

THE LEGEND OF THE LONE WOLF: CATEGORIZING SINGULAR AND SMALL GROUP  
TERRORISM

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Keith W. Ludwick  
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Committee:

_____	A. Trevor Thrall, Chair
_____	Gregory Koblentz
_____	Colin Dueck
_____	Gregory Koblentz, Program Director
_____	Mark J. Rozell, Dean

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Fall Semester 2016  
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Fairfax, VA

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

By

Keith Ludwick  
Masters of Arts  
Naval Postgraduate School, 2008  
Bachelor of Science  
California State University, Sacramento, 1990

Director: A. Trevor Thrall  
Department of Biodefense

Fall Semester 2016  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to Mom and Dad. Thanks for helping me understand

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

- William Butler Yeats

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my wife, I offer my sincere gratitude for letting me pursue my goals. Your tolerance of my aspirations always amazes me. Thank you for making me fix the ceiling before getting started otherwise the hole would still be there to this day.

To Sarah and Sean, I apologize this project interfered so much in our daily lives, but I hope you will come to understand the benefits of setting and achieving goals. May your future be void of having to deal with the issues raised in this research.

To Dr. Thrall, not much more to say at this point than 'Thank You.' You have been a great mentor in this process, and not just for academic nuances. Time for a nice Quad I think. Dr. Koblenz and Dr. Dueck, your comments were invaluable.

Finally, to the men and women of the FBI. Thank you for all you do every day. Your unwavering, and often unnoticed, tenacity for upholding the Constitution is unlike anything in any other organization. Despite public perception, media hype, and significant misunderstandings, you continue to do your jobs every day keeping us free and secure. Stay safe.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBRN – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear  
CCTV – Closed Circuit Television  
DoD – Department of Defense  
DoJ – Department of Justice  
FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation  
FISA – Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act  
FISC – Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court  
GTD – Global Terrorism Database  
HVE – Homegrown Violent Extremist  
ISBSG – International Software Benchmarking Standards Group  
IRA – Irish Republican Army  
IRTP – Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004  
ISIL – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant  
LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)  
USA PATRIOT Act – The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001  
RICO – Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization  
SSGT – Singular and Small Group Terrorism  
U.S. – United States  
USIC – United States Intelligence Community

## ABSTRACT

### THE LEGEND OF THE LONE WOLF: CATEGORIZING SINGULAR AND SMALL GROUP TERRORISM

Keith W. Ludwick, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2016

Dissertation Director: Dr. A. Trevor Thrall

“Lone wolf terrorism” represents an overused and clichéd phrase adding confusion to the research of political violence. In response, this dissertation introduces a new framework based on mental illness and group association which better describes terrorism conducted by Singular and Small Group Terrorists (SSGT). This new framework describes and analyzes three new categories of terrorists: Zealots, Opportunists, and Strategists. Based on this new framework, a review of current laws and policy show a significant gap and demonstrates how the SSGT framework helps impact policy development. This study then creates a new database of known SSGT providing a basis for offering five suggestions for incorporating this new framework into the activities of counter-terrorism practitioners and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER ONE – Introduction

### Introduction

Most academics researching political violence recognize “lone wolf terrorism” as a growing trend.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, politicians often list “lone wolf terrorism” as the current biggest threat to the United States.<sup>2</sup> Despite a recent uptick in efforts researching “lone wolf terrorism” over the past few years, sporadic and inconsistent research has hampered analysis and policy development. Considering the notable increase in some terrorist incidents conducted by individuals or small groups over the recent past, it is critical we develop a better understanding of this type of threat.

A significant body of research strives to understand “lone wolf terrorism” as a function of whether a single individual has accomplices or if they are part of a group.

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<sup>1</sup> Rodger A. Bates, “Dancing With Wolves: Today’s Lone Wolf Terrorists,” *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology* 4, no. 1 (April 18, 2012): 11; Jeff Gruenewald, Steven Chermak, and Joshua D. Freilich, “Distinguishing ‘Loner’ Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence: A Comparison of Far-Right Homicide Incident and Offender Characteristics,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 12, no. 1 (February 2013): 82, doi:10.1111/1745-9133.12008; “Use of Small Arms: Examining Lone Shooters and Small-Unit Tactics,” Joint Intelligence Bulletin (DHS/FBI, August 16, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> For example, see “Obama Says Lone Wolf Terrorist Biggest U.S. Threat,” *Reuters*, August 16, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/16/us-usa-obama-security-idUSTRE77F6XI20110816>; Jeffrey Goldberg, “Janet Napolitano on Lone-Wolf Islamist Terrorism,” *The Atlantic*, September 9, 2011, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/09/janet-napolitano-on-lone-wolf-islamist-terrorism/244810/>.

However, this approach toward understanding political violence is wrong. Why is research focusing on defining a term dealing with political violence based on a number? There are differences between individuals or small groups vs. well-established, larger terrorist organizations, but when examining “lone wolf terrorism,” why do exact numbers matter? If only one of the Tsarnaev brothers, aka “The Boston Bombers,” had conducted the attack on April 15, 2013, could counter-terrorism practitioners do anything different to prevent the attack?<sup>3</sup> It seems unlikely.

Contributing to the lack of understanding of “lone wolf terrorism” is the semantics of the phrase itself. Within the academic literature, counter-terrorism policy, and even media reports, the phrase has gathered such momentum, and become such a part of the modern lexicon; it now describes a broad variety of violence conducted by individuals or small groups. Thus, the research to date struggles to develop overarching theories, hypotheses, or policies. The term “lone wolf terrorism” lumps together an assortment of situations with little consideration of the separate conditions, strategies, or dimensions of terrorism adding complications to research when defining data sets and attempting to create analytical boundaries. Additionally, this vague definition leads to inconsistent, and sometimes ineffective, policies providing little help for those charged with countering terrorist threats.

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<sup>3</sup> “1 Boston Bombing Suspect Dead; Massive Manhunt for 2nd,” *CBS News*, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201\\_162-57580380/1-boston-bombing-suspect-dead-massive-manhunt-for-2nd-the-white-hat-suspect/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57580380/1-boston-bombing-suspect-dead-massive-manhunt-for-2nd-the-white-hat-suspect/).

This dissertation proposes a shift in thinking to help better understand individual and small group terrorism without dwelling specifically on numbers of individuals involved in a terrorist attack. It examines individual and small group terrorism with the aim of developing a new categorization framework of this unique type of political violence. The new framework I propose moves away from the numbers argument and works to redefine “lone wolf terrorism” as a function of two articulable elements common to individuals or small groups committing political violence - specifically their group affiliation and presence/absence of mental illness. These categories will provide more pointed research and policy development against individual and small group terrorism. The framework aims to address the critical question: Is the current construct of “lone wolf terrorism” analytically useful for academics and policymakers?

My answer to that question is a resounding “no.” I demonstrate that instead of one nebulous category - “lone wolf terrorism” - there are three distinct categories more academically and analytically useful. This effort is more than just creating new terrorism typologies; it also provides empirical boundaries for future research and policy development. This dissertation also begins the development of a dataset for future academics to obtain definitive answers to long-standing questions such as “Who among ‘lone wolf terrorists’ are the most dangerous?” or “What are some of their common traits?”

To respond to the above questions, we need to disregard the common phrase “lone wolf terrorism” and instead focus on a phrase containing more meaning: Singular

and Small Group Terrorism (SSGT). I define SSGT as political or religiously inspired acts of violence committed by individuals or small groups, typically nine persons or less, against non-combatants or military outside of a war zone with the intentions of influencing governmental policy.<sup>4</sup>

Within SSGT are three categories – Zealots, Opportunists, and Strategists – each requiring specific understanding and description. Two main variables ground the development of these three categories: Group association and mental illness. Within the scope of this study, group association is the presence of a social identification with an existing, organized terrorist group and mental illness is the existence of some psychological disorder, as usually defined by mental health professionals, such as schizophrenia, narcissism, or depression. These two elements combine to categorize members of SSGT into one of the three categories as described below:

- Zealots include individuals working alone, or rarely in small groups, who have some mental illness.
- Opportunists represent those individuals or small groups lacking either group association or any mental illness.
- Strategists are individuals or small groups who display some group association but lack any mental illness.

In table form:

*Table 1 - Categorization Matrix*

	Strong Group Association	Weak/No Group Association
Mentally Stable	Strategist	Opportunist
Mentally Ill	Zealot	Zealot

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<sup>4</sup> I delve deeper into the reasoning of the value nine later in the dissertation.

The term “lone wolf terrorism” has impeded significant advancement of research and policy development in many ways. Using the SSGT framework offers several advantages over the previous understanding of “lone wolf terrorism.” First, the use of this imprecise and ambiguous term has prevented proper analysis of the threat. Due to differences in definitions of the phrase across government agencies, policy makers are currently unable to answer questions such as “what percentage of terrorist attacks are committed by individuals or small groups?” Second, the term has hampered academic research. What exactly is a “lone wolf terrorist”? Without a common definition, researchers struggle to develop empirically consistent methods of investigation. Questions such as “are those with religious ideologies more dangerous ‘lone wolf terrorists’” or “what role psychological association with larger terrorist organizations plays among those who operate alone?” remain unanswered. Finally, the term “lone wolf terrorism” has negatively influenced the development of policy. If we do not know how big the overall terrorism threat is, how can we develop policies and prioritize limited counter-terrorism resources to target the problem?

To develop this new framework, I began with the development of an academically defensible database of individual and small, unaffiliated groups drawn from existing datasets within the literature. This database incorporates a broad range of fields including demographic data, education, and social standing. The database will provide the “proof of concept” and serve to lay the groundwork for future investigations to expand upon and enhance to apply this and other new theories.



It is necessary to point out this research focuses on aspects of political violence conducted by individuals and small groups - not criminal violence such as mass shootings, murder, and assassinations conducted for purposes other than political reasons. As most terrorism researchers agree, acts of violence undertaken by individuals with political or religious agendas are different from crimes, so for context, this dissertation adopts the usual definition of criminal behavior as involving a person or group conducting violence or other illegal activity for personal gain with little regard to the political outcomes. This definition does not preclude a terrorist or terrorist organization from conducting criminal acts to generate revenue supporting their larger agenda of influencing governmental policy. The key is the major emphasis of the individuals' or groups' goals.

Hate crimes are a unique, and often blurry, boundary between terrorism and criminal behavior due to the similarities between the two. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines hate crimes as "...criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity."<sup>5</sup> For this dissertation, and to differentiate hate crimes from terrorism, hate crimes target individuals and groups in one of the protected classes listed previously but without the emphasis on influencing policy or governments. The violence targets individuals merely

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<sup>5</sup> "Hate Crimes," Folder, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, accessed October 22, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>.

to harass or 'eliminate' those of the protected class. Unfortunately, like numerous elements within terrorism studies, it will be impossible to provide a definition which fits every instance of violence definitively, and incidents which are at the edges of this definition need addressing on a case-by-case basis. Although it could undoubtedly be useful within criminological studies, and at times the lines between terrorism and criminal behavior will be blurry, the research within this study will focus on asymmetrical, political violence.

To begin this effort, Chapter 2 provides an extensive literature review regarding the current academic efforts concerning "lone wolf terrorism" with an emphasis on dealing with gaps in the literature to identify weaknesses in the current debate. Next, this research draws on the work of Ramón Spaaij, Ralph Pantucci, Edwin Bakker & Beatrice Graaf, and others who describe some commonalities and differences of "lone wolf terrorists" forming the basis for the development of my new framework using group association and mental illness. Chapter 2 concludes with a description of the coding mechanism for the SSGT framework.

Chapter 3 applies a mixed-methodological approach reviewing the data described in Chapter 2 both from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. It presents and defends case studies for each category, followed by exploring the details of the new database focusing on SSGT. This chapter ends by analyzing the database for new insight into the phenomena previously described as "lone wolf terrorism."

Chapter 4 provides a review of policy as it pertains to the outdated phrase “lone wolf terrorism” with an eye toward answering the question of whether existing law and policy, as well as the few statutes specifically addressing “lone wolf terrorism,” are best suited to address the threat from individuals categorized as SSGT. This review offers a reference point for discussing the impact of SSGT on policy. Using the FBI as a model, Chapter 4 demonstrates the struggles and problems agencies deal with when investigating individuals and small group terrorists.

Chapter 5 of this dissertation concludes the study outlining a five-point plan for implementing the knowledge gained from the research presented in this dissertation followed by suggestions for future research. The last section looks at the ‘big picture’ going forward with respect to who would be classified by SSGT.

## CHAPTER TWO – Singular and Small Group Terrorism in Context

### **Introduction**

To understand the issues surrounding the term “lone wolf terrorism,” this chapter begins with a brief review of the history of the phrase. Next, this Chapter identifies some of the shortcomings within the literature, specifically the definitions, psychological, and social aspects. After the literature review, a new framework addressing these deficiencies is introduced and lays the groundwork for a better understanding of so-called “lone wolf terrorism.”

### **Historical perspective**

The media and academia banter about the term "lone wolf terrorism" so much we forget this is a new phrase. The first recorded use of “lone wolf” referred to a prominent American Indian chief in the 1860’s & 1870’s, but this had little to do with terrorism.<sup>6</sup> Within criminal behavior, circa 1920’s, occasionally “lone wolf” referenced a

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<sup>6</sup> The American Indian Kiowa Chief (the Kiowa being from the Central Plains) who was referred to as “Lone Wolf.” Although not necessarily working alone, Chief Lone Wolf led several “terrorist” attacks against various U.S. forts and outposts.

“bandit or housebreaker who works without confederates.”<sup>7</sup> From a military perspective, during World War II, the Germans adopted a strategy of letting U-boat commanders operate with an unusual amount of autonomy to break up Allied convoys in the Atlantic shipping lanes; the print media often described them as “lone wolves.”<sup>8</sup> The first documented use of the term “lone wolf terrorist” was in 1955, when an article in *The Times* described a “lone wolf terrorist” as most likely responsible for a political bombing in Cyprus.<sup>9</sup> The phrase “lone wolf terrorism” has steadily increased in use since then.

To look at the increase another way, consider the use of “lone wolf” and “terrorism” in journal articles/books since the 1950’s.<sup>10</sup>

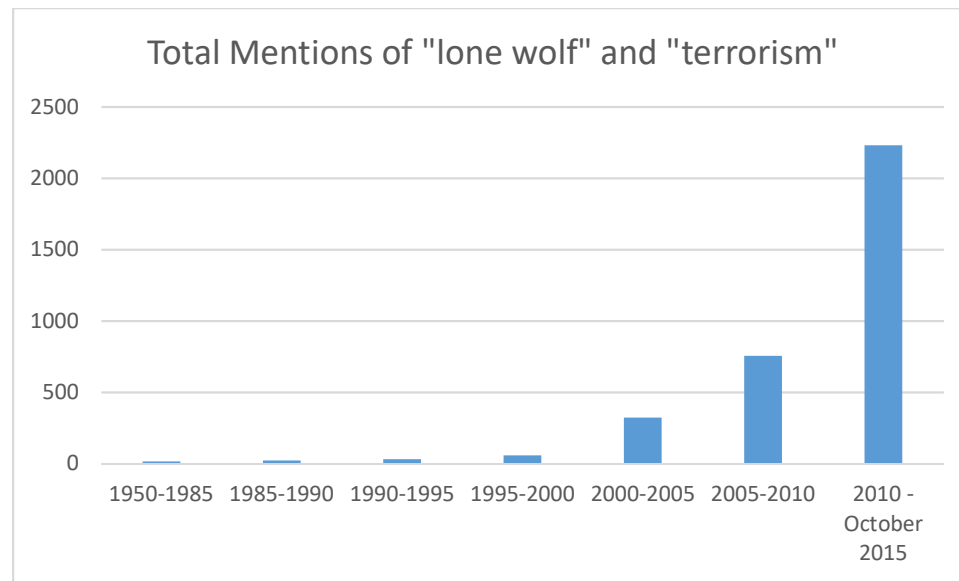
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<sup>7</sup> “Lone, Adj.,” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 19, 2013, <http://www.oed.com.mutex.gmu.edu/view/Entry/109964#eid38781474>.

<sup>8</sup> Max Boyd, “Ocean Warfare by Germans to Be Carried Out by ‘Lone Wolf’ Submarines,” *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, March 6, 1941, 143 edition.

<sup>9</sup> “Day of Talks in Cyprus,” *The Times*, July 11, 1955, 53269 edition, sec. Col A; “Lone, Adj.”

<sup>10</sup> Results from a search within Google Scholar limiting the dates based on years. Searches of Lexus/Nexus Academic, JSTOR, and a selection of other terrorism centric journals yielded similar increases.



*Figure 1 - History of the Utilization of the Term "Lone Wolf" and "Terrorism."*

This chart represents an approximate 600% increase in the use of the phrase since the year 2000, and over a 4,000% increase since the 1950's.

Broadly, from 1990-2000, academic literature did not focus on "lone wolf terrorism" as a specific threat or seek to understand individuals who worked alone. The literature seemed to use the phrase anecdotally as a descriptive term.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, during this time, researchers had not considered the idea of concentrating efforts on looking at the differences between group based and individual terrorism. The focus changed from about 2000 to 2010 as "lone wolf terrorism" solidly became part of the

<sup>11</sup> For example, see Jeffrey Kaplan, "'Leaderless Resistance,'" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9 (September 1997): 80, doi:10.1080/09546559708427417; Bron Taylor, "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! To the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 4 (December 1998): 11, doi:10.1080/09546559808427480.

English lexicon, most likely attributable to the aftermath of the Theodore Kaczynski and Timothy McVeigh trials occurring in the mid to late 1990's.

Throughout this period, the scholarly investigation into the specifics of “lone wolf terrorism” slowly increased as demographic information started to become a focus to profile, or at least begin to understand, “lone wolf terrorists.” Scholars began to refine the unaddressed questions surrounding individuals who commit political violence alone and began to look deeper into the specifics of the issues. As the literature review below illustrates, 2005 launched the serious investigation into “lone wolf terrorism” and how it relates to the overall problem of political violence.

### **Muddled Meaning, Connectedness, and the Psyche**

Presently, the conventional usage of the term “lone wolf terrorism” muddles the content of the available literature. The competing definitions and various analytical frameworks failed to provide much direction and cohesion in scholarly thought. Despite this, three broad themes emerged centered around existing definitions, group association of terrorists and their psychological aspects.

#### ***Meaning***

The most significant problem within the current literature on “lone wolf terrorism” is the focus on the number “1”, as the label “lone wolf” suggests. This focus on numbers, coupled with the lack of specific meaning of the term, prevents a deeper

effort toward understanding within the context of terrorism studies. Even as extensive terrorism research struggled with definitional issues for decades, researchers and policymakers moved forward and provided a solid foundation for research.<sup>12</sup> For example, we now have accepted categories of ideologies such as white supremacist, religiously inspired, and left-wing, allowing law enforcement and intelligence agencies to address these threats more effectively.<sup>13</sup> However, the overall lack of any consistency for defining or categorizing “lone wolf terrorism” impedes understanding and policy development. Consider journal editors, reviewers, and professors interpreting the term “lone wolf terrorism” without a defined level of consensus; this influences research when authors use definitions fitting the dataset they wish to create and introduces bias into what is “lone wolf terrorism.”<sup>14</sup> The framework developed within this dissertation solves this problem by removing the ambiguity of a clichéd term and replacing it with articulable descriptions having a single meaning. This framework provides the common ground from which future research and analysis can grow.

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<sup>12</sup> See Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1–40.

<sup>13</sup> As an example, consider the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act. Regardless of political arguments, the PATRIOT Act did develop policy using an understanding of how terrorist groups work to thwart law enforcement and intelligence agencies. For a discussion on this point, see Charles Doyle, “The USA PATRIOT Act: A Legal Analysis” (Congressional Research Service, April 15, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> For two examples, see Chris Dishman, “The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (May 2005): 237–52, doi:10.1080/10576100590928124; Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich, “Distinguishing ‘Loner’ Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence.” In both of these articles, the data used for their respective studies has been limited to one specific type of ideology to further their investigations.



A considerable amount of space in most articles discussing “lone wolf terrorism” focuses on the numbers of people involved while still considering it a “lone wolf” attack.<sup>15</sup> As stated in one report “Terrorism is commonly viewed as essentially a collective activity.”<sup>16</sup> A significant problem then arises in determining where the “cut off” is to define a “lone wolf terrorist” attack. It is easy to travel down a path where we begin asking...if two people work alone, is that a lone wolf attack? Three? Six? Usually, the articles throughout the corpus of literature do not devote considerable time to arguing numbers, but the issue weaves itself throughout the literature as the basis of definitions. In Clark McCauley, Sophia Moskalenko, and Benjamin Van Son’s article, *Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers*, they immediately start with a definition stating “...political violence committed by individuals acting alone.”<sup>17</sup> Fred Burton and Scott Stewart state:

It is important to define the term ‘lone wolf’ because many people – both in the militant realm and law enforcement and intelligence circles – misuse it or use it imprecisely. A lone wolf is a person who acts on his or her own without orders from – or even connections to – an organization.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Lone-Wolf Terrorism” (Instituut voor Veiligheids en Crisismanagement, June 7, 2007), 6; Beatrice de Graaf, “Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some CT Approaches Addressed,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5–6 (December 2011): 43; Ramón Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33 (August 16, 2010): 856, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2010.501426.

<sup>16</sup> “Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” 4.

<sup>17</sup> Clark McCauley, Sophia Moskalenko, and Benjamin Van Son, “Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 7, no. 1 (February 2013): 4.

<sup>18</sup> Fred Burton and Scott Stewart, “The Lone Wolf Disconnect,” *Stratfor*, accessed December 30, 2013, [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/lone\\_wolf\\_disconnect](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/lone_wolf_disconnect).

They go on to discuss “sleeper operatives” whom they define differently as a single individual who lays in wait to be recalled for operations later.<sup>19</sup> Although probably prudent considering the focus of their article, it still directly contradicts other definitions such as Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf’s in their article *Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some CT Approaches Addressed* where they state individuals who are part of a network need to be included in the definition.<sup>20</sup> It is evident that the significant effort devoted to defining “lone wolf terrorism” regarding numbers has hindered the ability to launch a deeper debate.

There are some articles providing suggestions for categorizing “lone wolf” groups based on their size. Raffaello Pantucci proposes four typologies of lone wolf terrorist: Loner (a single individual without connections), Lone Wolf (a person with some interaction with operational extremists), Lone Wolf Pack (a small group of Loners), and Lone Attacker (individuals acting alone but with an external control).<sup>21</sup> Pantucci’s article *A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists* concentrates on the issue of “lone wolf terrorism” as it relates to Islamic fundamentalism. Although significant, his work provides excellent analysis as it relates to this specific ideology of terrorism; however, it entirely leaves out broad aspects of the issue, making broader analysis difficult. For instance, when attempting to break down the definitions of his

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Edwin Bakker and Beatrice de Graaf, “Lone Wolves: How to Prevent This Phenomenon?” (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, November 2010), 44.

<sup>21</sup> Raffaello Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists” (London: Kings College, March 2011), 13–32.

various typologies, he starts with the description of the “Loner.”<sup>22</sup> He specifically uses an example of the individual who operates alone “...using the cover of extreme Islamist ideology.”<sup>23</sup> Granted, most academics would consider this technically correct, but it leaves out huge swaths of people who otherwise fall within this category and have no interest in Islamic fundamentalism such as Eric Rudolph or Anders Breivik. How can the research community look toward a typology toward understanding this subset of terrorism when it discounts a significant population of the possible dataset? These are useful, but they still base their categories on the number of individuals. While Pantucci does mention some aspects of organizational structure and command & control integrating various typologies, he barely mentions differences based on other factors and limits his analysis to those incidences of terrorism conducted by Islamic fundamentalists. Along these same lines, in another example, a Danish Security Intelligence Service report distinguishes between a “lone wolf terrorist” and a “solo” terrorist based on numbers and support from outside individuals.<sup>24</sup>

Many essays work to grasp the concept of terrorism conducted by individuals and small groups but provide imprecise characterizations and backgrounds rarely conforming to one another.<sup>25</sup> Ramón Spaaij starts his article *The Enigma of Lone Wolf*

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> “The Threat from Solo Terrorism and Lone Wolf Terrorism” (Danish Security and Intelligence Service: Center for Terror Analysis, April 8, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> For example, see Bruce Hoffman, *Inside terrorism*, Rev. and expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 40 and Ramón Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33 (August 16, 2010): 854.

*Terrorism*, with the discussion of terrorism in general then moves on describing “lone wolf terrorism” as: “...terrorist activities carried out by lone individuals [as opposed to] those carried out on the part of terrorist organizations or state bodies.”<sup>26</sup>

Often noted as one of the top terrorism experts of our time, Bruce Hoffman also strives to define “lone wolf terrorism” - “This type of networked adversary is a new and different breed of terrorist entity to which traditional organizational constructs and definitions do not neatly apply.”<sup>27</sup> Hoffman’s introduction of the term “networked” further complicates the definition by not including the unique individuals who operate alone. Most recently, Hoffman acknowledged the uselessness of the term “lone wolf” in a Tweet, “Lone Wolf is useless analytical category. Unabomber & Adam Lanza were LWs. Inspired by stated terrorist group strategy something different...”<sup>28</sup> These examples of inconsistencies, coupled with a lack of a significant body of research, make finding a baseline for research problematic. Furthermore, these inconsistencies throughout the academic discussion create a situation where researchers have yet been able to develop a data set of “lone wolf terrorism” for use by the community or terrorism scholars.

As an example of avoiding the issue altogether, Aidan Kirby provides an excellent case study of the “London Bombers” in his paper *The London Bombers as Self-Starters: A*

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<sup>26</sup> Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” 856.

<sup>27</sup> Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Hoffman, Bruce, “Lone Wolf Is Useless Analytical Category. Unabomber & Adam Lanza Were LWs. Inspired by Stated Terrorist Group Strategy Something Different,” microblog, @hoffman\_bruce, (June 14, 2016), [https://twitter.com/hoffman\\_bruce/status/742752855371616257?refsrc=email&s=11](https://twitter.com/hoffman_bruce/status/742752855371616257?refsrc=email&s=11).

*Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques.*

Kirby analyzes the radicalization process of four young men who committed the attack in London on July 7, 2005.<sup>29</sup> Although he addresses the analytical bias against this type of attack which initially took place, his paper fails to discuss how this clique of radicalized individuals fits into the overall terrorism debate.<sup>30</sup>

Even within the mainstream media and various governmental organizations, there lacks a standard view of “lone wolf terrorism.” NBC News does not directly define a “lone wolf terrorist,” but states “...small groups of individuals who decide to carry out actions for their own reasons... who decide to choose their targets.”<sup>31</sup> The National Journal defines “lone wolves” as “...extremists who self-radicalize and launch attacks with no outside guidance...”<sup>32</sup>

Finally, reviewing a broader sampling of the literature, we see several other terms such as lone offender, individual attacker, and solo terrorist.<sup>33</sup> These terms, often

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<sup>29</sup> Aidan Kirby, “The London Bombers as ‘Self-Starters’: A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30 (April 17, 2007): 415–28, doi:10.1080/10576100701258619.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 419.

<sup>31</sup> Alastair Jamieson and Michele Neubert, “Are ‘Lone Wolf’ Attacks the New Path to Terror?,” *NBC News*, May 24, 2013, [http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2013/05/24/18471226-are-lone-wolf-attacks-the-new-path-to-terror](http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/05/24/18471226-are-lone-wolf-attacks-the-new-path-to-terror).

<sup>32</sup> James Kitfield, “Were Boston Bombers Lone Wolves or Long Arm of Al-Qaida?,” *NationalJournal.com*, accessed May 1, 2013, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/were-boston-bombers-lone-wolves-or-long-arm-of-al-qaida-20130419>.

