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# The Phenomenon of Homegrown Radicalization in the United States

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The Phenomenon of Homegrown Radicalization in the United States

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### Abstract

The phenomenon of homegrown radicalization in the United States has become a disturbing trend for many Americans in the past decade. Many of these radicalized individuals raised in the United States come from affluent families and have had many of the opportunities that any other Americans are granted. In this thesis content analysis and case study examinations are used to explore the question of what is leading to individuals becoming radicalized in the United States. This study examines five cases of homegrown radicalization to determine the role that traumatic events, alienation, poverty, internet usage, a perceived divide between the West and Islam, overseas trips and social withdrawal play in the radicalization process. In this study the above mentioned factors were used to formulate seven hypotheses that could be tested against the five case studies in order to determine their validity. Four of the seven hypotheses were found to be supported in at least 80% of the cases they were tested against in this study and the remaining three hypotheses were supported in 1 or more of the cases that they were tested against. Any of these factors alone may not be the sole driving force of radicalization in the United States but they do help to gain a better overall understanding of the causes of homegrown terrorism.

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### The Phenomenon of Homegrown Radicalization in the United States

Terrorism is a worldwide problem with a growing realization that terrorism is no longer contained in the Middle East, but has begun to manifest in other areas of the world. This is especially true in the United States where the threat of homegrown terrorism has become increasingly higher. This study will focus solely on religious terrorism and not on other acts that could be considered terrorism such as the growing trend of active shooter cases that have been seen in America recently or on hate crimes such as the Charleston, South Carolina church shooting. As such, religious terrorism can be defined as, "Terrorism motivated by an absolute belief that an other worldly power has sanctioned- and commanded- the application of terrorist violence for the greater glory of the faith. Religious terrorism is usually conducted in defense of what believers consider to be the one true faith" (Martin, 2014, p. 10).

Today, individuals are becoming radicalized inside of America as opposed to becoming radicalized in other areas of the world and then traveling to the United States. Many of the radicalized individuals raised in the United States come from affluent families and have had many of the opportunities that any other Americans are granted. However, recently there has been a growing trend of people being radicalized under the flag of radical Islam and manipulated into carrying out various types of attacks on behalf of terror organizations. There have been recent cases of acts of religious terror in the United States such as the mass shooting seen in Chattanooga and the Boston bombing. However, there have also been a number of people who have left the United States to fight on behalf of al-Shabaab, Al Qaeda or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, which is commonly called ISIS, in the Middle East. This disturbing trend has led to many questions concerning how and why this is happening.

### **Key Definitions**

Islam- The religion of the Muslims, a monotheistic faith regarded as revealed through Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah (Oxford dictionary).

Salafi Islam- A strictly orthodox Sunni Muslim sect advocating a return to the early Islam of the Koran and Sunna (Oxford dictionary).

Extremism- A quality that is “radical in opinion, especially in political matters” and is characterized by intolerance toward opposing interests. Extremism is also characterized by an adoption of moral absolutes (Martin, 2014, p. 3).

Terrorism- An act of violence that is politically motivated, is typically directed at soft targets and has the intention of terrorizing a target audience (Martin, 2014, p. 6).

Homegrown terrorist- U.S. persons, who appeared to have assimilated, but reject the cultural values, beliefs, and environment of the United States. They identify themselves as Muslims and on some level become radicalized in the United States. They intend to provide support for, or directly commit, a terrorist attack inside the United States (FBI, 2006, p. 5).

### **Literature Review**

The rise of terror organizations such as the Islamic State combined with recent acts of homegrown terror incidents have resulted in a vast amount of research and interest examining the topic of radicalization, as well as literature that examines terror organizations as a whole. There is also an increasing amount of literature that looks at the lives of the people who have become radicalized such as Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. News channels are filled with reports of people becoming radicalized or attacks being carried out with a seemingly growing frequency. The

growing nature of this issue has led to a large amount of the research being published that is both recent and highly relevant. The focus of this literature is to examine how and why individuals living in the United States have become radicalized and are supporting, funding and carrying out attacks in the name of radical Islam. The majority of the literature being examined agrees that there are some common themes that help to explain the radicalization process but also a common theme that a complete understanding of this phenomenon is lacking. Also there are distinct disagreements on the role that religion itself plays in the radicalization process among the different studies.

### **Homegrown Terrorists in the U.S. and U.K.**

Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) conducted an empirical examination of the process of radicalization that has been seen in the United States and the United Kingdom. Their study examines 117 cases of individuals who are considered homegrown jihadist terrorists and either illegally supported a terrorist group or directly participated in a terrorist plot. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) believe that the trend of homegrown terrorism poses several striking concerns. One concern would be that there is an unprecedented number of Westerners joining or supporting these militant Islamic movements. Another concern is that Westerners that become radicalized already are very familiar with the societies in which they are targeting.

Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) find that there are six distinct manifestations of the radicalization process that is observable in the homegrown terrorists that were studied. While there were cases where an individual may not display every step noted in the radicalization process overall the six manifestations occurred in a high enough frequency to be considered statistically significant. The first manifestation observed was adopting a legalistic interpretation

of Islam. A legalistic interpretation is in short a literal and conservative interpretation of Islam and often dictates how almost all aspects of life are conducted. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) believe that a legalistic interpretation does not mean that someone is a terrorist or even has a radical belief system. However, a legalistic interpretation is almost always found in terrorists. The second step in the radicalization process discussed by Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman is that they trust only a select group of religious authorities. Homegrown terrorists will likely only follow religious authorities that share their legalistic interpretation of Islam. The third manifestation in the radicalization process is the perceived schism between Islam and Western society according to Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009). This perception is often identified as a belief that these two sides are on opposite ends of a spectrum and are at odds with each other. This idea can be as extreme as claiming that Western society is in direct violation of Islamic law.

