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The Applicability of Criminology to Terrorism Studies: An Exploratory Study of ISIS Supporters in the United States

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The Applicability of Criminology to Terrorism Studies: An Exploratory Study of ISIS
Supporters in the United States

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dad, the late Dr. John R. Sharp, for instilling in me the love of learning. And to my grandparents, Ed and Mary Jo Hogan, who cheered me on through all my academic endeavors. I know you are all smiling down on me from heaven.

And to my hearts; my goosie and my buddy: Tatiana and Jax. When I felt like giving up or quitting, you two inspired me more than you will ever know to keep pushing forward. Thank you for being patient with me on the nights I had to work late, and the times I had to write and not play. I did and do it all for you both. Love you to the moon and back!

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Abstract

In the years following the 11 September 2001 attacks, research in the area of terrorism expanded exponentially. However, the changing nature of terrorism and lack of available data make it a difficult topic for criminologists to study; as academics we do not have access to the governmental data and data that is publicly available is often restricted due to the sensitive nature of national security issues. As first hand data is not available, an alternate data source, court records, may provide insight to the profile of current terrorists/terrorist supporters in the United States. Using court data from 71 cases of individuals in the United States charged with providing support to ISIS, and comparing this profile to the established profiles of other non-traditional criminal groups, this exploratory study attempts to be a first effort in examining the contributions criminology can make to the study of terrorism; from both theoretical and law enforcement perspectives.

Chapter One

Introduction

“Let history be a witness that I am a criminal” –Osama bin Laden

A decade ago, Gary LaFree, as the president of the American Society of Criminology (ASC), called in his presidential address for Criminology to expand its’ research domain and embrace the study of terrorism (2007). However, the changing nature of terrorism and the lack of availability to data, make this a difficult topic to study. Criminologists seek to understand why people become criminal, or engage in criminal behavior; however we are not really any closer to understanding why one becomes a terrorist/jihadist or a supporter of such. This may be largely because, as academics, we do not have access to governmental data on these individuals and organizations (Sageman, 2014).

Within the field of criminology, there are mixed feelings about the applicability of this discipline to the study of terrorism (Mythen & Walklate, 2006). Traditionally, the subject has been viewed as a “sub-field” within social science research (Reinares, 2012); however it has been argued that instead of being a sub-field, terrorism studies should be an interdisciplinary field that applies the unique methodologies of multiple academic disciplines, including criminology (Reinares, 2012). Incorporating a variety of academic fields to the study of terrorism may help broaden the understanding of this international threat (Chermak & Gruenewald, 2015). The strong tradition of criminological studies can offer insight to the ever changing nature of terrorism (Mythen & Walklate, 2006).

While researching terrorism, criminologists encounter more problems than those performing traditional crime research. Terrorism studies are constrained by the availability of data. Traditional crime reports used by criminologists (Uniform Crime Report (UCR), National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), etc) do not include data on terrorism events, victims, or perpetrators. Previously collected data on international terrorism is not usually open source or publically available, and furthermore, it is extremely difficult to get clearance to survey or interview current, former, or alleged terrorists. Those who are able to do so are often restricted on what they can make publically available, due to the sensitive nature of national security issues. Furthermore, while the intelligence community may have access to this information (Sageman, 2014); they may not have the methodological expertise to engage in explanatory research to answer this question.

LaFree and Hendrickson (2007) outline the following contributions criminology can make to the study of terrorism:

- (1) Help understand the best processing techniques for those charged with terrorism related offenses.

There has been a revolving shift in thought as to whether criminal courts or military tribunals should be responsible for the trials of individuals accused of terrorism or terrorism support (Smith et al, 2002). Using court and other official documents may offer insight as to the best processing methods for those charged with terrorism related offenses.

- (2) Help understand the etiology of terrorism, both theoretical and methodological.

By understanding the current state of terrorism, as well as the actors and their motivation and justification behind their actions, those on the front line of detection and mitigation may be more amply prepared to thwart such events.

(3) Contribute to the identification, capture, and incapacitation of terrorists

(LaFree & Henderickson, 2007).

If it is possible to ‘profile’ supporters of terrorism, criminal justice agencies would be better prepared to allocate resources and manpower to mitigate and prevent future attacks (Rae, 2012).

In order to formulate a profile of the current state of terrorists/terrorist supporters, national data should be collected. As original data collection is problematic, and it is difficult to acquire national data on terrorism (Smith et al, 2002), criminologists may consider using other data sources to study terrorism. The proposed study is an exploratory approach to examine the “Who becomes a terrorist supporter?” question by using an alternative data source: court documents. Prior to the attacks on 9/11, traditional criminal trials were used for individuals charged with terrorism related offenses. Immediately after 9/11, there was a shift to try alleged terrorists or terrorist supporters via military tribunals. Currently, there is a shift back to traditional criminal court to try supporters of terrorism (Smith et al, 2002). Using current (2014-2016) court data to construct a profile of what a terrorist supporter looks like, and comparing it to known profiles of other “non-traditional” criminals (white-collar criminals, organized crime criminals, and gang members), it may be possible to speculate on the degree that terrorist supporters resemble other criminal groups. These findings could have implications for theoretical application and help law enforcement in their counterterrorism efforts, depending on the amount of overlap in the profiles.

Justification for the Study

In the United States, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (1996) regulates the statutes associated with providing support to terrorist organizations (Jonakait, 2004a), however prior to September 11, 2001, only three cases were tried under this statute. Since 9/11, almost all cases involving terrorism have included charges associated with providing material support to terrorism (Jonakait, 2004b). As terrorism related arrests hit record highs in 2015 (BBC, 2016), it is more pertinent now than ever to be able to study and identify the characteristics of individuals charged with such offenses as the presence of terrorist supporters raises concern in the countries from which these individuals originate. If these individuals become even more radicalized, authorities may have cause for concern that they may become part of a larger movement within their home country (Steinbach, 2015).

As of December 2015, there are 900 active investigations of ISIS supporters in the United States, with 71 individuals being charged in the last two years (Vidino & Hughes, 2015). A recent follow-up to this report indicated that as many as 15 more have been charged between January and May 2016 (George Washington University, 2016). Charges in these cases range from providing money, weapons, shelter, or other forms of support to terrorist organizations. Often these individuals have a large presence online, and are being radicalized at an unprecedented rate, due to their access to social media (Signal, 2014). These newly radicalized individuals may then leave their home countries for further instruction and training. Due to this concern, it may be useful to be able to identify these individuals and prevent them from leaving their home countries for further radicalization. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a “profile” of what to look for in regards to probability of radicalization.

One of the main issues facing criminologists is there is no past precedent/guidance on how to study this phenomenon, only past criminological studies to direct new research. By examining past research, and building off the theoretical and methodological considerations, this study will provide a “foot in the door” for criminology to expand its domain into terrorism research.

The proposed research will examine the demographics of individuals in the United States charged with providing support to ISIS and compare that profile to the known profiles of other non-traditional criminal groups/typologies. This exploratory approach is a first-step in identifying information about known terrorists and their supporters/sympathizers and how their characteristics overlap with other criminal groups. This is important because the result may be useful in helping first-responders and those on the front lines (law enforcement, members of the community, etc.) recognize and mitigate the process of radicalization and subsequent terror attacks. For criminologists, understanding who these people are and how they compare to other criminal groups may help expand the application of criminal theory to terrorism.

Conceptualizing Terrorism

Defining terrorism is a contentious and continuous issue. There is not a universally agreed upon definition of terrorism, which lends itself to the problematic nature of prosecuting acts of terrorism. The United Nations has been unable to agree on an international definition of terrorism, mostly due to a disagreement with the *Organization of the Islamic Conference* (OIC), which refuses to include “armed struggle for liberation and self-determination” in the definition (Eye on the UN, 2013). Even in the United States there is not one agreed upon definition of terrorism, even among U.S. government agencies. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Homeland

Security (DHS), and the State Department, are just a handful of federal agencies with differing definitions of terrorism. Definitions continue to vary at the state and local levels.

More than 200 definitions can be found in the academic terrorism literature (Jackson, 2008), each of which seems to include a list of criteria for an attack to be classified as terrorism. Schmid and Jorgman (1988) conducted a survey of leading terrorism researchers to examine common elements in definitions of terrorism. Endorsement of individual criteria varied widely. Only 83.5% indicated that violence/force was a necessary element (Schmid & Jorgman, 1988). Based on their findings, they listed eight features commonly associated with terrorism:

1. The use of violence
2. Symbolic choice of victims
3. Performance by an organization
4. Operational seriality
5. Advance planning
6. An absence of moral restraint
7. Political motivation
8. The use of fear/anxiety (Schmid & Jorgman, 1988; Weimann, 2006)

In reviewing these definitions, as well as the definitions of multiple U.S. government agencies¹, the most common elements across definitions are:

1. Non-personal motivation (political, religious, ideological, or ethnic)²
2. Targeted at civilians and/or non-combatants
3. Perpetrated by non-state actors

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security

² Although, it is recognized that “proving” motivation is problematic

Charging an individual with “terrorism” is an extremely complex task, due to the discrepancies in definitions. As such, many individuals are charged under 18 U.S. Code §2339B, for providing material support to terrorist organizations. This study will explore the variety of cases filed under 18 U.S. Code §2339B in the United States, and examine if current criminological theory can contribute to the mitigation and prevention of further ISIS related terrorism activities.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

18 U.S. Code §2339B

Prior to September 11, 2001, terrorism in the United States was most often viewed as a domestic (right-wing or left-wing) issue. The idea that an outside organization could break the barrier and attack the United States was rarely discussed as a viable threat. Even the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, was viewed by many as an isolated incident. The 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, OK shocked the nation, but was carried out by a domestic right-winged white supremacist. It was not until the attacks of September 11, 2001 that it became evident just how vulnerable the United States was to attacks from international terrorist organizations.