<sup>33</sup> Gary LaFree, “Lone-Offender Terrorists: Loner Attacks and Domestic Extremism,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 12, no. 1 (February 2013): 59–62, doi:10.1111/1745-9133.12018; Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists”; Randy Borum, “A Dimensional Approach to Analyzing Lone Offender Terrorism,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 17, no. 5 (September 2012): 389–96, doi:10.1016/j.avb.2012.04.003.

used by their respective authors as synonyms of “lone wolf terrorism,” center on a single individual, but other terms such as sleeper cell and phantom cell, are also interspersed throughout the media and academic journals.<sup>34</sup> The lack of consensus on a definition of “lone wolf terrorism” might be the best evidence that it could be time to give up the term altogether.

This discussion demonstrates we should not limit the study of this phenomenon to individuals; the definitions simply do not work. Literature and academics have struggled to define this sub-category of political violence resulting in a hodge-podge of definitions and weak frameworks. Instead, research should focus on **both** individuals and small groups shedding reliance on the perceived aspect of the number “1.” The key is finding common elements for directing the research.

### ***Connectedness***

The second most significant problem found within the literature of “lone wolf terrorism” is how it fails to incorporate the role of social connectedness or group association. A good way to demonstrate this concept is by asking such questions as How closely does an individual align their ideology with those of an existing terrorist organization? Does an individual adopt the ‘culture’ or behaviors of an existing terrorist

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<sup>34</sup> Raffaello Pantucci, “What Have We Learned about Lone Wolves from Anders Behring Breivik?,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 5, no. 5–6 (December 2011): 27–42; Liesbeth Van der Heide, “Individual Terrorism: Indicators of Lone Operators” (Master’s Thesis, University of Utrecht, 2011).

organization? Despite not being a formal member of the terrorist organization, do they follow the activities of the organization and identify with their successes and failures? The literature within this area of investigation demonstrates the importance of group association but unsuccessfully incorporates it concretely into a workable framework for study.

General terrorism research establishes the role of social cohesion and identity, but much less so within the smaller set of “lone wolf terrorism.”<sup>35</sup> In some cases, the literature incorrectly uses concepts resulting in more confusion and inconsistency. As an example, the media and public often interchange “lone wolf” and leaderless resistance. Leaderless resistance, a concept initially endorsed by the radical right/white supremacy movement – most notably Louis Beam - describes a strategy or tactic of autonomous cells working in support of a larger effort.<sup>36</sup> George Michael’s book, Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance, presents a perfect example of this mixing of terms, even within the book’s title.<sup>37</sup> In Roger Bates’s paper “Dancing with Wolves,” he intermingles the terms “lone wolf terrorist” and leaderless resistance with

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<sup>35</sup> For examples of social studies for the overall terrorism issue, see Seth J. Schwartz, Curtis S. Dunkel, and Alan S. Waterman, “Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (May 28, 2009): 537–59, doi:10.1080/10576100902888453; Steve Ressler, “Social Network Analysis as an Approach to Combat Terrorism: Past, Present, and Future Research,” *Homeland Security Affairs* II, no. 2 (July 2006): 1–10; Jerrold M. Post, “When Hatred Is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-Cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism,” *Political Psychology* 26, no. 4 (August 2005): 615–36, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2005.00434.x; Donald Black, “The Geometry of Terrorism,” *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 1 (March 2004): 14–25.

<sup>36</sup> Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance” 1983.

<sup>37</sup> George Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10576433>.

little or no regard to the consideration if they are the same.<sup>38</sup> This confusion alludes back to the previous section regarding definitions. Even within a subset of “lone wolf terrorism,” there is a struggle to distinguish between a type of terrorist (the “lone wolf terrorist”) and a tactic (leaderless resistance).

For a considerable amount of time, the term “lone wolf” focused almost exclusively on the strategy of political violence used by the white supremacy movement, particularly from the late 1980’s to the end of the 1990’s. Usually credited to the likes of Tom Metzger, Alan Curtis, and Louis Beam, the term became more ingrained in the lexicon of terrorism studies when describing those involved with political violence in support of racial ideologies.<sup>39</sup> Michael’s book devotes the entire second chapter into analyzing several white supremacy groups such as The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord, The Order, and Posse Comitatus and how their leaders encouraged leaderless resistance.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, *Rise of Leaderless Resistance* fails to cover any categorization of leaderless resistance or “lone wolf terrorism.” Regardless of these uncertainties, the important point for this dissertation is the relationship of leaderless resistance to the concept of group association, covered in more detail in a later section.

Another concept that fits within the connectedness aspect of terrorism would be ‘fictive kin.’ Fictive kin centers on the idea of ‘adopting’ non-family members with no

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<sup>38</sup> Bates, “Dancing with Wolves: Today’s Lone Wolf Terrorists,” 1.

<sup>39</sup> For further information, see the Anti-Defamation League’s website at <http://www.adl.org>.

<sup>40</sup> Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance*, chap. 2.



blood or ancestry relation into a close, family-like, personal relationship.<sup>41</sup> A concept only recently applied to terrorism studies, specifically Scott Atran's investigation into suicide bombings, it incorporates the idea that individuals feel a connection to those whom they form strong 'family-like' bonds.<sup>42</sup> This interesting concept shows promise but has limitations when applied to "lone wolf terrorism" including requiring close, personal contact with several others who work to commit political violence. Its applicability to "lone wolf terrorism" has yet to be shown.

Amplifying group association's impact, the internet plays a strong role in recruitment, radicalization, and communication for "lone wolf terrorists." As stated by Jeffrey Kaplan, Heléne Lööw, and Leena Malkki, "The Internet and social media are among major recent developments enabling communication in ways and in scope that was not possible before."<sup>43</sup> Although the literature on this specific topic is growing, the use of social media by terrorists and their organizations has far outpaced academic investigation, with most articles mentioning it anecdotally without the full attention it deserves.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> George Ritzer, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (Oxford, UK, Malden, USA and Carlton, Australia: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/b.9781405124331.2007.x>.

<sup>42</sup> Scott Atran, "Genesis of Suicide Terrorism," *Science* 299, no. 5612 (2003): 1534–39.

<sup>43</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, Heléne Lööw, and Leena Malkki, "Introduction to the Special Issue on Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 2, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.854032.

<sup>44</sup> One exception, see J.M. Berger, "Tailored Online Interventions: The Islamic State's Recruitment Strategy," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 10 (October 2015): 19–23.

Several books mention access to the Internet as a common theme of the radicalization of the “lone wolf.” Usually, academics credit Marc Sageman’s Leaderless Jihad as one of the first substantial works stating the impact of the Internet on terrorist groups. He notes,

The Internet can encourage another special case, namely loners. These loners appear as ‘lone wolves’ only offline. Most are part of a forum, where they share their plans and are encouraged by chat room participants to conduct them.<sup>45</sup>

Academic journals often discuss the Internet’s role in the radicalization process due to applicability to “lone wolf terrorism.” Kirby states, “The role of the Internet in facilitating the emergence of self-starters cannot be overstated.”<sup>46</sup> Others who come to a similar conclusion include Burton and Stewart, Gabriel Weimann, and Pantucci.<sup>47</sup> Some research looks at the on-line radicalization process as a potential avenue for detecting politically violent individuals. Joel Brynielsson et al. present an analysis method of on-line data useful for determining “weak signals.”<sup>48</sup> Although beneficial and intriguing, it uses a broad definition of “lone wolf terrorism” generating possible confusion as to what the study includes. Other books, such as Simon’s Lone Wolf

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<sup>45</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 122.

<sup>46</sup> Kirby, “The London Bombers as ‘Self-Starters,’” 425.

<sup>47</sup> Burton and Stewart, “The Lone Wolf Disconnect”; Gabriel Weimann, “Lone Wolves in Cyberspace,” *Journal of Terrorism Research* 3, no. 2 (September 22, 2012): 2, <http://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/jtr/article/view/405>; Pantucci, “What Have We Learned about Lone Wolves from Anders Behring Breivik?,” 33.

<sup>48</sup> Joel Brynielsson et al., “Harvesting and Analysis of Weak Signals for Detecting Lone Wolf Terrorists,” *Security Informatics* 2, no. 1 (July 10, 2013): 11, doi:10.1186/2190-8532-2-11.

Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat and Michael's previously mentioned book also describe in detail the impact of the Internet on those involved with "lone wolf terrorism."<sup>49</sup>

It is evident the Internet provides the average individual access to unparalleled amounts of information. Numerous authors conclude this represents the most disconcerting fact to this unique aspect of terrorism. "The tactical and operational tradecraft that can be gleaned from the thousands of existing sites is comparable to that once only available in physical training camps."<sup>50</sup> Weimann's "Lone Wolves in Cyberspace" extensively describes instances of training and education for singular and small group terrorists.<sup>51</sup> Some resources specifically detail how individuals are seeking information regarding how to engage in political violence.<sup>52</sup>

Several authors and researchers make distinctions regarding those who might have received advice or guidance on-line when planning their attacks.<sup>53</sup> As an example, the actions of Maj. Nidal Hasan on November 9, 2009, illustrate the essence of this

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<sup>49</sup> Jeffery D. Simon, *Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat*, n.d., 22–28; Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance*, 89.

<sup>50</sup> Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters,'" 425.

<sup>51</sup> Weimann, "Lone Wolves in Cyberspace."

<sup>52</sup> Bakker and de Graaf, "Lone Wolves: How to Prevent This Phenomenon?," 4; Bates, "Dancing with Wolves: Today's Lone Wolf Terrorists," 1; Brynielsson et al., "Harvesting and Analysis of Weak Signals for Detecting Lone Wolf Terrorists," 1–2; Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance*.

<sup>53</sup> Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, chap. 6; "Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 51; Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters,'" 416; John Andrews, "Case Study: The Lone Wolf Killer," *The Counter Terrorist*, September 2009, 7.

problem.<sup>54</sup> His communications with a known terrorist clearly bring his associations into question.<sup>55</sup> Hasan's on-line communication has been a key argument into the discussions of whether Hasan was a terrorist or his actions were the result of "workplace violence."<sup>56</sup> This issue regarding Hasan is explored further in a later section.

The inevitable exploitation of the Internet for nefarious means and the potential anonymity it provides exemplifies its utility to violent actors. The internet's ability to bring critical information, such as tutorials on bomb-making or geographical information, makes a strong argument regarding the increase of attacks over time. There is also a concern that the Internet makes it easier than ever to engage in the study and dissemination of extremist views.<sup>57</sup> The Internet becomes a force multiplier, allowing individuals and small groups access to the knowledge of literally billions of others. Could law enforcement agencies develop specific policies enabling them to target different types of terrorist groups or organizations differently? The currently available literature regarding "lone wolf terrorism" does little to help answer these questions.

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<sup>54</sup> Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins, "A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Governments Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack," February 3, 2011, 27.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>56</sup> Patrik Jonsson, "With Nidal Hasan Bombshell, Time to Call Fort Hood Shooting a Terror Attack?," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 5, 2013, <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2013/0605/With-Nidal-Hasan-bombshell-time-to-call-Fort-Hood-shooting-a-terror-attack>.

<sup>57</sup> Katie Cohen et al., "Detecting Linguistic Markers for Radical Violence in Social Media," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 246–47, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.849948.

The literature glosses over social connectedness and group association without strong efforts to tying this element to the overarching issue of “lone wolf terrorism.”

The SSGT framework addresses this by incorporating group association into the categorization of these individuals and demonstrates how integral and important it is to understanding this type of political violence.

### ***Mind***

The psychological study of “lone wolf terrorism” only began to become part of the academic debate recently. For the topic of general terrorism, during the early period of research, the discussion focused on applying psychological models to help understand individuals who conduct political violence to determine possible explanations for their behaviors.<sup>58</sup> Decades of study revealed in most cases people who engage in political violence do not exhibit mental abnormalities.<sup>59</sup> The traditional thought fixated around “rational actors” who made their choices freely based on sound

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<sup>58</sup> J. Victoroff, “The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 3–42, doi:10.1177/0022002704272040; Bruce Michael Bongar, *Psychology of Terrorism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=167608>; David W. Brannan, Philip F. Esler, and N. T. Anders Strindberg, “Talking to ‘Terrorists’: Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (January 2001): 3–24, doi:10.1080/10576100118602; D. Canetti-Nisim et al., “A New Stress-Based Model of Political Extremism: Personal Exposure to Terrorism, Psychological Distress, and Exclusionist Political Attitudes,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (May 4, 2009): 363–89, doi:10.1177/0022002709333296; Post, “When Hatred Is Bred in the Bone”; Emily Corner and Paul Gill, “A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness and Lone-Actor Terrorism,” *Law and Human Behavior* 39, no. 1 (2015): 23–34, doi:10.1037/lhb0000102.

<sup>59</sup> Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley, “The Psychology of Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 24 (June 2011): 123, doi:10.1080/09515070.2011.581835; Victoroff, “The Mind of the Terrorist,” 12.

reasoning.<sup>60</sup> The academic community has spent considerable effort attempting to develop a psychological profile of people involved in political violence. Unfortunately, most researchers agree these efforts did not bear much fruit.<sup>61</sup>

Because of the varied backgrounds, ideologies, and experiences of “lone wolf terrorists,” reviews of psychological commonalities made it difficult to ascertain trends, but researchers attained some success in determining a few individuals engaging in “lone wolf terrorism” do suffer from some degree of mental illness. Jeff Gruenewald, Spaaij, McCauley, and others document psychological disturbances of some individuals conducting these attacks.<sup>62</sup> In the past, few researchers dedicated full articles to the study of the psychological aspects of “lone wolf terrorism” academic articles with this focus were rare. Recently, however, articles such as “The Psychology of Lone Wolf Terrorism” by Moskalenko and McCauley and “A Review of Lone Wolf Terrorism” by Matthijs Nijboer devote significant effort to studying psychological aspects of single individuals; many others provide a brief overview.<sup>63</sup> Although these studies were relevant and proved critical to the overall study of “lone wolf terrorism,” their conclusions on the impact of mental illness on “lone wolf terrorism” were varied, mostly

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<sup>60</sup> Ami Pedahzur, *Suicide Terrorism* (Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity, 2005), 26.

<sup>61</sup> One example: “[Psychology] and other interpretations certainly offer partial (and complementary) insights, yet are unable to explain the phenomenon of ‘terrorism’ on their own.” Brannan, Esler, and Anders Strindberg, “Talking to ‘Terrorists,’” 6.

<sup>62</sup> Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich, “Distinguishing ‘Loner’ Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence,” 77; Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” 867; McCauley, Moskalenko, and Van Son, “Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers,” 6.

<sup>63</sup> Moskalenko and McCauley, “The Psychology of Lone-Wolf Terrorism”; Matthijs Nijboer, “A Review of Lone Wolf Terrorism: The Need for a Different Approach,” *Social Cosmos*, n.d., 33–39.

because of a lack of consistent dataset. In a later section of this dissertation, I demonstrate how my new framework helps alleviate some of these inconsistencies.

Publications over the past five years have started to see things differently, beginning with McCauley et al.'s article *Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders* in 2013, which delved into psychological aspects of political assassins (assassins being a possible subset of "lone wolf terrorism").<sup>64</sup> Emily Corner and Paul Gill demonstrated that a "lone-actor" terrorist was over 13 times more likely to have a mental illness over a group based actor.<sup>65</sup> This study was significant in that it empirically reviewed 119 cases of "lone-actor" terrorists, alongside a comparable set of group based terrorists. It also represents one of the first articles that attempts to fully define what mental illness means within the context of the study of "lone wolf terrorism." They use a modified version of a definition of mental illness from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as basis for examining mental illness in "lone wolf terrorism," but still don't provide a concrete, definitive definition.<sup>66</sup> Gill followed up with a more detailed analysis of mental health in "lone wolf terrorism" in his subsequent book Lone-Actor Terrorists: A Behavioral Analysis coming to a similar conclusion that many more "lone wolf terrorism" suffered from mental issues than previously thought.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> McCauley, Moskalenko, and Van Son, "Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers."

<sup>65</sup> Corner and Gill, "A False Dichotomy?," 27.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists: A Behavioral Analysis*, Political Violence (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

A different, but related psychological approach is an increased interest by the public in the biographies of “lone wolf terrorists.” This interest resulted in an increase in the number of biographies and true crime novels which record the lives and motivations of some of the more notorious and unique singular terrorists. Books documenting the lives of Eric Rudolph, Timothy McVeigh, Ted Kaczynski, and others provide interesting reading and significant background information on these individuals, but rarely, if ever, provide policy implications or examine this type of political violence from a broader, more encompassing view.<sup>68</sup>

From a psychological perspective, up until very recently, there was a lacuna within this subset of terrorism studies concerning “lone wolf terrorism.” Few articles dedicate themselves to the psychological study of “lone wolf terrorism;” some mention a psychological perspective, but most do not even cover the topic. The problem of a lack of consistent meaning plagues those that do mention psychological study. This is due in part to the lack of an overarching understanding of what exactly is “lone wolf terrorism.”

Another significant problem with the term “lone wolf terrorism” is its inherent inability to contribute to meaningful psychological analysis. How do academics apply strict empirical research to a term that has ambiguous meaning? Implementing the

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<sup>68</sup> Pan Pantziarka, *Lone Wolf: True Stories of Spree Killers* (London: Virgin, 2002); Maryanne Vollers, *Lone Wolf: Eric Rudolph: Murder, Myth, and the Pursuit of an American Outlaw*, 1st ed (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006); “Ted Kaczynski Biography,” *BIO*, accessed August 30, 2013, <http://www.biography.com/people/ted-kaczynski-578450>.



label of “lone wolf terrorism” so broadly, and to such different types of individuals, makes the application of psychological concepts nearly impossible. Since most researchers consider “lone wolf terrorism” a different kind of phenomenon from political violence conducted by more established terrorist organizations, it is natural to attempt a fresh look at a psychological approach for the understanding of this type of political violence. Without a robust categorization scheme, we obtain mixed results.

As demonstrated by the discussion above, there lacks significant incorporation of psychological aspects into a strong framework. It is imperative that we reevaluate our schema for understanding “lone wolf terrorism.” The framework I describe below – Singular and Small Group Terrorism – meets this challenge by considering the literature, understanding the gaps, and applying previous ideas in a new way.

## **Illustrations of the Problem**

To illustrate the problem inherent with the term “lone wolf terrorism” and how the label obscures important differences within the category of terrorism, I compare three individuals who have become synonymous in the public eye: Ted Kaczynski, Nidal Hasan, and Eric Rudolph.<sup>69</sup> All three acted alone, committed violence based on political

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<sup>69</sup> I acknowledge the previous stance of the Obama administration that this was not a terrorist incident but that of “workplace violence.” However, most scholars, as well as the public, recognize him as a terrorist. Even Hasan himself stated he acted on behalf of Islamic extremism. More recently, the Department of Defense recanted its determination of “workplace violence” and acknowledged the religious basis of Hasan’s violence. See Jonsson, “With Nidal Hasan Bombshell, Time to Call Fort Hood Shooting a Terror Attack?”

or religious ideologies, and represent iconic “lone wolf terrorists.” Dozens of researchers within dozens of academic papers have analyzed these three individuals and classified them as the same type of terrorist.<sup>70</sup> The academic analysis marginalizes the differences and fails to incorporate variances into conclusions. Table 2 provides a brief examination.

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<sup>70</sup> For example, see Julie M. Gall, “Domestic Lone Wolf Terrorists: An Examination of Patterns in Domestic Lone Wolf Targets, Weapons, and Ideologies” (George Mason University, 2014); Bates, “Dancing With Wolves: Today’s Lone Wolf Terrorists”; McCauley, Moskalenko, and Van Son, “Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers.”

Table 2 - Comparisons of Kaczynski, Hasan, and Rudolph

	Ted Kaczynski	Nidal Hasan	Eric Rudolph
<b>Ideology</b>	Kaczynski committed acts of violence within an ideology eschewing technology - clearly unique.	Hasan predicated his violence in Islamic ideology, common to a significant number of recent terrorist groups.	Rudolph used violence to promote anti-abortion and homophobia.
<b>Mental State</b>	Kaczynski had a history of mental illness over the years. <sup>71</sup>	Hasan did not present any evidence of mental illness. <sup>72</sup>	Rudolph did not present any signs of mental illness.
<b>Association</b>	Kaczynski lived as a hermit shunning all contact with other individuals during the timeframe of his attacks. <sup>73</sup>	There is evidence Hasan gained inspiration for his extremist views from others. <sup>74</sup> His marginalization possibly occurred while in the military, but he was not a hermit.	Rudolph did not have any association with a formal terrorist group.
<b>Attack Frequency</b>	Kaczynski committed numerous attacks over a 16-year period, each becoming more sophisticated (from a weapons perspective).	Hasan's attack meant to be singular and was the result of minimal preparation.	Rudolph conducted several attacks including the Olympic Park bombing and several abortion clinics. <sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Paul Gill, John Horgan, and Paige Deckert, "Bombing Alone: Tracing the Motivations and Antecedent Behaviors of Lone-Actor Terrorists," *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, no. 2 (March 2014): 428, doi:10.1111/1556-4029.12312.

<sup>72</sup> Lieberman and Collins, "A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Governments Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack."

<sup>73</sup> McCauley, Moskalenko, and Van Son, "Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers," 16.

<sup>74</sup> Lieberman and Collins, "A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Governments Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack," 8.

<sup>75</sup> Bates, "Dancing With Wolves: Today's Lone Wolf Terrorists," 3.

Even these brief descriptions make clear the distinctions of their differences. How do current scholars arrive at the same definition for such diverse examples? Comparing these three is akin to investigating a drug dealer who murdered a rival to someone who murdered a spouse in a domestic dispute. To be sure, both are violent crimes and both involve an individual who committed that crime, but would the law enforcement response, both tactical and strategic, be similar? Would the policy to protect the victims be comparable?

Table 2 demonstrates some of the differences between so-called “lone wolf terrorists.” However, this term lacks the ability to distinguish between three individuals providing academics and policymakers a better understanding of this threat. As described above, it should be clear that the concept of “lone wolf terrorism” is confusing, muddled, and of little value. What **is** clear is that there are some common elements valuable for analysis, if viewed through the appropriate lens. Researchers have come to some interesting and applicable conclusions, but their misapplication to the overall debate creates confusion, conflicting results, and a lack of consensus. There are social and psychological factors of these individuals coming to light in recent research which demonstrate the usefulness of understanding their mental state and social identity.

## Redefining Lone Wolf Terrorism: Toward a New Framework

This section moves beyond the critique of the literature and introduces a new framework to address the inconsistencies common throughout the literature. It establishes a better approach, allowing researchers to categorize individuals and small groups properly into a useful catalog of terrorists. Specifically, “lone wolf terrorism” is not *one* thing, but *three* different things.

This section will analyze how researchers have struggled to find common elements, such as ideology, weapon use, and demographics, to all those characterized as “lone wolf terrorists.” This approach has been problematic since only some of these characteristics are present in a portion of those considered “lone wolf terrorists,” while others are not. This lack of clear understanding of the elements creates the situation where researchers, as well as policymakers and the media, “lump together” all these individuals under one umbrella when there are clear differences: articulable differences bearing on understanding and categorization. The SSGT framework draws on both ‘traditional’ terrorism literature and the sub-set of “lone wolf terrorism” literature to show that there are two specific elements crucial to understanding: Group Association and Mental Illness. However, it is first necessary to describe how SSGT fits into the overall terrorism picture.

### ***An Organizational Look at Terrorism***

It is important to begin any discussion of “lone wolf terrorism” with an overview of terrorist group organizations. Researchers typically categorize terrorism regarding ideology: White supremacy, religious fundamentalism, single issue, or separatists. For the last few decades, scholars addressed terrorism within this view; as an ideological issue with an emphasis on trying to understand how various terrorist ideologies “fit” into the overall body of terrorism. Despite this, common sense tells us other options are available to investigate terrorism, from geographical, domestic vs. international, or even an economic perspective.<sup>76</sup> All of these approaches are fruitful, and even necessary, to grasp the full extent of political violence and the impact on modern society. However, when addressing “lone wolf terrorism” and small group political violence, the most logical approach begins by analyzing terrorist groups from an organizational standpoint. Reviewing terrorist organizations is not new by any means, but broader, organizational methodologies applied to smaller groups and individual terrorists are rare.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> For example, see Brent Smith, “A Look at Terrorist Behavior: How They Prepare, Where They Strike,” *National Institute of Justice*, 2008; E. Benmelech, C. Berrebi, and E. F. Klor, “The Economic Cost of Harboring Terrorism,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 2 (February 23, 2010): 331–53, doi:10.1177/0022002709355922. For domestic vs. international terrorism, consider how the FBI structures its squads, typically broken into Domestic Terrorism squads and International Terrorism squads.

<sup>77</sup> For example, see Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism : Causes, Processes and Consequences* (Milton Park Abingdon Oxon;New York: Routledge, 2010).

Most models arrange terrorist groups into two or three wide-ranging categories based on their organizational makeup. For example, Renate Mayntz analyzes the difference between a hierarchical, traditional top-down, pyramidal organization and networked cells of loosely connected individuals. The United State Army suggests three categories: Hierarchical, Networked, and Cells.<sup>78</sup> The organizational model presented in this dissertation follows along those lines but slightly modifies the concept of the cell to introduce the category of SSGT. The organizational model proposed here consists of larger, hierarchical organizations, mid-level, networked organizations, and smaller groups and individuals, the latter labeled SSGT.

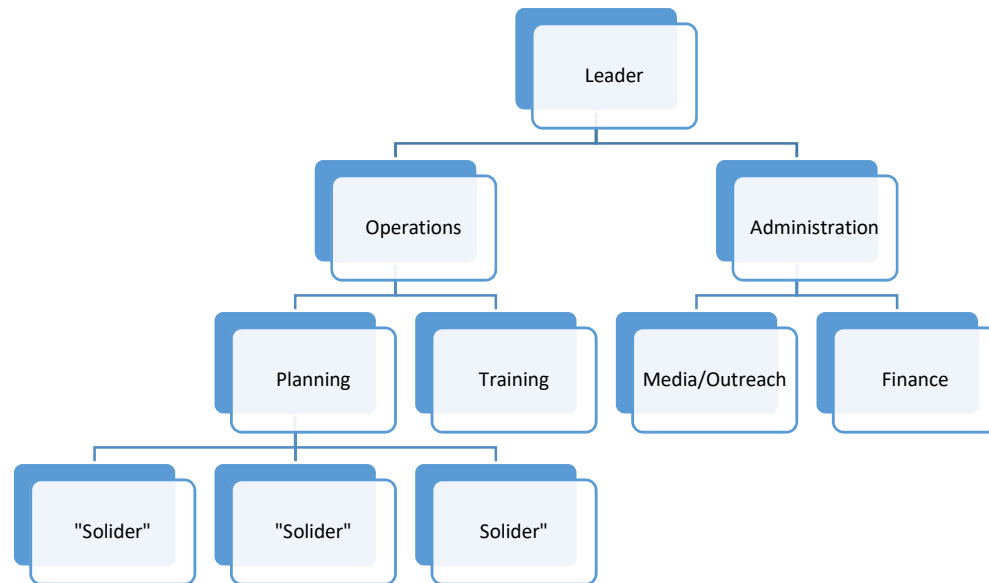
### ***Hierarchical Terrorist Organizations***

Hierarchical Terrorist Organizations represent those politically violent groups organizing themselves around a more traditional, business or governmental, hierarchal structure, typically consisting of a single leader providing vision, guidance, and priorities, but supported by other, mid-level leaders of the organization. Reporting to this leader are “deputies” responsible for various functions such as finance, media, or tactics/military. These terrorist organizations are usually well known and might have formal, publicly recognized components as part of their strategy, or they might solely be devoted to violence to influence political change. An organizational chart of this

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<sup>78</sup> Renate Mayntz, “Organizational Forms of Terrorism - Hierarchy, Network, or a Type Sui Generis” (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, May 2004), 11–12; United States, *A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, ver. 3.0, DCSINT Handbook, no. 1 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, 2005), 3-5-8.

terrorist organizational would be very pyramidal and similar to a large corporation. (See Figure 2.)



