled attack. The other case studies followed or studied material from terrorist organizations via the internet.

Although this research focused on terrorist organizations in the diaspora's homeland during the time of their radicalization, it should be mentioned that terrorist organizations existed in their homeland while they still resided there, prior to relocating to the U.S. Terrorism is not an accepted way to pursue an agenda or seek revenge over a perceived grievance in the U.S.; however, in the homeland of the diaspora this technique was routinely exercised. The circumstantial familiarity with terrorist techniques or effects of terrorism likely made permanent impressions in the mindset of the individuals.

### Religious Criticism

The presence of religious criticism was the second factor existing in each diaspora's homeland. While the individuals analyzed in each case study were Muslim, the predominate criticism in their homeland were against non-Muslim religions. Unlike western societies, religion is a dominant aspect in Muslim countries and they often establish Islam as the official religion of the country. The governments analyzed either had provisions established which made it illegal to convert a Muslim to a non-Muslim religion or indirectly contributed to religious censorship by requiring a minimum number of personnel in the religious organization to obtain required permits from the government. Direct discrimination was exercised on behalf of terrorist organizations such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, who actively sought and killed Christians.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to determine if Muslim diaspora in the U.S. are vulnerable to exploitation by Islamic extremists. Topical relevancy was discussed and a thorough review of the literature conducted. I selected seven factors to analyze in the homeland of recent Islamic extremists in selected diasporas who planned or conducted acts of terrorism against the U.S. A qualitative research approach was applied utilizing comparative case study methodology. This enabled identification of commonalities and the formulation of a probabilistic answer to the research question.

Two factors were present in the homeland for each diaspora studied; known terrorist organizations and religious criticism. The notion of terrorist organizations obtaining support from or utilizing diasporas to conduct an attack is not a new phenomenon. However, this research revealed only one occurrence, Faisal Shahzad, where the radicalized individual unquestionably experienced direct communication with the terrorist organization in his homeland. Tamerlan Tsarnaev posted links to terrorist organizations in the Caucasus, suggesting a degree of familiarity with the group. The other two cases referenced electronic interactions with known terrorist organizations outside their homeland, highlighting the effectiveness of Islamic extremist messaging.

The occurrence of religious criticism in each case study was predominately against non-Muslim religions. The importance of religion in Muslim culture cannot be underestimated. Muslim countries do not separate church and state and often declare Islam the official religion of the country. In the analysis, a common grievance by the diaspora who conducted or attempted to conduct an attack was the perceived war on

Islam by the U.S. and other western countries. This reoccurring theme highlights the ability of deeply rooted beliefs, such as religion, to establish a common frame and build a dedicated cadre of support.

Three factors were present in 75 percent of the case studies: armed conflict, overt U.S. involvement, and a high unemployment rate. The participants involved in the armed conflicts were primarily comprised of forces or groups residing within the diasporas homeland. Only in the case of Somalia were external forces involved.

Overt U.S. involvement was predominately militaristic in nature and centered on counter-terrorism activities. The U.S. did not conduct missions in Kyrgyzstan, but instead operated a large air base that served to facilitate movement of military forces into Afghanistan. A theme common to the selected case studies was the misguided belief the U.S. was at war with Muslims. This notion served as justification to the individuals studied for their terrorist plots against the U.S.

The unemployment rate in three of the case studies was 8.9 percent or higher. This contributed to financial hardship in the diaspora's homeland and specifically identified as a contributing factor in the case of Amine El Khalifi. All the case studies experienced financial hardship while living in the U.S.

The factors regarding the type of government in the diaspora's homeland and the presence of a broken family were evenly represented in the analysis. Diaspora from both democratic and autocratic governments are vulnerable to Islamic extremism, and no specific grievance toward the host nation government was observed by the diaspora. Likewise, the diaspora studied were equally distributed between broken families and homes where the parents were still married. However, in the cases originating from

broken families, the separation of their parents were profound influences on their decisions to pursue extremist ideologies.