After the first World Trade Center attack, and the Oklahoma City bombing, Congress passed The Anti-Terrorist and Effective Death Penalty Act (18 U.S. Code §2339B). However 18 U.S. Code §2339B- Providing Material Support or Resources to Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, was only used to charge three individuals prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks. The statute reads:

(a) PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES-
(1) UNLAWFUL CONDUCT-

Whoever knowingly provides material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization, or attempts or conspires to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 20 years, or both, and if the

death of any person results, shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life. (18 U.S. Code §2339B)

Furthermore, it clarified material support, training, and expert advice or assistance, as defined in 18 U.S. Code §2339A:

(b) DEFINITIONS.-As used in this section-

- (1) The term “material support or resources” means any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documents or identification, communications equipment, facilities or weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (1 or more individuals who may be or include oneself), and transportation, except medicine or religious materials;*
- (2) The term “training” means instruction or teaching designed to impart a specific skill, as opposed to general knowledge; and*
- (3) The term “expert advice or assistance” means advice or assistance derived from scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge. (18 U.S. Code §2339A)*

Finally, a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act, section 219, must be designated by the Secretary of State and meet three criteria: (1) must be foreign based, (2) currently engages in terrorist activity or terrorism or retains the capability/intent to engage in terrorism, and (3) the terrorist activity or terrorism of the group threatens the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States (Immigration and Nationality Act, 1965).

Currently there are 59 FTOs, as determined by the U.S. State Department (see Appendix B). The most recent addition to the list, ISIL-Korhasan (ISIL-K), was added 14 January 2016. A FTO can request once every two years to have their determination status reviewed. If they do not request such, the Secretary of State must review the group to determine if the classification as an FTO still applies. ISIS was designated a FTO on 17 December 2004, under the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al Qaeda in Iraq) (U.S. Department of State, 2016).

Evolution of the Threat

In the aftermath September 11, 2001, precautions were quickly put in place (i.e. the USA Patriot Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security) to increase security in the United States, specifically concerned with outside threats entering the country. Furthermore, shared intelligence soon revealed that the threat was not only outside the country but hiding within the country in sleeper cells. In late 2001, three organizations (the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, the Global Relief Fund, and Benevolence International) had their assets frozen, and the organizations' leaders were arrested and charged under 18 U.S. Code §2339B, providing material support to terrorists (Aziz, 2003). All three organizations had been in operation for over ten years; the raids suggesting a shift in the focus of foreign terrorism investigations.

However, as years passed, there was a shift in focus from those already in the United States (i.e. sleeper cells), to the concern that radicalized American citizens may travel overseas to obtain training and pledge support to the extremist groups. This was illustrated in the case of Anwar al-Awlaki, the radical Islamic cleric, who was killed by drone attacks in 2011 (Bergen, 2015). Al-Awlaki lived in the United States until the age of seven when his family returned to Yemen. Al-Awlaki returned to the United States for college, attending Colorado State University (Bachelor degree), San Diego State University (Master degree), and then George Washington University, where he earned a doctorate in Human Resources (CNN, 2013). While in the United States, he had interactions with three of the 9/11 hijackers, however he claimed to have no knowledge of, nor did he support the attacks. He returned to Yemen after the attacks, and was alleged to have ties to multiple attacks that attempted to target the United States. In 2010, he was labeled by the United States as a "specially designated foreign terrorist" (CNN, 2013, n.p.). Al-

Awlaki was targeted and killed by a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) drone on September 30, 2011 (CNN, 2013).

Presently, especially in regards to ISIS, there is a shift occurring that removes the middle man; that of the necessity of travelling to the Middle East or other terrorist training grounds in order to become radicalized. With the popularity of social media, travel to ISIS territories occurs *after* the individual is radicalized, if at all (Berger, 2015). The use of social media by ISIS to gain support for the cause has led to a new face of terrorism within the United States and around the world. ISIS spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on propaganda videos and their supporters are constantly on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, etc); some report up to 90 tweets per minute (Barkoubis, 2015). According to Berger, the most common ISIS recruitment methods are as follows:

- *First contact*
 - *Islamic State seeks out target*
 - *Recruiters respond to targets who seek out Islamic State*
 - *Create micro-community*
 - *Maintain constant contact*
 - *Encourage target to insulate against outside influences*
 - *Shift to private communications*
 - *Identify and encourage pro-Islamic State action suitable for target*
 - *Social media activism*
 - *Travel to Islamic State territories*
 - *Terrorism*
- (2015, p. 19)*

Even with crackdowns on social media accounts supporting the group, it is reported that ISIS has been able to recruit over 20,000 individuals from 40 different countries (Masi, 2015). Other reports claim that individuals from over 80 counties have joined the group (McCoy, 2014). One recruit reported that she received daily social media contact, including over 200 videos of killings and 500 requests for her to travel to the Islamic State (Laub & Al-Soud, 2015). Use of

social media remains the most effective method of recruitment for ISIS because, even though accounts are monitored and shutdown, their supporters re-create new accounts just as fast, and by using hashtags that change hourly, the group is able to stay in constant communication with their supporters and sympathizers (Masi, 2015).

The United States ranks fourth in ISIS supporting tweets (Twitter postings), and, outside of Great Britain, is the only Western country ranking in the top twelve (Opelka, 2015) (See Figure 1). Currently there are active investigations in every state related to supporting ISIS (Barkoubis, 2015). According to Stakelbeck, author of *ISIS Exposed: Beheadings, Slavery, and the Hellish Reality of Radical Islam (2015)*, the use of social media “is the new reality” of terrorism (Barkoubis, 2015) and the individuals being reached represent a new typology of potential supporters. Recent attacks in San Bernardino, CA and at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, FL, illustrate how social media is transforming the radicalization and recruitment methods of ISIS.

This unprecedented use of social media by ISIS, coupled with the high reports of pro-ISIS tweets generated from within the United States leads to the following overarching research questions of this paper: Who are these pro-ISIS supporters and what are the characteristics and demographic details of individuals in the United States charged with providing support to ISIS? And furthermore, how does their profile compare to the profiles of other non-traditional criminal groups? And if it is comparative, then what role can criminological theory play in the prevention, mitigation, and policy implementation of/against terrorism? The effect that social media use has on the traditional application of theory will also be addressed.

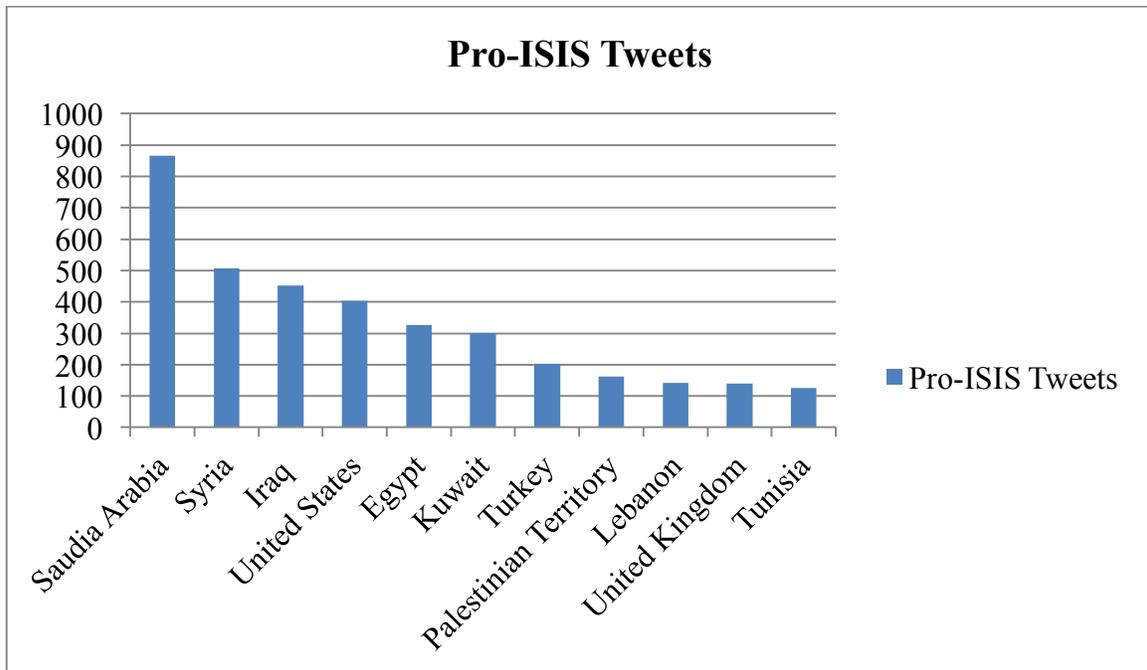


Figure 1: Locations Claimed by Pro-ISIS Supporters on Twitter*

*out of a sample size of 20,000. Data borrowed from Opelka (2015); Source of data: Brookings Institute

Comparative “Non-Traditional” Criminal Groups

The literature asserts that there is a relationship between terrorism other non-traditional crimes (Finklea, 2010; Smith, Rush, & Brown, 2013), however the extent of this relationship and if the information can assist criminologists in a better understanding of who these people are, is unknown. There is a connection between gangs, organized crime, and terrorism in that, as time passes, these criminals change their techniques to adapt to the current situation (Smith, Rush, & Burton, 2013). Moreover, the lines between all these groups and white collar criminals are starting to blur, at least where methodology is concerned. Gangs are now turning to white-collar crimes as a way to avoid detection (Michael, 2011). As individuals age out of gangs, they may enter into a more organized criminal group (Smith, Rush, & Burton, 2013). Terrorism and

organized crime are connected by money (Finklea, 2010), and the recruitment techniques employed by these criminal typologies are somewhat similar (Carlie, 2002; Long, 2013).