*Figure 2 - Structure of a Hierarchical Terrorist Organization*

As an example, consider Aum Shinrikyo during the mid-1990's. With thousands of global members (although not all were actively engaged in violence), Aum was organized to mimic the Japanese government to be better positioned to take over after the apocalypse, with ministers of research, medicine, and finance.<sup>79</sup> Another example, Hezbollah, is organized as a quasi-state consisting of a secretary general as well as recruiting, political, legislative, and military 'assemblies.'<sup>80</sup> A complex, almost

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<sup>79</sup> Daniel Alfred Metraux, *Aum Shinrikyo's Impact on Japanese Society*, Japanese Studies, v. 11 (Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 149–50.

<sup>80</sup> Casey L. Addis and Christopher M. Blanchard, "Hezbollah: Background and Issues for Congress" (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2011), 10.



bureaucratic, organization clearly meets the definition of a hierarchical terrorist organization. Additional examples include Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and Hamas.<sup>81</sup>

Although these organizations could have upwards of thousands of individuals, smaller examples of this type of organization include Army of Islam and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine consisting of hundreds of members.<sup>82</sup> Based on this, it would not be correct to categorize hierarchical terrorist organizations specifically as purely a function of size. By analyzing the extent of their organizational structure, it should include some manifestation of an operations branch, finance, outreach/media and lower level ‘managers’ under them which monitor day-to-day activities.

### ***Networked Terrorist Organizations***

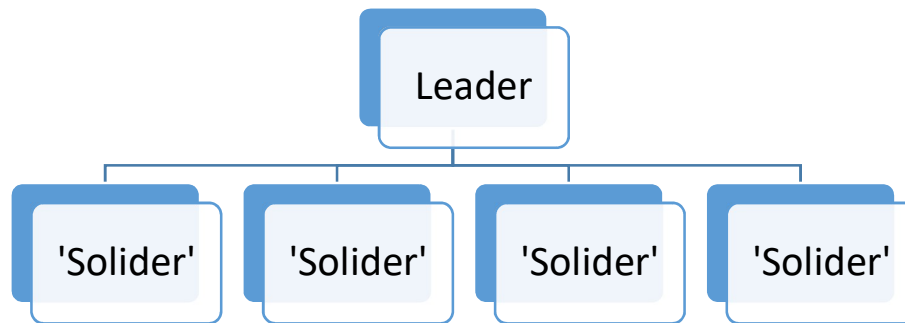
Networked Terrorist Organizations make up those terrorist groups with a less formal organizational arrangement, yet still maintain some leadership structures. These groups work independently supporting a cause of their own. They have ideologies unique enough (at least to the members) which validate the need for creation of their organization. The Animal Liberation Front or Il Silvestre, an Italian eco-terrorism group, would be examples of this type of organization. Rarely would they have an organizational structure supporting deputies under the leader; a chart showing this

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<sup>81</sup> Mayntz, “Organizational Forms of Terrorism - Hierarchy, Network, or a Type Sui Generis,” 9.

<sup>82</sup> “Foreign Terrorist Organizations | Jewish Virtual Library,” accessed September 3, 2015, [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/terror\\_report\\_orgs.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/terror_report_orgs.html).

structure would be very flat with all, or at least most, members directly reporting to one or two leaders. (See Figure 3.)



*Figure 3 - Layout of an Entrepreneurial Terrorist Organization*

Examples of this type of terrorist group also include those having tens to possibly a hundred members; examples include the Weather Underground, Black Panthers, or People's Liberation Front of India. Again, the number of individuals is not the single categorization factor, but how the group organizes and internally manages itself is the critical component.

### ***Singular and Small Group Terrorists (SSGT)***

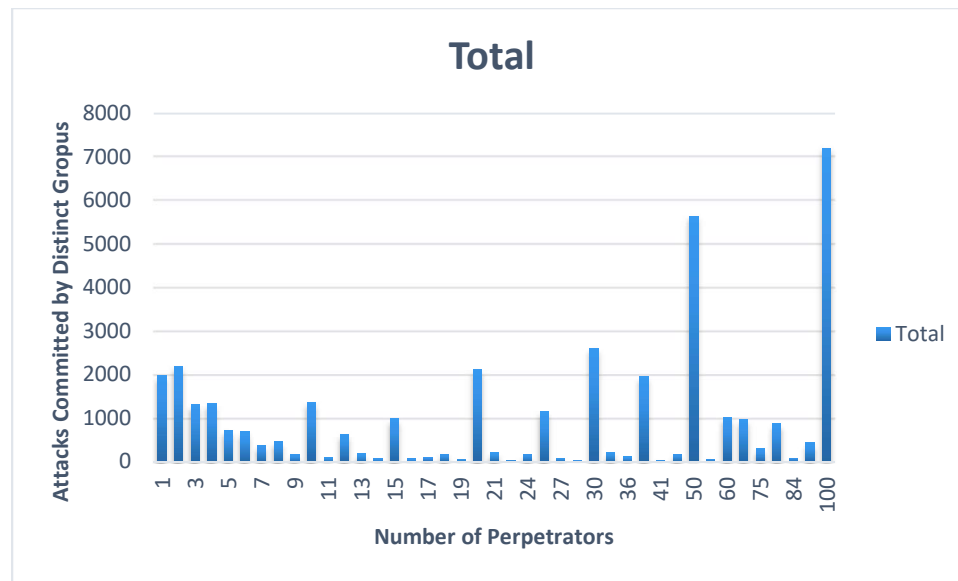
Singular and Small Group Terrorist organizations represent the smallest, most loosely associated type of terrorist. The “singular” portion represents individuals who planned and perpetrated violence working alone. The “small group” portion is a bit

more complex; it begs the question, “What exactly is a small group?” There is a little specific dialog in the modern academic literature regarding what constitutes a distinct value for a small group; it is about the context, research, or study. This determination is especially relevant considering this dissertation is critical of previous academic efforts attempting to understand “lone wolf terrorism” as a definition relying on numbers. This study defines a small group as nine individuals or less based on numerous factors taken from the business, organizational, and the military literature.

This investigation into what constitutes small groups started by analyzing the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) compared with terrorist group size. Figure 4 plots terrorist group size against all terrorist incidents listed within the GTD.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The GTD includes terrorist organizations with sizes in the thousands and tens of thousands. In order to make the chart more readable, and considering the emphasis of this research, the chart was limited to terrorist groups numbering less than one hundred.



*Figure 4 - Number of Attacks Compared to Group Size*

Figure 4 visually shows the natural decline in the number of perpetrators as a function of the number of attacks by distinct groups. This decrease creates a natural delineation at nine individuals. After nine, the number appears to be random and with spikes at numbers divisible by ten. The cutoff and spikes at whole numbers could be due to the data acquisition strategy used by the GTD. Journalists gather the data from global news reports making it possible that witness interviews conducted by the journalists arbitrarily listed ten as a natural choice when asked: “How many perpetrators were involved?” Answers could be based on some natural tendency of human nature to pick round numbers when describing the numbers of individuals. Common sense tells us that it is unusual for someone to ask, “How many people were at the party?” and a response of “oh...about 17” is unlikely. A response of “about 15 to 20” is more

expected. A spike in the number of perpetrators at ten seems understandable when described within this context. Despite this anecdotal analysis, the graph still facilitates a logical limit and starting point for determining what should represent a small group when coupled with other factors.

Figure 4 is intriguing but not definitive. Integrating this finding with research from other disciplines helps build an empirical basis for utilizing nine as the number representing the upper limit of a small group. For example, business research, investigating team size to ensure efficiency and span of control, points to an optimal small group being between five and ten. Katherine Kline noted organizational and business researcher, states “My intuition is that by the time you are over eight or nine people, it is cumbersome, and you will have a team that breaks down into sub-teams.”<sup>84</sup> Evan Wittenberg, director of the Wharton Graduate Leadership Program, reached a similar conclusion, saying while team size is “not conclusive, it does tend to fall into the five to 12 range, though some say five to nine is best, and the number six has come up a few times.”<sup>85</sup>

From the realm of software development, academics within this discipline also found a common group in a maximum team size of nine. In D. Rodriguez et. al’s, paper in 2012, “[software] projects with an average team size of 9 or more people (the

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<sup>84</sup> “Is Your Team Too Big? Too Small? What’s the Right Number?,” *Knowledge@Wharton*, June 14, 2006, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/is-your-team-too-big-too-small-whats-the-right-number-2/>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

threshold suggested in the literature) are less productive than those above such a threshold.”<sup>86</sup> Other literature also drawing conclusions about a maximum effective team size of nine include Lawrence Putnam and a report produced by the International Software Benchmarking Standards Group (ISBSG).<sup>87</sup> To be clear, within the literature of the software development community, researchers note other factors impacting optimum team size including programming language, overall effort of the project, and financial resources. The important point deals within those general confines; four to six represent optimum team size and nine as the upper limit for a maximum number of individuals.

Another approach is to look at a small group within the context of the military. This perspective represents a better analytical focus due to the commonalities often found between the military and the para-military focus of terrorist organizations. Typically, the largest number of men included in the smallest military unit size is approximately ten. Every modern military force uses around nine personnel to represent the smallest unit size; even during ancient times, the Roman army had Contuberniums of eight men.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> D. Rodríguez et al., “Empirical Findings on Team Size and Productivity in Software Development,” *Journal of Systems and Software* 85, no. 3 (March 2012): 569–70, doi:10.1016/j.jss.2011.09.009.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence Putnam, “Team Size Can Be the Key to a Successful Software Project,” Text, *QSM SLIM-Estimate*, (February 10, 2011), [http://www.qsm.com/process\\_improvement\\_01.html](http://www.qsm.com/process_improvement_01.html); “Team Size Impacts - Special Report.” (International Software Benchmarking Standards Group, 2007).

<sup>88</sup> P. Nick Kardulias, “Estimating Population at Ancient Military Sites: The Use of Historical and Contemporary Analogy,” *American Antiquity* 57, no. 2 (April 1992): 281, doi: 10.2307/280733.

The U.S. Army has relied on a squad size of nine to eleven for all modern history, with current squad size being nine.<sup>89</sup> As stated in one analysis of U.S. Army squad size after World War II:

After careful study, they [the research committee] drew several conclusions. The first was that the infantry squad should be defined as the smallest combat element consisting only of as many soldiers as one leader could control. Second, the most soldiers that one leader could control in favorable conditions were eight.<sup>90</sup>

There is a slightly different, but related, concept applicable to this discussion: Span of control. Instead of looking at a maximum number of individuals working within a single team, this tends more to the idea of how many people an individual manager or leader can effectively supervise. Another way to think about this: Group size from the perspective of the team members or group size from the viewpoint of the supervisor or leader.

The complexity of the work, among other variables, often drives exact numbers for an optimum span of control. Simpler tasks require less management, which allows a greater span of control, more complex tasks require more management and a smaller

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<sup>89</sup> Although this number is currently up for debate. See "US Army Forecasts Shrinking Squads, Smaller Vehicles," *Defense News*, accessed October 17, 2014, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20131125/DEFREG02/311250013/US-Army-Forecasts-Shrinking-Squads-Smaller-Vehicles>.

<sup>90</sup> Major Stephen E. Hughes, "The Evolution of the U.S. Army Infantry Squad: Where Do We Go from Here? Determining the Optimum Infantry Squad Organization for the Future" (School of Advanced Military Studies - U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), 6.

span of control.<sup>91</sup> Some military-centric research suggests “...two to five subordinates appear to be a good starting point when a commander organizes his forces.”<sup>92</sup> Although dated, the U.S. Army Field Manual for Headquarters Organizations notes that five subordinate units should be the maximum.<sup>93</sup>

The discussion above validates nine as a suitable maximum number to define a small group and the literature and practice from a variety of disciplines demonstrates its suitability. Considering the ‘complexity’ of even the most violent or deadly terrorist attack compared with that required from a team of software developers working on a project for years or a fighter squadron in the military, a span of control of a leader of eight individuals is acceptable. Other research validates teams greater than nine tend to ‘splinter’ into sub-groups which further supports the conclusion drawn here.<sup>94</sup>

### **Key Variables to Categorization: Group Association and Mental Illness**

Next to definitional issues, the next significant problem with the study of “lone wolf terrorism” lies in the lack of consensus regarding specific elements contributing to an individual becoming a “lone wolf terrorist.” Researchers in the field have examined weapon sophistication, intelligence, geographic location, and many other contributing

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<sup>91</sup> “Span of Control | The Economist,” accessed June 24, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/node/14301444>.

<sup>92</sup> William G. Major Pierce, “Span of Control and the Operational Commander: Is It More Than Just a Number?” (Master’s Thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1991), i.

<sup>93</sup> “Army Field Manual 101-5 - Staff Organizations and Operations” (U.S. Army, May 31, 1997), 5–14.

<sup>94</sup> “Is Your Team Too Big?”



elements.<sup>95</sup> Incorporating these elements, but narrowing them down to the most critical ones, is key in determining what personal, psychological, and environmental elements contribute to an individual conducting political violence and categorizing them as SSGT.

To choose these elements, yet ground my variables in previous research, I reviewed 47 relevant and frequently cited journal articles and academic papers regarding “lone wolf terrorism,” recording the most common elements discussed and examined. The review included articles relating to “lone wolf terrorism,” leaderless resistance, and individual terrorism and led to revealing a list of elements present among those who commit political violence on their own or as part of a small group. As the analysis progressed, I recorded and tallied the specific elements to determine what the community of scholars considered most important. Elements obviously varied from article to article and author to author; likewise, every article did not include every element, but the list of the various elements, as well as their count within the literature, is shown in Table 3; in summation, leaderless resistance and mental illness became apparent as the two most significant elements noted by the researchers of “lone wolf terrorism.”

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<sup>95</sup> Numerous examples exist and were referenced in the literature review section. See Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism”; Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists”; Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone.”

*Table 3 – Breakdown of Elements Discussed in the Literature and Their Count*

<b>Element Discussed in the Literature</b>	<b>Count of Times mentioned in Corpus</b>
<b>Manifesto</b>	10
<b>Social Awkward</b>	10
<b>Weapon Sophistication</b>	8
<b>Support from Others</b>	9
<b>Leaderless Resistance</b>	21
<b>Unique Ideology</b>	6
<b>Autonomous Radicalization</b>	9
<b>Internet Impact</b>	9
<b>Mental Stability</b>	20
<b>Higher than Average Intelligence</b>	5
<b>Premeditated</b>	4
<b>Gender</b>	3
<b>Single Event vs. Multiple Event</b>	1
<b>Risk Averse vs. Risk Taking</b>	4
<b>Target: Civilian vs. Military</b>	3
<b>Communication with Others</b>	2

Almost half of the researchers investigating the phenomena of “lone wolf terrorism” make a connection between mental issues and leaderless resistance and “lone wolf terrorism.” This finding pointed to their use as the two significant variables toward understanding the unique terrorist population of “lone wolf terrorists.”

I rejected other elements for several reasons. Primarily, the considerable difference between the number of times leaderless resistance (21 times) and mental health (20 times) appeared in the results compared to the next element most frequently discussed, a manifesto before an attack (10 times) within the 47 articles. This significant difference represents the importance placed on leaderless resistance and mental health

by the collective research of scholars considering terrorism conducted by individuals. Second, when reviewing the list of factors discussed by researchers investigating “lone wolf terrorism,” a significant number proved difficult to articulate definitively. For instance, an element such as weapon sophistication contains so much variation as to be useless. Do we consider formal training vs. self-taught? Military experience? Law enforcement? If an individual conducted multiple attacks, wouldn’t their weapon sophistication grow with each subsequent attack making this element ever-changing? The subjectivity to an element such as this makes it almost useless for categorization. Of course, investigating weapon sophistication of individual terrorists does provide benefit to the academic community or policy makers, but is questionable for categorizing SSGT. Furthermore, skill based elements such as weapon sophistication are better defined as a tool used by individuals as opposed to a core part of an individuals’ psyche. Finally, empirical research over the past five years or so into the phenomena of “lone wolf terrorism” has reached a point beyond simple exploration and moved into deeper analysis and study. Critical for the SSGT framework, not all elements referenced in “lone wolf terrorism” studies are present in all instances of “lone wolf terrorism.” This small but crucial point is essential to the development of the new framework presented in this dissertation.

### ***Group Association***

For the SSGT framework, I define group association as the combined sociological, psychological, and organizational ideas influencing how an individual perceives their relationship with an existing group. Since SSGT centers on individuals and small groups, this definition focuses on perceptions of membership in larger, more established terrorist organizations which do not fall within the definition of SSGT. Consider it within the context of how an individual or small group associates with the ideology or “culture” of another group. It means a mental commitment or connection to an organization that does not formally recognize them.

This dissertation bases group association on the concept of social identity. Social identity can be thought of as "...a social comparison process, [where] persons who are similar to the self are categorized with the self and are labeled the in-group; individuals who differ from the self are classified as the out-group."<sup>96</sup> An individual identifies and considers to be part of an ‘in-group’ with a terrorist organization if he or she feels they maintain a connection to the larger terrorist organization even if active or formal participation is not available or sought out. To illustrate this, consider the example of a fan of a professional football team. The football team eagerly accepts fans to “follow” and support them in their wins or mourn their losses on the field. Individuals who are fans might quietly monitor the team or fanatically support them with banners and

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<sup>96</sup> Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 225, doi:10.2307/2695870.

painted faces. There might even be instances where fans of the team meet individual members, contact them via social media or at events. Despite this connection and affiliation with the team, no one would agree he or she held membership within the team.<sup>97</sup>

Social Identity Theory was originally introduced in 1971 by Henri Tajfel as a sociological/social psychological construct.<sup>98</sup> Since then, its use has expanded and applied to a broad range of sociological investigations such as children's behaviors, religion, and organizational theory.<sup>99</sup> Social Identity Theory's application to terrorism studies has been slow to mature, but numerous authors have begun to see its applicability to political violence and as a possible tool for understanding terrorist actions.<sup>100</sup> The Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Homeland Security and Defense, even developed two academically robust, on-line training modules investigating how Social Identity Theory fits in with the current understandings of terrorism.<sup>101</sup> These

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<sup>97</sup> This example is borrowed from an example describing Social Identity Theory. See Merritt Posten, "Sports Fans: Social Identity Theory," Spring 1998, <http://www.units.miamioh.edu/psybersite/fans/sit.shtml>.

<sup>98</sup> Henri Tajfel et al., "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1971): 149–78, doi:10.1002/ejsp.2420010202.

<sup>99</sup> Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); R. Ysseldyk, K. Matheson, and H. Anisman, "Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, January 19, 2010, doi:10.1177/1088868309349693; Michael Hogg and Deborah J. Terry, *Social Identity in Processes in Organizational Contexts* (Hove: Psychology, 2002).

<sup>100</sup> Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist"; R. Brad Deardorff, *The Roots of Our Children's War: Identity and the War on Terrorism*, 2013; Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman, "Terrorism."

<sup>101</sup> Dave Brannan and Anders Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory Module I: A Brief Overview of Terrorist Studies" (Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Summer 2012); Dave Brannan and Anders Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory Module II: What Is Social Identity Theory?" (Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Summer 2012).

types of research efforts supplement previous research regarding measuring the social identity of individuals and groups, both terrorists as well as others, by using various survey instruments or coding of interviews.<sup>102</sup> This discussion demonstrates Social Identity Theory as an academically useful concept applied to this dissertations' concept of group association.

Group association goes beyond just simply acting on behalf of some individual calling someone to action. As the discussion on Social Identity Theory implies, it represents a mental belonging to a group. Note that this is different from simply adopting an ideology. An individual such as Eric Rudolph held strong anti-abortionist ideologies, yet he did not identify with an anti-abortionist group such as the Army of God.<sup>103</sup>

What about those individuals who perceive themselves as being part of an organization which might not exist at all? As the case with many so-called "lone wolves," they claim allegiance to an organization that is either fictitious, an incorrect manifestation of a legitimate organization, or a vague grouping of individuals. For example, Anders Breivik, in his manifesto and court documents, referred to himself as a

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<sup>102</sup> J. Goyder, "Measuring Social Identities: Problems and Progress," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 15, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 180–91, doi:10.1093/ijpor/15.2.180; Volker C. Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets," *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 175–202; Keith W. Ludwick, "Closing the Gap: Measuring the Social Identity of Terrorists" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2008).

<sup>103</sup> Even though Rudolph did not actively promote or associate with the Army of God, the Army of God did put up a website in his honor promoting his attacks.

member of the Knights Templar, an organization Breivik claimed “...whose goal is a deport political Muslims from Europe, supporting cultural Christianity and the seizure of power.”<sup>104</sup> Muharem Kurbegovic, the famed “Alphabet Bomber” convicted in 1980 of a bombing at the Los Angeles, Ca. airport represents another excellent example of an individual who worked alone but claimed to be part of a larger, fictitious group in his case the “Aliens of America.”<sup>105</sup>

These manifestations of group association begin to intersect both elements of group association and mental illness requiring some clarification. If evidence points to the individual strongly associating with a non-existing or fictitious organization to the point of a delusional belief of belonging to that organization, that would fall under the scope of mental illness as in the Anders Breivik example above. However, this requires scrutiny to ensure the individual was not claiming allegiance or association to a fictitious group for purposes of distraction or diversion. If this is the case, further analysis of the circumstances requires analysis to decide the individual’s mental state.

As mentioned in the literature review, “lone wolf terrorism” is often referred to as a Leaderless Resistance strategy, but how does this relate to the variable group association? Leaderless resistance implies conducting political violence in response to a general request from an established terrorist organization for unaffiliated members to

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<sup>104</sup> “Anders Behring Breivik Psychiatric Report 2012-04-10 - The Breivik Archive,” accessed April 10, 2015, <https://sites.google.com/site/breivikreport/documents/anders-breivik-psychiatric-report-2012-04-10>.

<sup>105</sup> “Alphabet Bomber Guilty of Murder,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2006, <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/oct/16/local/me-a2anniversary16>.

“rise-up” or “act on their own” without specific direction. To break this down, consider leaderless resistance within the context of two different types of individuals. First, the individual who strongly relates to a specific group who conducts an attack based on a “call to action” from that group. Within the research of most scholars on the topic, this is a classic example of leaderless resistance. Contrast this with a second instance where an individual might feel they need to conduct an act of violence in support of an overall ideology, but there is no specific direction from an established group, the need to act is self-generated or comes from the general ideological population who advocate each other committing acts of violence. Most researchers of “lone wolf terrorism,” and terrorism studies in general, would not consider the latter to be a leaderless resistance strategy but part of an overall terrorist strategy.

For this dissertation, I limit the idea of leaderless resistance to individuals who commit political violence within the context of a strategy of an existing terrorist group, the “call to arms.” This association or link is in the form of an individual who follows a terrorist group or organization but has not tried to contact anyone (or more rarely, incidental contact that did not result in tasking’s, direction, or training) from that group or organization. All other general, non-specific requests for violence by loosely affiliated groups or general discussion among members in the various means of communicating will not fall under the definition of leaderless resistance.



## ***Mental Illness***

The second variable used for development of the SSGT framework is mental illness. As mentioned in the literature review, there has been debate over the years as to whether terrorists have some level of mental illness. It seems the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other, from the 1950's when experts assumed all terrorists were 'crazy' to the thought in the 1980's and 1990's that terrorists are in reality 'rational actors' without mental issues. More recently, the research community seems to tend more toward a middle ground recognizing some of these individuals, particularly that the "lone wolves" do sometimes present mental illnesses.<sup>106</sup> SSGT incorporates this evolving idea into the categorization framework.

Before examining mental illness within the SSGT framework, this dissertation needs a working definition. As discussed above, numerous researchers consider mental illness a key component of "lone wolf terrorism" yet provide little regarding defining what constitutes mental illness for their studies. Obviously, clinical diagnoses by a professional psychologist/psychiatrist, perhaps within a court-ordered competency exam, would constitute a "gold standard" for determining if an individual was mentally ill. However, using this as the required yardstick is problematic. Differences in legal processes, the impact of other factors on court proceedings, and even if an individual

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<sup>106</sup> Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists*.

wished to suppress psychological information from their trial, as Anders Breivik did, so that they would not have their actions tainted by the broad brush of mental illness.<sup>107</sup> Of course, this is of little help in those instances of perpetrators being killed or injured beyond normal cognitive ability. Finally, within the context of the modern understanding of mental illnesses, many of these psychological disorders are treatable, and millions of individuals live fully productive (and non-violent) lives either through counseling, medication, or both.<sup>108</sup> This variable needs to include some component within it taking these various contingencies into account.

Evaluating mental illness among those who commit terrorism is difficult. There is little methodology for doing so fully vetted by the literature. Many studies, including those by Spaaij, Gill, Sageman, and many others use the simple question (in one form or another) “Did the individual have some mental illness or personality disorder?” to investigate mental issues of terrorism behavior.<sup>109</sup> Many citations often note this difficult. As stated by Spaaij:

“... lone wolf terrorists are relatively likely to suffer from some form of psychological disturbance, although it is difficult to accurately

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<sup>107</sup> Laura Smith-Spark, “Norway Killer Anders Breivik Ruled Sane, given 21-Year Prison Term,” *CNN*, August 24, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/24/world/europe/norway-breivik-trial/index.html>.

<sup>108</sup> “NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness | Mental Health Conditions,” accessed October 27, 2016, <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>.

<sup>109</sup> Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” 867; Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone,” 428; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 63; Lydia Alfaro-Gonzalez et al., “Report: Lone Wolf Terrorism” (Georgetown University, June 27, 2015), 23; Pantucci, “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists,” 4.

establish the extent to which their actions were directly influenced by their mental condition.”<sup>110</sup>

Turning to the literature outside of terrorism studies, few authors provide broad definitions of mental illness useful for this study; most do not provide a working definition at all.<sup>111</sup> Consider a few examples from psychology. In one article entitled *Violence and Mental Illness: An Overview*, the authors define mental illness “...the term 'mental illness' will be reserved for non-substance related disorders, usually major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or depression.”<sup>112</sup> The National Alliance on Mental Illness uses the definition “[a] mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day.”<sup>113</sup> On the Mayo Clinic's website they define mental illness as “...refer[ing] to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior...” and “...a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism,” 867.

<sup>111</sup> As a few examples: “Violence, Crime, and Mental Illness: How Strong a Link?,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 53, no. 6 (June 1, 1996): 481, doi:10.1001/archpsyc.1996.01830060021003; Julio Arboleda-Flórez, “Mental Illness and Violence:,” *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 22, no. 5 (September 2009): 475–76, doi:10.1097/YCO.0b013e32832c08fc; Virginia Aldige Hiday, “The Social Context of Mental Illness and Violence,” *Journal of Health and Human Behavior* 36, no. 2 (June 1995): 122–37.

<sup>112</sup> Heather Stuart, “Violence and Mental Illness: An Overview,” *National Center for Crisis Management*, accessed October 27, 2016, <http://www.nc-cm.org/article232.htm>.

<sup>113</sup> “NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness | Mental Health Conditions.”

<sup>114</sup> “Mental Illness - Mayo Clinic,” accessed October 27, 2016, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/basics/definition/con-20033813>.

There is little in the literature from terrorism studies, and beyond in the larger set of psychological and sociological disciplines, useful for honing the variable for the SSGT framework. As such, for this dissertation, I define mental illness as a mild to severe mental disorder or psychological issue causing significant stress and affecting an individual's ability to function within society. This working definition supports the need to differentiate between those influenced by their mental state and those with a successfully treated mental condition.