The fourth step identified in the radicalization process according to Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) is a “low tolerance for perceived theological deviance” (p. 13). In this mindset disagreements about religious interpretation may be personalized and can manifest directly into violent acts. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) cite that the fifth manifestation that can often be seen in individuals becoming radicalized is an attempt to impose their beliefs on people around them in an effort to enforce their own interpretations. The last step in the radicalization process found by Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) is political radicalization. Political radicalization step can be seen as a view that the West has conspired against Islam and other Muslims lack the strength and perseverance to protect it, leaving extremists to believe that violent action is the only solution.



In the study conducted by Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) several notable findings were made. Their first finding is that while theological interpretations of Islam often played a large role, their specific beliefs were often not their sole motivation. In fact less than 40% of the individuals studied cited Islam as their primary motivation (Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, 2009, p. 14). Also Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) concluded that there was no clear demographic group that could account for a large enough amounts of the terrorists to be considered statistically significant. Another notable finding was that over 40% of those studied had traveled overseas for training or to fight. Lastly Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) found that found that the perceived schism between the West and Islam was the most important factor and that taking steps to lesson this perceived schism is that only effective method of countering radicalization.

### **Muslim-American Terrorism in the Decade Since 9/11**

In a study for the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security Kurzman (2012) examines the trend in Muslim-American terrorism in the decade since 9/11. The focus of this study was to examine cases of support for terrorism, in addition to violent terrorism plots as well. The report by Kurzman found that 193 Muslim-American individuals had been convicted of violent terrorist plots from 2001 to 2011. This statistic includes individuals who had their plots either disrupted early in the planning stages, late in the planning stages or after the attacks were carried out. In addition to violent plots 462 Muslim-Americans have been indicted from 2001-2011 for some degree of support of either a terrorist plot or for an organization.

One of the most obvious takeaways from the Kurzman study is that there has not been a strong trend in the number of plots by Muslim-Americans on a year to year basis. In fact, the

number of yearly cases seems to be sporadic. For example there were only 3 cases mentioned in this study in 2008 compared to 49 cases in 2009 and 26 in 2010.

Another important concept found by the Kurzman study (2012) is that the vast majority of these cases show an obvious lack of sophistication and formal training by the perpetrators. The positive side of this is that these attacks typically lack the potential for a significant loss of life. However, this also shows that there is little collaboration with outside terrorist organizations given the lack of planning and sophistication. Catching individuals who orchestrate and carry out attacks on their own does add to the difficulty of catching them before an attack is carried out due to the lack of an opportunity to intercept communications with outside groups who may already be being monitored.

Perhaps the most important finding of the Kurzman study is that there is no clear demographic group that can be associated with Muslim-American terrorists. In cases from 2001-2011 32 perpetrators were African American, 48 were Arab, 24 were Somali, 29 were South Asian, 31 were white and 29 fell into the other category (2012, p. 5). This statistic is useful in showing that the stereotype of a homegrown Muslim terrorist almost always being an Arab is completely false.

### **The Homegrown Threat and the Long War on Terrorism**

In an article published by the Heritage Foundation, a Washington D.C. based think tank, Carafano, Bucci and Zuckerman (2012) review a number of publicly known terrorist plots that have been stopped since 2001. Through examining these attempted attacks the overarching nature of the threat of terrorism in the United States can be more thoroughly understood, as well as the best practices for stopping future attacks. Carafano, Bucci and Zuckerman (2012, p. 1)

cite that, “The U.S. must also be ready to adapt its security strategies—such as to counter terror attacks by an increasing number of homegrown terrorists”.

One of the central concepts discussed in this article is that in today’s international environment homegrown terrorism has become very attractive to terror organizations. This is large part due to the successes in the “war on terror”. Various terrorist leaders have been eliminated, training camps have been destroyed, domestic security has vastly improved and the leadership of terror organizations has become less centralized. All of this has led to an increase in the difficulty for these organizations to plan and carry out attacks. However, the ability to radicalize a United States citizen offers many advantages. These individuals are already well versed in American culture and linguistic skills (Carafano, Bucci and Zuckerman, 2012, p. 2). Also if an individual acts as a “lone wolf” the chances of law enforcement catching them prior to an attack are significantly lower.

Despite the notable advantages of homegrown terrorism for terror organizations there are also several disadvantages and limitations. Homegrown terrorists typically lack the support and direction, as well as skill sets needed for a large devastating attack. One example would be a lack of funding for supplies or not knowing how to properly construct IEDs. Also the lack of training usually leads to sloppiness and opens up opportunities to be apprehended during the planning phases of an attack by law enforcement.

In addition to discussing the advantages and limitations of homegrown terrorism for terror organization, Carafano, Bucci and Zuckerman (2012) also examine the motivations for an individual to become radicalized. One of the notable motivations is the mentality of the United States is waging a war on Islam. This mentality often leads an individual to legitimize their acts

as a defense of the Islamic faith from the United States. Carafano, Bucci and Zuckerman (2012, p. 3) also note that although poverty and social alienation often play a role as well, the path to radicalization from start to finish often vary greatly. It is often dependent on many factors such as ideology and geographic location and can vary greatly from one individual to the next.

### **Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat**

Bhatt and Silber's report prepared for the New York City Police department examine the current state of homegrown terrorism in the United States, as well as the path taken to radicalization. Their study is based on case study analysis of Americans who have been radicalized to carry out attacks under the flag of radical Islam. Through the selected case studies on these individuals Bhatt and Silber were able to identify four distinct phases that can be seen in the radicalization process.

The first phase identified in the radicalization process by Bhatt and Silber (2007, p. 24) is the Pre-Radicalization phase. This phase describes the early phase of the radicalization process and describes the demographics of someone who may be more vulnerable to begin the path of radicalization. For example, areas that are primarily consisting of Islamic individuals may serve as an area where the "seeds" of radical thought may begin. In an area such as this an individual may be motivated to try to fit in by proving their belief in "pure" version of Islam. Individuals tend to be males under the age of 35, middle class, little to no criminal history and have at least a high school education. Also it is noted that recent converts to Islam may be particularly vulnerable to radical conversion.