Moreover, there may be some similarities between terrorism and professional criminals, as both typologies take on their crime(s) as a lifestyle, and their lives become dedicated to the cause. Unlike other criminals who may age out of crime, both terrorists and professional criminals view their choice as a life-long commitment. Finally, it may also be useful to compare the current profile of ISIS supporters to the known profiles of prior terrorist groups/supporters, as some research has been done on Palestinian suicide terrorists (see Pedahzur & Perliger, 2003), and specifically within the field of psychology, on the motivation and goals of former Irish Republican Army (IRA) supporters (see Horgan & Taylor, 1999 & 2003), that may offer insight to the current issue of the growing number of ISIS supporters within the United States.

However, while the profiles of some former terrorists/supporters, as well as those of professional criminals, gang members, organized crime members, and white collar criminals, are well researched; data on the profile of current terrorist supporters is lacking. It is proposed in this research that, by establishing a profile of ISIS supporters within the United States and comparing it to the more established profiles, criminologists may be better positioned to apply theory to terrorism.

Examining the established profiles within the United States, in his original study of white collar criminals, Sutherland found that many belonged to upper class society (Sutherland, 1940). Traditionally, white collar criminals are primarily older, white males (in their 40s), with an overrepresentation of the Jewish faith, and to be from middle or upper class environments (Daly, 1989; Friedrichs, 2007; Piquero & Benson, 2004; Wheeler, 1988). Supported by Braithwaite

“White collar criminals are not likely to be juveniles and are not likely to be female or poor (1985, p. 4). Overall the level of education and employment records is much higher for white collar criminals compared to traditional criminals. 27.1% of white collar criminals reported having a college education, compared to 19% of the general public and 3.9% of non-violent traditional criminals (Wheeler, 1988). White collar criminals are less likely than traditional criminals to have a prior record, and they exhibit criminal tendencies/attitudes (Ragatz, Fremouw, & Baker, 2012). Furthermore, they operate in work –related subcultures. Coleman (1987) identifies three specific subcultures: organizational, industry, and occupational, that dominate white collar criminality as they “isolate their members from the mainstream of social life and its construction of reality” (p. 422).

Subcultures are also very prevalent in the gang literature. Original research on juvenile delinquency and youth gangs explored the idea of a subculture created by the stain shared between lower-class juveniles (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955). Cohen asserts that such subcultures exist because they provide a solution to a problem that is shared between like-minded individuals (1955). Gang subculture focuses on group autonomy, with outsiders being treated in a hostile, and sometimes violent, way. Violence is an overarching theme within the gang subcultures, as evidenced by the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) gang. MS-13 is divided into sub-groups, each having its own responsibilities. Within this gang, the violence as a culture is evident, as all members are trained in combat and guerrilla warfare (Adams & Pizarro, 2009).

Gang member demographics differ from that of other non-traditional criminal groups. Gang members are traditionally younger, with 40% of members being under the age of 18 (National Gang Center, n.d). It has been reported that gang recruitment starts young (as young as eight years old), so that the individuals become committed for life (Adams & Pizarro, 2009).

According to the FBI, there are currently 1.4 million active gangs in the United States (Smith, Rush, & Burton, 2013). Racial breakdown of gang members is reported to be: 46% Hispanic, 35% African American, 11% White, and 7% Other. Gang members are overwhelmingly male, and few studies have found there to be an increase in female gang members (National Gang Center, n.d.). Molidor's study of 15 female gang members (aged 13-17), found that the majority came from dysfunctional families, characterized by abuse, domestic violence and/or divorce and that many did not have formal education (1996).

As these females may have used the gang as a means to escape, the glamorization of the gang lifestyle/subculture may also contribute to the increase in gang activity. Recent studies have shown that gangs are turning to social media for recruitment and communication, as well as posting images portraying the gang lifestyle (Michael, 2011). Carlie reports the five most common methods of gang recruitment to be (1) seduction, (2) subterfuge, (3) obligation, (4) coercion, and (5) self-recruitment (2002). The online glamorization of the gang lifestyle may be attractive to individuals looking to escape from their current situation.

Gang members who start out early and become committed to the lifestyle may transition into more organized criminal activities as they grow older (Miller, 1958). Many gang members 'graduate' to a more organized criminal lifestyle as they 'age out' of gangs. That being said, organized crime members are traditionally older, male, and have an ethnic connection to their group. The FBI lists the top three ethnic groups operating in the United States as (1) Italian (la Cosa Nostra), (2) Eurasian/Middle Eastern Groups, and (3) Asia and African criminal enterprises (Finklea, 2010, p. 16). Much like gangs, organized crime syndicates have a distinctive subculture, often focusing on ethnic loyalty, hierarchical structure, unique set of rules, regulations, and punishments, and enterprise ventures (Lyman & Potter, 2015). Similar to white

collar criminals, organized criminals commit rationally thought-out crimes and are motivated by a financial goal. Violence is often secondary to the monetary goal (Coleman, 1987). Organized criminal groups view their actions as part of their life-style, similar to professional criminals, in which their actions are actually their business and main method of monetary support. Organized criminals fall under the umbrella of professional criminals. Professional criminals may operate alone, or within a group. Organized and white collar criminals may also be considered professional criminals, however not all professional criminals engage in organized or white collar activities. Like organized criminals, professional criminals view their actions as their 'career', a necessary factor in their life-style.

Profiling professional criminals is more difficult than other non-traditional crime typologies. Professional criminals may work alone or within a group. They may hire themselves out for services. They are often employed in blue collar jobs and use their professional crime to supplement their desired lifestyle. Their race, gender, and educational background vary. Original research by Sutherland found five characteristics of professional thieves: "(1) technical skill, (2) status, (3) consensus, (4) differential association; and (5) organization" and later studies found support for these characteristics (Rosecrance, 1986, p. 31; Sutherland, 1937).

Differential association and organization are also characteristics of previous terrorist organizations. Prior to 9/11, terrorism was viewed as mainly a nationalist issue. Domestic groups such as the Irish Republican Army, The Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), and Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) were prevalent in Europe while domestic Right-Winged (white supremacy groups) and Left-Winged (Environmental and Animal rights extremists; i.e. Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front) were the main cause of concern in the United States.

Examining the literature on former terrorist organizations it appears that there are few constants

across or between groups. Although the majorities are male, age, education, employment status, and religious affiliation differ. Palestinian terrorists are more likely to be young, male Muslims with some high school education (Pedahzur, Perliger, & Weinberg, 2003). Former members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) are predominantly white Catholic males, over 80% born in Northern Ireland, and are employed in blue collar jobs (Gill & Horgan, 2013). German jihadists report dropping out of school after conversion to Islam, and experiencing trouble with socialization upon being radicalized (Pisoiu, 2015).

In the United States, left wing organizations are more likely to attract sympathizers. As compared to right-wing organizations, left wing have more females involved, are more educated, and are less likely to be previously arrested. Left-wing supporters come from a variety of religious backgrounds, whereas the majority of right-wing supporters identify as Protestant (Chermak & Gruenwald, 2015). Like many of the other non-traditional groups previously discussed, they find support from others who share the same goals and ideologies.

The Subculture Phenomenon

Although there are many differences in the profiles of the previously discussed non-traditional criminal groups, one aspect that was consistent in the literature was the idea that like-minded individuals bond together and may establish their own subcultures of learning and support. A subculture can simply be an isolated division of society who share norms that differ from the traditional goals of society (Pisoiu, 2015). Within society, social life occurs within small formal and informal groups. “A subculture is a set of modal beliefs, values, norms, and customs associated with a relatively distinct social subsystem...existing within a larger social system and culture” (Fischer, 1975, p. 1323).

Each example discussed above has a set of belief, values, and norms unique to the crime typology. Law enforcement is able to use aspects of these norms to mitigate and prevent crime from occurring. It is unknown what, if anything, characterizes current ISIS supporters in the United States. As the subcultural phenomenon has not been fully applied to the idea of radicalization within the literature, and radicalization often occurs in unique social and cultural environments (Pisoiu, 2015), examining the characteristics of current ISIS supporters may help identify characteristics of their subculture.

As profiles are established for each group, and possible subcultural aspects are discovered, criminologists are able to apply theory and inform law enforcement policy in order to better mitigate criminal activities. If a profile of current terrorist supporters can be established and then compared to these known profiles, criminological theory may be able to also inform the study of terrorism. Furthermore, if subculture patterns emerge within the data on current ISIS supporters, law enforcement may be better informed to mitigate and prevent future attacks by ISIS supporters.

Chapter Three

Data and Methodology

Contextualizing the Dissertation Research

This research project is an attempted first step in identifying known information about ISIS supporters in the United States. Unfortunately, there is not a known profile of ISIS supporters. Much of the publically available data on terrorism is outdated (TWEED dataset, ITERATE data) and does not apply to the current terrorist situation in the U.S (see data in Engene, 2007; Mickolus, 1982). As current official data is classified or unavailable, an alternate data source will be used in this research.

In order to explore the main research question, of who these people providing material support to ISIS are and how their profile compares to that of other non-traditional criminal offenders, court documents from seventy-one cases of individuals within the United States charged with providing support to ISIS will be utilized. This data is rich with information not only on the specific individuals, but also on their techniques, including use of social media and technology for communication with ISIS. The data is also applicable to this study as the court cases are recent (date when charged ranges from 2014-2016) and will be used to create a profile of what the current ISIS supporter looks like.