To determine if an individual presents some mental illness, an approach loosely based on a scale of determination evaluates individuals against the definition of mental illness above, coupled with the severity of the individual's mental illness. One end of this scale, the definitive judgment of a person's mental state, would be a psychological professional having access to the individual and reaching a diagnosis of a mental illness such as schizophrenia. This diagnosis would offer the most confidence that there was indeed a mental illness meeting the definition set forth above. A 'middle ground' would be an individual who self-reported going to counseling for some mental illness and admitted to taking medications for their condition. Other sources should support this such as several friends and relatives who confirm their need for psychological help or describing actions supporting the notion the individual was mentally ill. Finally, having the least confidence would be anecdotal evidence from a single person who makes general statements about the person in question simply "being crazy" or "being depressed." Admittedly, this loose scale is not exact but taken in context with the larger

evidence provided by the research, will lead to a categorization which will meet the needs of the SSGT framework and stand up to most empirical reviews.

It is not the intent of this project to delve into the analysis of specific psychological disorders or mental illnesses of individuals conducting political violence. This dissertation uses the analysis and research done by previous investigators and applies their findings of mental illness to cases of SSGT. As such, this project looks at official court documents, publicly available medical records, media reports as well as a preponderance of evidence taken from other sources such as family members, friends, and contacts in determining if the individual meets the threshold of having a mental illness. The goal of this effort is not to offer any hypothesis as to whether the mental illness was a direct contributing factor to the individual's violent behavior. Instead of providing a basis for causation or correlation, this dissertation simply uses the presence of mental illness as a categorization mechanism.

### **Three Categories of SSGT**

This section provides a detailed description of the three categories of SSGT followed by a discussion regarding the coding mechanism for determining the categorization of the individuals and small groups. It shows that "lone wolf terrorism" is not one nebulous category, "lone wolf terrorism," but in fact three different categories.

### ***Strategists***

These individuals were mentally stable during the planning, and execution phases, of their attacks committing political violence in support of a larger, more established, terrorist organization. Usually, Strategists lack any formal ties to that group, but this does not exclude contact with others with similar ideologies, particularly using electronic communication or social media. If an individual belonged to an established terrorist organization (through some formal or informal process the group recognizes) with more than nine members, then that individual would not be a Strategist, nor would they even be SSGT. A classic example of a Strategist would be Nidal Hasan. He did not present any mental illness and mentally associated very closely with those from Al-Qaeda.<sup>115</sup>

### ***Opportunists***

Opportunists also present as mentally stable but commit their violence based on their initiative rather than a “call to arms” or a specific request to commit terrorist acts from an established group. Timothy McVeigh represents the iconic Opportunist. His trial cleared McVeigh of having any mental illness.<sup>116</sup> He committed his terrorist act to further a right-wing, white supremacist agenda, but he did not associate himself with or act at the behest of any established, violent right-wing group.

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<sup>115</sup> Weimann, “Lone Wolves in Cyberspace.”

<sup>116</sup> Rebecca Raphael, “PrimeTime: Inside McVeigh’s Mind,” *ABC News*, January 6, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=132276&page=1>.

What might make the categorization of the Opportunist confusing is the Group Association element. The critical part is not that an Opportunist associates with an ideology, for instance, an anti-governmental stance, but whether they associate with a specific group like the Montana Freeman. Applying the social identity example of the football fan stated above, then this individual enjoys the game for the games' sake but does not necessarily root for one particular team.

### ***Zealots***

The key to categorizing individuals as Zealots is their mental illness. Using mental illness as a classification tool is one of the fundamental components of the study of SSGT often glossed over in all but a few studies. Theodore Kaczynski, aka "The Unabomber," is the stereotypical Zealot. He suffered from serious, numerous mental illnesses, including schizophrenia.<sup>117</sup> Although there could be a discussion regarding his group association or lack thereof, he lived as a hermit and was well known for having little to no contact with other individuals; this would be immaterial as the determination of mental illness is the overriding factor. Because the mental aspect is so key to categorizing Zealots, their affiliation with other groups is secondary and not considered when coding them.

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<sup>117</sup> McCauley, Moskalenko, and Van Son, "Characteristics of Lone-Wolf Violent Offenders: A Comparison of Assassins and School Attackers," 16; Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, "Bombing Alone," 428.

It is important to restate SSGT focuses on those with political or religious motivations to their violence. SSGT does not cast a broad net and incorporate **every** individual with mental illness as Zealots. The act cannot simply be criminality or violent. The individual needs to fall within the definition of a terrorist stated at the beginning of this dissertation. Consider the tragedy of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Ct. The perpetrator, Adam Lenza, shot and killed his mother then traveled to the school and killed 27 individuals.<sup>118</sup> According to the final report by the State's Attorney's office of Connecticut, Lenza did have mental illnesses, but there could not be a determination of motive because he killed himself with a gunshot to the head.<sup>119</sup> Even though Lenza was mentally ill, there was no indication whatsoever of a religious or political motive. Lenza committed violence, but not based on an ideology, so therefore is not a terrorist.

The analysis in Chapter 3 will demonstrate that most Zealots are loners and those that do claim membership in a group frequently affiliate with some fictitious, non-existent organization. The presence of the mental illness in these types of SSGT's also provides specific tools which can help focus on mitigation and countering strategies that will be more efficient for this unique sub-set of terrorists.

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<sup>118</sup> "Report of the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Danbury on the Shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School and 36 Yogananda Street, Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012" (Connecticut: Office of the State's Attorney - Judicial District of Danbury, November 25, 2013), 3.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

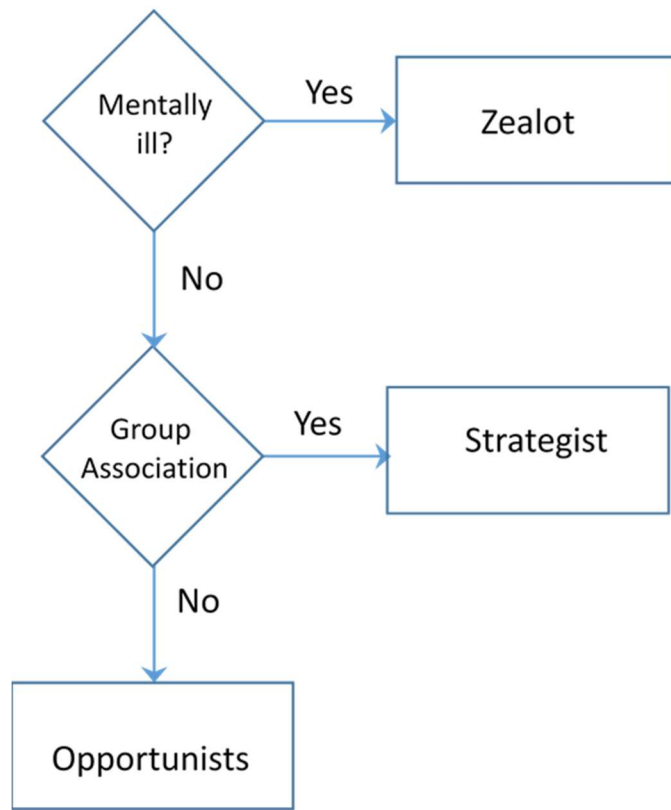


## ***Coding***

The coding mechanism for SSGT starts with the understanding that mental competency has resurfaced as a debate within the community of those studying terrorism. As mentioned in the literature review, for a significant number of years, researchers considered terrorists to be rational actors committing their violence with full understanding of their actions. Recently, instances of mental illness among those with political or religious motives is coming more to light, also mentioned in the literature review. This finding is critical in understanding those categorized as SSGT. These individuals are often unpredictable, and therefore mitigation strategies and countering tactics will need to be different from those of terrorists who are mentally stable. Furthermore, these individuals rarely work in groups, and typically consist of only one or two people, because other rational actors connect to an established terrorist organization do not want to accept the risk of 'working' with unstable people as part of their group. Therefore, the first test of the coding mechanism is straightforward: Does the individual present mental illness as defined in the section on mental illness? If the answer is 'yes,' then classify them as a Zealot. If the answer is 'no,' then proceed to the second test.

The second test of the coding mechanism asks about group association: Does the individual affiliate, identify, or mentally associate with an existing, larger terrorist organization as described in the section on group association? If 'yes,' then classify

them as a Strategist. If the answer is ‘no,’ then classify them as an Opportunist. This coding mechanism leads to the simple flow chart illustrated in Figure 5:



*Figure 5 – Flowchart of the Coding Mechanism for SSGT Categories*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated how “lone wolf terrorism” is not merely an issue of numbers, but reveals how specific mental and associative issues unique to an individual determines their classification within the SSGT framework. Each needs to be fully

understood within the context of his or her category. However, this is a much more powerful concept than simply putting individuals in separate buckets. It allows the capability to analyze an individual specifically on which category they fit and provide targeted policies on their specific group. Chapter 3 will demonstrate the implementation of this new framework against real world terrorists previously deemed “lone wolves.”

## CHAPTER THREE – Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I illustrate the value of the SSGT framework through the analysis of a new dataset comprised of 52 individuals and small groups who fit this dissertation's definition of terrorism. This dataset, described in more detail below, is not all-inclusive at this point, but a proof of concept rooted in previous empirical studies validating the SSGT framework. Additionally, it serves as the beginnings of a full database aimed at focusing on individuals and elements of those individuals which contribute to their categorization into SSGT.

Prior research developed less than productive mitigation strategies because "lone wolf terrorism" was poorly defined and boundaries of categories non-existent. This lack of definition prevented asking such basic questions as "Who among these individuals are the most dangerous?" or "What backgrounds make up the deadliest?" The SSGT framework allows practitioners and policy makers to address these types of questions and bridges the gap between how we look at terrorist groups vs. how we look at individual terrorists.

Before delving into the description of the database and the logical outcomes it provides, this chapter begins with three detailed case studies of individuals representing each category illustrating an Opportunist, Strategists, and Zealot. Following the case studies, there is an explanation of the new database and the coding mechanism for including examples into the database. It then investigates a broad, descriptive look of the database to reveal valuable information regarding SSGT as a whole. Next, a broad policy analysis of the database reveals some significant findings. Most importantly, the threat from Opportunists appears to be most worrisome. Other key findings include the few female participants in SSGT, the relationship between Strategists and religious ideology, and the social awkwardness of Zealots, explaining why they are most likely to operate by themselves. This chapter concludes with a review of other findings and discussion regarding their impact on the overall study of SSGT.

## **Case Studies**

### ***Introduction***

To provide better context and expand on the brief examples within Table 2, consider the three detailed case studies below providing real-world examples of the categories within SSGT. The case studies apply the framework to an individual or small group followed by a discussion of some of the common and different elements on other SSGT. Each case study begins with a brief description of the attack, followed by discussions regarding their group association and any mental issues relevant to their

categorization. Finally, I compare and contrast with other terrorists to crystallize the effectiveness of the new framework.

### ***Strategists – Tamerlan Tsarnaev aka “The Boston Bomber”***

Strategists strongly associate with some outside, established terrorist organization and its ideology without maintaining membership with that terrorist organization. Additionally, individuals and small groups categorized as Strategists do not exhibit any mental illness before or during the attack, or subsequent arrest if law enforcement disrupts the attack.

#### ***Background on attack***

On April 15, 2013, at approximately 2:50 pm near the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon, two single pressure cooker bombs exploded killing three people and injuring over 250 others.<sup>120</sup> The bombs exploded within seconds of each other and used “BB-like pellets and nails” to enhance their effectiveness as weapons.<sup>121</sup> Over the next four days, two brothers later identified as Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, killed a Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer, hijacked an individual’s car, and managed to avoid law enforcement until the older brother Tamerlan was killed while

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<sup>120</sup> “Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts,” *CNN*, November 1, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/03/us/boston-marathon-terror-attack-fast-facts/index.html>.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

trying to be apprehended.<sup>122</sup> Dzhokhar escaped but was later found in a residential neighborhood hiding in a small boat, injured but alive, and subsequently arrested.<sup>123</sup>

The ensuing investigation revealed the two brothers were Chechen, had lived in the U.S. for approximately ten years, and had assimilated to a U.S. lifestyle relatively easily.<sup>124</sup> Frustrated with his lack of advancement in U.S. society and beginning to question the validity and reasons for American involvement in the Middle East, Tamerlan began to become more devoted to the Islamic faith. He traveled back to Chechnya in 2012, which possibly started his path toward radicalization. There is no available information or evidence Tamerlan met with anyone with terrorist ties while visiting Chechnya. Tamerlan's younger brother, a bright young man who squandered his opportunities at higher education by dealing drugs and neglecting his studies, joined his older brother in conducting these attacks.<sup>125</sup>

Later, after his trial and being found guilty, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev admitted to participating in the attacks along with his brother and apologized "for the lives that I've

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Sally Jacobs, David Filipov, and Patricia Wen, "The Fall of the House of Tsarnaev — The Boston Globe," December 15, 2013, chap. 2, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/Page/Boston/2011-2020/WebGraphics/Metro/BostonGlobe.com/2013/12/15tsarnaev/tsarnaev.html>.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., chap. 9.

taken, for the suffering that I've caused you, for the damage that I've done."<sup>126</sup>

Dzhokhar was sentenced to death on June 24, 2015.<sup>127</sup>

### *Group Association*

Despite a few individuals who lied to law enforcement agencies regarding their relationships with the Tsarnaev brothers, and might have even helped them evade the manhunt after the April attack, there is no information in intelligence or trial reports to indicate they had support from an established terrorist organization.<sup>128</sup> Tamerlan did travel to Russia and most likely had contact with Muslim radicals, possibly leading to becoming more extreme in his religious faith.<sup>129</sup> On several occasions, while attending services at a mosque, Tamerlan screamed outbursts against others who observed U.S. holidays which tended to exemplify his extreme religious views.<sup>130</sup> The videos of Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical Muslim with ties to Al-Qaeda who has repeatedly called for individuals to commit violence on their own, significantly influenced Tamerlan.<sup>131</sup> All of

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<sup>126</sup> TIME Staff, "Read Boston Bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's Full Statement," *Time*, June 24, 2015, <http://time.com/3934592/boston-bomber-dzhokhar-tsarnaev-apology/>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> "Boston Marathon Terror Attack Fast Facts."

<sup>129</sup> Jacobs, Filipov, and Wen, "The Fall of the House of Tsarnaev — The Boston Globe," chap. 7; "Today's Rising Terrorist Threat and the Danger to the United States: Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of The 9/11 Commission Report" (Annenberg Public Policy Center: University of Pennsylvania, July 2014), 11, [WWW.BIPARTISANPOLICY.ORG](http://WWW.BIPARTISANPOLICY.ORG).

<sup>130</sup> Jacobs, Filipov, and Wen, "The Fall of the House of Tsarnaev — The Boston Globe," chap. 8; Gabriel Weimann, "Virtual Packs of Lone Wolves," *Medium*, accessed March 1, 2014, [https://medium.com/p/17b12f8c455a?mkt\\_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRoiuKTLZKXonjHpfsX%2F4%2B0lWLHr08Yy0EZ5VunJEUWy3YsET9Q%2FcOedCQkZHbIFnV4JQ624SrUNrKEO](https://medium.com/p/17b12f8c455a?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRoiuKTLZKXonjHpfsX%2F4%2B0lWLHr08Yy0EZ5VunJEUWy3YsET9Q%2FcOedCQkZHbIFnV4JQ624SrUNrKEO).

<sup>131</sup> Bev Ford and Corky Siemaszko, "Tsarnaev Went to Gun Range, Was 'radicalized' by Cleric - NY Daily News," March 24, 2015, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/dzhokhar-tsarnaev-radicalized-anwar-al-awlaki-expert-article-1.2160612>; Scott Shane, "The Lessons of Anwar Al-Awlaki," *The New York Times*, August 27, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/30/magazine/the-lessons-of-anwar-al-awlaki.html>.



this points to a strong association with a radical Islamic organization, Al-Qaeda, a known terrorist group.

### *Mental Illness*

Within all the court documents, news articles, and interviews, there is little to no evidence of Tamerlan or his brother being mentally ill.<sup>132</sup> After extensive interviews with family members and individuals known to him, mental instability would have certainly manifested itself outwardly and been noticeable to family, friends, law enforcement or lawyers.

Because of Tamerlan Tsarnaev's strong association with Al-Qaeda and lack of mental illness, Tamerlan and his brother are Strategists.

### *Further Examples*

Other individuals and small groups categorized as Strategists include the London Bombers - the four individuals who bombed the mass transit system in London in July of 2005 in support of Al-Qaeda - as well as the individuals known as the "Fort Dix Five" who plotted to attack the military installation at Fort Dix in New Jersey.<sup>133</sup> However,

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<sup>132</sup> There is one exception; an article written by *The Boston Globe* claims Tamerlan was delusional and hearing voices, possibly suffering from schizophrenia. This article, originally published in December of 2013, has not had any follow-up nor has there been any other reporting claiming Tamerlan was mentally ill. See Jacobs, Filipov, and Wen, "The Fall of the House of Tsarnaev — The Boston Globe."

<sup>133</sup> Despite the nickname, there were actually six individuals implicated in the plot; an additional person who helped supply the weapons. See Dale Russakoff and Dan Eggen, "Six Charged in Plot To Attack Fort Dix," *The Washington Post*, May 9, 2007, sec. Nation, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/08/AR2007050800465.html?hpid=moreheadlines>.

Strategists are not limited to small groups; individuals within the Strategist category include Richard Reid, the Shoe Bomber, and Nidal Hasan, the Army Captain who shot 13 individuals at a Fort Hood processing center in 2009.<sup>134135</sup> What these examples clearly illustrate is the size of the group or ideology does not play a part in their categorization. Again, with respect to the individuals, the critical component is their strong association with a larger, more established terrorist organization; both the Fort Dix Five and the London Bombers associated with Al-Qaeda.<sup>136</sup> Their close association with a group and drive to commit violence in support of a group's teachings, in this case Al-Qaeda, are key to their categorization.

These examples of Strategists represent individuals and small groups who identify with larger terrorist groups and acted, not on their specific direction but based on a broader call to action by that group or in support of that organization's specific goals and objectives. Hasan might have contacted someone, but there is no evidence of

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<sup>134</sup> Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists," 30; Scott Friedman, "Army Considers Reclassifying Fort Hood Shooting, Pending Review," *NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth*, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://www.nbcdfw.com/investigations/Army-Considers-Reclassifying-Fort-Hood-Shooting-Pending-Review-233087321.html>.

<sup>135</sup> Richard Reid's categorization as an SSGT could be up for debate. Although he claimed to have worked alone, there is some forensic evidence that the bomb he tried to use could have come from another source. This, coupled with his alleged training in Pakistan could eliminate him from the SSGT category. However, he was categorized as Strategist based on the code rules and meets all the criteria of a Strategist. For a discussion on his involvement with Al Qaeda, see Pam Belluck, "THREATS AND RESPONSES: THE BOMB PLOT; Unrepentant Shoe Bomber Is Given a Life Sentence For Trying to Blow Up Jet," *The New York Times*, January 31, 2003, sec. U.S., <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/31/us/threats-responses-bomb-plot-unrepentant-shoe-bomber-given-life-sentence-for.html>.

<sup>136</sup> "BBC NEWS | Americas | US Base Accused 'Plotted Jihad,'" October 23, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20081023153547/http://news.bbc.co.uk:80/2/hi/americas/7680988.stm>; Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters,'" 419.

direct guidance or support to these individuals from the larger terrorist group.

Additionally, there lacks any specific information leading to the suspicion of mental illness present while planning or conducting their attacks.

### ***Opportunists – James Von Brunn***

Opportunists include those individuals who are mentally stable and but do not associate with any other politically violent group or terrorist organization.

#### ***Background on Attack***

James Von Brunn was an espoused white supremacist who particularly hated Jews and African-Americans. On June 10, 2009, he parked outside the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., walked up to the front door, and proceeded to shoot the guard who later died.<sup>137</sup> Before having a chance to storm the museum, other guards in the museum subdued and apprehended him.<sup>138</sup> Von Brunn acted alone in the attack and died at the age of eighty-nine years old awaiting trial for the shooting.<sup>139</sup>

What is less well known is in 1981 he walked into the Federal Reserve Board with a sawed-off shotgun, a handgun, and a knife in a weak attempt to take board members hostage to influence the deportation of all Jewish people from the United

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<sup>137</sup> Del Quentin Wilber, "Von Brunn, White Supremacist Holocaust Museum Shooter, Dies," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2010, sec. Metro, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/06/AR2010010604095\\_2.html?sid=ST2010010604659](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/06/AR2010010604095_2.html?sid=ST2010010604659).

<sup>138</sup> Ryan Lenz, "Age of the Wolf" (Montgomery, AL: Sothern Poverty Law Center, February 12, 2015), 18.

<sup>139</sup> Wilber, "Von Brunn, White Supremacist Holocaust Museum Shooter, Dies."

States.<sup>140</sup> He served six and a half years in prison for the attempted hostage taking.<sup>141</sup>

Because of the racially motivated attack and the potential for violence, this also represents a similar attack to the one at the Holocaust Museum.

### *Group Association*

Von Brunn did not belong to any specific white supremacy group. Instead, he spent his time working to further his views by maintaining his website and self-publishing anti-Semitic pamphlets. He was friends with other neo-Nazis but when developing his brochures and websites, worked primarily alone.<sup>142</sup> Investigations into the attack at the Holocaust Museum did not reveal any specific involvement or links to established or known racist or white supremacist terrorist organizations. He never formally joined an organization supporting white supremacy. In fact, “right-wing leaders ignored him as too politically incorrect...”<sup>143</sup>

### *Mental Illness*

Von Brunn did not present any mental illness. While awaiting trial for the shooting at the Holocaust Museum, a judge ordered a mental health assessment, but

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<sup>140</sup> “Holocaust Museum Shooting Suspect Has History of Anger, Racism,” Text.Article, *FoxNews.com*, (June 11, 2009), <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/06/11/holocaust-museum-shooting-suspect-has-history-anger-racism>.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> “New Evidence Shows Holocaust Museum Shooter James von Brunn Had Long Craved Attention,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, accessed September 18, 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2009/new-evidence-shows-holocaust-museum-shooter-james-von-brunn-had-long-craved-attention>.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

Von Brunn died before a psychologist could complete the exam.<sup>144</sup> Although a judge questioned Von Brunn's mental state by ordering an exam, the dearth of reporting on the literature, interviews, and legal documents lend support to a lack of mental illness.

### *Categorization*

Because of his lack of mental illness and having not associated with an established politically violent organization, Von Brunn represents an Opportunist.

### *Further Examples*

Opportunists go beyond racially motivated terrorists. Consider Yigal Amir, the individual who assassinated the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. Amir worked alone and based his violence on his frustration with Rabin's efforts toward peace, seeing it as a "sin" aimed at the Jewish people.<sup>145</sup> The police claim Amir was part of a larger effort to kill Rabin but provided no evidence.<sup>146</sup> However, regardless of whether Amir was part of a larger effort or not, he would still fall within the Opportunist classification because of his lack of identification with a known, larger organization and being mentally stable.

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<sup>144</sup> Delvin Barr, "James Von Brunn Dead: Holocaust Museum Shooter Died in Hospital," *The Huffington Post*, March 18, 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/06/james-von-brunn-dead-holo\\_n\\_413479.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/06/james-von-brunn-dead-holo_n_413479.html).

<sup>145</sup> John Kifner, "A SON OF ISRAEL: Rabin's Assassin -- A Special Report; Belief to Blood: The Making of Rabin's Killer," *The New York Times*, November 19, 1995, sec. World, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/11/19/world/son-israel-rabin-s-assassin-special-report-belief-blood-making-rabin-s-killer.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

It is important to realize that Opportunists may form small groups as well; numbers and size are not the significant factors. For example, the four individuals who made up the “New Year’s Gang” represent a left-wing, anti-Vietnam group who committed the bombing at the University of Wisconsin in 1974.<sup>147</sup> Karl Armstrong, the informal leader of this small group, was instrumental in planning and perpetrating the bombing.<sup>148</sup> Karl did not present mental illness and, as an anti-war protestor, did not affiliate with a specific group; rather, he associated with an overall ideology. Both points lead to categorizing members of the “New Year’s Gang” as Opportunists.

Opportunists represent the most dangerous category of SSGT, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Their ‘rational action’ and independence make them particularly calculating and difficult to detect. Individuals who do not relate to a large group, which can be infiltrated by law enforcement or intelligence agencies, and act rationally, make hard targets for detection and mitigation.

### ***Zealot - David Copeland***

Definite mental illness marks Zealots, usually revealed through interviews, court documents, or even self-description. Individuals conducting political or religious

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<sup>147</sup> Margalit Fox, “Dwight Armstrong, Who Bombed a Campus Building in ’70, Dies at 58,” *The New York Times*, June 26, 2010, sec. U.S., <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/27/us/27armstrong.html>.

<sup>148</sup> “Sterling Hall Bombing: Seven Men Linked by a Moment in History: Wsj,” *Madison.com*, accessed November 14, 2014, [http://host.madison.com/news/local/education/university/sterling-hall-bombing-seven-men-linked-by-a-moment-in/article\\_6817a970-a981-11df-9407-001cc4c03286.html](http://host.madison.com/news/local/education/university/sterling-hall-bombing-seven-men-linked-by-a-moment-in/article_6817a970-a981-11df-9407-001cc4c03286.html).

violence in this category most often work alone, but sometimes affiliate with fictitious or non-existent groups.

### *Background on Attack*

In April of 1999, David Copeland, aka “The London Nail Bomber,” executed a two-week string of bombings in the suburbs of London targeting areas of immigrants and homosexuals.<sup>149</sup> In three separate attacks, he built and detonated bombs killing a total of three people and injuring 129 others.<sup>150</sup> As a racist and Nazi sympathizer who believed in a master race, Copeland wanted to cleanse England of those who were “inferior.”<sup>151</sup> Copeland suffered from numerous psychological issues, discussed below, leading him to conduct these attacks for both political and personal reasons.<sup>152</sup>

After a brief investigation, and with the aid of CCTV camera footage, British anti-terrorism police identified Copeland, subsequently tracked him down, and arrested him for the bombings.<sup>153</sup> Copeland confessed to the attacks after his arrest and stated he had several other future targets in mind.<sup>154</sup> He is currently serving several life terms for the attacks.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Lena Corner, “London Nail Bombs: The Two Weeks That Shattered the Capital,” *The Independent*, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/london-nail-bombs-the-two-weeks-that-shattered-the-capital-1666069.html>.

<sup>150</sup> “Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” 23.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> “Nail Bomber David Copeland given Three More Years for Slashing Fellow Prisoner,” *Mirror*, accessed December 4, 2015, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nail-bomber-david-copeland-three-6724260>.

### *Group Association*

Originally, law enforcement attempted to tie Copeland to one of England's many white supremacy groups.<sup>156</sup> Despite some initial controversy in the media, Copeland operated alone. When officers arrived at his door to execute his arrest, Copeland stated "[y]eah, they were all down to me. I did them on my own."<sup>157</sup> The subsequent investigation found no connection or contact with any terrorist or politically violent organization. It is worth noting in the late 1990's, and before any of his attacks, he did join the British National Party and the National Socialist Movement, both right-wing Neo-Nazi groups, but his interest in their activities waned after he found out they did not advocate violence.<sup>158</sup> Although other groups attempted to take credit for Copeland's bombing spree, a police investigation determined no one helped him.<sup>159</sup>

### *Mental Illness*

Mental health professionals diagnosed Copeland with depression, anxiety disorder, and personality disorder.<sup>160</sup> Additionally, during his trial, Copeland received a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia and is currently serving six life terms in a mental

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<sup>156</sup> Nick Hopkins and Sarah Hall, "David Copeland: A Quiet Introvert, Obsessed with Hitler and Bombs," *The Guardian*, accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/jun/30/uksecurity.sarahhall>.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> "Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 32.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>160</sup> Spaaij, "The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism," 862. x



hospital in the United Kingdom.<sup>161</sup> Due to his clear mental illness, Copeland is categorized as a Zealot.