The second phase in the radicalization process according to Bhatt and Silber (2007, p. 32) is Self-Identification. This phase is marked by an individual beginning to adhere to a more strict

and radical sect of Islam. The Wahhabi interpretation of Islam is a common sect of Islam followed by many religious extremists due to its extremely conservative views. Bhatt and Silber (2007, p. 32) cite that, “The catalyst for this religious seeking is often a cognitive event, or crisis, which challenges one’s certitude in previously held beliefs, opening the individual’s mind to a new perception or view of the world”. An individual may be motivated to take this path by seeking to form an identity or attempting to establish a new direction in life. Also the decision to make this change may be initially started due to a variety of economic, social, political or social conflicts.

The third phase identified in this study is Indoctrination. This phase is where an individual’s views escalate to the point that they can be considered radical. Bhatt and Silber explain that, “The key aspect of this stage is the acceptance of a religious-political worldview that justifies, legitimizes, encourages, or supports violence against anything kufr, or un-Islamic, including the West, its citizens, its allies, or other Muslims whose opinions are contrary to the extremist agenda” (2007, p. 37). Also there are two distinct signs that a person may have reached the Indoctrination stage. The first is a withdrawal from the mosque, which may be due to the fact that their own radical beliefs have surpassed the views of others held there. This trend may also be in part due to a feeling that the mosque has become a liability and may lead to them getting caught. The second sign is a politicization of their new beliefs. In other words their beliefs are no longer simply a set of beliefs or ideals, but have now become a personal cause and calls for some form of action. This phase can also be marked by the individual in question finding likeminded individuals to discuss their ideals with, which can come in the form of a small social group or even on internet blogs or websites.

The fourth and final phase of the radicalization process according to Bhatt and Silber (2007, p. 45) is Jihadization. At this phase an individual has identified themselves not only as part of a cause or movement, but as a holy warrior. At this point a close knit group of like-minded individuals is almost always formed and the pressure from the group is much more influential. This stage, unlike the others which may take years, can be the quickest to progress through, sometimes in as little as several weeks. Individuals who have entered this stage often travel abroad for additional religious justification, further training and for further radicalization to carry out suicide missions or for help planning an attack Bhatt and Silber (2007, p. 47).

### **Countering Radicalization in America**

Vidino's study entitled *Countering Radicalization in America* examines the challenges faced with homegrown radicalization in America, as well as strategies for combatting and preventing homegrown terrorism. Vidino currently works with the RAND Corporation in Washington D.C. and has previously worked with the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In particular this study examines the difficulties of identifying the exact process of homegrown radicalization.

One major concept addressed by Vidino is that there is a general lack of consensus on how the path to radicalization works and what factors lead to people becoming radicalized. Vidino notes that, "few issues have proven more divisive and controversial among experts, both within and outside government, than trying to identify the reasons that drive people to embrace radical views and then to act on them in violent ways" (2010, p. 3). Some of the wide ranging theories of why Americans are becoming radicalized include political tensions, life-changing events, need for self-identification, economic depression, etc. Vidino also notes that there is not a

standard profile for someone who may become radicalized in the United States as this also tends to vary widely.

Another important point addressed in Vidino's article is the role of Islam in homegrown terrorism. Vidino cites that, "Most Muslim-majority countries that have implemented counter radicalization programs view religion as a major factor, though not the only one, in radicalization" (2010, p. 3). In the U.S. the role that Islam plays in the radicalization process has been met with much controversy, however, many agree that radical Islam is a twisted interpretation used to achieve political goals. Some countries such as Saudi Arabia have seen the emergence of programs to teach a more moderate and "true" form of Islam to counter radicalization. Although this idea seems attractive Vidino quickly points out that through the U.S. supporting one interpretation and discrediting the more conservative interpretations could lead to a back fire and serve as a huge recruiting tool for showing that the U.S. is in fact waging a war on Islam.

### **Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland**

The Majority staff of the Committee on Homeland Security has conducted an investigation to examine the threat posed to the United States by the Somali based terror organization al-Shabaab. Although al-Shabaab is based out of Africa they have publically declared an alliance to Al Qaeda and share a common mission. Specifically, this report discusses the threat of recruiting and radicalizing Americans to their organization. Al-Shabaab has recruited American citizens to not only support their organization but to also travel abroad and fight on their behalf.

One of the most alarming findings from this report is that al-Shabaab has created a very advanced and successful recruiting network in America. According to the report, “The U.S. has become the primary exporter of Western fighters to al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen in Somalia, which exploits foreign fighters from the U.S. and Europe for specialized missions such as suicide bombings and for propaganda and recruiting tapes” (2011, p. 2). The successes of al-Shabaab in recruiting Muslim-Americans inside of the U.S. have not been matched thus far by Al Qaeda or any other terror organization.

Also many of the recruited and converted Americans are of Somali decent and live in primarily Somali areas in large cities such as Minneapolis, Boston, Seattle, D.C., and Columbus. Many of these individuals still have family ties in Somali and regularly visit, which adds to the difficulty of knowing who is on legitimate trips and who is traveling for radicalization purposes. Combined with the fact that Somalia’s government has been in turmoil for years, the difficulty of knowing what Americans do and who they encounter while in Somalia has become very difficult for U.S. authorities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The literature review provided an overall summary on what is known about homegrown terrorism and provided key insight into the radicalization process. However, there are some noteworthy gaps in the literature that is available. The most notable gap would be detailed insight gained from interrogations of captured homegrown terrorists. Many of the smaller cases or cases that were stopped in the very early phases of planning did not receive an overwhelming amount of media attention or in depth academic study. As such, aside from the larger more famous cases little information is readily available about the details and process of these people becoming



radicalized. Due to this many of the theories developed are based off of a limited number of in depth case studies.

Reoccurring themes of factors in radicalization could broadly be classified in two areas: Factors that make someone more susceptible to being radicalized to begin with and factors that may occur along their path to radicalization or lead to radicalization.