The finding of this study will be a ‘foot-in-the-door’ to begin examining ISIS supporters within the United States. This is important as the findings in this study could assist those on the

front-lines (law enforcement, other emergency responders, etc.) to recognize warning signs and intervene early with those at risk/in the process of becoming radicalized. Furthermore, by increasing awareness of the current state of ISIS support, and understanding more about these individuals, first responders will be in a better place to counter any radicalization/recruitment that is occurring.

Research Questions

1. Who are these pro-ISIS supporters and what are the characteristics and demographic details of individuals in the United States charged with providing support to ISIS?
2. How does their profile compare to the profiles of other non-traditional criminal groups?
3. What role can criminological theory play in the prevention, mitigation, and policy implementation of/against terrorism?
4. Does social media effect the application of criminological theory to terrorism, and if so, how?

Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is best suited for topics that little are known about. As asserted by Stebbins (2001), exploratory research is optimal when:

- (1) When a group or topic has received little or no scrutiny in the literature,
- (2) Has not incorporated flexibility into the above study, and
- (3) Has changed so much that it must be explored again (p.9).

The application of criminology to terrorism, specifically to ISIS supporters, is a serious national security issue, however little is known about the identity of these individuals. Furthermore,

tactics and trends of terrorism are constantly changing, making past research inapplicable to present day circumstance. Although there is not a lack literature on the motivations of other non-traditional criminal groups within criminology, the characteristics and motivation of ISIS supporters in the United States is relatively unexplored. “[A] program of exploration is a good practice, even in well-explored fields to ensure that new developments will find their way into established theory....” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 10).

Reliability and Validity

Although there is less concern with reliability and validity issues in exploratory studies (Silke, 2001), these issues still need to be taken into consideration. Validity is concerned with how accurately a group or phenomenon is portrayed. Reliability focuses on the replicability of the study; if another researcher would achieve similar results (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Fox & Jennings, 2014; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Stebbins, 2001). Reliability and validity are measured differently in exploratory studies, as compared to explanatory or confirmatory studies (Stebbins, 2001).

Often in exploratory research, validity and reliability can only be established at a later date, as researchers concatenate (replicate) their research (Stebbins, 2001). Concatenated studies link together research that builds off each study, and studies move from inductive to more deductive (See Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991: Figure 2), with the goal of progression from one level to the next (Silke, 2001). Studies at the beginning of the chain are less likely to have established measurement of reliability and validity than those studies conducted later. In fact, as there are multiple methods for establishing a criminal profile (Torres, Boccaccini, & Miller, 2006), and without prior research on what the profile of an ISIS supporter looks like, there is no criterion against which this exploration could be comparatively validated (Gunn & Robertson, 1976).

Nevertheless, some considerations must be taken into account, including the representiveness of the sample and sample size. Following Stebbins rule, “a minimum of thirty people per group, process, activity, or situation studied” (2001, p. 26), the number of cases of ISIS supporters used in this study greatly exceeds his suggested minimum. Using at least 30 cases is important as “it allows for the emergence of important categories and subcategories that will inevitably occur during the study...[and] these categories must have enough cases-four or five at minimum- to constitute a foundation for valid general exploratory generalizations” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 27). Furthermore, a secondary database will be used to help confirm the information gathered via court documents.

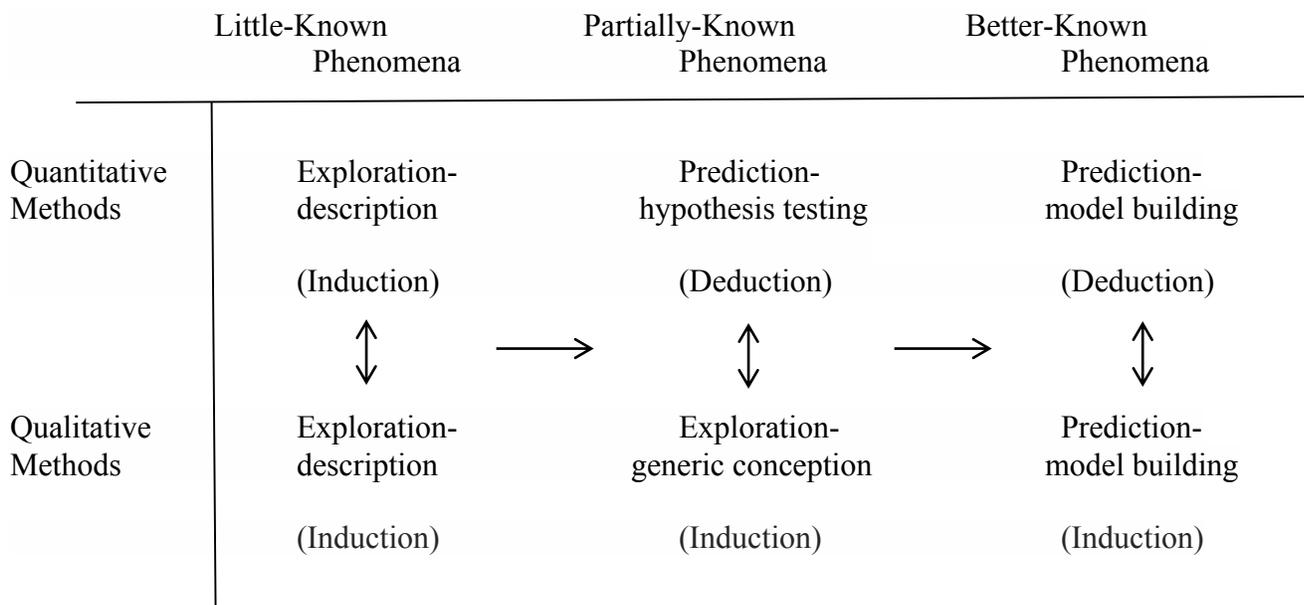


Figure 2: The Relationship of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods. (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991; as cited in Stebbins, 2001).

Data

The data used in this study is taken from open source documents, pre-collected by Vidino and Hughes (2015), and is publically available online at <https://cchs.gwu.edu/isis-in-america>. Secondary data is optimal when examining new questions with previously collected data (Glass, 1976) as well as conducting research on subjects of a sensitive nature. This use of secondary data in this study may also offer qualitative narrative that can better address the research questions (Long-Sutehall, Sque, & Addington-Hall, 2010). The original investigators are aware and approve of the use of the data for this current exploration. This study was approved by the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board 15 March 2016.

Court documents collected in 71 cases in the United States of individuals charged with supporting ISIS (see Appendix C) will be used to gather demographic and other data. Court documents include criminal complaints, courtroom minutes, detention hearing transcripts, continuing trial order, transcripts, indictment, motions to suppress, criminal discovery, general allegations, plea agreements, and detention orders (George Washington University, 2016). From these documents, data pertaining to the alleged ISIS supporter: age, gender, ethnicity, current location, birthplace, as well as travel activities and social media usage data will be collected and used to create a profile of ISIS supporters in the United States. These documents will also allow for the qualitative exploration of social media posts and dialogue. By deconstructing the social media dialogue of those accused and exploring the underlying meaning of the online dialogue, we may better be able to understand the subcultural characteristics of the environment which encourages individuals to provide support to ISIS (Feldman, 1995).

Court documents are often used in criminal justice and criminological research, as a way to avoid interviewing subjects or directly observing criminal behavior (Maxfield & Babbie,

2001). However, they may be especially helpful when studying terrorism, as it is a rare event that is not often observed, nor is interviewing terrorists often feasible. Since government data is often restricted, court documents provide an alternate data source appropriate for this study. By understanding how these documents are gathered, filed, and recorded, and ensuring that discrepancies in data are omitted; reliability and validity issues with the secondary data will be addressed (Jacob, 1984; Maxfield & Babbie, 2001). A second data source (The Counter Extremist Project) was also used to fill in missing demographic data on the alleged suspects as well as to examine the social media platforms used by the suspects. This data is also publically available via <http://www.counterextremism.com/extremists>.

As this study is exploratory, univariate analysis of the demographic variables will be combined with the qualitative analysis of the data to formulate a preliminary profile of individuals in the United States charged with providing material support to ISIS. Once a profile of these individuals has been created, it will be compared to the established profiles of other criminals groups/typologies (white collar criminals, organized crime, gang members, professional criminals, other terrorist typologies) to explore the degree to which terrorist supporters in the United States resemble these other criminal typologies. Findings from this study may help identify who these individuals are, how they compare to other known criminal profiles, and how the overlap may allow for criminological theory to be applied to terrorism. The majority of the analysis will be descriptive, examining patterns between the different criminal typologies. Qualitative data will be used to try to establish common characteristics of the subculture within which these individuals are radicalized. Due to the relatively small number of cases in this study, multivariate analysis is not appropriate. However, this descriptive analysis

may help laying the groundwork for future research to explore the application of criminology to terrorism using more advanced analysis and statistics.

Chapter Four

Results

Previous Findings

As reported by Vidino and Hughes (2015), the demographic breakdown of those charged with providing support to ISIS is extremely complex and difficult to generalize. Age, race, and background vary greatly between the individuals charged with providing support to ISIS (See Table 1). The use of social media, often excessively, was extremely prominent in the data. Travel activities, found overall to be infrequent by U.S. ISIS supporters, are detailed in Table 2.

Comparison to Non-Traditional Groups

Taking these demographics and comparing them to known profiles of non-traditional criminals, it is evident that we are seeing characteristics in ISIS supporters that have not been traditionally characteristic within these other groups, except for exhibiting some subcultural characteristics (see Table 3). Following the pattern of the other non-traditional groups, the majority of ISIS supporters are male; however, there are a higher percentage of female actors (14%), which needs to be recognized. Literature supports that terrorist groups are increasing recruiting females (Cunningham, 2003) and the data agrees.