#### *Further examples*

Another example of a Zealot, and probably the most famous, is Theodore Kaczynski - the Unabomber. Brilliant, yet reclusive, his 16 attacks over approximately 20 years clearly demonstrate how dangerous these types of individuals can be.<sup>162</sup> What is noteworthy regarding Zealots is their unique or original ideologies. For example, consider another Zealot, Luke Helder, the “Smiley-face bomber” who drove around the mid-west placing bombs in mailboxes. He did so in a pattern drawing a smiley face on a map (hence the name) to promote “bizarre anti-government beliefs...” and demonstrate, “that death did not exist because people simply enter higher dimensions.”<sup>163</sup>

Another example of a Zealot would be Anders Breivik, who conducted the now infamous terrorist attacks in Oslo, Norway on July 22, 2011, killing 77 people at two different locations.<sup>164</sup> Breivik was a right-wing xenophobe who was concerned about the “Islamification” of Europe, in particular Norway.<sup>165</sup> He claimed to be a member of

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<sup>161</sup> Corner, “London Nail Bombs.”

<sup>162</sup> “Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” 68.

<sup>163</sup> Ryan J. Foley, “Man Suspected of 2002 Mailbox Bombing to Face Hearing,” *The Huffington Post*, May 15, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/15/luke-helder-mailbox-bomb-\\_n\\_3281576.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/15/luke-helder-mailbox-bomb-_n_3281576.html).

<sup>164</sup> Chris Hill, “Active Shooter Lessons Learned from the 2011 Norway Attack,” *The Guardian Antiterrorism Journal* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 26.

<sup>165</sup> Pantucci, “What Have We Learned about Lone Wolves from Anders Behring Breivik?,” 30.

the Knights Templar but could not produce any proof of his membership or existence of the group.<sup>166</sup> At Breivik's trial, he was found to suffer from mental illness but refused to use that in his defense.<sup>167</sup>

Finally, Muharem Kurbegovic, the so-called "Alphabet Bomber" famous for bombings at the Los Angeles, Ca. airport in 1974, represents another iconic Zealot.<sup>168</sup> Kurbegovic stated he belonged to a group called Aliens of America, but authorities could not verify its existence.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, Kurbegovic's did not stand trial due to mental incompetence.<sup>170</sup>

Zealots pose a significant threat to the societies they target because being mentally ill makes them unpredictable and "out of the box" thinkers. They come from a variety of backgrounds and ideologies and are unique in many aspects. It is hard to find parallels between their personas or actions; this unpredictability makes mitigating this type of threat challenging and problematic.

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<sup>166</sup> Mattias Gardell, "Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 146, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.849930.

<sup>167</sup> Mark Lewis and Sarah Lyall, "Breivik Gets 21-Year Sentence in Norway for 77 Killings," *The New York Times*, August 24, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/25/world/europe/anders-behring-breivik-murder-trial.html>.

<sup>168</sup> "Alphabet Bomber Guilty of Murder."

<sup>169</sup> Christopher Dickey, "Shadowland: T Is for Terror," *Newsweek*, February 26, 2003, <http://www.newsweek.com/shadowland-t-terror-140385>.

<sup>170</sup> "People v. Kurbegovic (1982)," *Justia Law*, accessed September 20, 2015, <http://law.justia.com/cases/california/court-of-appeal/3d/138/731.html>.

## Development of a New Database

To date, publicly accessible, comprehensive databases of **individual** terrorists who act alone or in small groups do not exist on the scale or accessibility of something similar to the GTD. While numerous studies apply various, independently developed *datasets* of “lone wolf terrorists,” there are no comprehensive, empirically vetted *databases* accepted by the academic community.<sup>171</sup> Table 4 represents a sample of four different datasets, from four different authors, demonstrating some of the differences between them. These differences demonstrate inconsistencies requiring significant manipulation of the data for use with other research.

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<sup>171</sup> In this context, a dataset would be a set of information used once for a study where a database implies a standing repository of information, continuously updated with new information used to retrieve information for future research and analysis. As an example, a dataset is based on data collected for an academic study, like the one developed in Gill’s research where a database is often used by a myriad of individuals, such as the Global Terrorism Database.

Table 4 – Sample of Different Datasets of SSGT<sup>172</sup>

Author/Study	Definition of “Lone Wolf”	Number of individuals in their dataset	Notes
<b>Gill – <i>Bombing Alone...</i></b>	Individuals, with or without control links.	119	Primarily concerned with behavioral aspects.
<b>Spaaij – <i>The Enigma...</i></b>	Operates alone.	72	First major study.
<b>Phillips – <i>Deadlier in the U.S.?...</i></b>	Might include others.	263	Covers <i>attacks</i> , not <i>individuals</i>
<b>Gruenewald – <i>Distinguishing...</i></b>	Operates alone.	139	Only covers far-right extremists

The development of a complete database should be an on-going process, but the research effort in this dissertation begins this endeavor by creating the coding mechanisms, determining relevant data fields, and starting the process of populating a database based on the established coding methodology. The development of the database for SSGT began with incorporating statistical fields from various codebooks generated by several other sources.<sup>173</sup> Reviewing these sources generated four broad categories of data: 1) Demographic information such as name, date of birth, and place of birth, 2) Educational/Occupational information, 3) Psychological/Sociological

<sup>172</sup> Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone”; Spaaij, “The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism”; Brian J. Phillips, “Deadlier in the U.S.? On Lone Wolves, Terrorist Groups, and Attack Lethality,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, August 11, 2015, 1–17, doi:10.1080/09546553.2015.1054927; Gruenewald, Chermak, and Freilich, “Distinguishing ‘Loner’ Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence.”

<sup>173</sup> Primarily from: Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone”; Kevin Strom et al., “Building on Clues: Examining Successes and Failures in Detecting U.S. Terrorist Plots, 1999-2009” (Duke University: Institute for Homeland Security Solutions, October 2010); “Global Terrorism Database (GTD) Codebook” (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), December 2013).

information, and 4) Information on the violent acts conducted by the individual.<sup>174</sup>

Every effort was made to collect as much information as possible which might be of interest and useful for later research.

After determining the data fields, the next step was developing a coding mechanism to evaluate individuals and small groups for inclusion in the database. The codebook listed in Appendix I details the coding rules for inclusion. Since a major theme of this dissertation is showing the ambiguity with previous research utilizing the vague term “lone wolf terrorism,” it is appropriate to begin the categorization against those studied in the past. These past studies provide not only good contrast but also supply significant information regarding these individuals to conduct the coding and final analysis. Thus, I selected the candidates to apply the SSGT framework from the same literature reviewed for determining the two most important variables for the SSGT framework. The same 47 journal articles and academic papers formed the basis for including individuals in the SSGT database. Reviewing each article and pulling out the subjects of their case studies/datasets generated a list of 253 individuals. I then checked these names against the coding rules for inclusion within the SSGT database which resulted in 60 individuals meeting the criteria of SSGT. Among these 60 individuals, 52 had sufficient information available in the literature and open sources to populate the SSGT database fields. These 52 individuals represent all the previously

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<sup>174</sup> Appendix II has the full data dictionary for the database describing the specific fields.

mentioned “lone wolf terrorists” in the 47 most referenced literature resources addressing “lone wolf terrorism” and met the coding rubric of the SSGT database. These individuals constitute a variety of ideologies, from around the globe, having used various forms of violence, from time periods of approximately 1880 to 2014. Appendix I details the coding rules, and Appendix III includes the database in its entirety.<sup>175</sup>

When utilizing the coding flowchart shown in the previous chapter (Figure 5) to categorize the individuals, applying the rule to a single individual is relatively straight forward. Code the individual based on answers to the two questions relating to Mental Illness and Group Association, then place them in their resulting category. The application of the SSGT framework to a small group requires the additional step of determining the leader of the small group. As stated by JM Levine and RL Morela “Leadership is a universal aspect of human groups...”<sup>176</sup> Sometimes these groups have formal leaders who are elected, assigned, or simply emerged, but other times a leader operates in an informal capacity. Whichever is the case, as anyone who has ever managed or led a team knows, the team adopts the philosophy of its leader. As such, all members of a small group acquire the same classification as its leader.

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<sup>175</sup> 2014 through 2016 proved to be highly active years for individual terrorists. Many high-profile terrorist attacks which occurred in this period will be added to later iterations of the database. Clearly, this will alter some of the findings revealed later in this chapter, but the study of terrorism is always evolving and none of this changes the basic premise which is “lone wolf terrorism” is an ambiguous term and the SSGT framework provides a better mechanism to address this unique type of terrorism.

<sup>176</sup> J M Levine and R L Moreland, “Progress in Small Group Research,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 41, no. 1 (January 1990): 612, doi:10.1146/annurev.ps.41.020190.003101.

It is worth discussing why this study did not use already established databases necessitating the creation of a new database. First, as mentioned above, comparing individuals previously analyzed provides an excellent source for validating any new framework lending additional credence to the data since the individuals met the criteria for other empirical studies. Second, most of the other database publicly available have significant limitations. For example, the GTD, although a robust and incredibly useful academic tool, focuses on incidents rather than individuals. Although their incident data does include the number of perpetrators, there are significant gaps in the data (1,000's of data points where perpetrators are unknown). Other frequently cited data sources, such as the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents and the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list are useful for academic study.<sup>177</sup> Both of these are excellent resources but contain limitations making them difficult for a study such as the one conducted in this dissertation. The RAND database only makes incidents available through 2009, is incident focused, does not differentiate between groups and individuals. The FTO list is group centric and does not contain information on domestic groups or individuals. Numerous other datasets are available as well, such as the Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD), the TEVUS Portal datasets (both accessible from START) and the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism Suicide Attack Database, but

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<sup>177</sup> 1776 Main Street Santa Monica and California 90401-3208, "RDWTI | RAND," accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents.html>; "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," Other Release, *U.S. Department of State*, (May 8, 2009), <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>.

they concentrate on subsets of terrorism incidents making extensive studies impractical.<sup>178</sup> Because of the need to be academically vetted by using known data, as well as the need to be broadly focused without the limitations brought on by using these other existing databases, the decision was made to begin a new dataset which was individually focused.

### ***Descriptive Analysis of the Database***

After including the individuals in the database and coding them for classification into an SSGT category, it was possible to review the entire population of data for basic background information and context. Within studies of “lone wolf terrorism,” researchers often focus on the total number of individuals, gender, and ideology. For comparison, those common demographics are reviewed briefly below before the more detailed analysis.

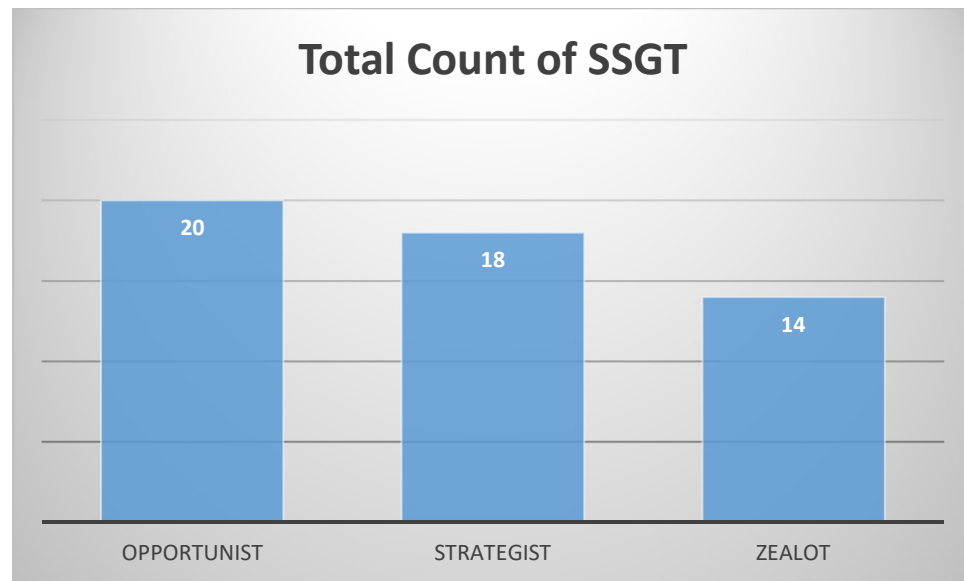
#### ***Totals***

Of the 52 individuals coded, 20 were Opportunists, 18 Strategists, and 14 Zealots making up a distribution without much variance. (See Figure 6.)

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<sup>178</sup> “START.umd.edu,” accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.start.umd.edu/>; “UChicago CPOST,” accessed November 1, 2016, <https://cpost.uchicago.edu/>.





*Figure 5 - Total Count of SSGT from Database*

It is hard to compare this with the broader study of terrorism. Because the SSGT framework is new and provides a unique look at individuals or small groups who commit an act of political violence, comparisons with other studies of terrorists or terrorist organizations are akin to the “apples to oranges” argument. For example, comparing this breakdown with the GTD, which looks at terrorist incidents, not individuals, provides little to link with SSGT.<sup>179</sup> What it does show is the importance of not fixating on efforts to understand, research, and mitigate on one specific category of SSGT; research and policy should target all types of SSGT.

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<sup>179</sup> Although the GTD does provide options to list out terrorist attacks by different factors including number of perpetrators, because the focus of the GTD is terrorist incident, not on individuals, a large number of the values for number of perpetrators is listed with approximate numbers or a null (unknown) value. This make analysis nearly impossible.

## Gender

Figure 7 shows the relationship of gender and SSGT; of the 52 individuals coded, just 3 (6%) were females.

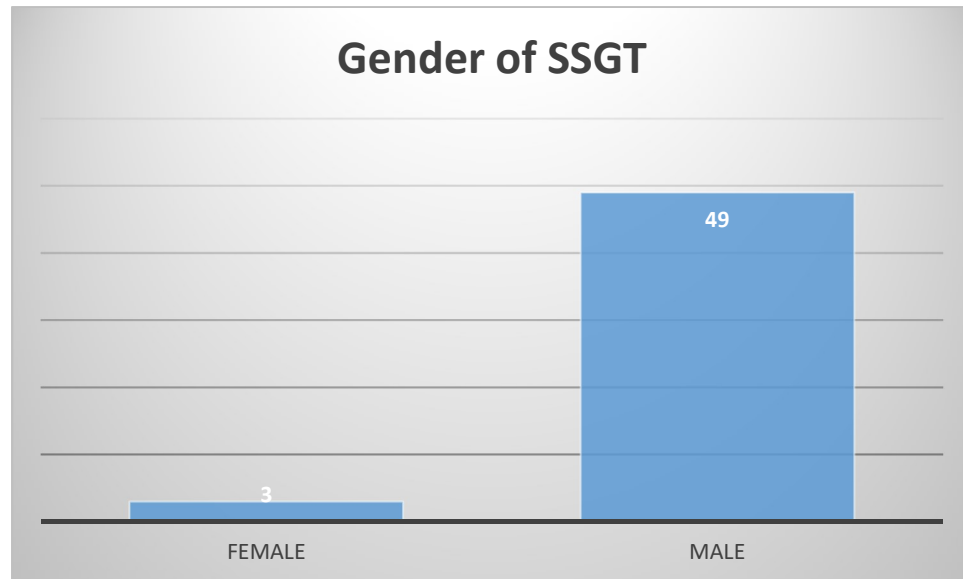


Figure 6 - Breakdown by Gender Within SSGT

This preponderance of males supports findings by other researchers who have looked at various “lone wolf terrorists” that females are rare among individuals or small groups who commit terrorism.<sup>180</sup> Of the three women categorized as SSGT, none were mentally ill (there were two Strategists and one Opportunist). Two of the three women subscribed to religious ideology, while the third supported left-wing ideas. All three

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<sup>180</sup> For example, see Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone”; Joel A. Capellan, “Lone Wolf Terrorist or Deranged Shooter? A Study of Ideological Active Shooter Events in the United States, 1970–2014,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 6 (June 3, 2015): 395–413, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2015.1008341.

targeted the infrastructure or individuals representing their respective governments. Importantly, females categorized as SSGT were not very efficient or dangerous compared to the others; between the three of them, there was one death and one injury. With the increase in some females involved in SSGT attacks in 2014 and 2015, it will be interesting to see how this gender ratio changes in the future.

### *Ideology*

Religious ideology appears to be a driving factor for about half of the individuals within the SSGT, with 25 out of 52 ascribing to religious motives for conducting violence. We see that the second most ascribed ideology is right-wing. (See Figure 8.)

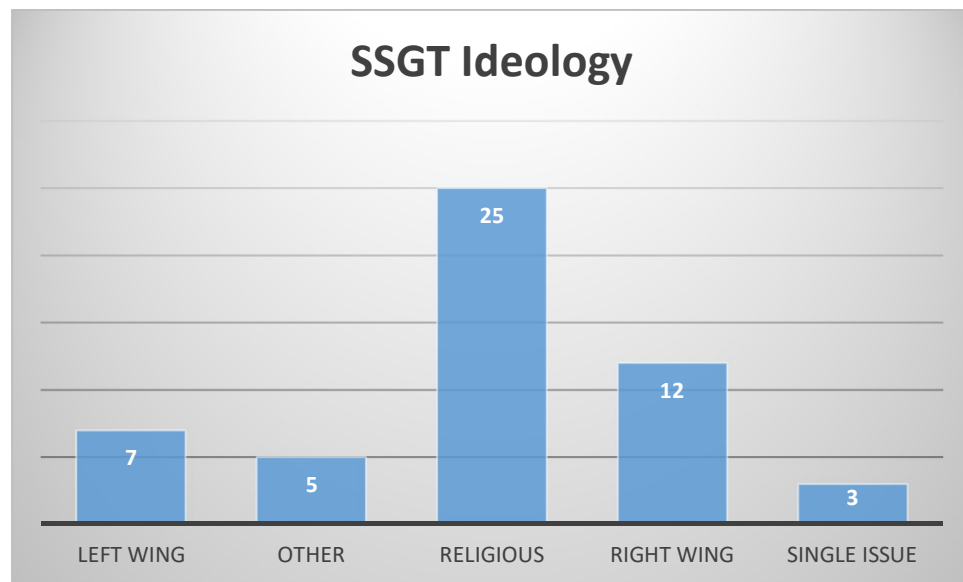


Figure 7 - Breakdown by Ideology Within SSGT

71% of all SSGT being religious and right-wing fundamentalists makes a strong argument for focusing mitigation strategies and policy on individuals within SSGT who subscribe to these types of ideologies. Likewise, in Gill's study, he arrives at a very similar figure of 77% of individuals motivated by religious or right-wing ideology.<sup>181</sup> One problem realized by this comparison deals with how many researchers look solely at a single ideology when studying "lone wolf terrorism." For example, Pantucci, who has done extensive work on "lone wolf terrorism," focuses on Islamic fundamentalist "lone wolves."<sup>182</sup>

#### *Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) attacks by SSGT*

Although CBRN weapon use by terrorists does not specifically relate to the development of the SSGT framework, the possible high consequence of such an attack makes this an important point for discussion. This section will not provide a comprehensive, 'deep-dive' analysis as that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, because there were three individuals within the SSGT dataset who used and attempted to use CBRN, a brief review will provide some insight. Unfortunately, the available literature dedicated to CBRN and "lone wolf terrorism" is extremely low. A few articles do exist, but their findings fall in line with recommendations regarding

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<sup>181</sup> Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, "Bombing Alone," 429.

<sup>182</sup> Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists."

mitigation strategies for organized terrorist groups (such as controlling precursor material, securing storage areas, and training) and suggest this is an emerging threat.<sup>183</sup>

Public perception is CBRN attacks are extremely rare. However, as Jonathan Tucker points out in the introduction of his book Toxic Terror, these types of attack are more common than the public realizes.<sup>184</sup> In W. Seth Carus's book Bioterrorism and Biocrimes: The Illicit Use of Biological Agents Since 1900, he lists 180 criminal and terrorist CBRN attacks from the years 1900 through 1999.<sup>185</sup> Despite being significantly less than traditional terrorist attacks, and CBRN criminal attacks outnumbering terrorist CBRN attacks by 4 to 1, they still occur enough to be of concern.<sup>186</sup> Gary Ackerman provides some analysis that suggests the threat from religiously inspired groups using CBRN is worth serious consideration:

[E]vents perpetrated by lone actors and autonomous cells pursuing and using CBRN seem *less likely* [emphasis added] to be driven by collective religious ideology or ethno-nationalist goals than events involving formal organizations.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> The main examples consist of Gary A. Ackerman and Lauren E. Pinson, "An Army of One: Assessing CBRN Pursuit and Use by Lone Wolves and Autonomous Cells," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 226–45, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.849945; Patrick D. Ellis, "Lone Wolf Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction: An Examination of Capabilities and Countermeasures," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 211–25, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.849935; "Lone Wolves' CBRNe Capabilities – Lessons Learned from Breivik Attack | CBRNe Portal," July 30, 2011, <http://www.cbrneportal.com/lone-wolves-cbrne-capabilities-lessons-learned-from-breivik-attack/>.

<sup>184</sup> Jonathan B. Tucker, ed., *Toxic Terror: Assessing Terrorist Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons*, BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), 1.

<sup>185</sup> W. Seth Carus and Center for Counterproliferation Research, *Bioterrorism and Biocrimes: The Illicit Use of Biological Agents Since 1900* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Counterproliferation Research, National Defense University, 2002), 8.

<sup>186</sup> Tucker, *Toxic Terror*, 1–2.

<sup>187</sup> Ackerman and Pinson, "An Army of One," 236.

Based on his analysis, this would lead to the conclusion that since most SSGT are from a religious ideology, the threat from individuals and small groups using CBRN in an attack would seem low. However, other researchers point to the Al-Fahd fatwa (an Islamic religious ruling) which declared the use of weapons of mass destruction acceptable in *jihad*.<sup>188</sup> Although a fatwa ‘approves’ the use of CBRN weapons and does not decree its use, having its use ‘approved’ is alarming. This discussion demonstrates an on-going debate on the role of CBRN and religiously inspired terrorism.

From another perspective, Tucker quotes a FBI executive who states perpetrators of chemical and biological attacks fall into two categories: “‘Lone Offenders’ who are mentally unstable and ‘extremist elements of right-wing groups.’”<sup>189</sup> If we take a brief look at the twelve case studies in Tucker’s book Toxic Terror, only one (the first Al-Qaeda bombing of the world trade center), possibly two (the Rajneeshees, depending on your interpretation of their cult as a religion), are from groups who were religiously motivated.<sup>190</sup> This suggests researchers lack any significant consensus on the role of ideology, group size, or other elements leading to the use of CBRN by a terrorist group.

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<sup>188</sup> Sammy Salama and Lydia Hansell, “Does Intent Equal Capability? Al-Qaeda and Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 12, no. 3 (November 2005): 627, doi:10.1080/10736700600601236.

<sup>189</sup> Tucker, *Toxic Terror*, 2.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., Table of Contents.

So how can SSGT help inform this debate? Individual terrorists are not exempt from conducting these types of attacks. Bruce Ivins sent infected anthrax letters through the U.S. mail system in 2001, and Muharem Kurbegovic (the Alphabet Bomber) threatened the use of anthrax and nerve agents.<sup>191</sup> However, the research into the use of CBRN by single individuals is too sparse to draw any strong conclusions, but it has been shown here and by other researchers that individuals have in the past, and in the future, will likely use CBRN weapons.

Due to the limited number of individuals within the SSGT dataset developed for this dissertation, who were involved with CBRN types of attacks or threats, any analysis would be inconclusive. However, the two SSGT groups who did use CBRN in attacks were two Zealots (Bruce Ivins and the Alphabet Bomber) and one Opportunists (Clayton Waagner).<sup>192</sup> Other commonalities of these three individuals include their lack of participation in small groups, all reported higher than average IQ, and all conducted numerous attacks.

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<sup>191</sup> The issue of whether a “threatened” used of CBRN constitutes an incident will be left to other researchers. However, since Tucker includes it in his study, it will be incorporated here. Ellis, “Lone Wolf Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction,” 214; Tucker, *Toxic Terror*, 71.

<sup>192</sup> Waagner never used CBRN agents, but sent ‘fake’ anthrax letters. This opens the question of whether ‘fake’ letters would constitute a CBRN attack. Since the dataset for this dissertation was drawn from the existing literature on “lone wolf terrorism,” his inclusion is primarily based on other researchers also including him in their dataset. It is left to future investigations analyzing other fake CBRN attacks to make determinations as to whether they should be included as a CBRN attack. For information regarding his fake letters, see “Clayton Lee Waagner Sentenced for Abortion-Anthrax Letters,” *LifeNews.com*, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.lifenews.com/2005/07/06/nat-1436/>.

As an imperfect proxy for the SSGT dataset, a review of other analysis might provide some additional insight. The cases studies within Toxic Terror establishes three individuals (out of the 12 cases in the book) who appear to be within the scope of SSGT. One, the Alphabet Bomber, is already included in the SSGT dataset and the other two both seem to fall within the Opportunist category. These two cases consisted of one small group of two to five (the case study is inconclusive on absolute numbers) calling itself RISE and an individual, Larry Wayne Harris. Both would fall within the Opportunist category as neither had any indications of mental illness nor did they strongly relate to an established terrorist organization as discussed in the case studies.<sup>193</sup>

Another study, from Bioterrorism and Biocrimes, suggests that SSGT might be more of concern regarding CBRN than previously discussed. Of the 180 incidents included, Carus finds that 62 individuals or small groups committed attacks using biological agents, large groups committed three, and an unknown number of perpetrators committed 115.<sup>194</sup> A word of caution regarding this finding within the context of this dissertation, Carus includes criminal incidents along with terrorism, defines a small group as between two and four individuals and a large group as five or more.<sup>195</sup> With comparison to SSGT, Carus's data makes comparisons difficult, but it does provide some rough insight. Specifically, he demonstrates individual and smaller

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<sup>193</sup> Tucker, *Toxic Terror*, 55-70-246.

<sup>194</sup> Carus and Center for Counterproliferation Research, *Bioterrorism and Biocrimes*, 25.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.



groups are more likely to use CBRN weapons than larger groups. With SSGT, this suggests, although not definitive by any means, that Opportunists and Zealots would be more likely to use CBRN than Strategists, due to their propensity to working alone. Additionally, Carus notes in cases of groups of two to four there was a single person with the scientific or technical skills capable of working with the CBRN materials.<sup>196</sup> This reliance on educated individuals loosely implies a link to advanced education or higher IQ. These are not conclusive findings but do provide a basis for future investigations.

Other available sources of information concerning CBRN use by terrorists are available, and many are beginning to incorporate information, helping to implement the SSGT framework in their analysis. The GTD provides a sub-set of data, “The Radiological and Nuclear Non-State Adversaries Database (RANNSAD)” for researchers to utilize. This work in progress by Principal Investigator Gary Ackerman aims to develop “...profiles of all former non-state users and attempted users of radiological and nuclear weapons and the database seeks to answer the research question ‘Who are the most likely radiological or nuclear non-state threat actors?’”<sup>197</sup> It will be a valuable tool for future investigators wishing to look at the intersection of SSGT and CBRN attacks. Additionally, the Monterey WMD Terrorism Database, another database which collects data and information regarding CBRN and terrorists, provides some capability for sorting

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> “Radiological and Nuclear Non-State Adversaries Database (RANNSAD) - START Terrorism Data Archive Dataverse,” accessed October 31, 2016, <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl%3A1902.1/16258>.

by “Lone Actor(s),” but fails to define what a “lone actor” is or refine the search further by number of perpetrators.<sup>198</sup>

This section provides some insight into the CBRN incidents and how they relate to SSGT and other findings within this paper. Other researcher’s data used in this dissertation did not spend considerable time devoted to investigating CBRN use by “lone wolf terrorists.” With a new framework in place, future research into SSGT will have a better typology to start from allowing a more robust focus on the subset of CBRN terrorism studies.