### **Existing factors or precursors**

The first broad classification of themes includes factors that are commonly identified as either preexisting or precursors to the radicalization process. In theory, an individual that has one or more of these mentioned factors present in their lives are more susceptible to beginning the process of radicalization. It is to be noted that practicing Islam or being a recent convert to Islam will not be included in this study. The focus of this study is on homegrown Islamic terrorists; as such every individual studied must be a practicing Muslim to be considered a part of this study. Including this as a factor would head no statistical importance to include.

The first commonly mentioned factor that may lead someone to be vulnerable to becoming radicalized is a life changing or traumatic event happening in their lives. A traumatic event may include the loss of a loved one, a major political event that holds significant importance to the individual or even losing a job. The underlying theory is that when a traumatic or life altering event happens that saddens or angers an individual, they will look to find solace and comfort. In some cases people seem to find the support and a new direction in life through an increased involvement in Salafi Islam or extremely conservative Islam. Bhatt and Silber claim that, "The catalyst for this religious seeking is often a cognitive event, or crisis, which challenges

one's certitude in previously held beliefs, opening the individual's mind to a new perception or view of the world" (2007, p. 32).

One common theme that was present in much of the literature was a sense of social or cultural alienation, even a perceived lack of purpose in life. Several experts believe that individuals prior to becoming radicalized may feel alienated from their peers or even from family. Feelings of social and culture alienation may very well stem from the fact that as an individual becomes more conservative in their belief system, the perceived alienation from those around them grows. Also, especially following a traumatic event, an individual may feel that they have lost a calling in life. In some cases a change to radical Islam may help these individuals fill that void in their lives. A close knit group of like-minded friends helps them to gain an enriched sense of belonging. Dedicating their lives to these new found Islamic practices may also make these individuals feel a renewed sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

Another commonly mentioned theme from the literature was that an individual who may be prone to the radicalization process may come from more economically less privileged upbringings. The fact that an individual comes from a certain level of poverty may also lead to a lower social status or a lack of higher education. This general theory somewhat mimics similar theories about why youth join gangs in America. With a lack of money and social status joining a group of people who promise a new direction in life and make an individual feel important, whether it's a gang or a group of extremists, may prove to be very effective in recruiting youth in America.

**Path indicators**

Internet activity in the form of chat rooms, blogs, video posting and social media interactions is a very commonly mentioned factor in homegrown radicalism. When someone begins to become radicalized they may yearn for the chance to discuss their beliefs with likeminded individuals. In some cases this may take place in a mosque but as an individual becomes increasingly extreme in their beliefs they may have to go elsewhere to find people who share common view points. Also if the individual in question lacks the fiscal resources to travel abroad they may use the internet to educate themselves further on Islam or even to look into how to carry out an attack or to get advice on how to plan an attack.

Another commonly mentioned theme displayed by someone who is becoming radicalized is development of a belief system that there are two sides, the West vs Islam. In some situations this perceived schism has grown to the point that less conservative Muslims are even considered to be on the “other side”. The development of a mentality that the rest of the world is an opposing force may help to justify the radical viewpoints or even an attack perpetrated by an individual. Viewpoints like this are often heavily influenced by the United States’ foreign policy. Some extremists point to the U.S. backing of Israel over Palestine, India over Pakistan or even the invasion into the Middle East as a clear war being waged against the Islamic community worldwide.

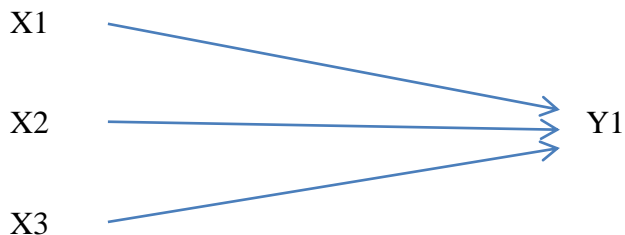
Taking trips abroad to primarily Muslim countries has been a common factor mentioned in much of the literature concerning homegrown terrorism. Taking these trips can serve a host of different purposes for a particular individual. Some individuals may take these trips to study how to read in Arabic. Others may have a desire to learn more about their faith from universities or

religious leaders. There have also been cases where individuals are attending training camps to gain skills and to become further radicalized. In some cases there are reports of Westerners even leaving to fight directly for a terror organization, which has been seen on occasion with al-Shabaab and Al Qaeda.

As previously mentioned newly found beliefs and practices may lead an individual to feel alienated from those around them. At the same time as their beliefs become more conservative an individual may find that they are becoming frustrated with the cultural norms of those around them. A sudden withdrawal from social life due to newly found beliefs can be a sign that someone has begun to become radicalized. At this point an individual may choose to associate themselves more with a small group of individuals who share similar beliefs and also live a similar life style.

Structural Casual Model 1

What factors make an individual more prone to becoming radicalized under the flag of radical Islam?



Y1- A Muslim-American beginning the path to radicalization.

X1- A life changing or traumatic event

X2- An individual expressing feelings of alienation or a lack of purpose in life

X3- An individual being economically disadvantaged

From the literature examined and the structural causal model created for this study, there are 3 hypotheses that can be created from the relationships between the independent variables represented by X and dependent variable represented by Y.

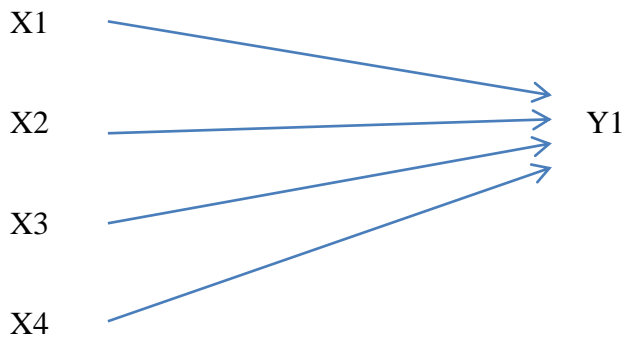
Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization.