Furthermore, the age range of ISIS supporters varies greatly, and encompasses age groups typical of gangs (15-18), organized and professional criminals (older), right and left wing terrorists (mid-late 20s), and white collar criminals (traditionally older). The average age of ISIS

supporters is 26, similar to the age of U.S. left and Right wing terrorists as well as former P-IRA members. The race and ethnicity of ISIS supporters varies, when compared to other non-traditional criminal groups. The majority are U.S. citizens, comprising a variety of ethnic groups. It is difficult to make assertions based on education and employment, as data varies across the cases.

However, when exploring the idea of a subcultural phenomenon within non-traditional criminal groups, there are similarities between the differing groups. However, as discussed in detail later, the ISIS supporter subculture is seemingly a virtual environment, where group autonomy is found via online chatrooms and social media.

In regards to recruitment, there are some similarities of ISIS recruitment to gang recruitment. The use of social media in terms of self-radicalization is present in both gangs (Carlie, 2002), and in the data on ISIS supporters. Much of the dialogue posted in pro-ISIS messages or in extremist chatrooms glamorized the goals of ISIS. Supporters were found to have multiple accounts on multiple social media forums, and if accounts were closed they would easily set up a new account, as one female supporter attested on Facebook:

- *“I love ISIS! They keep deleting my accounts because of it.”*

Table 1: Demographics of ISIS Supporters in the United States

Variable	n=71	%
Age		
Under 18	3	4.2%
18-23	35	49.3%
24-29	14	19.7%
30-35	3	4.2%
Over 35	12	16.9%
Gender		
Male	61	86%
Female	10	14%
Nationality		
U.S. Citizens	58	81.7%
Born in the United States	31	43.6%
Born Outside of the United States	13	18.3%
Bosnia	5	7%
Iran	1	1.4%
Iraq	1	1.4%
Jordan	1	1.4%
Kenya	2	2.9%
Saudi Arabia	1	1.4%
Sudan	1	1.4%
Syria	1	1.4%
Unknown	14	19.7%
Permanent Residents	6	8.5%
Other	7	9.8%
Social Media Use*		
Chat Rooms	2	2.9%
Facebook	40	56.3%
Twitter	19	26.8%
Tumblr	2	2.9%
Blogs	1	1.4%
Youtube	8	11.2%
Instagram	2	2.9%
Google+	2	2.9%
Other/Unspecified	5	7%
Email Use*	5	7%
Texting*	6	8.5%

*As reported in the court documents (Vindino & Hughes, 2015) and by the Counter Extremist Project

Table 2: Travel Activities of ISIS Supporters in the United States

Variable	n=71	%
Travel Activities*		
Planned/Attempted Travel	28	39.4%
Syria	17	23.9%
Turkey	10	14.1%
Egypt	1	1.4%
Middle East (general)	1	1.4%
Planned by US born citizens	18	64.3%
Successful Travel	8	11.2%
Syria	5	7%
Turkey	3	4.2%
Egypt	3	4.2%
Jordan	2	2.9%
Dubai	1	1.4%
Germany	1	1.4%
Lebanon	1	1.4%
Success by US born citizens	5	7%

*As reported in the court documents (Vindino & Hughes, 2015) and by the Counter Extremist Project

As the qualitative data indicates, especially via facebook and twitter, messages³ of support and allegiance to ISIS were prominent and included:

- *“I pledge obedience to the Caliphate Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Here we renew our pledge to the Caliphate Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi come on supporter where is the pledger”*
- *“Hate the kuffars [non-believers] and Oppressors and the likes, love the Mumineen [the devout];Inshallah [God willing] soon the Islamic state will take over Baghdad ya musulmeen”*

³ All direct quotes and messages were found in the court documents collected by Vidino and Hughes (2015), and can be found at <https://cchs.gwu.edu/isis-in-america>.

- *“Islamic State steps up #Libya attacks, targets Iran ambassador #BombAttacks #Iranian/Ambassador #Islamic State.”*
- *“I am Abu Amir al-Yemeni of the Quhayf tribe, and give my pledge to hear and obey Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi @zakareea20 @salil_sawarim @AsawirtiMedia”*
- *“Whose wisdom is better than God’s? The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. [Youtube video link]”*
- *“Oh, you who are defaming the Islamic State, its soldiers shall be present at time of death. Those who have brains ought think & learn.”*
- *“Baqiyah The Islamic state will remain, it has been established woe to you kuffar who aim your arrows in the direction of the Muslims be it here in America or abroad.”*

Furthermore, in response to an attack in Texas, one suspect tweeted:

- *“aatawaakul allahuakbar brother was it you?” “@atawaakul I love you for the sake of Allah brother may Allah grant you Jannat al ferdaus [highest level of paradise that includes martyrs].”*
- *“And just like that our noble brother came as a stranger and left as a stranger. May Allah accept him as a Shaheed [martyr].”*

Table 3: Non-Traditional Criminal Demographics*

	Age	Gender	Race	Education	Employment	Previous Arrest	Religion	Use of Social Media	Sub-culture
White Collar Criminals	Traditionally Older	Male	White	Higher levels	Employed	Low	Overrepresentation of Jewish population	No	Yes
Gangs	Younger (under 18)	Majority male	Hispanic and African American	Low	No	Some	Varies	Somewhat	Yes
U.S. Organized Criminals	Older	Majority male	White	Some high school	Some legit cover businesses	Some	Christian	Somewhat	Yes
Professional Criminals	Older	Male	Varies	Some high school	Blue collar	Yes	Unknown	Somewhat	Yes
Former P-IRA (n=1240)	Average age 25	95% male	White (82% born in N. Ireland)	Unknown	Majority blue-collar; 11.4% unemployed	Unknown	Majority Catholic	No	Yes
Palestinian Suicide Terrorists	Young	Male		Some high school	No	No	Muslim	No	Yes
U.S. Right Wing	Mid-late 20s	Male (92%)	white	Less than ½ with college	Blue collar jobs	Over 1/2	Majority (94%) protestant	Yes	Yes
U.S. Left Wing	Mid-late 20s	More women involved	white	Over ½ with college	Unknown	Approx. 1/4	Variety of religious backgrounds	Yes	Yes
U.S. ISIS Supporters **	15-47*** Average age 26	86% male	Varies ***	Varies ***	Unknown	Varies ***	Varies/Islamic sympathizers	Yes	Yes

*Data interpreted from research by: Chermak & Gruenewald, 2015; Finklea, 2010; Gill & Horgan, 2013; Handler, 1990; National Gang Center, n.d.; Pedahzur, Perliger, & Weinberg, 2003)

**Data from Vidino & Hughes, 2015

***As stated in Vidino & Hughes, “The profiles of individuals involved in ISIS-related activities in the U.S. differ widely in race, age, social class, education, and family background. Their motivations are equally diverse and defy easy analysis” (2015, p. ix).

Other accounts brag about future plans for martyrdom:

- *“Just thinking about getting martyred puts a smile on my face. One day soon inshallah”* and *“this is the perfect time...this shows Allah I’m not about this life.”*
- *“My life is for Allah, I am a soldier in His army. Even after I get my family to dowlah I intend to go in the cause. The best of mankind are the mujahideen. May Allah place me among their ranks.”*
- *“...but real men die on the battlefield. I don’t want to die in a cell. I don’t want to die surrounded by my children in my bed. I want to die on the battlefield. I want to die fighting. You know what I mean? I mean...if...I want to die [inaudible]...coming at me. I want them to have to put me down. The best warriors, and when I say warriors, I mean those to achieve the highest rank in paradise. They die fighting on the battlefield, you know what I mean? This is what God says...”*
- *“will see each other in afterlife inshallah”*

Qualitative Trends

Qualitative dialogue within the court documents can identify characteristics of this unique and emerging subculture. Data was obtained via social media, emails, instant messaging, and text messages. Of the 48 suspects found to use social media, qualitative dialogue was available for 41. A total of 483 messages, postings, and dialogues were examined⁴. Patterns that were found within the data include (1) pledging support for ISIS, both in word and in pictures, (2) Discussing recruitment and how to deal with family/friends who do not agree, (3) discussion

⁴ All direct quotes and messages were found in the court documents collected by Vidino and Hughes (2015), and can be found at <https://cchs.gwu.edu/isis-in-america>.

of weapons, (4) plans for (a) travel, and (b) attacks, (5) Anti-American/Israeli or Western sentiment, and lastly (6) statements of superiority (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Patterns of Social Media Posts: By Person

Trend	n=41	%
Support for ISIS	24	58.5%
Recruitment	13	31.7%
Weapons	8	19.5%
Plans	30	73.2%
Travel	17	41.5%
Attacks	13	31.7%
Anti-Western Sentiment	11	26.8%
Superiority	11	26.8%

Table 5: Patterns of Social Media Posts: All Posts

Trend	n=483	%
Support for ISIS	66	13.6%
Recruitment	28	5.8%
Weapons	40	8.3%
Plans	79	16.4%
Travel	54	11.2%
Attacks	25	5.2%
Anti-Western Sentiment	37	7.7%
Superiority	17	3.5%

Overall, future plans were the most common topic discussed, and discussed by the most people. Of those future plans, travel was discussed by more, more often, than attack plans. Statements of support for ISIS, both in words and pictures was the 2nd most common theme, with

58.5% of suspects posting at least on pro-ISIS statement, and 13.6% of all posts being pro-ISIS.