## **Analysis**

### ***Introduction***

With a firm understanding of what the three different SSGT categories are and how they relate to each other, the discussion now turns to what makes the SSGT categorization framework so important. This section helps us better understand the nuances of this dangerous subset of terrorists.

This section provides a detailed analysis of three areas commonly used in terrorism studies literature: Deaths/Injuries, Ideology, and Social Factors. Among the notable findings: Opportunists are the most dangerous (both fatalities and casualties) of the three categories, Strategists maintain the ability to integrate with peers and

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<sup>198</sup> “Monterey WMD Terrorism Database: Home,” accessed October 31, 2016, <http://wmddb.miis.edu/>.

community while Zealots do not and Strategists are more likely to belong to a small group.

### ***Specifics***

#### *Deaths/Injuries*

Terrorists kill, maim, and destroy. Whether this is their goal or a byproduct of their effort to get attention is a matter of continued debate within the academic and policymaking communities. Either way, understanding which groups or individuals are the deadliest has been the focus or a tangential part of most research efforts on terrorism. This dissertation continues the trend but with an eye toward incorporating the new SSGT framework into the analysis. A reminder that this analysis looks at data from the SSGT dataset consisting of individuals drawn from previous studies. Several recent incidents conducted by SSGT which occurred since 2014 to present day will undoubtedly change these numbers.

Before beginning a deeper analysis, a detail regarding a specific data point; Timothy McVeigh was the Opportunist who led the small group responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing, killing 168 and injuring over 600. The possibility exists to argue that that one small group, responsible for over half of all the killings for this category, could skew the numbers. However, if we take a closer look at the other two categories, we see a similar situation, single incidents which make up a significant portion of the deaths within their category as well. Strategists include the London bombers who killed

52 and Zealots have Anders Breivik who killed 77. In this sense, every group has its' deadliest of killers, but all groups had at least one who was the most prolific. All categories within the SSGT have their most capable individuals, leading to a 'leveling out' of the incidents. The situation is similar with number injured.

First, when looking at deaths and injuries, what becomes clear is the deadliness of Opportunists compared with the other two categories, being responsible for over half (58%) of all deaths conducted by SSGT. (See Figure 9).

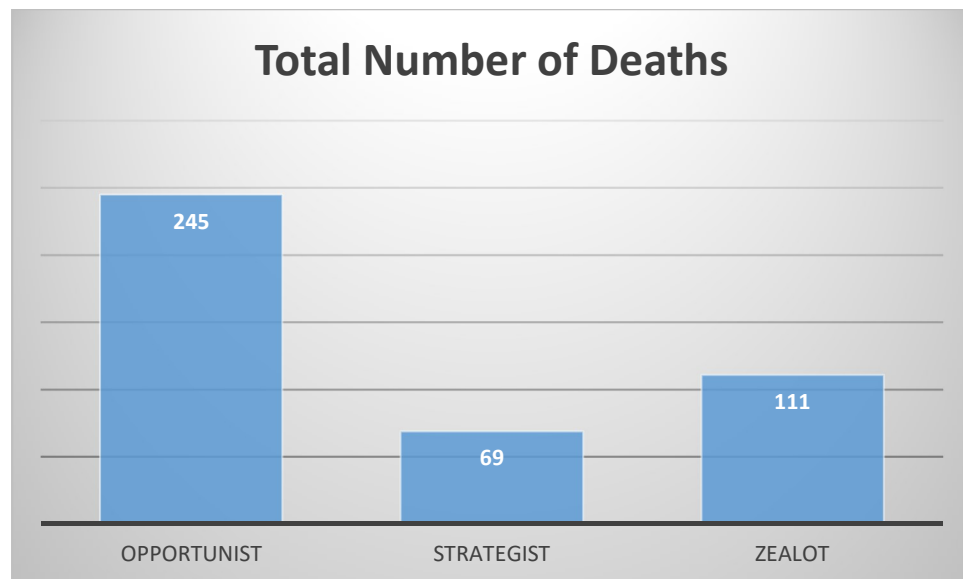


Figure 8 - Breakdown of Fatalities by SSGT Category

The results are similar when examining injuries, with Opportunists being responsible for 40% of all injuries inflicted by SSGT. (See Figure 10.)

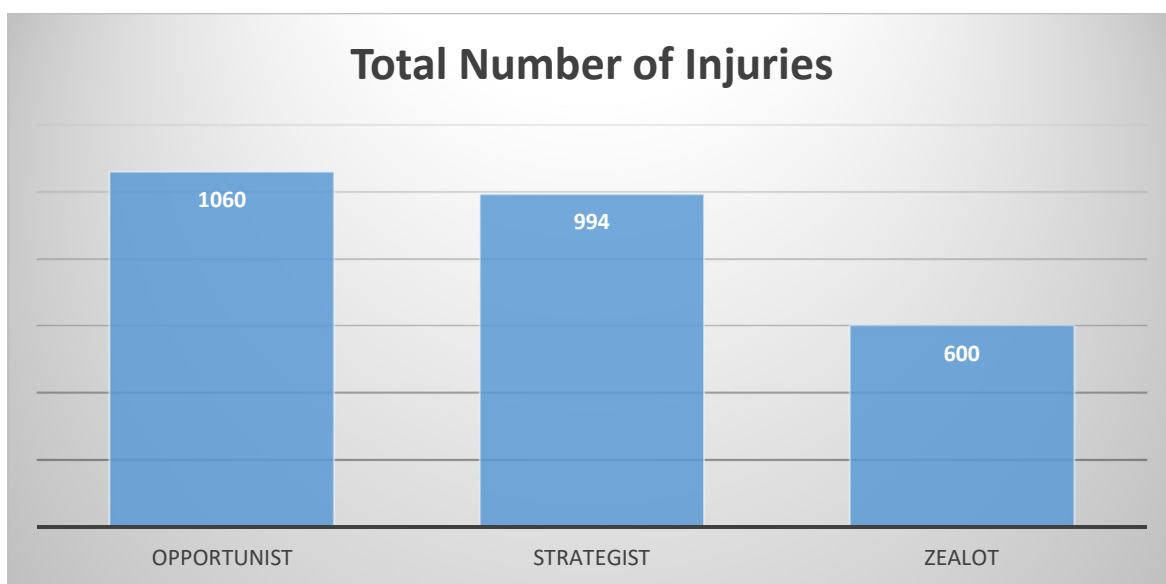


Figure 9 - Breakdown of Injuries by SSGT Category

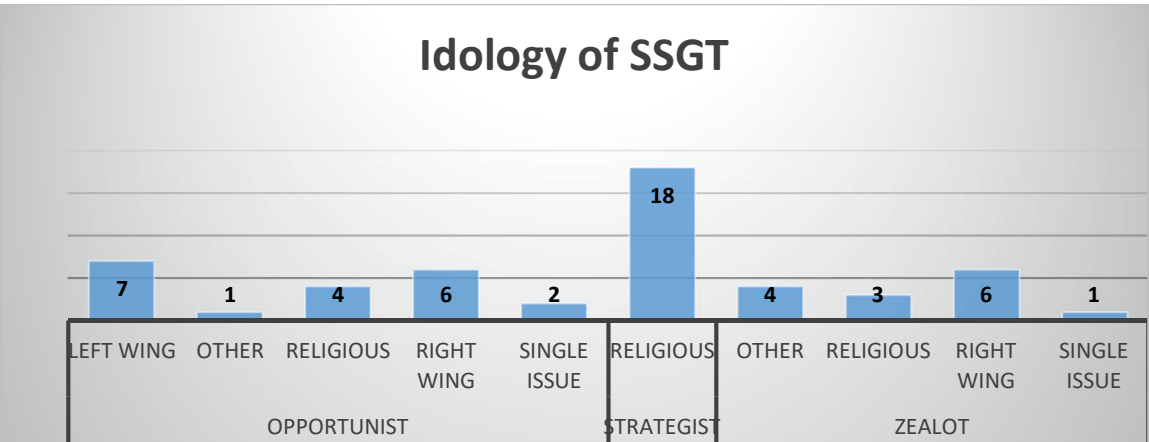
What influences Opportunists to become the deadliest? A variety of factors leads to their effectiveness. Most notable is their lack of membership in an existing group. Actions by individuals who participate in groups are often 'regulated' by the larger set of people within the groups. These groups are more likely to dismiss extreme, risky, or unprepared operations to avoid apprehension. Opportunists, do not associate with larger groups so are more apt to take risks because they need to be successful to promote their ideology; there is no other group which they feel will directly support their cause. The statement made by Timothy McVeigh in correspondence illustrates this remarkably well:

The people of this nation should have flocked to Waco with their guns and opened fire on the bastards! The streets of Waco should have run red with the blood of the tyrants, oppressors and traitors that have

slaughtered our people. Every person responsible for this massacre deserves nothing less than to die. If we want to live in peace, then sometimes we must go to war...<sup>199</sup>

*Ideology*

The most notable element within the category of Strategist is the ideological aspect. As demonstrated in Figure 11, 100% of all Strategists analyzed in the dataset used for this research ascribe to a religious ideology as compared with 2 out of 20 (10%) for Opportunists and 3 out of 14 (21%) for Zealots.<sup>200</sup>



*Figure 10 - Breakdown of SSGT by Ideology*

<sup>199</sup> Kaplan, “Leaderless Resistance,” 92.

<sup>200</sup> Note that within this early iteration of the SSGT database, all religiously inspired Strategists are from an Islamic perspective, but that does not imply a correlation between Islamic fundamentalism and other religiously inspired Strategists.

The high number of religiously motivated SSGT versus other ideologies could appear preconceived. The lack of representation by other ideologies is interesting but most striking is the absence of right-wing terrorists, often considered the founders of the leaderless resistance strategy (as discussed in Chapter 2). Understanding the lack of representation of right-wing ideology within the Strategist category requires a detailed look at the differences between ideology and group association.

The core of the Strategist categorization revolves around the idea of an individual strongly associating with an existing, specific organization. In contrast, consider a person who simply supports or agrees with an ideology advocated by a group. The association with the organization includes identifying with their group 'code' or 'ethics,' their culture, as well as 'following' the leader of the larger group. Another way to describe this: A Strategist always associates with a specific group, but someone who follows a groups' ideology is not always a Strategist.

As an example, consider Timothy McVeigh. His right-wing, anti-government views are well known along with the impetus for his attack based on the perceived injustices during the government sieges in Waco and Ruby Ridge.<sup>201</sup> Despite this and other organizations which called for violence against the government because of Waco

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<sup>201</sup> Associated Press, "McVeigh Regarded Bombing That Killed 168 People a Failure," *New York Post*, April 18, 2015, <http://nypost.com/2015/04/17/mcveigh-regarded-bombing-that-killed-168-people-a-failure/>.

and Ruby Ridge, McVeigh did not associate or identify with a specific right-wing group; he responded to his own, personal, anti-governmental feelings.

Although it could appear as if ideology influences as a categorization mechanism within the SSGT framework for Strategists, it would be incorrect; ideology does not take the mental state into account. Additionally, numerous instances within the dataset collected for this study demonstrate where an individual with religious ideologies ended up categorized as either an Opportunist (Mir Aimal Kasi and Arid Uka) or Zealot (Nicky Reilly or Naveed Haq).

In another example, consider ISIL publicly and repeatedly calling for the reinstitution of the Caliphate in the Middle East.<sup>202</sup> This large, established terrorist organization had specific, defined goals and called on others to commit *jihad* in support of its objectives.<sup>203</sup> Strategists align and associate with an existing group such as this, one having an existing organization, stated goals, and some formal, specific purpose. Faisal Shahzad, the “Times Square Bomber,” and four individuals nicknamed “The London Bombers” are examples of this (although the four were inspired by Al-Qaeda, not ISIL).

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<sup>202</sup> For a recent primer on ISIS, see “What Is ‘Islamic State’?,” *BBC News*, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>.

<sup>203</sup> “Top US Security Threats: Lone Wolves, Syria Fighters-Officials,” *Mail Online*, September 17, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2759922/Top-US-security-threats-lone-wolves-syria-fighters-officials.html>.



Another consideration centers on the cohesion of religious groups themselves. By their very nature, most religions uphold some group identity including a code of ethics, culture, and hold regular meetings or gatherings.<sup>204</sup> Among the several papers covering group association and religion, Renate Ysseldyk et al.'s sums up a clear connection between religion and group association applicable to religiously inspired terrorism: "...that religious identification can be fundamental to the promotion of individual well-being while simultaneously serving as a basis for seemingly intractable intergroup conflicts."<sup>205</sup> Ultimately, religious identification points to the conclusion that individuals with strong religious ideologies, who commit violence in the name of that religion, tend to have more group identification leading to the stronger likelihood of categorization as a Strategist.

It is also entirely possible right-wing terrorists do not associate with a specific small group or commit violence as individuals as much as previously thought; a possibility not previously discussed in the literature. This conclusion leads to an obvious follow-up question: Do right-wing terrorists always commit their violence as a member of a larger group or alone and shunning smaller groups? From the data

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<sup>204</sup> This short description obviously cannot cover every religion, but focuses on the mainstream, world-wide, organized religions. These are typical the religions which produce radical fringe elements so often associated with religiously inspired terrorism. A full discussion of religion and terrorism is beyond the scope of this project, but for additional information see: Taylor, "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism"; Bongar, *Psychology of Terrorism*.

<sup>205</sup> Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman, "Religiosity as Identity," 60.

reviewed in this study, the latter appears to be the case. Those with right-wing ideologies are split between Opportunists and Zealots with six each.

Figure 12 demonstrates how Strategists are more likely to be involved with a small group than any other category of SSGT.

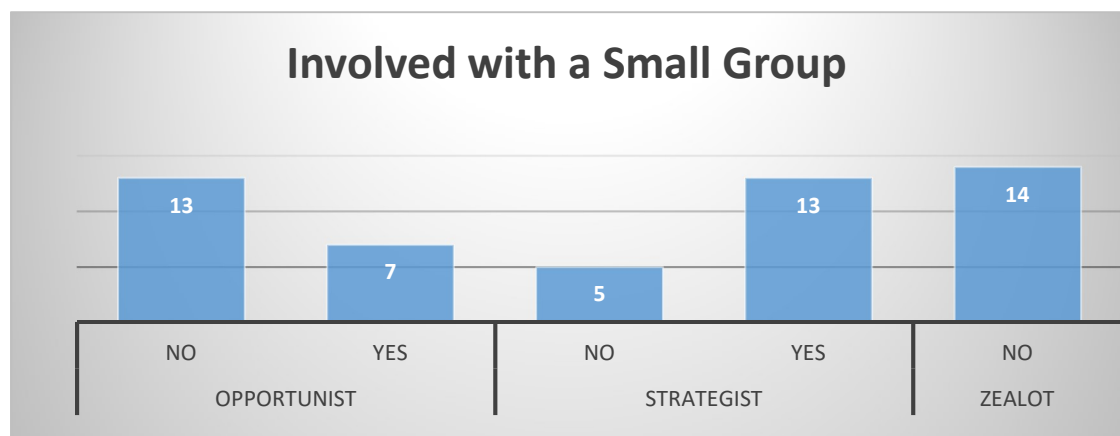


Figure 11 - Breakdown of SSGT Involved with a Small Group by Category

Of the 18 Strategists, 13 (72%) conspired with others compared with 7 out of 20 Opportunists (35%) and none of the Zealots. Strategists affinity toward groups seems intuitive given the previous discussion regarding Strategists adhering to a deeper religious ideology and considering religions almost always form some group or organization.

There is a tremendous amount to consider from the connection of Strategists being more likely to be working within a small group. This type of finding supports other

research in terrorism studies on sociological and social-psychological impacts of terrorism. As mentioned in the literature review, religion and social identity theory has been regularly studied since the 1990's and integrated with terrorism research.<sup>206</sup> Growing acceptance of Social Identity Theory as a tool for understanding political and religious violence is an integral part of this conclusion. As stated by Victoroff when discussing left-wing and religiously inspired terrorism

“...extensive evidence supports the observation that, far from being outcasts, terrorists are often regarded by their in-group as heroic freedom fighters...” and “[s]ome antisocial individuals perhaps use the moral cover of group affiliation to disguise their aggressive and remorseless drives.”<sup>207</sup>

Another finding of interest related to ideology pertains to the origins of Opportunists. Of the 20 individuals coded as Opportunists, 13 (65%) were born in the United States. U.S. nationality is far more prevalent than the other two categories of SSGT, which consisted of 2 of 18 (11%) Strategists and 6 of 14 (42%) Zealots born in the United States.

Target selection shows Opportunists are more likely to direct their violence at governments - 13 incidents out of 20 (65%) - while Strategists, who are more apt to have a religious ideology, split their targets evenly between governments and private

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<sup>206</sup> Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman, “Religiosity as Identity”; K. K. Robison, E. M. Crenshaw, and J. C. Jenkins, “Ideologies of Violence: The Social Origins of Islamist and Leftist Transnational Terrorism,” *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 1, 2006): 2009–26, doi:10.1353/sof.2006.0106; Deardorff, *The Roots of Our Children's War*.

<sup>207</sup> Victoroff, “The Mind of the Terrorist,” 13–14.

citizens, 9 out of 18 (50%) for each. Some recent investigations into groups associated with ISIL suggest groups like these might be shifting toward more civilian targets.<sup>208</sup>

Opportunists have more right-wing (6 cases out of 20) or left-wing (7 cases out of 20) cases, both of which tend to have anti-government philosophies.

As an example of anti-government ideology by an Opportunist, consider the humorous case of Dwight Watson. Falsely threatening to detonate a tractor full of explosives, Watson drove a tractor onto the National Mall protesting declining subsidies for farmers.<sup>209</sup> He stated, “I’m going to get my message out or die trying.”<sup>210</sup> He acted out due to a unique ideology no terrorist group espoused, but he did target the U.S. Government. Watson’s political ‘violence’ ended without incident after almost 48 hours; he surrendered peacefully and was ultimately sentenced to six years in prison for destruction of federal property and making false threats.<sup>211</sup>

Opportunists are individuals most likely to have a military background, with 8 out of 20 (40%) having served in the either a foreign or the U.S. military services. 1 out of 18 (5%) Strategists had a military background, and Zealots had none. This finding leads to the suggestion that Opportunists are the deadliness category due to their military

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<sup>208</sup> “Special Report: Kill Lists from Pro-IS Hacking Groups” (SITE Intelligence Group, June 7, 2016), 8.

<sup>209</sup> This incident is listed in the GTD. “Tobacco Farmer Drives Tractor into D.C. Pond,” *Associated Press*, (March 18, 2003), <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2003/03/18/tobacco-farmer-drives-tractor-into-dc-pond>.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> “Man Gets Six-Year Term for D.C. Tractor Standoff (washingtonpost.com),” accessed February 16, 2016, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64008-2004Jun23.html>.

experience which even intuitively seems to be a possible explanation. The conclusion that prior military service might influence individuals to become “lone wolf terrorists” has been a burning political debate over the past few years. As an example, consider the backlash from lawmakers regarding the Department of Homeland Security’s report Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment.<sup>212</sup> However, now correctly categorized, analysis of individuals within the SSGT framework who come from the military provides more accurate conclusions than by an ill-defined concept such as “lone wolf terrorists.”

### *Social Factors*

For Zealots, a key finding was their inability to integrate socially as opposed to the other two categories. 8 out of 14 (57%) Zealots in the dataset were socially awkward as opposed to 2 out of 20 (10%) of Opportunists and none of the Strategists. From an intuitive perspective, this makes sense. Mentally ill individuals typically have trouble ‘fitting in’ or maintaining relationships. As such, friends, family members, co-workers, and others who interact with Zealots are likely to describe them as socially awkward. Consider Ted Kaczynski’s and Anders Breivik’s inability to have friends or long-term associates; neither of them ever married or were involved in a serious relationship.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment,” Assessment (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, April 7, 2009).

<sup>213</sup> “Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” 37–40; Gardell, “Crusader Dreams,” 131.

Also supporting the SSGT framework, we see Zealots as less likely to belong to a small group, more likely to work alone, and often have unique and unusual ideologies (recall Figure 11 where 29% of Zealots had 'Other' ideologies.) In contrast, no Strategist reported being socially awkward, having this trait would make it difficult to fit in with a small group.

Another interesting aspect of Zealots is the concept of publishing a manifesto before conducting their attack, also referred to as *Broadcasting Intent* by Spaaij and Mark Hamm.<sup>214</sup> From a social perspective, it is worth questioning why some individuals feel the need through print or electronic media to publish their message. While the numbers are not overly large, 4 out of 14 (29% of Zealots) published some manifesto before conducting their attack. In contrast, 1 out of 20 (5% of Opportunists) and no Strategists made an attempt to broadcast a declaration of ideology before conducting their violence.<sup>215</sup> Indeed, the only non-Zealot to 'publish' a manifesto was Joseph Stack, the right-wing Opportunist who flew a small airplane into the IRS offices in Austin, Texas killing himself and one other individual.<sup>216</sup> Stack's anti-IRS rant on a web page demonstrated his clear dislike for the U.S. Government and taxes, but according to his

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<sup>214</sup> Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, "Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies" (Indiana State University, February 2015), 9.

<sup>215</sup> Note that a martyr video often created by religious extremists would not be categorized as broadcasting because even though the video was made prior to the attack, it's release was held until afterwards.

<sup>216</sup> Frank Rich, "The Axis of the Obsessed and Deranged," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2010, sec. Opinion, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/opinion/28rich.html>.

family and friends, he was far from a fanatic.<sup>217</sup> This most likely relates to Zealots being socially awkward and failing to have other outlets to inform the public of their political or religious grievances and deeply held personal views motivating their actions.

Several studies beyond Spaaij and Hamm looked at the concept of Broadcasting. Lisa Kaati, Bakker, and Gill are just a few examples looking at manifestos and public statements after a terrorist act.<sup>218</sup> Note that this should not be confused with *Leakage*. This slightly different concept means individuals are likely to discuss their plans, either directly or in a round-about way, with close friends or family implying some intent before the attack.<sup>219</sup> Leakage does not include martyr videos, most often created by religious extremists associated with Islamic fundamentalism. Martyr videos are not broadcasting because they are recorded before an attack but released afterward.

## Conclusion

This chapter began by looking at three case studies to help crystalize examples of each category of SSGT and compare/contrast them with the others. These detailed case studies showed how “lone wolf terrorism” is not a single issue to be lumped together but individual categories independent of each other. This discussion laid the foundation for a more comprehensive analysis within each of the three categories of SSGT.

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<sup>217</sup> Richard Fausset, “Austin Pilot ‘Was Always Even-Keeled,’” *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/20/nation/la-na-plane-crash-austin20-2010feb20>.

<sup>218</sup> Lisa Kaati and Pontus Svenson, “Analysis of Competing Hypothesis for Investigating Lone Wolf Terrorist” (IEEE, 2011), 295, doi:10.1109/EISIC.2011.60; de Graaf, “Preventing Lone Wolf Terrorism: Some CT Approaches Addressed,” 45; Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone,” 429.

<sup>219</sup> Brynielsson et al., “Harvesting and Analysis of Weak Signals for Detecting Lone Wolf Terrorists,” 3.

The section detailed the development of the SSGT database and discussed its population rubric and began to describe the overall breakdown of categories of the 52 individuals making up the database. The chapter also looked broadly, across SSGT, to see the summary of ideology, gender, and other general analysis of the dataset. Additionally, a discussion of the role of CBRN and SSGT demonstrated a need for devoting additional research efforts to this unique subset of terrorism studies.

The detailed analysis described some significant findings including the deadliness of Opportunists. The results of this effort clearly show that moving beyond the simple, nebulous phrase “lone wolf terrorism” to a more analytically useful concept will have a broad impact on the understanding of this type of political violence. Chapter 4 builds upon this by providing a look at the current state of policy as it applies to “lone wolf terrorism.”



## CHAPTER FOUR – Policy, Problems, and the Impact of SSGT

### **Introduction**

This chapter looks at SSGT with an eye towards how it applies to the real-world. It begins by providing a brief review of existing general terrorism laws, as well as the few statutes specifically addressing “lone wolf terrorism.” This background offers a baseline for the discussion regarding the impact of SSGT on policy but is not a definitive review. Such an endeavor is beyond the scope of this project; however, it does provide a foundation for policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.

After examining terrorism laws, and using the FBI as a model, this chapter then demonstrates the struggles and problems agencies deal with when investigating individual and small group terrorists. It illustrates how the various categories of SSGT will help agencies like the FBI mitigate and prioritize threats as well as more efficiently use resources. This chapter concludes with a general discussion of the overall implications.

## **Legal History of Terrorism Laws**

### ***Introduction***

This section attempts to shed light on whether existing law and policy regarding “lone wolf terrorism” meets the needs of the United States Intelligence Community (USIC), law enforcement, and policymakers with respect to SSGT. The discussion illustrates how the U.S. government shifted from a counter-intelligence focus to more of a security, counter-terrorism motivated approach while neglecting the problem of SSGT. The question of the efficacy of terrorism laws is not solely a U.S. phenomenon; the situation is similar worldwide. However, for a focused review, this section concentrates on U.S. legislation and policy leaving the detailed investigation into general terrorism legislation and policy to the volumes of research and opinion already available.<sup>220</sup> This section confirms the major point made in previous chapters of this paper - the phrase “lone wolf terrorism” is of little use, even within law and policy.

### ***Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act***

It is important to start any examination of terrorism laws with a brief explanation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). This law is the bedrock for **all** intelligence activities conducted by the USIC on U.S. soil or against U.S.

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<sup>220</sup> For a good resource listing applicable books on the topic of terrorism law see Joshua Sinai, “Terrorism Bookshelf: Top 150 Books on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 2 (May 16, 2012), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/sinai-terrorism-bookshelf>.

Persons/permanent residents. FISA history is steeped in the politics of the mid-to-late 1970's when public debate arose regarding powers of U.S. agencies belonging to the Executive Branch. When the Watergate and Church Commissions revealed questionable domestic and international intelligence activities by the FBI and other federal agencies, the discussion regarding governmental intelligence activities (or more accurately, lack of judicial process) on U.S. soil came to a head.<sup>221</sup> In light of these commission's reports, Congress passed the FISA authorizing the formation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC), as well as developing legal authority and guidance for domestic intelligence activities for governmental agencies.<sup>222</sup> The critical component of this brief discussion regarding the FISA is it focuses on *foreign intelligence activities* and mentions *terrorist activities* only in passing. More specifically, it targets foreign powers or entities defining them as:

A foreign power is –

- (1) a foreign government,
- (2) a diplomat, other representative or employee of a foreign government,
- (3) a faction of a foreign nation that is not substantially composed of U.S. persons,
- (4) an entity openly acknowledged by a foreign government to be directed and controlled by it,

or

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<sup>221</sup> For a brief review of this, see the U.S. Senate's website. "U.S. Senate: Watergate," *United States Senate*, June 2, 2014, <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/investigations/Watergate.htm>; and "U.S. Senate: The Church Committee," accessed March 27, 2016, <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/investigations/ChurchCommittee.htm>.

<sup>222</sup> "Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court | United States," *United States Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court*, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.fisc.uscourts.gov/>.