### Implications

The research revealed five factors present in at least 75 percent of the diaspora's homeland. These factors are armed conflict, overt U.S. involvement, unemployment rate above 8.9 percent, the presence of known terrorist organizations, and religious criticism. Each of these factors are currently present in Syria; an indication some members of diaspora from the war torn country will be vulnerable to exploitation by Islamic extremists.

Syria has suffered from civil war since the spring of 2011 when a group of teenagers were arrested and presumably tortured by President Assad's regime for painting revolutionary graffiti on the walls of their school in Deraa. This incited protests across the country and the government countered with the use of force. The conflict quickly escalated as rebel groups began to form and fight against the government for control of the country. The unemployment rate rose to an estimated 18.0 percent as the war continued into 2012 and 2013.<sup>112</sup> During the course of the conflict, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, a known terrorist organization, rose to prominence in Raqqa and began to rapidly expand their influence throughout the region. The group occupied territory in both Iraq and Syria, and viciously pursued their own agenda to establish an Islamic Caliphate. They forced non-Muslims to convert to Islam, pay a tax for their

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<sup>112</sup> Index Mundi, "Syria Unemployment Rate," 2014, accessed April 29, 2015, [http://www.indexmundi.com/syria/unemployment\\_rate.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/syria/unemployment_rate.html).

protection, or die.<sup>113</sup> Videos were posted on internet sites depicting members of the group executing Christians, journalists, aid workers, and other personnel.

The U.S. Congress approved a plan to arm and train moderate Syrian rebels in September 2014. Additionally, U.S. aircraft began bombing targets in Iraq and Syria shortly thereafter. As of March 2015, the death toll had risen to 220,000 with millions of people displaced from the homes.<sup>114</sup> The violence from the Syrian conflict spread throughout the region, threatening the security of and destabilizing the surrounding countries. The conflict has shown lines on a map do not confound the wrath associated with extremist ideologies, ethnic sentiment and religious differences.

As briefly summarized, the five factors commonly identified through this research in the homeland of radicalized diaspora are currently present in Syria. These findings and research support the concerns of intelligence officials. As James Comey stated at a House hearing on September 17, 2014, “There will be a terrorist diaspora out of those areas—especially Syria—that we all wake up every day thinking and worrying about.”<sup>115</sup>

### Future Research

Through the research and analysis of this project, areas have surfaced that warrant further study. The first is to apply the methodology utilized in this research against all

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<sup>113</sup> Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, “Religious Freedom in Syria,” accessed April 29, 2015, <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/religious-freedom-in-syria>.

<sup>114</sup> BBC News, “Syria: The Story of the Conflict,” March 12, 2015, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>.

<sup>115</sup> CNN, “Transcripts,” September 17, 2014, accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1409/17/ath.01.html>.

terrorist attacks either conducted or foiled in the U.S. by Muslim diaspora since September 11, 2001. This would allow a more thorough depiction of factors occurring in the diaspora's homeland. Such knowledge could assist in determining appropriate criteria for U.S. engagement into foreign affairs.

The second area of study recommended is to identify approaches to encourage successful and prosperous diaspora in the U.S. to return to their homeland and broadcast a positive image of western society. A reoccurring grievance in the research was the perception of the U.S. being at war with Islam. The U.S. has not been successful in changing this narrative. The enlistment of willing diaspora could assist in reducing the acceptance of Islamic extremist rhetoric.

### Closing

The threat from Islamic extremists will not diminish overnight. The U.S. is accustomed to the western way of war, where victories are expected to be decisive and obtained quickly with the aid of advanced technology. The expertise required to reduce the threat from Islamic extremists depends upon understanding the human domain. Technology can be utilized to detect early indicators of radicalization; however, it does not address the root causes of terrorism. As mentioned in chapter one, the direct approach for reducing Islamic extremism is effective for short term victories, however, the indirect approach is required to attain long-term success. Addressing cultural values and altering religious philosophies will take generations to accomplish. To achieve the desired end state, we must continue to identify and persistently engage vulnerable populations before extremists exploit them.

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