Pictures posted in support include a picture of a dead American Soldier captioned:

- *“Thank you Islamic State! Now we won’t have to deal with these kafir back in America.”*

A picture of Jihadi John standing over a dead man’s body was hyperlinked into the following post:

- *“ISIS is getting ready to attack Israel now? This is getting exciting, looking forward to see some yahoodi heads rolling, or dead bodies carrying their own yahoodi heads, and jihadi john doing this stance on them.”*

Other pictures include individuals holding weapons, signs, or banners and praising ISIS. In reply to a picture, one alleged supporter wrote:

- *“Lol bunch of tight Jeaned shiny faced kafirs. We should take them to a tall building and push them off because they look like a bunch of homosexuals.”*

Discussing recruitment was a major theme in the documents collected. Dialogue ranged from expressing general interest to discussing plans to go overseas to join ISIS. Of special interest are the third and fourth quotes (in bold), in which the individual asserts that they are currently a member of the United States military (Army and National Guard, respectively):

- *“I wish to be a mujahid akhi. I am willing to fight. I want to be taught what it really means to have that heart in battle!”*
- *“planning to go to Iraq soon to join the Islamic state of Iraq and sham in shah Allah...I’ll send you a couple of lectures tomorrow as well to get you familiar with*

fighting in Islam and all that...Love for shahada is so strong.. Okay well do some research on ISIS.”

- *“Not be easy but I’d rather struggle and strive hard in the cause of Allah rather than sit back and live a ‘comfortable’ life. And what you say is true brother but the banners are up. The State has been established and it is our duty to heed the call. InshaAllah we will complete our task or be granted shahada trying. And yes I look forward to the training. **I am already in the American kafir army** (back when I was still in this dunyah and not muslim) and now I wish only to serve in the army of Allah alongside my true brothers...**“I joined the united states army national guard about 3 years ago. I still currently have 3 years left that I have no intention what so ever of fulfilling.”**”*
- *“I will speak to my shahaba about this. I do not have any problems with your request and would be honored to help out however I can. My original goal was simply to fight and sever as a muhadjid. I’m not opposed to training the brother my only request is I be allowed to fight and earn my stripes in the field before being given such an honor inshallAllah. **Though I have trained in the U.S. army I have not been in combat with them and I refuse to teach my shabaha anything I haven’t tested myself yet.** This is my only request. Since I don’t yet speak Arabic fluently I will be in need of training.”*
- *“Yunus and I are working on fiq of jihad and fiq of Khalifah right now. InshallAllah when I arrive I will at least have the proper understanding of my duties and we can go from there inshaAllah.”*

- *“Remember something. If you are a Muslim and you have given bayah to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, you are a citizen of the Islamic State, it doesn’t matter. You can be from the North Pole. You feel me? You don’t have to be in Iraq or Syria to be a citizen of Dawla, to the Islamic...”*

Also within the recruitment discussion was discussion of what to do with family and friends who did not agree with their support of ISIS.

- *“That’s what I told him...but now he realizes he is bad and he is the sad one...but believe me...I’m not happy either...and he won’t go there...I gave him every opportunity to go there remember? I set him up with the brothers who gave him a contact name and number in Turkey to get him across the border when it was time for training...I spoke to another brother about it who said he was shocked he is sitting around waiting in Macedonia and he is going to call the emir and fix that and get him to Turkey...but my account was disabled so I couldn’t follow through with that. But I think he was just joking us about going.”*
- *“Wa alaykum salaam and Jzk Akhi for your dua. She worries so much but not because she doesn’t trust Allah, she does, but because she is so anxious to see her sisters and perfect her deen. Wallahi, I can tell that she loves her sisters that she has not yet me but she loves them because they are in Dawlah and they love Allah swt and I know that as soon as we reach Turkey In sha Allah, she will be relieved and that when we reach Dawlah she may nearly pass out from happiness. We make dua every night and in sha Allah we will see you soon Akhi.”*
- *“...many of the family members and members of the community do not support Dawlah...” “...Dawlah is correct.”*

In reference to her sister, one suspect asserted:

- *“She know ISIS because I told her about them and got her into liking them lol” ... “my dad is a little angry because I got her into all this jihad stuff.”*

The third major theme within the dialogue is the discussion of weapons. Included in these discussions were plans to obtain and/or create weapons:

- *“The big thing is guns.”*
- *“What I am gonna do is prepare fire bombs. I’ll do that today. T[hey] are cheap and effective.”*
- *“Really need the guns though. Otherwise it’s a waste of time for me to stay around here akhi (brother).”*
- *“You get the rifles. I’ll get the powder. Then next time we meet I want us to have at least those two things.”*
- *“Allahu Akbar!!! [Arabic phrase for God is great] I got the pressure cookers today. Alhamdulillah.”*
- *“I am no expert with our weapons but I can get the job done.”*
- *“To be honest I’m best with my side arm (handgun) and then my rifle. We are few in number compared to the kufar army but there are believers like myself hear in America and we wait and prepare ourselves for the orders of the Ameer. Either we will make it to dowlah or bring the flames of war to the heart od this land with Allahs permission.”*

- *“I can own handguns shotguns and rifles but no automatic weapons or heavy machine guns. We have plenty people here who have them and hide them so we will do the same.”*
- *“Yes, I want to learn how to make a controller bomb.”*
- *“Try to find out what we need to make it with a controller remote that’s the type of bomb we need to make and recruit.”*
- *“10x12 titanium steel bulletproof hard armored rifle plate level Ak-47.”*
- *“I got two bulletproof, just need the plate.”*

Specific plans for travel were also discussed. At the time of the conversations, all suspects were in the United States, so the conversations dealt with travel overseas. However, it is interesting to note that the majority of the suspects did not have plans, or at least did not discuss plans for travel to ISIS related areas. One factor that stood out in the exploration of this dialogue was the use of Turkey to travel though on their way to ISIS territory:

- *“I have been working and Yunus and his family are trying to get there birth certificates because they need those to get a passport here. We are all working toward our goal but it takes patience, this is why we gave ourselves to at least April or May. Need to get all the documents ready. InshaAllahour work will pay off. Now it seems we’ve found some other brothers here with the same goals as ours akhi. Still screening them but we will let you know.”*
- *“I am wondering about your travel route (is it still open or is the enemy on to it like the route from Turkey to Sham now). And home much money is needed to make this hijrah? Yunus and I have already spoken and we both wonder the same thing. I am ready with my passport and such things now but his family is still preparing. I will go*

first and train in the army. inshaAllah and they will follow once they have everything then need to escape this land of kufar and shirk. [...] We are meeting a brother soon who claims to have connects to travel as well but Yunus and I trust you so we ask you as well.”

- *“I know several Muslims have been caught attempting the Turkey route so tell me why not many americans take the Egypt route. I am open to either way. I think it would raise less alarms on my end if I take the second route...either way I’m still coming.”*
- *“The tickets are bought and my trust is in Allah. I can only move forward now. I am fine being in Egypt, Sham, or Libya to be honest akhi. I just want to answer the call.”*
- *“When you get to turkey, they might ask if you have enough money back from turkey for like a return ticket. Tell them your friend will be paying or something. Just make an excuse that you have the money to go back. If you have your card, show them it and say you have like 2 grand in there”*
- *“I need help crossing from Turkey to Syria with my hijjah partner. We will leave before August Ukti and we don’t know Turkey at all very well. (I haven’t even travelled outside U.S. before).” “Alhamdulillah Ukti, and yes we are. We know this is the true Khalife.”*
- *“Alhamdulillah Ukti, and we have saved some expenses. In sha Allah it will be enough, will we need to pay for a taxi or train? You don’t need to tell me specifics but we just want to calculate to make sure we have enough.” “You will leave IS to come get us in Istanbul?”*

- *“But a brother I talked to told me that if I get to Tuela, he would send the brothers to pick me up, he told me that. In which part of turkey is that Tuela located?”*
- *“Actually, I can say, ‘I am going to Uzbekistan to visit the relatives.’ Then get off in Russia, then from Russia to Turkey. From Turkey we can go there.”*

Discussion about attacks and attack plans was also a heavily prominent theme. Both coordinated attacks and lone-wolf attacks were discussed in regards to vulnerable targets and methods to avoid detection:

- *“I believe that we shout just wage jihad under our own orders and plan attacks and everything.”*
- *“We already got a thumbs up from the Brothers over there and Anwar al Awlaki before his martyrdom and many others.”*
- *“I believe we should meet up and make our own group in the alliance with the Islamic State here and plan operations ourselves.”*
- *“We can surely do something. Even the kaffirs here are fighting the police and government so we can really strike harder in true cause of Allah. The biggest and hardest thing is staying under their radar. Right. Here they hide and some even pretend to be friends...We’d like to cause as much damage and mayhem as possible before being granted shahada.”*
- *“It would be hard to pull off a larger scale attack on the government but police stations and courts are pretty easy and its been done before by kufar sometimes just one person.”*
- *“Plans have been made. Now we need to get the funds for our travels and build our arsenal here. That’s what we are working at now.”*

- *“I will just go and buy a machine gun, AK-47, go out and shoot all the police.”*
- *“It is legal in America to carry a gun. We will go and purchase one handgun... then go and shoot one police officer. Boom....Then, we will take his gun, bullets and a bulletproof vest...then, we will do the same with a couple of others. Then we will go to the FBI headquarters, kill the FBI people....”*

One subject, who seems new to ISIS, was especially concerned with the assassination of the President, and if, by doing so, they would be considered a martyr if killed in the process:

- *“Greetings! We too wanted to pledge our allegiance and commit ourselves while not present there. I am in USA now but we don’t have any arms. But is it possible to commit ourselves as dedicated martyrs anyway while here? What I’m saying is, to shoot Obama and then get shot ourselves, will it do? That will strike fear in the hearts of infidels”*

And he asserted that he needed help leaving America:

- *“Can you provide me Fatwa to my circumstances? First, I am in the land of infidels. If right now I decide to go to the airport and go anywhere, except for Uzbekistan, they may arrest me. It’s what I told them about Obama. ‘If I contact with someone from the Caliphate, pledge oath, and then if they order me to kill Obama if the order is based on the Quran and Sunnah, if I have what I need, i.e guns, then for Allah, and my intentions, and because he is an enemy of Allah, I will execute Obama’, I said. Even after these words, they left me alone, Why? Because they think I am establishing a Jihadi group, or I belong to such group, Allah knows the best. My parents in Uzbekistan, sometimes they worship and practice Islam, sometimes they do idolatry.*

My sisters are uncovered, lack knowledge of a religion. I wish they knew at least how to cover themselves up. What should I do? I need to sneak out of here with extreme caution without being noticed by them...