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization.

Structural Casual Model 2

What factors may indicate that an individual is in the process of being radicalized?



Y1- A Muslim-American is currently on their the path to radicalization.

X1- Internet activity involving extremist literature and websites

X2- Expressing beliefs of an existence of 2 distinct sides: the West and Islam

X3- One or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries

X4- A sudden withdrawal from their previously held social lives

From the literature examined and the structural causal model created for this study, there are 4 hypotheses that can be created from the relationships between the independent variables represented by X and dependent variable represented by Y.

Hypothesis 1: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other.

Hypothesis 3: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family.

### **Research Design**

The research for this study will be conducted primarily in two ways. First, content analysis will be utilized where the available literature will be examined to learn what is already known about this topic and to get a better understanding of it as a whole. This will also be used to gain a better understanding about what is not known concerning homegrown radicalization. Second, a number of case studies of people who became radicalized in the United States will be examined to determine if there are notable similarities that may be considered statistically significant. The above mentioned hypotheses will be tested against a number of individuals. If a

certain hypothesis is supported in a minimum 80% of the cases tested it may be considered statistically significant for this study. For this study a hypothesis will either be considered proven, disproven or inconclusive. A total of 7 hypotheses will be tested in this study against the 5 chosen case studies. These hypotheses will be tested against case studies due to the fact they go into in-depth detail about these individual's lives prior to and during the radicalization process.

The first hypothesis that will be tested states that a life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization. This hypothesis will be considered to be supported if an event such as a death in the family occurs, an individual is fired from a job, they drop out of school, etc. Also this event will only be considered a factor if it takes place within a year of an individual beginning to become radicalized.

The second hypothesis that will be tested states that an individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization. This hypothesis will generally be regarded as true if the individual themselves or those who were close to them recall the individual claiming feelings of alienation or that there was a lack of purpose and direction in life.

The third hypothesis states that an individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization. This hypothesis will be considered true if they came from lower class upbringings or stated themselves that they felt economically disadvantaged.

The fourth hypothesis states an individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat

rooms or websites. This hypothesis may be considered true if the individual was active in extremist chatrooms or discussion boards, active on or with social media accounts that have been linked to extremism, or if the individual themselves had posted content online that demonstrates extremist beliefs.

The fifth hypothesis states an individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with one another. This hypothesis will be considered true if the individual in question had expressed beliefs to friends or family members that there is a perceived schism between the West and Islam, or that the two sides are at war with one another. Also this hypothesis may be proven true through internet posts that the individual had created.

The sixth hypothesis states an individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. Countries or regions will be considered primarily Muslim if the Islam is practiced by at least 50% of the population in the county or region visited. Also an overseas visit will only be considered to be a factor if the visit happened within two years of an attack, an arrest or leaving the country to fight on behalf of a terror organization.

The seventh hypothesis states an individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family. This hypothesis will be considered true if the individual in question suddenly made dramatic changes to their social life or if their friends and family reported seeing them much less on a regular basis.



## Case Studies

The following 5 individuals will be used as case studies to be examined in depth for this study. Each individual listed below meets the criteria of a homegrown terrorist. The above mentioned hypotheses will be tested against each individual case study to determine if they were supported or disproved.

**Adam Gadahn.** Adam Gadahn was raised in rural California and came from modest upbringings. His parents Phil and Jennifer raised goats on their farm and the family had chosen to live a self-sufficient lifestyle (Khatchadourian, 2007, p. 8). Adam was home schooled, played Little League baseball and was raised a Christian. By all accounts he lived an average American life. Adam even had an interest in death metal music. According to Khatchadourian in 1995 Adam moved from the family farm to live with his grandparents in Santa Ana in search of work (2007, p. 29). In late 1995 Adam converted to Islam, by 2004 Adam is reported by the FBI to have joined Al Qaeda and in early 2015 Adam is killed by a U.S. counter terrorism operation.

**Omar Hammami.** Omar Hammami was raised in Alabama. His father was a Syrian immigrant and his mother was in Omar's words "a southern belle" (2012, p. 5). Omar recalls that he was raised like any other privileged youth in America. Omar was initially raised Christian despite his father's wishes. Omar used to go deer hunting and build forts with other kids from school. In school Omar was very talented and was placed in advanced classes at an early age. By many accounts Omar was a social butterfly and also a talented soccer player. Around 1999 Omar had developed his doubts about Christianity and had converted to Islam. According to CNN in 2005 he moved to Egypt in an attempt to attend Al-Azhar University but was turned down

(2010). By 2007 Omar had joined Al-Shabaab and eventually ascended to the FBI's most wanted list. He was killed by his former allies in Al-Shabaab in 2013.

**Nadal Malik Hasan.** Nadal Hasan was born in 1970 in Virginia to two Palestinian immigrants. After modest upbringings Nadal Hasan would graduate high school and opt to join the military. According to a New York Times article Nadal's cousin recounts him saying, "I was born and raised here, I'm going to do my duty to the country" (2009). Nadal would go on to also earn a degree in biochemistry from Virginia Tech and graduate with honors. After the respective deaths of his father in 98' and his mother in 01' Nadal reportedly becomes a more devout Muslim. In early 2009 Nadal earns the rank of Major and is working as a psychiatrist helping soldiers with PTSD coming home from deployment. In late 2009 Nadal opens fire on Fort Hood killing 12 and injuring 30 more.

**John Lindh.** John Lindh was born in 1981 to parents Frank and Marylyn. John was raised Catholic by his parents in a Maryland subdivision. Money was tight early on until his father was able to graduate and begin his legal career. The Lindh family would eventually end up moving outside of San Francisco where Adam would go on to attend a high school for gifted and talented students (Kukis, 2003, p. 7). By the age of 16 John's interests had focused on Islam and he would soon thereafter convert. Slowly John Lindh became a more devout Muslim and began a path to radicalism. According to Kukis, "Lindh was captured by American forces on December 1, 2001, outside Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, after a savage battle at a prison fortress that he and other foreign fighters for the Taliban narrowly survived (2003, p. 1).