(5) a **group** [emphasis added] engaged in international terrorism or activities in preparation therefore.<sup>223</sup>

A different section of the FISA discusses agents of foreign powers, and in paragraph (2) it says:

An Agent of a foreign power is –

(2) any person who—

(A) knowingly engages in clandestine intelligence gathering activities for or on behalf of a foreign power, which activities involve or may involve a violation of the criminal statutes of the United States;

(B) pursuant to the direction of an intelligence service or network of a foreign power, knowingly engages in any other clandestine intelligence activities for or on behalf of such foreign power, which activities involve or are about to involve a violation of the criminal statutes of the United States;

(C) knowingly engages in sabotage or international terrorism, or activities that are in preparation therefor, for or on behalf of a foreign power; or

(D) knowingly aids or abets any person in the conduct of activities described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) or knowingly conspires with any person to engage in activities described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C).<sup>224</sup>

It is clear the law emphasizes foreign nationals working on behalf of a foreign power. Moreover, despite a definition of *international terrorism* in section 101 (c), there lacks a description of a terrorist acting alone. This absent detail seems small, but has tremendous implications; consider Zacharias Moussaoui's (the assumed "20<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> *Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978*, 50, vol. 1801, 1978.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1801, sec. 101.

hijacker”) involvement in the plot on September 11, 2001. As stated in a report from the Department of Justice Inspector General:

The Minnesota FBI and FBI Headquarters differed as to whether a warrant could be obtained and what the evidence in the Moussaoui case suggested. FBI Headquarters did not believe sufficient grounds existed for a criminal warrant, and it also concluded that a FISA warrant could not be obtained because it believed Moussaoui could not be connected to a foreign power as required under FISA.<sup>225</sup>

The lack of direct connection to a foreign power - Moussaoui did not ‘qualify’ as an agent of a foreign power under the FISA definition - limited the USIC’s, and more specifically the FBI’s, legal options. Closing this loophole might not have prevented the attack on the World Trade Center, but it illustrates a specific problem. These types of issues proved even more problematic as the U.S. entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the focus of the national security to the terrorist threat.

Looking broadly, in some instances legislators did provide law enforcement and the USIC legal mechanisms to deal with terrorism, but often it seemed the legislation and policy struggled to ‘catch up’ and adapt in the wake of the increase in terrorist attacks. From a legal perspective, existing laws and policy would cover a small group because the law applies just the same as a larger group. In contrast, individuals, especially those not working on behalf of a foreign power, would not fall under the

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<sup>225</sup> “A Review of the FBI’s Handling of Intelligence Information Related to the September 11 Attacks” (Washington D.C.: Department of Justice, November 2004).

purview of these old laws, so their prosecutions used criminal statutes treating the suspects no differently from 'regular' criminals.<sup>226</sup>

From an academic and research perspective, there are further problems. If we wish to seek out instances of terrorism when searching through legal records, the difficulty lies in determining which prosecutions were terrorism and which ones were criminal. This absence in the literature exemplifies the incomplete reporting which fails to include all instances of terrorism, making studying and understanding difficult due to lack of data.

### ***USA PATRIOT ACT***

The defining period in legal policy regarding terrorism immediately followed the 2<sup>nd</sup> attack on the World Trade Center. The USA PATRIOT Act (formally: The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001) laid the necessary groundwork and provided many useful tools for law enforcement and the USIC. Despite its importance, the PATRIOT Act failed to consider SSGT, leaving gaps requiring later attention.

The PATRIOT Act aimed to provide law enforcement and the USIC better legal tools to counter and investigate terrorist groups targeting the United States. This law,

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<sup>226</sup> This could potentially lead into a discussion on whether terrorism should be viewed as a criminal issue or a national security issue. Some countries, especially those in Western Europe, take the criminal viewpoint. Others, such as the United States and Russia, see it more as a national security issue. I do not address the larger debate here, but for a review of this discussion as well as examples of different countries' approach, see Doron Zimmermann and Andreas Wenger, eds., *How States Fight Terrorism: Policy Dynamics in the West* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007).

which provided enhanced electronic surveillance procedures, money laundering abatement, and border protection among other things, became law on October 26, 2001.<sup>227</sup> Although the PATRIOT Act did not address “lone wolf terrorism,” it laid the groundwork for the “Lone Wolf Amendment” to the FISA law three years later.

### ***“Lone Wolf” Amendment***

In July of 2004, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (otherwise known as “The 9/11 Commission”) publicly released its final report. The 9/11 Commission reviewed the actions of the USIC and FBI leading up to the attack on September 11, 2001, and developed recommendations to prevent future attacks. During this same period as the 9/11 Commission, attention focused on solving the issues brought up because of Moussaoui’s investigation by the FBI (as discussed earlier.) All these topics coalesced to form the basis for the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention (IRTP) Act of 2004, most often referred to as the “Lone Wolf” Amendment. Some of the changes the law implemented included the creation of the Director of National Intelligence and facilitating more sharing of FISA intelligence within the USIC and law enforcement. The IRTP also amended the FISA to fix the loophole regarding an individual unaffiliated with a foreign power who commits acts of international terrorism.<sup>228</sup> Before this change, the clause regarding an ‘agent of a foreign power’ did

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<sup>227</sup> *P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act of 2001*, 18, vol. 1, 2001.

<sup>228</sup> Elizabeth B. Bazen and Brian T. Yeh, “Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004: ‘Lone Wolf’ Amendment to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act” (Congressional Research Service, December 19, 2006), sec. 6001(C).

not apply to individuals who acted alone and not as part of a state-sponsored terrorist group, inhibiting the law's application to terrorist investigations such as in the case of Moussaoui.

However, this amendment was not without its critics. Some felt the FISA, in its original interpretation, did allow the FBI to address unaffiliated individuals and considered it an overreach of law enforcement to target individuals without ties to foreign governments.<sup>229</sup> On December 31, 2009, the President signed the IRTP into law.<sup>230</sup> The FISA was amended to say:

SEC. 6001. INDIVIDUAL TERRORISTS AS AGENTS OF FOREIGN POWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL. —Section 101(b)(1) of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (50 U.S.C. 1801(b)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:  
“(C) engages in international terrorism or activities in preparation therefore; or”.

(b) SUNSET. —The amendment made by subsection (a) shall be subject to the sunset provision in section 224 of Public Law 107–56 (115 Stat. 295), including the exception provided in subsection (b) of such section 224.<sup>231</sup>

As the FISA law focused primarily on foreign intelligence activities, not terrorism, it appeared to be a much-needed amendment to an outdated law. The Assistant Attorney General at that time, David Kris, testified during a U.S. Senate hearing that the

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<sup>229</sup> For a discussion on both sides of this debate see Mary DeRosa, “Lone Wolf Amendment,” Blog, *Patriot Debates*, (2005), <https://apps.americanbar.org/natsecurity/patriotdebates/lone-wolf>.

<sup>230</sup> Bazen and Yeh, “Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004: ‘Lone Wolf’ Amendment to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act,” 1.

<sup>231</sup> *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, USC*, vol. 50, 2004, sec. 6001.



FBI had not used this provision in the five years since the passage of the law.<sup>232</sup> Kris argued in his testimony that the law offered a tool having application should a terrorist self-radicalize or “...severs his connection with his group...”<sup>233</sup>

Despite closing a loophole, there was an unforeseen problem with respect to domestic terrorist acts. The IRTP law states an individual who “...engages in **international** terrorism...” [emphasis added] shall be included within the FISA law. The law fails to address those who commit domestic terrorism or where their relationship with a terrorist group, international or domestic, is not known.

This issue regarding domestic terrorism is not normally a significant problem as most of these investigations rarely use FISA law, due mostly to the prohibition against targeting U.S. citizens as well as First Amendment issues protecting free speech. Traditionally, domestic terrorism investigations rely on criminal warrants. However, there have been instances of espionage investigations ‘turning into’ a domestic terrorism case or an international terrorist ‘becoming’ a domestic terrorist because they obtain citizenship. Despite this, since it is possible in limited circumstances to use FISA law in some domestic terrorist cases, the possibility exists that there would be difficulty in pursuing some complex investigative techniques should they become necessary as it removes a ‘tool from the toolbox’ of investigators. Publicly available information has

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<sup>232</sup> *Statement of David Kris, Assistant Attorney General Before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate Entitled “Reauthorizing the USA Patriot Act: Ensuring Liberty and Security”* (Washington D.C., 2009), sec. Judiciary 4.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. Judiciary 5.

yet to reveal any specific examples caused by this new loophole, but as is often the case, the problem will become evident due to some major policy or prosecutorial failure and later become an issue.

### ***Discussion***

The preceding section laid out a discussion on historical and current law regarding terrorism and “lone wolf terrorism.” Except for one amendment to cover a loophole in the federal legislation, the “Lone Wolf Amendment,” the discussion up to this point demonstrates that legislators and policymakers have yet to understand them fully. Even this brief examination demonstrates a lack of focus on looking at individuals who commit terrorist acts alone. With a few exceptions, detailed in Table 5 below, the laws and policies reviewed here do not address individuals who commit terrorism alone and practitioners usually rely on existing criminal statutes.

Table 5 - Summary of Terrorism Laws Addressing "Lone Wolf Terrorism."

<b>Name of Law</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Addresses Singular Terrorism?</b>
<b>Foreign Assistance Act of 1969.</b>	<i>Prohibited funding the United Nations if the money went to organizations supporting terrorism.</i>	No
<b>International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976</b>	<i>Prohibits the U.S. from providing financial assistance to countries which grant sanctuary to international terrorists.</i>	Yes
<b>Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978</b>	<i>Implemented FISA Court and FISA law system.</i>	Yes
<b>USA PATRIOT Act of 2001</b>	<i>Implemented new tools for the USIC and federal law enforcement to mitigate and investigate terrorist attacks.</i>	No
<b>Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention (IRTP) Act of 2004</b>	<i>Created the Director of National Intelligence, reformed sharing of FISA intelligence, created the "lone wolf amendment" within the FISA.</i>	Yes

As mentioned above, and previously in Chapter 1, if the legal system employs other laws to prosecute individual terrorists, it is difficult for policymakers and researchers to determine the full extent of "lone wolf terrorism" due to the inability to distinguish between individuals prosecuted on terrorism charges versus individuals prosecuted under criminal laws. Consider this within the context of law enforcement and prosecutors tending to work from a perspective of "What can we charge a person

with?” and proceed with investigative steps to fulfill those prosecutorial goals. Lacking specific laws for “lone wolf terrorism,” law enforcement and prosecutors search for statutes from which to pursue these individuals and their threats.

### ***SSGT Applied to Policy***

#### *Introduction*

This section moves away from the review of terrorism laws and discusses how one Executive Branch agency, the FBI, deals with the vague intersection of legislation, policy, and need to ‘accomplish the mission.’ It begins by discussing some background on the methodology and philosophy the FBI uses when conducting counter-terrorism investigations with an emphasis on individual terrorist subjects. Next, this section provides an examination of how lack of understanding of “lone wolf terrorism” impacts investigations of known subjects as well as vague threats, including how the SSGT framework can aid in a more efficient and targeted strategy in an ever-increasing avalanche of new cases. The section concludes with some examples where the SSGT might have limitations as part of an investigative strategy.

There are three primary reasons for using the FBI as the model for looking at current policy. First, the FBI maintains responsibility as the principal agency for investigating acts of terrorism. Although other organizations play critical roles, as well as local/state law enforcement agencies, the FBI is primarily responsible. Second, because of its status as a federal agency, the FBI incorporates intelligence, information,

and ideas of other federal/state/local agencies and maintains a broader view of terrorism issues. Finally, the resources the FBI draws upon to investigate terrorism (surpassed only by the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency) are considerable allowing a better understanding of the threat than most agencies.

### *“Boots on the Ground” Policy*

#### Background

For the FBI, investigations into potential terrorist activities start with complaints from the public or intelligence from other federal/state/local agencies regarding an individual or group engaged in politically or religiously inspired violence. After verifying the lead as genuine, investigators check databases and follow leads (based on legal authorities) to develop a picture of how the subject, and possibly others, presents a potential threat. Except in rare circumstances, each suspect stands alone; indictments are independent of any other confederates. If an individual is part of a group, the possibility exists to consider indicting them similar to a criminal enterprise. The FBI occasionally takes this approach, but because the main goal in terrorism investigations is to mitigate the threat by any means, prosecuting individuals for a lesser charge provides a simpler solution. Consider this choice: Agents could spend years developing a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) case to incur a forty-year sentence or pursue a simpler, yet less severe, tax evasion or counterfeiting investigation

over the course of only a few months but incur a five to ten-year sentence.<sup>234</sup> When the pressure is to put a terrorist in jail, the answer is obvious.

Since the FBI treats each case individually, the concept of a “lone wolf terrorist” has little impact on investigative strategy or prosecutorial outcome. The only element close to “lone wolf terrorist” in the semantics of the FBI is the phrase Homegrown Violent Extremist (HVE). The definition of an HVE within the FBI is “...a person of any citizenship who has mostly lived in the U.S. and who engages in a terrorist activity to advance an ideology. This person is influenced by foreign terrorist organizations but acts alone.”<sup>235</sup> The FBI most likely adopted the phrase HVE to prevent the confusion caused by the nebulous term “lone wolf terrorist” very similarly to what this dissertation argues. It roughly parallels most academic definitions of “lone wolf terrorism” but is more ‘U.S. centric’ due primarily to the FBI’s jurisdictional authority. However, the FBI’s definition does have its pitfalls. In a statement Director of the FBI James Comey made to Congress in 2014, he states “[HVE’s] present unique challenges because they do not share the profile of an identifiable group.”<sup>236</sup> SSGT helps to inform this approach by adopting more definable categories.

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<sup>234</sup> For information on the RICO statute see the *Organized Crime Control Act of 1970*, 1970, sec. 901.

<sup>235</sup> “Homegrown Violent Extremism,” Audio, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, accessed October 28, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/audio-repository/news-podcasts-thisweek-homegrown-violent-extremism.mp3/view>.

<sup>236</sup> “Worldwide Threats to the Homeland,” Testimony, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, accessed October 29, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/worldwide-threats-to-the-homeland>.

To aid understanding and appropriately apply the SSGT framework to counter-terrorism investigations requires dividing FBI activities into two different types: An investigation into a known individual who demonstrates intent for conducting an attack or searching for unknown threats by individuals or groups. This section looks at these two scenarios, the pitfalls when dealing with them, and draws from the SSGT framework to show how it can help prioritize investigative efforts as well as more efficiently distribute resources.

#### Known Suspect

Although the FBI has successfully caught and helped prosecute hundreds of known terrorists actively preparing to conduct an attack, the hidden problem with counter-terrorism cases centers on investigating those individuals who demonstrate interest, but not intent. This type of subject often seems radicalized, but radicalization is not a crime. Hence, the FBI waits, taking its normal investigative steps determining if the subject will ‘flip’ and become violent.<sup>237</sup> So often this becomes a stalemate as extensive personnel, technical, and legal resources commit effort toward investigating an individual who *might* be considering some violent act in response to an ideology. Often, these subjects are guilty of lesser charges which could lead to their arrest, but

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<sup>237</sup> This begs the question, if radicalization is not illegal, why does the FBI investigate people who have not committed a crime? All counter-terrorism investigations are reviewed at several levels of management as well as legal entities within the FBI and DOJ to ensure the investigations are legally authorized. Should an individual under investigation be a U.S. citizen, special consideration is given requiring extra scrutiny. The discussion here assumes legally authorized investigations falling within the guidelines of the FBI and DOJ.

rarely can these types of charges keep someone incarcerated more than a day or two. Early indictments lead to the possibility of the FBI “showing its hand” and losing the ability to investigate an individual further. Likewise, there is always the possibility of the subject being enraged or scared after the limited incarceration and immediately turning to violence when released, without the FBI being able to respond because the case is turned over to the Department of Justice (DoJ) for prosecution.

In the instance of an individual described above, the FBI spends thousands of man-hours conducting surveillance, monitoring technical collections, coordinating with DoJ and other law enforcement agencies, just to watch a single individual go about their daily routine on the off chance they might ‘break’ and commit a violent act. Although the FBI does not publicly disclose the number of pending investigations, an estimate of approximately 1,000 terrorism cases targeting HVE’s is within reason.<sup>238</sup> Taking a conservative approach and estimating half these cases involve individuals part of a larger group or cases incorrectly generated due to bad tips or incorrect intelligence, leaves 500 active investigations by the FBI categorized as SSGT.

Regarding man-power, consider a rough estimate; a single subject of a terrorist investigation that is of ‘considerable concern’ occupies anywhere from two to four hours a day for fifteen, to as many as fifty, investigative and analytical staff. That calculates out to between 30 and 200 man-hours a day attempting to cover one known

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<sup>238</sup> Eric Lichtblau, “F.B.I. Steps Up Use of Stings in ISIS Cases,” *The New York Times*, June 7, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/08/us/fbi-isis-terrorism-stings.html>.



individual for a single case.<sup>239</sup> If we consider that even one-fifth of these 500 cases is of ‘considerable concern’ (an admittedly arbitrary standard) to the management of the FBI, that is 3,000 to 20,000 man-hours **each day** following, monitoring, and investigating individuals who demonstrate interest but have yet to display intent to conduct an attack.

The FBI has operated at this tempo for the past fifteen years, since 9/11, and these numbers increased during 2015-2016 with the spread of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The FBI is not alone. The British domestic intelligence agencies only have the resources to monitor a handful of terrorism suspects adequately. The French domestic intelligence agency stated a similar figure.<sup>240</sup> More recently, after several attacks in the summer of 2016, German police are also feeling overwhelmed and spread thin.<sup>241</sup>

This significant drain on FBI resources negatively impacts other investigations as well as exhaust its people. Applying the SSGT framework to day-to-day counter-terrorism investigations of the FBI enhances prioritization and influences investigative

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<sup>239</sup> This could include for a ‘simple’ investigation: Primary & backup Special Agent, 2-4 analytical staff, 1 administrative support, 2-3 technical operations Agents, 5-10 surveillance personnel (more if 24 hours), and considerable management/legal oversight by 3-5 personnel at the field office and FBI Headquarters. If the case is complex or the violent intent appears to be imminent, these numbers could easily double. Personal experience of the author.

<sup>240</sup> “It’s Impossible to Monitor All Terror Suspects. These Charts Show Why.,” *Washington Post*, accessed June 23, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/06/15/its-impossible-to-monitor-all-terror-suspects-these-charts-show-why/>.

<sup>241</sup> Anthony Faiola and Griff Witte, “Amateur Terror Attacks May Mark a New Chapter in the ISIS War in Europe,” *MSN*, July 26, 2016, <http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/amateur-terror-attacks-may-mark-a-new-chapter-in-the-isis-war-in-europe/ar-BBuUGdv>.

strategy. An understanding of a subject's background allows categorizing them based on their mental state and group association with a fair amount of confidence. Knowing an individual's SSGT categorization influences prioritization against other investigative subjects, informs investigative approaches and gives prosecutors a head start on legal stratagems.

Looking at a general example, consider a subject of an FBI counter-terrorism investigation, someone who falls within the SSGT framework. If the individual exhibits mental illness, then as a Zealot the FBI should immediately begin to consider alternatives to criminal statutes or terrorism laws and focus on mental health-related strategies. These alternatives might include working with the local public health office, psychologists, or psychiatrists to develop ideas, plans, and investigative steps to institutionalize, or at least help the individual in some way. As for specific investigative strategies, investigators can assume with some confidence a subject classified as a Zealot works alone and is more likely to be socially awkward. This determination is important should strategies lean toward introducing human sources. Investigative steps should rely more on court authorized technical means to look for patterns in behavior which might indicate the development of some weapon, unusual inquiries to businesses for precursor materials, researching supporting information regarding their methodology, or other means of preparing for an attack. Taking a broader, agency-wide view, if the number of cases involving Zealots meets a certain threshold, the FBI might consider the creation of a specialized team of experienced investigators, coupled with

analytical and mental health personnel, to develop specific strategies to deal with Zealots.

However, if an evaluation of the intelligence regarding the subject of a terrorism investigation suggests a lack of mental illness and absence of group association, this leads to a classification of Opportunist. In this case, investigators need to be cognizant of an increase in the probability of the subject being dangerous. Additionally, they are more likely to subscribe to a right-wing or left-wing ideology (therefore probably anti-government) and stand a good chance of having a military background. Both points would be paramount to a law enforcement officer considering an interview or making an arrest. The FBI develops detailed interviewing and interrogation strategies for various subjects, and the application of this specific knowledge would be extremely beneficial.

Finally, if intelligence reveals an individual with strong group association and lack of any mental illness, we can evaluate them as a Strategist. Knowing that Strategists are more likely than not to have a religious ideology, act socially normal, and more apt to work in small groups is helpful. Investigators should be cognizant of the possibility of confederates or those who might have knowledge of the subject's intentions leading to an investigative strategy more dependent on human sources than technical ones.

## Unknown Suspect

The previous paragraphs looked at the applicability of SSGT from the standpoint of a known subject currently under investigation. However, the SSGT framework proves to be beneficial with regards to the unknown threat as well. In this instance, the FBI or USIC demand investigators and analysts search for unknown individuals which might be potential threats - the proverbial “needle in a haystack.” Before the mid-1990’s, the FBI rarely initiated pre-emptive steps to stopping unknown terrorists. This position started to change with the rise of Al Qaeda and the first World Trade Center bombing. Resources turned away from investigating crimes and counter-intelligence investigations to an emphasis on proactively looking for unknown threats. Changing the focus of the FBI from a reactive stance to a proactive stance was (and still is) a massive undertaking. It required an organization of 30,000 individuals, with a strong existing culture, decades of ingrained policy bent toward reactive investigations, and a legal apparatus established for solving crimes not preventing them, to shift monumentally. The FBI’s gradual shift contributed considerably to the debate after 9/11 regarding whether to split the FBI into two agencies – A law enforcement agency and a dedicated domestic intelligence collection agency.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> This issue was heavily debated after 9/11. For a brief, but excellent review of both sides of this issue, see Gregory F. Treverton, “Intelligence, Law Enforcement, and Homeland Security” (The Century Foundation, August 21, 2002).

As it is now known, the push to divide the FBI into two organizations was unsuccessful due in part to the strides the FBI made moving toward being more intelligence-driven. Despite this effort, some in the FBI maintain dedicating additional resources to searching for the unknown threat. These types of investigative activities include reviewing old case files for missed leads or scouring various forms of open source intelligence – especially social media – for indications of attempts to coordinate or conduct some attack. The SSGT framework helps inform us on this drain of resources as well.

For clarification, it is important to note that there is a distinct difference between spending investigative resources searching for specific threats versus looking for unknown or unspecified individuals who might be on the verge of radicalization. Looking for threats through open source intelligence means scrubbing e-mail pages, blogs, web pages, social media feeds, anywhere an individual describes, threatens, or openly discusses a planned attack. In contrast, targeting radicalization constitutes searching open source intelligence for indications of either an individual attempting to convert others to a specific ideology or finding an individual on the verge of becoming radicalized. These two scenarios are very different, particularly in the context of SSGT.

Examining the scenario where the FBI searches for threats, we apply the SSGT framework in a slightly different fashion. Since categorization of an unknown individual is impossible, decisions need to be made based on the overall ‘population,’ guiding the

search and targeting those who might be SSGT. Among one of the strongest considerations is the previous analysis demonstrating very few SSGT would broadcast their intentions. Recall only 29% of Zealots published some manifesto before conducting their attack, only 5% of Opportunists ‘broadcast’ their attack, and no Strategists pre-indicated violent action. Spending considerable resources to search for future threats on-line or in social media, particularly considering the volume of posts, tweets, and pictures posted daily ensures this as a lesson in futility. Twitter stated approximately 500 million tweets a day in 2011.<sup>243</sup> If the mission is to look for “lone wolves” within open source, the FBI ends up “drinking from a firehose.” Filtering down 500 million Tweets to a manageable number proves almost impossible. Add to this the additional data other mainstream social media sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, produce and the situation worsens and deteriorates even more if including obscure and specialized social media sites. With the growing trend of ISIL moving toward encrypted chat applications such as Snapchat and Telegram then searching on-line for the “lone wolf” dedicates thousands of man-hours in a fruitless endeavor.

When broadly searching for unknown threats the FBI, and all government agencies, need to strongly consider perceptions of intrusions into the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Well publicized in the media, the activities of Edward Snowden made privacy rights the forefront of most discussions surrounding the U.S.

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<sup>243</sup> “#numbers,” *Twitter Blogs*, accessed July 16, 2016, <https://blog.twitter.com/2011/numbers>.

Government's collection and review of electronic information.<sup>244</sup> With privacy concerns now being a matter of almost daily media coverage, U.S. Government agencies are becoming increasingly concerned with perceptions of illegal government intrusions. Combine this with current events involving questions of inappropriate police shootings and the subsequent demonstrations, and it would be easy to see how the public might perceive the FBI monitoring social media as a questionable overreach, even if the information the government is reviewing is openly available.<sup>245</sup>

Another question arises as to what response the FBI should take after finding a threat within social media. Obviously, a Tweet or Facebook post revealing a direct and imminent threat of some attack would generate immediate law enforcement involvement, who would deploy to ensure prevention or mitigation of any violence saving as many lives as possible. However, as demonstrated above by the SSGT framework, a specific threat or post before an attack is unlikely, but instances of vague intentions pose a problem. If social media posts or blogs make *general* references to violence against police or vague threats against the government, what actions should the FBI take? The FBI's extensive, physical areas of responsibility compared with the number of available responding Special Agents makes deploying them to every vague

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<sup>244</sup> For an excellent historical account of the revelations made by Edward Snowden see Luke Harding, "How Edward Snowden Went from Loyal NSA Contractor to Whistleblower," *The Guardian*, February 1, 2014, sec. US news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/01/edward-snowden-intelligence-leak-nsa-contractor-extract>.

<sup>245</sup> To be clear, all on-line activities of the FBI are regulated by strict policy to avoid this type of misperception, but in the current climate, **any** broad searching of social media or on-line presence of an individual can be seen as an overreach.

threat impossible. Considering the limited number of social media posts geo-located (about 1% of all Twitter posts contain geo-located information), the first difficulty lies in where to respond.<sup>246</sup> The conclusion reached by this discussion reveals that having the FBI conduct real-time monitoring of social media for vague threats appears to be an incredible waste of time.

One real-world example illustrates how difficult it is to uncover a plot or pursue an unknown threat by searching social media or open source intelligence. During the Christmas season in 2015, the FBI took a 'heightened response posture' because of vague threats from ISIL. Additionally, during this time, a husband and wife in San Bernardino, CA, Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, shot and killed 14 people and injured over 20 celebrating at a gathering on December 2, 2015.<sup>247</sup> The FBI deemed the shooting an act of terrorism but found no indication of either of the shooters being directed by or belonging to a larger, established terrorist organization.<sup>248</sup> Subsequent investigation revealed evidence of radicalization years before, the two practiced at a local shooting range and built bombs in their garage. Malik had even undergone a background check before obtaining her green card.<sup>249</sup> There were early reports Malik

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<sup>246</sup> David Jurgens et al., "Geolocation Prediction in Twitter Using Social Networks: A Critical Analysis and Review of Current Practice" (Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, 2015), 1.

<sup>247</sup> "What Investigators Know About the San Bernardino Shooting," *The New York Times*, December 2, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/12/02/us/california-mass-shooting-san-bernardino.html>.

<sup>248</sup> "FBI Will Investigate San Bernardino Shootings as Terrorist Act," Story, *Federal Bureau of Investigation*, accessed July 17, 2016, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-will-investigate-san-bernardino-shootings-as-terrorist-act>.