Another prevalent theme in the postings and dialogue was Anti-American/Israeli/Western Sentiment.

- *“I can’t wait for another 9/11, Boston bombing, or Sandy Hook!!!”*
- *“I’m American by birth not choice. Easily I’m African American and native American so this country has made my people suffer years. Casualty of war. I would gladly take part in an attack on this murderous regime and the people.”*
- *“I’ll be proud when I shed American blood.”*
- *“Somebody should park a car bomb in front of a church, school, or mall.”*
- *“Death to Israel, Death to America. Free Syria. Free Palestine.”*
- *“Death to Israel!!!”*
- *“13 Israeli soldiers killed today, if that’s not cause for celebration I don’t know what is.”*
- *“This is what happens when you bomb women and children and get caught. Alhumdullilah I was worried for a while they might let that murderer go.”*
- *“232 killed in #Kobane 27 killed in #Kuwait 1 killed in #France 39 killed in #Tunisia Dawlatul Islamiya Baqiya!!! Allahu Akbar!!!!”*
- *“Yet, their cursed secular laws are worse than the laws of Islam, and they want to say Shari’ah is worse than their secular laws. A bunch of morons sucking on melons.” “If the goddam Americans and sons of satan, Israeil wanna mutilate the dead, shit, we*

get an eye for an eye fool. Grow a set of nuts! Climb that fuckin tree and getcha some.”

- *“Honestly can we not kill one piece of crap Zionist?”*

Finally, these cases were rich with statements of superiority and threats to continue attacks until the American will to fight is broken.

- *“In all honesty the best way to bet them is to break their will. With the U.S. no matter how many you kill they will keep coming unless the soldiers and American public no longer have the will to fight.”*
- *“If we can break their spirits we will win. Whenever we attack them instead of killing them all try to take a few as prisoners for either ransom or to show the world the hours the kufar army will suffer at the hands of the lions of Allah.”*
- *“Knowing that we will never stop striving in the case of all will break them. They are terrified now! This is why when they suspect someone of being pro dawlah they send 20 or 30 highly armed police and military personnel to arrest them. They send 20 or 30 for one or two people out of fear. Allah (swt) said for every one of us that stands firm 10 of them will fall! Use the istihad missions to stick fear in their hearts! They will fold!”*
- *“The American identity is dead. Even if I get caught, I’m whatever...I’m through with America. Burn my ID.”*
- *“No American citizen is safe, fisabilillah they are all valid target. Until our brothers and sisters are free from imprisonment, harassment, torture, bombs, and bullets American will bleed inshallah.”*

- *“...we will destroy America and divide it in two, we will raise our black flag on top of your white house and any president on duty (cut head). There will be no one against us, the Islamic state. No matter how many brothers of us they kill...or leaders, we always will have leaders for us to follow, they will never destroy the Islamic state and Abu Bakr al Baghdady, we will keep going forward, how we are now on U.S. Soil, FLORIDA, NEW YORK, TEXAS, OHIO, CALIFORNIA, MICHIGAN, CANADA THERE is a lot of us there, too. We are everywhere and we are not going to stop, until we create the caliphate and seek our enemy and kill them, where we find them.”*

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

The overarching goal of this exploratory study was to attempt to take a first step into identifying the current state of ISIS supporters in the United States, and compare what we find to known profiles of other non-traditional criminal offenders. One common aspect other non-traditional offenders is the development of a subculture-type atmosphere that supports the norms and goals of the offenders. By determining what common factors are present within these subcultures, law enforcement and policy makers can identify common characteristics to assist in recognition of a potential criminal and/or crime.

After the San Bernardino and Orlando attacks, even more focus has been put on home-grown or self-radicalization within the United States. Although the majority of the alleged ISIS supporters are male, their age and race varied greatly. There are active criminal charges of providing support to ISIS in 24 states, and current investigations being conducted in all 50 (George Washington University, 2016). The majority of those charged are U.S. citizens, over half of which have never attempted or successfully travelled overseas. Furthermore, the connection between the suspects is extremely low.

As the connection between these individuals is low, it brings into question if the idea of a criminal subculture is applicable to ISIS supporters in the United States. However, the use of

social media by ISIS has been unprecedented and their propaganda is “polished, highly choreographed, and highly persuasive....and has an appeal to both converts and natural-born Muslims” (Horgan, as quote in Singal, 2014). Their recruitment efforts have resulted in the apprehension of over 250 individuals who were attempting to leave the United States and travel to join ISIS overseas.

Although the media and other sources often discuss ISIS recruitment and self-radicalization via social media and other online sources, it is important to note Facebook was the most widely used social media source, and only 27 individuals had evidence of pro-ISIS postings via Facebook. Overall, ISIS supporters on Twitter posted more than the average Twitter user, some up to 50 tweets a day on average (Berger & Morgan,2015), however in this sample, only about 25% of individuals used Twitter for pro-ISIS propaganda.

Of those suspects who did use social media, it did appear that their actions followed Berger’s suggested pattern or recruitment. As the literature asserted, once an individual seeks out ISIS, they create a micro-community (i.e. subculture?) so they can stay in constant contact with other pro-ISIS supporters. They may then shift to more private communications, as was illustrated by the use of email and instant messaging. Finally, social media action (pro-ISIS posts, travel to ISIS, territories, and plans of action will occur (Berger, 2015). Much of the dialogue obtained via the court documents, supports these assertions.

Upon examining the dialogue that was gathered, six main themes emerged. The majority of social media posts presented as evidence centered around:

- (1) Statement and affidavits pledging support for ISIS and/or specific ISIS leaders, both in word and in pictures,

- (2) Discussing recruitment and how to join ISIS including how to deal with/convince family/friends who do not agree with the decision to join ISIS,
- (3) Discussion of weapons, including typologies, access to, and plans to build,
- (4) Detailed plans for:
 - (a) travel, specifically from the United States to ISIS territories, and ways to avoid detection.
 - (b) attacks.
- (5) Anti-American/Israeli or Western sentiment, and
- (6) Statements of superiority, specifically that ISIS will not quit until America falls.

Using these themes to identify commonalities in Pro-ISIS social media may be a first step in establishing a profile ISIS supporters in the United States.

Emerging Profile

Although it is important to note that a rising number (14%) of ISIS supporters are female; the majority are male (86%), under the age of 30 (73.2%), and are United States citizens (81.7%). Of this number (81.7%), the majority (43.6%) were born in the United States, with only 18.3% born outside and naturalized. Furthermore, although less than 40% of suspects planned to travel outside the United States, 64.3% of those who did make plans to travel overseas were U.S. born citizens. Furthermore, only 8 (11.2%) successfully travelled overseas, but of those 8, 5 were U.S. born citizens. Finally, the use of social media by 67.6% of suspects, specifically Facebook

and Twitter, was prominent across the data. Using these demographics, criminologists and law enforcement may begin to build a basic profile of potential ISIS supporters.

Theoretical and Policy Implications

Criminological theory, as currently applied to non-traditional crimes, has not fully examined the use of social media and other forms of virtual communication in its application. For example, Routine Activity Theory (RAT) has been used to identify organized crime and gang activity (Lyman & Potter, 2015). The three components of RAT: motivated offender, suitable target, and lack of guardianship have identified where gang activity is likely to occur, and with that information, law enforcement has been able to implement policies to reduce crime (situational crime prevention) (Horgan et al., 2016). Subcultural theory has also been applied to non-traditional crimes, examining the specifics of the learning process within the subculture (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955). Although these theories have been applied successfully in the physical world, it is unknown if their application would transfer to the virtual world.

As routine activities are established in the physical world, law enforcement can implement policies to reduce the likelihood of crime by increasing guardianship. The physical presence of gangs and organized criminals can alert law enforcement to problem areas. However, when physical contact and communication are absent, and replaced by virtual communication, previous methods of detection and mitigation may not be applicable. The aspect of subcultures has been used in gang and other non-traditional research, and it may be opportunistic for criminologists to examine in more detail the online arena of ISIS and ISIS supporters. By identifying a basic profile of ISIS supporters within the United States, and their activities online, law enforcement can implement policy to monitor and identify suspicious behavior.

However, as investigations move to the virtual world, policies must be examined where 4th Amendment rights are concerned. Questions of what constitutes a legal search of publically accessible social media, and if a search warrant is necessary, may cause problems for law enforcement working in the virtual arena. Furthermore, law enforcement personnel may not have the training to investigate behaviors and trends online. Because of this, law enforcement may need to update policy to collaborate more with private sector agencies, which may have the knowledge and skills to identify potential ISIS supporters via their online behavior. More research is needed in this area before assumptions can be made, but by recognizing and monitoring pro-ISIS online activities, may be a way to begin to understand the changing nature of radicalization within the United States and prepare law enforcement to deal with this evolving threat.