**Tamerlan Tsarnaev.** Tamerlan was the son of two Chechen immigrants who had moved to the United States in 2001. His parents were granted asylum and settled in Boston. Tamerlan

was raised Muslim by his parents. In 2003 Tamerlan entered the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and began school in Boston along with his brother Dzhokhar. Tamerlan would eventually take up boxing as a hobby and eventually would excel in it. In 2006 Tamerlan would attend a community college to acquire a two year degree, but eventually got back into boxing. He would go on to win the Rocky Marciano Trophy for winning the New England Golden Gloves competition (Gessen, 2015, p. 78). However, Tamerlan was not able to compete in Nationals because he lacked the legal status of a citizen, which he would have been eligible for except for an arrest record. Tamerlan began reading the Koran in 2009 and exploring internet for additional information. In the Spring of 2015 Tamerlan and his younger brother were accused of planting the bombs at the Boston Marathon and was subsequently killed.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were several noted limitations to this study. One of these limitations was that the literature on the topic of homegrown terrorism varies drastically from one study to the next. Although the cases that are looked at are often similar the conclusions tend to differentiate. This is likely due to the relative new and ever changing nature of this subject. Also profiles of the individuals who went on to become homegrown terrorists vary greatly in nature. As such, findings in this subject tend to be theoretical in nature. These findings can be used to look at new cases to see if they are validated or not, but cannot realistically be tested in an environment with controls on outside variables.

Another limitation to this study comes from the obvious lack of information available from these perpetrators. The above mentioned perpetrators are all either deceased or incarcerated and nearly impossible to contact for interviews. As such, much of the knowledge surrounding

these individuals comes from friends and family or in some cases, such as Omar Hammami's, from autobiographies written before their death or incarceration.

### **Case Studies/Findings**

The findings are presented in 5 sections based on each individual who was examined for this case study. Each individual will be examined and the above mentioned hypotheses will be tested for each individual. Evidence that either supports or disproves the hypotheses will be presented, if no information is available to support or disprove the hypothesis it will be listed as inconclusive. Finally, the results from all 5 individuals will be compiled into a chart so that the validity and statistical significance of each hypothesis may be determined.

#### **Adam Gadahn**

Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization: As for a life changing event Gadahn moved from the family farm that he was raised on that had no running water and was self-sufficient to Santa Ana to live with his Grandparents. The change came as somewhat of a culture shock and out of place, which eventually led him to Islam to fill this void. The move from the farm to a large city is considered to be an important and life changing point in Gadahn's life.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization: According to Khatchadourian, Adam Gadahn "wrote of a yawning emptiness, and he sought ways to fill that void" (2007, p. 29). Khatchadourian also accounted

that Gadahn felt somewhat isolated after moving and did not have many friends. Adam Gadahn did in fact state that he had feelings of isolation and had a sense of a lack of direction.

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization. Gadahn's parents did not have running water as he was growing up, however it was a personal choice to be a self-sufficient family. As such Gadahn would not qualify as economically disadvantaged.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremist viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites. A week after his conversion ceremony, Gadahn wrote "Becoming Muslim," about his path to Islam, and posted it on the Internet. Also after his radicalization process he would create videos to be posted for Al Qaeda. However, since the internet was seemingly not influential before or during his radicalization internet activity will be considered a non-factor.

Hypothesis 5: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other. According to Khatchadourian two of Gadahn's early mentors Deek and Diab would often preach that, "America was a bastion of sin" and "its streets will run red with blood" (2007, p. 53).

Hypothesis 6: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. In late 1997 Gadahn took the first of his trips to Pakistan. He would later take up residency in Afghanistan and join Al Qaeda (Khatchadourian, 2007, p. 63).

Hypothesis 7: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family.

Adam began falling out of contact with friends that he had been close to for some time. Khatchadourian cites that, “The two (Brown and Gadahn) chatted about music for several minutes longer. Brown never heard from Gadahn again” (2007, p. 47). By 1996 Gadahn reportedly moved into a small apartment with 6 other Muslims a block from the mosque. Later Gadahn’s father would report that after Adam had left for Pakistan he rarely wrote home and had faded away (2007, p. 63).

### **Omar Hammami**

Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization: For Omar this event seems to happen after he converted to Islam and returned from a trip from Syria. In his auto biography he sites that, “When I came back from my vacation I had become a different person but I was placed back into my old environment. It was like a struggle of two worlds. The drugs, the girls, the friends, the TV, and everything hit me with a big slap. Due to the blessings of Allah, I managed to hold on to my prayers” (2012, p. 13). This event seems to be extremely pivotal in Omar’s life.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization: Although Omar was very popular and even class president in ninth grade he slowly fell out of his social group. By 10<sup>th</sup> grade he claims that his “friends” only liked him as a Christian. Omar cited that, “The last resort I had to socialize was break time and by that point I had become so alienated that I began praying during that time as well” (2012, p. 14).

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization: Omar states in his autobiography that he was raised

with the same life as other privileged children in America were. He was not economically disadvantaged growing up.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites. Although Omar would go on to become one of the top ranking members of Al-Shabaab with a specialty in creating videos to post online it seems that the internet had little effect on him growing up.

Hypothesis 5: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other. On several occasions even before he is radicalized Omar complains of Western culture. He cites that, “In the West it is virtually a given that every company is doing at least one thing Islamically unacceptable” on the topic of looking for work. In his mind the two were polar opposites.

Hypothesis 6: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. Omar had been taking trips overseas for years due to visit relatives on his father’s side. Due to the frequency of these visits before he began to become radicalized it cannot be determined if they played a significant factor or not.

Hypothesis 7: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family: Omar became increasingly socially withdrawn as his level of devotion deepened. By his 11<sup>th</sup> grade year he recalls that, “I tried to limit my relationships with the disbelievers that surrounded me. At times it was very depressing. Some people became worried and thought I was suicidal or something! That was never the case. I was merely thinking about why I come to school instead of going to fight Jihad for instance” (2012, p. 15).

**Nadal Malik Hasan**

Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization: In the available literature there is little evidence of any traumatic or important event happening to Hasan within several years of the shooting at Fort Hood. However, his mother and father both died with 3 years of each other. Losing his mother in 2001 and the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment after 9/11 may have influenced his path to radicalization although this is speculation. Also Hasan was supposed to be deployed in the coming months after his attack. There is speculation that Hasan did not want to deploy which may have affected the timing of his attack.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization: Hasan did report feeling out of place in the Military before the shooting. Hasan reported anti-Muslim sentiment after 9/11 and claims that he had met with Army lawyers to discuss being discharged in 2004 according to a New York Times article in 2009.

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization: Hasan's parents both immigrants from Palestine and according to a New York Time article (2009) did well from themselves running a market, the Capitol Restaurant and the Mount Olive Grill and Bar.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites. Hasan had exchanged emails on several occasions with Anwar al-Awlaki, a known extremist, and had even defended suicide bombings in chat rooms before.



Hypothesis 5: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other. The available literature does account of Hasan expressing a view point such as this before the attack this he does infer that it was a motivation at the time. In court he rationalized his attack to the court claiming that he was, “defending the lives of the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan from American military personnel” (New York Times, 2009). This account could indicate that Hasan felt that the West and Islam as a whole were at war, or he simply could have been referring to the fact that U.S. and Taliban forces, who he sympathized with, were fighting at the time.

Hypothesis 6: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. There are no reports of Hasan having taken a trip overseas prior to the attack at Fort Hood.

Hypothesis 7: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family. Hasan never married and both of his parents were deceased at the time of his radicalization. Also there was little literature that would point to him having abruptly becoming withdrawn. Several accounts added that he had always been a loner.

### **John Lindh**

Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization. When Adam Lindh was about to go into the fifth grade his family moved to just outside of San Francisco. Lindh struggled to adjust being away from his old friends, bounced around several schools before eventually being homeschooled for a time,

and his parents divorced shortly thereafter. It seems that this series of events left Lindh looking for belonging and stability.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization: John Lindh began to feel alienated and out of place after converting to Islam. According to Kukis (2003, p. 10), “Lindh seemed at home with other Muslims, but he was finding it difficult to be with others away from the mosque. Lindh told Nana that on at least one occasion strangers had jeered at him for his Islamic clothes at the bus stop”. Even when Lindh would later travel to Yemen to learn Arabic he would still feel like he doesn’t fit in with the other students at the school. Kukis cites that, “He spent long hours at his desk studying the Koran and his Arabic lessons, while the other students mingled. Inwardly, he was feeling depressed, alienated, and disenchanted” (2003, p. 17).

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization. There were no mentions of Lindh coming from an economically disadvantaged background in the literature. On the contrary Lindh’s parents paid for his trip and tuition to study Islam in Yemen.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites. While Lindh initially used the internet to explore Islam, as well as other religions, he did not use it to explore radical ideas. In the case of Lindh his conservative and later radical teachings came from his visits to the mosque and later in Yemen.

Hypothesis 5: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other. When Lindh

moved to a more conservative school in Yemen he was exposed to radical teachings. According to Kukis (2003, p. 17) one sermon Lindh attended preached, “President George W. Bush plotted with Jews to stage the September 11 attacks and used them as a war cry against Muslims around the world”.

Hypothesis 6: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. At the age of 17 Lindh would first travel to Yemen to learn Arabic.

Hypothesis 7: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family. Before leaving for Yemen Lindh expressed that he felt out of place around non-Muslims, even his family. On one occasion he left his house on Christmas to spend the night in the local mosque.

### **Tamerlan Tsarnaev**

Hypothesis 1: A life changing or traumatic event powerful enough will make an individual more prone to begin a path to radicalization. The one event that seemed to serve as a trigger and sent Tamerlan’s life into chaos was his loss of boxing career. Gessen (2015, p. 79) recalls that, “In 2009 he made it to the national amateur boxing competition in Salt Lake City. The next year, he got the Rocky Marciano Trophy for winning the New England Golden Gloves competition. He did not, however, go on to the nationals that year: the federation had changed its rules, and noncitizens were now excluded”. At this time in his life Tamerlan had already dropped out of school and boxing, in his eyes, was his only viable option for a future.

Hypothesis 2: An individual who feels alienated or lacking a direction in life is more prone to begin a path to radicalization. After the demise of his promising boxing career Tamerlan began to voice his hatred of America and his new life. Tamerlan is quoted as saying, “I don’t have a single American friend. I don’t understand them,” (Gessen, 2015, p. 77).

Hypothesis 3: An individual who comes from economically disadvantaged upbringings will be more prone to begin a path to radicalization. Tamerlan’s family was extremely poor after immigrating to America. They struggled immensely to make a living for themselves. Tamerlan himself struggled to find work and eventually ended up working as a pizza delivery driver and selling pot on the side for extra money.

Hypothesis 4: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will display internet activity showing pro-extremists viewpoints or will engage in extremist chat rooms or websites. In the case of Tamerlan the internet did not play a significant role in his radicalization.

Hypothesis 5: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will express beliefs that the West and Islam are at odds with each other and to an extent at war with each other. The group of people who Tamerlan associated with while he was in Chechnya was known to have anti-American beliefs. Gessen (2015, p. 116) recalls that the groups that he associated with had been protesting American foreign policy. According to Gessen, “the protesters burned a United States flag— a gesture that had never before been seen in Dagestan”.

Hypothesis 6: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will take one or more trips overseas to primarily Muslim countries. Tamerlan traveled to Chechnya on several occasions but it is widely believed that it was in Chechnya that he was subsequently radicalized.