It is also important to identify what policy implications are *not* informed and/or supported by these exploratory findings. Although there is much concern and debate about ISIS supporters travelling to the United States to attack, when examining the current cases, there is a lack of support for this assertion. The majority of those charged with providing support to ISIS were natural born, U.S. citizens, many who never travelled overseas. Moreover, of those who did plan or success at travelling to the Middle East or ISIS-claimed territories, it was again U.S. citizens who were in the majority, many who were radicalized and making travel plans online. Although preliminary, these findings have major policy implications for detection of ISIS supporters within the United States as it seems that one concern should be with those *inside* our borders as much, if not more, than those outside.

Limitations

As this is a fairly new area of criminological study, there are some limitations that must be recognized. There is a lack of raw material (as Silke, 2001, refers to it, optimal data). While it would be beneficial to interview or collect primary data from those accused of or involved in terrorism, the opportunity to do so is scarce due to the sensitive national security nature of the issue. So not only is there a lack of empirical literature, but there is also a lack of relevant data. The issue of national security is constantly changing and data must be up to date in order to advise and inform theory and policy.

Due to the lack/availability of data, individuals wanting to explore this topic must gather and create their own data, often from newspaper articles or other public media outlets. Often these sources may be biased and by the time a dataset is established, the data points may be out of date and no longer applicable to the study. Being such, the decision to use recently collected secondary data to begin exploring this topic seemed appropriate.

The use of secondary data poses its own limitations. Constraints set by the amount of contextual data available, permissions set by the original researchers, and number of cases limited the advanced analysis that could be done within this study (Corti & Bishop, 2005). Specifically this study was limited by the use of only those court documents published online by Vidino & Hughes, 2015). This may have affected the number and content of social media pro-ISIS postings. If the use of such outlets was not admitted into evidence, there is no way of knowing the extent of use, if any, of social media platforms.

Adding to this, the lack of available raw data on other non-traditional criminal groups/typologies, at this time makes comparative statistical analysis not appropriate. Profiles of

the other non-traditional groups were compiled via the available literature, which was limited and consisted of some conflicting reports. The lack of advanced statistical analysis may be a turn-off to some researchers; however for the purposes of this study, it was not necessary, nor would have advanced statistics been particularly helpful. The purpose of this study was purely exploratory, and was meant to be a stepping off point for future criminological studies of terrorism, and specifically of ISIS supporters within the United States, to begin.

Directions for Future Research

Future research can build on this exploratory study, by expanding on the findings and on the idea of a possible online subculture of ISIS supporters. The difficulty will be obtaining the data, however, as social media accounts are often made public, there may be opportunity for expansion. Using data on past/retired terrorist organizations does have benefits in explaining behavior in the past, however, ISIS presents a new challenge to what is known about terrorist organizations, recruitment, and motivation and must be examined from a different angle.

Future research should look not only to examine the online activities of those suspected of supporting ISIS, but their daily activities as well. It may very well be that pro-ISIS online behavior is just one aspect of ISIS supporters in the United States. However, to get a better look into the lives of suspected supporters, a next pertinent research step would be to interview family members, close friends, neighbors, and other relatives, who may have insight on behavior patterns of the suspects. As was seen with the San Bernardino and Orlando massacres, not only did all three perpetrators post pro-ISIS messages via social media, but when interviewed after the attacks, family members admitted they saw recent behavioral changes in the individuals. It will also do well to remember that research in this area must be continuously updated, as the current

trends and threats change rapidly. If it is possible to establish a constant or pattern, there is much that the expansion of this study could contribute to policy and criminal justice procedures.

Conclusion

Criminology has much it can contribute to the study of terrorism. The application of theory can assist in the understanding of current trends and threats, and subsequently assist in mitigating future radicalization, recruitment, and attacks. However, methods of traditional theory testing and application may not be appropriate to apply to current terrorism data, specifically concerning ISIS supporters in the United States, as they seem to be moving from physical communication to virtual communication. This data is difficult to collect and/or obtain due to the sensitive security issue of the topic. Due to this, alternative data was used to explore the possibility of a criminological impact on terrorism studies. As there was no precedent for this research, other non-traditional criminal typologies were examined for comparison purposes. Although demographic data varied greatly between typologies, elements of a “sub-culture” mentality or arena were present in all. The current data was less than suitable for fully evaluating the subculture concept; however it did present an interesting aspect of the use of online social media, by ISIS supporters, in unprecedented amounts. If future research can build on this research, and examine in more detail the role of social media in the current terrorist subculture, policies may be created to help mitigate this supportive behavior before it turns into physical terror.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Exemption Letter 15 March 2016



IRB Study Processing Completed

To: Amanda Parker
RE: Social Media
PI: Amanda Parker
Link: Pro00023180

You are receiving this notification because processing has been completed on the above-listed study. For more information, please navigate to the project workspace by clicking the Link above.

Please note, as per USF IRB Policy 303, “Once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in eIRB. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change.”

If alterations are made to the study design that change the review category from Exempt (i.e., adding a focus group, access to identifying information, adding a vulnerable population, or an intervention), these changes require a new application. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project. Again, your research may continue as planned; only a change in the study design that would affect the exempt determination requires a new submission to the IRB.

DO NOT REPLY: To ensure a timely response, please direct correspondence to Research Integrity & Compliance either through your project's workspace or the contact information below.

Research Integrity & Compliance
University of South Florida - Research and Innovation
ARC Help Desk (eIRB, eIACUC, eCOI): (813) 974-2880
Email: rsch-arc@usf.edu
Mail: 12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd, MDC 35, Tampa, FL 33612-4799

Appendix B: Currently Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (USDOS, 2016)

- Abu Nidal Organization (ANO)
- Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)
- Aum Shinrikyo (AUM)
- Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA)
- Gama' al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group) (IG)
- HAMAS
- Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM)
- Hizballah
- Kahane Chai (Kach)
- Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) (Kongra-Gel)
- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
- National Liberation Army (ELN)
- Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)
- Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)
- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)
- PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)
- Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)
- Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C)
- Shining Path (SL)
- al-Qa'ida (AQ)
- Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)
- Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA)
- Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)
- Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT)
- Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)
- Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)
- al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA)
- Jemaah Islamiya (JI)
- Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)
- Ansar al-Islam (AAI)
- Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)
- Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)
- Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)
- Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)
- al-Shabaab
- Revolutionary Struggle (RS)
- Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)
- al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
- Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)
- Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
- Jundallah

- Army of Islam (AOI)
- Indian Mujahedeen (IM)
- Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT)
- Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)
- Haqqani Network (HQN)
- Ansar al-Dine (AAD)
- Boko Haram
- Ansaru
- al-Mulathamun Battalion
- Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi
- Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah
- Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia
- ISIL Sinai Province (formally Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)
- al-Nusrah Front
- Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)
- Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)
- ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)

Appendix C: List of Individuals Charged in the United States with ISIS-Related Activities (Vidino & Hughes, 2015, p. 35).

- Abdi Nur
- Abdirahman Yasin Daud
- Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem
- Abdullahi Mohamud Yusef
- Abdurasul Hasanovich Juraboev
- Abror Habibov
- Adam Dandach
- Adnan Abdihamad Farah
- Ahmed Mohammed El Gammal
- Akba jihad Jordan
- Akhror Saidakhmetov
- Akmal Zakirov
- Alaa Saadeh
- Alexander Ciccolo
- Alexander E. Blair
- Ali Saleh
- Ali Shukri Amin
- Arafat Nagi
- Armin Harcevic
- Asher Abid Khan
- Asia Siddiqui
- Avin Marsalis Brown
- Bilal Abood
- Christopher Lee Cornell
- David Wright
- Dilkhayot Kasmiov
- Donald Ray Morgan
- Fareed Mumini
- Guled Ali Omar
- Hamza Naj Ahmed
- Hanad Mustafe Musse
- Harlem Suarez
- Hasan Edmonds
- Heather Elizabeth Coffman
- Jaelyn Delshaun
- Jasminka Ramic

- John T. Booker
- Jonas ‘Yunus’ Edmonds
- Joshua Ray Van Haften
- Justin Nojan Sullivan
- Keonna Thomas
- Leon Nathan Davis III
- Mediha Medy Salkicevic
- Michael Todd Wolfe
- Miguel Moran Diaz
- Mohamad Saeed Kodaimati
- Mohamed Abdihamid Farah
- Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan
- Mohammad Hamza Khan
- Mufid Elfgeeh
- Muhammad Oda Dakhalla
- Muhanad Badawi
- Munther Omar Saleh
- Nader Elhuzayel
- Nadar Saadeh
- Nicholas Rovinski
- Nicholas Teasant
- Nihad Rosic
- Noelle Velentzas
- Ramiz Zijad Hodzic
- Reza Niknejad
- Robert C. McCollum
- Samuel Rahamin Topaz
- Sedina Unkic Hozdic
- Shannon Maureen Conley
- Tairod Nathan Webster Pugh
- Terrence McNeil
- Yusra Ismail
- Zacharia Yusul Abdurahman
- and
- (2) Unnamed minors (From Pennsylvania and South Carolina)

About the Author

Amanda M. Sharp Parker, originally from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is an Assistant Professor of Homeland Security at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. Campbell University hosts the first and only undergraduate degree in Homeland Security in the state. Parker completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Criminal Justice at East Carolina University. She has spoken nationally and internationally on a variety of topics within Homeland Security, including the applicability of theory to terrorism, cyberterrorism, the deep web, and cross-national issues in security. She is the proud mommy of Tatiana Marie (7) and Jaxon Christopher (5).