Hypothesis 7: An individual who is currently becoming radicalized will suddenly demonstrate a social withdrawal from their previously held social lives, which may include friends or family. While Tamerlan was popular in high school he reportedly became increasingly withdrawn over the years as he continued to become radicalized.

Summarization of Findings

	Adam Gadahn	Omar Hammami	Nadal Hasan	John Lindh	Tamerlan Tsarnaev	Findings
Traumatic Event	S	S	I	S	S	S 4/4 I 1
Feelings of Alienation	S	S	S	S	S	S 5/5
Economically Disadvantaged	N	N	N	N	S	S 1/5
Internet Activity	N	N	S	N	N	S 1/5
The West vs. Islam	S	S	S	S	S	S 5/5
Trip(s) Overseas	S	I	N	S	S	S 3/4 I 1
Social Withdrawal	S	S	I	S	S	S 4/4 I 1

Key: S= Supported, N= Not supported, I= Inconclusive

**Discussion of Findings**

A life changing or traumatic event was found in four of the studied individuals that could have set them down their path of radicalization. This event does not necessarily mean the death of a loved one or getting fired, but could be nothing more than moving to a new city. In these four cases something happened that significantly disrupted the stability of their day-to-day lives. In these cases these individuals were left lost and happened to choose Islam to fill a void in their

lives or to give them a sense of stability. In all of these cases the individual could have chosen something else

Reporting feelings of alienation prior to becoming radicalized was the only factor that was found in all five of the individuals examined. Feelings of alienation, rather they be socially or culturally, can drive an individual to perceive a divide between Islam and Western culture. This can also lead to individuals becoming increasingly withdrawn from their social lives. When this takes place an individual typically only associates with other Muslims, often ones with extremist viewpoints. For these reasons an individual feeling alienated will be seen in almost all cases of homegrown extremism.

Individuals being economically disadvantaged was the least supported factor in this study. All of the individuals studied with the exception of Tamerlan Tsarnaev came from middle class families. Tamerlan came from two poor immigrants who struggled to start their new life in America. The fact that Tamerlan was economically disadvantaged may have led to him relying so heavily on boxing in his life, which was subsequently taken away. In this sense his poverty may be considered a factor that led to his radicalization. In the other cases studied all of the individuals were economically well off and their monetary situations appeared to be a non-factor in their radicalization.

The internet's influence on Americans and the role it has played in the radicalization process was found to be a minimal factor in this study. Only one out of the five individuals studied appeared to be influenced by the internet towards radicalization. However, in several cases the internet was used by several individuals after they had become radicalized as a tool to try and radicalize others. Videos and websites were created to not only justify these terror

organization's actions but to also act as a recruiting tool. Nadal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, used the internet to communicate with religious authorities to answer some of his questions concerning Islam. The four other individuals examined tended to use their local mosques to gain insight to Islam and also become subsequently radicalized by individuals at these mosques. This study suggests that an individual will become radicalized from people who hold conservative or even extremist beliefs. Although this can occur via the internet it more often happens in person over a period of time.

A perception that the West or America is in direct odds with Islam was found present in every individual examined for this study. It is the development of this mindset that seems to be the largest difference between someone who holds very conservative beliefs and someone who could be labeled as an extremist. This mindset is characterized by not only intolerance for other cultures and religions, as well as less conservative Muslims, but also by a fear that their interpretation of Islam is under attack by outside forces. It is this development that can lead someone from simply being very religious to militant in their actions. At this point an individual will either join a terror organization such as Al Qaeda or ISIS to defend their faith or they will launch an attack in defense of their faith.

Taking trips overseas to predominately Muslim countries was found to be a supporting factor in the radicalization process in three individuals, a non-factor in one individual and was inconclusive in another individual. Major Hasan was the only individual who did not travel overseas prior or during his radicalization process. This may explain why he was the only individual who was found to have the internet be a factor in his radicalization. Omar Hammami's trips overseas factoring into his radicalization were classified as inconclusive because his father was Syrian and he had been taking trips to visit family overseas long before he was radicalized

or even converted to Islam. However, once he began to become radicalized he did take trips more frequently because he felt more at home and comfortable in Syria. As such, the roles that these trips played in his radicalization are inconclusive. While Tamerlan Tsarnaev was in a similar family situation as Hammami, it is believed that while on one of his trips we met with radicalized individuals and may have received training given the type of pressure cooker bomb that was used. Due to that his trip to Chechnya was considered a factor. Gadahn and Lindh both traveled abroad for religious education and in their cases they never returned home but instead opted to join terror organizations.

Social withdrawal from both friends and family was found in four individuals examined in this study, and was considered inconclusive in one other. In all of the cases this seems to be a product of their increasing religious devotion. As these individuals became more conservative in their beliefs and practices they found increasingly difficult to associate with their non-Muslim friends and family. They no longer celebrated the same holidays or shared similar interests with their previously held social groups. In turn these individuals abruptly became withdrawn and completely changed who they associated themselves with. Major Hasan was by many accounts a loner before he became radicalized so whether or not he demonstrated an abrupt withdrawal from his previously held social life was inconclusive.

### **Conclusion**

It is to be noted that a presence of the above mentioned factors does not mean that someone will become radicalized. In theory an individual could display all of these factors and may never materialize as a radicalized individual, or even obtain extremist views for that matter. However, these factors have been seen in a disturbing frequency in individuals who did gain



extremist views and who did become radicalized. Currently there is a limited amount of cases of homegrown radicalization in the United States. Even more limited is the information concerning these cases on the road of radicalization that these individuals went down. As such, the phenomenon of homegrown radicalization is still by and large a mystery. The studies of this trend are still in their infancy. As the number of cases of homegrown radicalization in America increase and more information comes concerning these cases a better picture of the causes of radicalization will be formed. As future cases occur new factors may be added and the above factors can be continually tested to determine their validity on a larger scale. With this continued study a clearer picture will continue to form helping to explain the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism.

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