<sup>249</sup> "What Investigators Know About the San Bernardino Shooting."



previously talked about jihad on Facebook, but the Director of the FBI, James Comey, later clarified these were private messages only visible to the parties involved in the communication.<sup>250</sup>

This brief example illustrates how unproductive it is for organizations like the FBI to expend resources searching through open sources and social media searching for someone with both interest **and** intent. Those who support extensive searching for general threats often argue that “missing one attack does not mean we will miss the next one.” Applying the knowledge of the SSGT framework to this discussion reveals spending extraordinary resources simply trolling open-source intelligence searching for an unknown threat proves inefficient, fruitless, and a poor use of minimal resources. The next chapter lays out a five-point model for using the SSGT framework to fix this resource problem.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided background on how policy and laws inadequately incorporated elements of the SSGT framework creating problems for legislators, policymakers, and practitioners. The first section provided a foundation for understanding terrorism legislation and described how legislators failed, unfortunately, to incorporate “lone wolf terrorism” fully into their statutes, creating the need later to

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<sup>250</sup> Al Baker and Marc Santora, “San Bernardino Attackers Discussed Jihad in Private Messages, F.B.I. Says,” *The New York Times*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/17/us/san-bernardino-attackers-discussed-jihad-in-private-messages-fbi-says.html>.

fill loopholes and gaps in the laws. The next section in this chapter used the FBI as a model for understanding how an incomplete picture has hamstrung counter-terrorism practitioners of “lone wolf terrorism” and provided examples of the inefficiencies and burden this lack of understanding puts on the agency. It described the difference between attempting to stop radicalizations vs. looking for threats. The FBI should expend resources looking for those who are in the radicalization process or are actively recruiting others for radicalization, but efforts in “throwing wide nets” or “trolling the Internet” for threats is work done in vain.

The unfortunate conclusion, under current policy and methodologies, is “lone wolf terrorism” will always be a reactive issue, not a proactive one. The present understanding of “lone wolf terrorism” cannot support the sense of urgency placed on practitioners by the public and policymakers to stop all threats. However, the SSGT framework provides insight and understanding. Chapter 5 offers a five-point strategy, drawing on the SSGT framework, to aid society in mitigating the threat from individuals and small groups.

## CHAPTER Five – Policy and Future Research Recommendations

### **Introduction**

With a solid understanding of what the SSGT framework provides and numerous examples of its effectiveness over the meaningless phrase “lone wolf terrorism,” the discussion now turns to solid recommendations offering solutions to the issues and problems presented throughout this dissertation. The first section of this chapter draws on the findings from the entirety of the paper to offer five concrete approaches critical for rectifying the shortcomings detailed previously. These include: Enhance Training, Incorporate SSGT into Education, Stop Untargeted Searching, Develop New Technologies, and Review Existing Laws. After detailing the suggested approaches, the next section lists some of the gaps associated with the SSGT framework leading to a discussion of recommendations for future research. This chapter concludes with an overall summary of the dissertation looking toward the future.

### **Five Steps for Implementation**

As highlighted in Chapter 4, and noted in the previous chapters, attempting to mitigate the activities from individual and small group terrorism without understanding

the threat reveals significant problems academically, politically, and legislatively. The SSGT framework offers a new way of approaching this growing phenomenon providing investigators and policymakers with better tools for them to execute their responsibilities. However, suggestions remain to be described drawing from the SSGT framework for aiding practitioners, policymakers, and academics. This section details five specific actions for immediate implementation drawing from the investigation and revelations regarding SSGT. It provides those studying terrorism, conducting counter-terrorism activities, and developing counter-terrorism policy with the best methods going forward for tackling the unique threat from SSGT.

### ***Train Practitioners***

Practitioners need to apply the SSGT concept in their day-to-day activities. It is important law enforcement, military, members of the USIC, and other disciplines receive training in the nuances of SSGT. These varied disciplines need the training when planning and responding to terrorist events. As a recent article stated, “[y]ou train people for *performance*. You educate people for *understanding*.”<sup>251</sup> Practitioners need the background understanding of general terrorism **and** SSGT to be effective in their roles.

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<sup>251</sup> Daniel Burrus, “Teach a Man to Fish: Training vs. Education,” *The Huffington Post*, 27:29 400AD, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-burrus/teach-a-man-to-fish-training-vs-education\\_b\\_7553264.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-burrus/teach-a-man-to-fish-training-vs-education_b_7553264.html).

Surprisingly, most police academies include little instruction covering basic terrorism concepts such as ideologies, motivations, and history. The New York State training curriculum includes one 8-hour block of instruction covering terrorism, out of 649 hours of total instruction; the Los Angeles Police Department and Florida Law Enforcement Academy do not officially devote time to terrorism training.<sup>252</sup> Although all U.S. military branches maintain significant counter-terrorism responsibilities, Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen do not receive formal terrorism training in ‘boot camp.’<sup>253</sup> Within the FBI, new Agent trainees and new intelligence analysts receive a basic indoctrination into terrorism at the FBI Academy providing a broad overview, usually centered on Islamic jihad. Details usually center on religious fundamentalism, HVE’s, some domestic terrorism, and investigative strategies. Follow-on courses provide the training into advanced counter-terrorism principles after investigators and analysts gain their initial experience.

These examples speak of ‘general’ terrorism training, but since law enforcement officers work at the level of the individual and the noted increase in attacks by SSGT, it is imperative at a minimum, individuals within these professions receive some basic

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<sup>252</sup> “Basic Course for Police Officers” (New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, January 2014); “JoinLAPD: Academy Training, Selection,” accessed July 26, 2016, <http://joinlapd.com/selection.cfm?section=academytraining>; “Florida Law Enforcement Academy: FLORIDA BASIC RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM” (Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, July 1, 2015).

<sup>253</sup> Determined by a review of the services websites regarding indoctrination training. Additionally, confirmed through personal experience of the author - U.S. Air Force and discussions with numerous individuals currently or previously serving in all branches of the U.S. military.

training on different types of SSGT. Any curriculum should embed SSGT training at all levels, starting with entry-level programs at police academies, introductory courses for analysts, diplomats, military personnel, and others. This dissertation demonstrated a widespread lack of understanding of the differences between SSGT and more established terrorist groups; anyone receiving basic terrorism training needs basic insight into how mental illness and group association dovetails with the traditional understanding of terrorism. As in many different types of training, introducing concepts at the entry levels and instilling them early leads to a cadre of people who implement these concepts as they progress through the higher levels of their respective organizations. These individuals then promote policies and procedures based on the understanding of SSGT and mental illness and group association when in positions to do so.

Specifically, training must include understanding the differences between the categories of SSGT and a basic understanding of the coding mechanism. With this understanding, individuals who deal with these threats every day can apply the results in their day-to-day work such as incorporating SSGT concepts into simple, “field usable” questions for quick assessments as to what type of threat is present. For example, police officers conducting field interviews could tailor questions to aid them in determining if they are dealing with a Zealot vs. someone who has mental illness without political or religious motivations toward violence.

### ***Refocus Terrorism Education***

Related to, but different from training, education and academia need to adopt the SSGT framework to provide a deeper understanding of the threat from SSGT.

Numerous researchers and academics detailed the necessity to research “lone wolf terrorists further.” Unfortunately, just encouraging academics to publish empirically rigorous articles is not enough. First, perpetuating research into the vague term “lone wolf terrorism” does little to further mitigation strategies. Various homeland security, public policy, security, and terrorism programs throughout universities need to incorporate current understanding of individuals involved in political or religious violence into their curriculums. Without an understanding of how mental illnesses or group association - the two most critical factors to SSGT demonstrated here - future scholars will be seeking to understand without the necessary concepts and tools.

However, this needs to broaden beyond simply a public policy or graduate program geared toward those who are currently involved with the USIC or military. Other disciplines need to incorporate the SSGT framework, and the understanding it provides, into their curriculum as well. Fields of journalism, international relations, conflict resolution, and even history could benefit from seeking to understand how mental illness and group association of those wishing to commit political or religious violence impacts the world. Encouraging academics in other disciplines will aide in a

better, overall understanding of SSGT as they incorporate these concepts into their reporting, international work, and developing new theories in response to old problems. Consider a recent observation by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr when describing the latest terrorist attacks by individuals, “[a]nalysts, journalists, and scholars have been quick to label each perpetrator of recent attacks as a lone wolf...”<sup>254</sup> Although as of this writing these attacks are still being investigated, there is evidence developing that these individuals did not act alone and indeed, some might not be considered SSGT.<sup>255</sup> Journalists move quickly to publish articles pointing to “lone wolves” perpetuating misunderstanding, and as open source intelligence takes a more prominent role in law enforcement and USIC activities, these quick conclusions have the potential to send police and investigators in wrong directions or misunderstanding what they are dealing with.

### ***Optimize On-line Investigations***

As detailed in the previous chapter, various governmental agencies at all levels allocate tremendous personnel resources toward researching and attempting to stop the unknown threat. The push to devote more resources toward looking for unknown threats equates to the man-hour equivalent of throwing ‘good money after bad.’

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<sup>254</sup> Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, “Lone Wolf Islamic Terrorism: Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad (Carlos Bledsoe) Case Study,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (January 2014): 110–28, doi:10.1080/09546553.2014.849921.

<sup>255</sup> Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr, “The Myth of Lone-Wolf Terrorism | Foundation for Defense of Democracies,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 26, 2016, <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/gartenstein-ross-daveed-the-myth-of-lone-wolf-terrorism/>.



Undirected, broad searches for threats expends thousands, if not tens of thousands, of man-hours toward chasing unknown and unsubstantiated threats. Those charged with mitigating terrorism simply must spend their time more efficiently.

In addition to the mere squandering of time, this 'trolling' for threats involves several other issues. These activities generate a false sense of security to senior management. Executives often maintain some sense of relief if analysts search through millions of social media posts and on-line profiles. However, the effort of these analysts and staff provide little impact on thwarting direct threats. Management often redirects resources to other investigative priorities thinking those conducting the active searching maintain a watchful eye unaware of the Sisyphean nature of this effort.

It must be acknowledged that occasional on-line, untargeted searching reveals minor, localized threats. These invariably fall into one of two categories, either the seriously mentally ill individual (without any terrorism nexus) or a vague threat such as "...we should just kill all the police..." which contains little actionable intelligence and may well be within an individual's First Amendment rights. These threats result in a considerable drain on resources as dispatched law enforcement professionals spend hours investigating 'ghosts.' For local police forces with officers patrolling dedicated areas or specifically dispatched to address these potential threats, the resource drain is significant, but manageable, due to police officers "deployed in the field." For other agencies without this model, such as federal law enforcement, fire departments, and

homeland security professionals, addressing these nuanced threats is impossible. The key is utilizing SSGT to direct resources to work more efficiently and prioritizing avenues of research.

SSGT facilitates a solution to this problem by helping prioritize resources and utilize a better understanding of group association and mental illness to focus intelligence gathering instead of blindly looking for threats. SSGT allows researchers and investigators to concentrate their efforts. For example, since Zealots and Opportunists would rarely post on social media or blogs (at least with respect to their ideologies), on-line investigations of social media would consequently be of little value. Additionally, since they are not involved with other groups, chat rooms and typical on-line 'hang-outs' would likewise be of little use. Instead, since we know that Zealots are individuals who are most likely to conduct some broadcasting, this has the potential for generating investigative leads, much like what occurred with the publishing of the Unabomber when the publication of his manifesto resulted in his brother recognizing the writing style and tipping off authorities.<sup>256</sup>

Strategists, on the other hand, are more likely interested in established terrorist organizations and susceptible to on-line radicalization processes. This understanding targets an on-line search to devote the time to radicalizers and those who 'friend' or 'like' the on-line presence of established terrorist organizations. This type of activity

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<sup>256</sup> "Lone-Wolf Terrorism," 56.

represents a much better-targeted search than simply trying to put up a ‘geo-bubble’ around an area or searching social media feeds for instances of “bomb,” “blow-up,” or “shoot” or dealing with code words/phrases. Other investigative and analytical tools such as Social Network Analysis, technical intercepts targeting communication, and financial analysis all help inform investigations regarding Strategists.

SSGT also helps define a process eliminating the search for unknown threats. Targeting open source searches for intelligence on-line means defining the objectives, bounding the time, and articulating search parameters. As an example, consider an analyst using a social media aggregation tool using a search filter for the term ‘bomb.’ Even bounded by a geographical area, a search such as this would return hundreds, if not thousands of posts. In today’s linguistic culture, references to ‘this pizza is the bomb’ results in a multitude of false leads. Development of a process which considers the differences between known targets, articulating boundaries to timelines, and clearly defining specific threats against a target requires immediate implementation.

A full detailing of developing this process is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and it requires devoted academic resources to view various options empirically. Even so, at a minimum, law enforcement agencies need to understand the limitations and a potential waste of resources while continuing current practices of open-ended searches. Better cooperation, sharing search strategies and information, is the first step, but

cannot replace strong research devoted to understanding looking for targets over threats.

### ***New Technologies***

Numerous companies provide local/state/federal government agencies with various tools claiming to provide unprecedented access to social media feeds.

Unfortunately, most of these tools amount to little more than social media aggregators, collecting data feeds and presenting them in one portal, that is if the data is available at all.<sup>257</sup> Programs like Babel Street, Geofeedia, and Dataminr collect publicly available Tweets, social media posts, photos, videos, and other rapidly changing data streams and present them in user-friendly formats facilitating searches and filters.<sup>258</sup> Many tools even offer integrated analytics to scrutinize ingested data. Of course, various governmental agencies contract or develop tools, but these tend to be different iterations of already existing systems. Part of the business model for social media sites includes providing open access to these data feeds by professional developers for use by

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<sup>257</sup> As of this writing, Facebook and Instagram have re-written their API's (basic instructions for tapping into their data feeds) to prevent many of these aggregators from incorporating their data. Although speculation, many feel Facebook and Instagram did this in response to privacy concerns and a realization that law enforcement and governments were using these feeds to 'monitor' individuals.

<sup>258</sup> For information regarding these programs, see their company websites. Interestingly, Dataminr will no longer sell their product to members of the USIC due to perceived privacy concerns. "Babel Street Company Website," accessed July 22, 2016, <http://www.babelstreet.com/>; "Location-Based Intelligence Platform by Geofeedia," *Geofeedia*, accessed July 22, 2016, <https://geofeedia.com/>; "Dataminr," accessed July 22, 2016, <https://www.dataminr.com/>.

marketing professionals. These programs simply take advantage of those data feeds for intelligence gathering purposes.

From a marketing perspective, where the goal focuses on collecting as much information as possible, these data aggregation tools are outstanding resources for targeted business development and analysis. However, from a counter-terrorism and overall intelligence perspective, these programs prove problematic. The deluge of information generates a situation where investigators or analysts feel they must review every post or Tweet for relevant information. Even when these data feeds are filtered down by cross-checking against keywords or by geolocation, the information posts requiring review numbers in the tens of thousands. The current method of reviewing is extremely inefficient, does not incorporate the latest technologies, and gives the impression to policymakers and executives 'the base is covered' when it is little more than a waste of resources.

To rectify this, government agencies, either on their own or through contracts with commercial partners, need to leverage immediately current research into social media and open source data analysis to develop technologies not just to aggregate the data but to provide more targeted acquisition and analysis. Applications which analyze location through non-traditional means, historical data, linguistic tones, and other new technologies include the capability to separate out unimportant, irrelevant, and even nonsensical threats from the real ones.

SSGT informs this technology by helping direct algorithm development with regards to group association and networking. Knowing, as mentioned above, that Strategists are more likely to use on-line resources to recruit, radicalize, or research violent activities. Technologies such as Social Network Analysis should leverage this knowledge to develop better targeting strategies as well as filtering mechanisms to separate real threats from false ones. Additionally, research into the psychological or sociological analysis of postings could aid in developing targeting strategies which identify those with mental illnesses and group association who seriously consider political or religious violence. New developments in linguistic analysis, content analysis, and trend analysis are on the cusp of making these technologies practical for daily use. One example in the article “Detecting Linguistic Markers for Radical Violence in Social Media” details how analyzing “warning behaviors” in Internet chat forums, social media posts, and other on-line sources can help detect signs of potential violence.<sup>259</sup> What remains is incorporating empirical findings like this into practical applications for use by counter-terrorism practitioners.

To be sure, government procurement officials will have problems. The ‘stovepipes’ long cemented in government bureaucracies coupled with the slow contract and procurement processes preventing integration of newer technologies significantly impacts development efforts. Additionally, this is an expensive proposition;

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<sup>259</sup> Cohen et al., “Detecting Linguistic Markers for Radical Violence in Social Media.”

commercial contracts like these easily run in the tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars.<sup>260</sup> Nevertheless, compared with the cost of man-hours described above, these investments represent little to no net increases in cost. Garnering Congressional support is crucial as there are legislative issues when dealing with up-front costs as well as detailing cost-benefit analysis of the technology vs. personnel, but this too is not an insurmountable problem.

The flood of data will not subside; it will only get worse. Specific social media platforms will grow and fade, but the world is hooked on virtual, social interaction; it will continue to evolve. As it does, the USIC and counter-terrorism practitioners will need tools to aid them in searching for those who wish to use it to support their violent actions.

### ***Review Existing Laws for Gaps***

Chapter 4 provided background on terrorism laws. The core point involved is a need for updating legislation to incorporate the new understanding of SSGT. Providing law enforcement and the USIC with better legislative tools, more specifically suited toward SSGT is critical, much like the *Lone Wolf Amendment* to the FISA law closed a loophole and provided a better, more robust statute for surveilling and prosecuting those seeking to conduct political or religious violence.

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<sup>260</sup> Personal experience of the author as a Contracting Officer Technical Representative for over ten years working on technical development projects.

One example illustrates this issue. Nidal Hasan's case represents policy failures impacting victims and survivors of his attack. Because the U.S. Government did not classify Hasan as a terrorist, the public and media ridiculed the Obama administration, complicated elements of his court martial, and denied benefits to victims and survivors. The U.S. Army backtracked and admitted their mistake several years later, despite almost every research paper investigating "lone wolf terrorism" referencing Hasan as a terrorist.

Nidal Hasan was the U.S. Army Major, who, on November 5, 2009, entered a U.S. Army processing center for individuals preparing for deployment overseas and began shooting unarmed soldiers.<sup>261</sup> His attack resulted in 13 deaths and 32 wounded.<sup>262</sup> After being shot himself by responders and taken into custody, subsequent reports and interviews revealed Hasan was struggling with the dichotomy of being a Muslim soldier in the U.S. Army coupled with being ordered for deployment to the Middle East.<sup>263</sup> According to his own statements, Hasan wanted to commit jihad.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Lieberman and Collins, "A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Governments Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack," 7.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>264</sup> Lee Ferran, "Nidal Hasan Admitted Jihadist Motive, Ft. Hood Victims' Attorneys Say," *ABC News Blogs*, accessed July 17, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/06/nidal-hasan-admitted-jihadist-motive-ft-hood-victims-attorneys-say/>.



The military brought Hasan to trial on thirteen counts of murder and thirteen counts of attempted murder.<sup>265</sup> Hasan's trial and sentencing commenced without incident. Despite the fact his attack was one of the deadliest on a U.S. military installation, the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government and the Department of Defense's (DoD) initially resisted calling his attack terrorism. Despite strong evidence Hasan was religiously motivated to kill his fellow soldiers in response to the U.S. Government's policy in the Middle East as well as his desire to influence future policy, the military and the Obama administration referred to the attack as an act of 'workplace violence.'<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, even after Hasan himself claimed his attack had 'jihadist roots,' the Obama administration and the DoD still denied the attack was an act of terrorism.<sup>267</sup> The Army concluded Hasan's Court Martial in August of 2013 eventually finding him guilty and sentencing him to death.<sup>268</sup> As of the time of this dissertation, he is currently awaiting appeal.

The critical component in Hasan's case revolves around the government's unwillingness to call the attack terrorism. Due, in large part, to the lack of consistent

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<sup>265</sup> "Accused Fort Hood Shooter Ruled Sane; Faces Capital Trial - Beaumont Enterprise," accessed April 25, 2016, <http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/news/texas/article/Accused-Fort-Hood-shooter-ruled-sane-faces-978233.php>.

<sup>266</sup> Ned Berkowitz, "DOD: Ft. Hood Massacre Likely 'Criminal Act,' Not International Terror," *ABC News*, May 24, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/dod-ft-hood-massacre-criminal-act-international-terror/story?id=19244244>.

<sup>267</sup> Ferran, "Nidal Hasan Admitted Jihadist Motive, Ft. Hood Victims' Attorneys Say."

<sup>268</sup> "Jury Sentences Hasan to Death for '09 Fort Hood Massacre," accessed April 25, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2013/08/28/military-jury-sentences-fort-hood-killer-hasan/2712803/>.

laws (or even meanings) surrounding “lone wolf terrorism,” the early trial preparation, court martial, and subsequent conviction of Hasan caused a significant issue with the government’s position. Not only did the semantic hedging by the DoD cause the press to question motives and the public to perceive political correctness, it impacted the victims and their families in a very real sense. Since the victims shot were targets of ‘workplace violence’ and not terrorism, this finding prevented them from receiving benefits reserved for combat wounded and denied them eligibility for the Purple Heart.<sup>269</sup>

Even after the conviction of Hasan, the DoD still refused to call the attack an act of terrorism. Critically, as reported by the *New York Times*, a spokesman for the U.S. Army investigators said: “We have not found any links to terrorism, or any international or domestic extremist groups at this time” a statement in itself that appears to disregard SSGT.<sup>270</sup> This quote typifies the ‘group-centric’ view of terrorism and lends credence to the position that the SSGT framework described in this paper could be a key factor in solving the type of political problems as faced by the DoD in this example. Under political pressure, and because of Congress redefining terrorism to include those inspired by a terrorist organization, the DoD finally awarded Purple Hearts to the victims

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<sup>269</sup> For a breakdown of benefits see “Wounded, Ill and Injured Compensation and Benefits Handbook” (Office of Warrior Care Policy: U.S. Department of Defense, October 30, 2015).

<sup>270</sup> Manny Fernandez and Alan Blinder, “At Fort Hood, Wrestling With Label of Terrorism,” *The New York Times*, April 8, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/09/us/at-fort-hood-wrestling-with-label-of-terrorism.html>.

in February of 2015.<sup>271</sup> Subsequent investigation did reveal that Hasan had been in e-mail contact with Al-Awlaki, but had limited communication consisting of general questions regarding jihad.<sup>272</sup>

As an individual without evidence of mental illness and someone who associated with an established terrorist organization, Hasan is a Strategist. Had the SSGT framework been available and applied to this case back in 2009, the victims would not have had to wait in limbo for almost seven years to receive their entitled benefits.

This example demonstrates some of the inadequacies with existing terrorism laws and policy; nearly every credible academic, media representative, and politician considered Hasan's attack an act of terrorism, yet the DoD refused to do the same due to politics. Since this attack happened after 9/11, it is curious the Obama administration fought the public relations battle for so long to keep it within the realm of criminal activity, even at the expense of causing stress among the survivors and their families. Pinning down the reasons for the Department of the Army sticking to their position of "workplace violence" is difficult. The Army stated that tying the attack to terrorism would potentially taint those who sat on a jury, but this justification seems weak; many

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<sup>271</sup> The law that redefined the eligibility for the Purple Heart was the *CARL LEVIN AND HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015*, vol. 10, 2014, sec. 1129a; Luis Martinez, "Fort Hood Shooting Victims to Get Purple Heart," *ABC News*, February 6, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/army-rules-fort-hood-shooting-victims-receive-purple/story?id=28780956>.

<sup>272</sup> William H. Webster et al., "The William H. Webster Commission on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Counterterrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood, Texas on November 5, 2009," July 19, 2012, 41.

prosecutors successfully tried terrorists regardless of their description. A more probable reason centered on the embarrassment the Obama administration and Dept. of the Army had regarding an open attack on a military base coupled with stalled investigations by the FBI and USIC.<sup>273</sup> This example signifies to the impact of politics on the debate, which the SSGT framework would help reduce.

One way to address the review of existing terrorism statutes is for lawmakers to facilitate the development and implementation of a panel of experts charged with this task. A panel ideally made up of policy makers, counter-terrorism practitioners/analysts, lawyers, and academics would be a start. These individuals should be empowered to review court records, existing laws, the FISA, and USIC policy to develop recommendations on developing new legislation addressing terrorism as it has evolved in its present form, including incorporating the concept of SSGT.

Understandably, this is a Herculean task, one whose nuances could potentially take years, but terrorism is not going to stop anytime soon. The more the U.S attempts to simply patch existing laws targeting terrorism, trying to plug the gaps, the more the hodge-podge of legislation will become more confusing and conflicting. Similar panels have been fielded in the past, albeit on much smaller scales, such as the Lieberman panel on the Hasan shooting which contained actionable recommendations. It could

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<sup>273</sup> Mariah Blake, "How the Obama Administration Failed the Victims of the First Fort Hood Attack," *Mother Jones*, April 10, 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/04/how-white-house-military-failed-fort-hood-victims>.

even be that such a panel would evolve into a permanent component within the USIC or DoJ to continuously monitor the evolution and changes of terrorism threats and ensure laws keep pace with current events.

## **Future Research**

Up till now, this dissertation has demonstrated the logical, empirical, and practical benefits of the SSGT framework. Still, as in any new framework, there are gaps which should be considered by others to build on the baseline work completed here to develop the concept of the SSGT framework fully. These suggestions center on three main themes: Group association of terrorists, mental illness, and development of a more comprehensive database.

### ***Group Association***

Group association, or lack of it, is a strong component to understanding SSGT. In the broader sense, group association can be more associated with elements of Social Identity Theory, discussed in Chapter 3. Many terrorism studies tangentially include Social Identity Theory in their findings, but the actual number of empirical investigations focusing on this area of research is, unfortunately, slim. Researchers and institutions need to re-visit this sociological construct and employ this theory to answer questions regarding ranges of group association among Strategists. The role of religion, as a function of group association, appears to a significant characteristic with the Strategist category. Because of the current global state and concerns with ISIS, much research

regarding religion and terrorism focuses on Islamic fundamentalism. Although important, this is a narrow approach lacking applicability to larger SSGT understanding. Equally important is determining the significance of why an Opportunist seems to identify more with an ideology rather than a salient group.

These types of questions require more than just individuals with academic credentials in terrorism studies to complete more studies. It requires a multidisciplinary approach including psychologists, social scientists, policy experts, and practitioners to bring the strengths of their disciplines to impact these studies. Just within this dissertation, the applicability of social sciences, psychologists, and practitioners has revealed strong benefits. As Clark McCauley, a well-published expert on terrorism, said in a recent interview, “...when your whole social world contracts down to just one particular group, an underground cell of some kind, then the power of that group to set norms and determine morality is unlimited.”<sup>274</sup>

### ***Mental Illness***

Psychological approaches to terrorism have been around since the beginning of research into political violence. As mentioned in the literature review, the pendulum appears to have swung from “they are crazy” to “they are rational actors” to the current state where researchers are beginning to understand the reality is somewhere in the

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<sup>274</sup> John Merfeld, “For ‘Lone Wolf’ Terrorists, the Motivation for Violence Isn’t Always Hate | Public Radio International,” July 18, 2016, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-07-18/lone-wolf-terrorists-motivation-violence-isn-t-always-hate>.

middle; there are indeed some terrorists who have mental illness, but not all. It is time once again to re-address this element and begin to ask questions regarding the differences between a mentally ill individual who is involved in political or religious violence and a mentally ill individual who is simply violent. Studies which can tease out these subtle differences will begin to have an impact as they look at the catalysts for those who commit political or religious violence and begin to suggest methods for mitigating them.

Additionally, their lack of consistent definitions for mental illness introduces some ambiguity into all studies incorporating psychological aspects of individuals. Researchers from psychological and sociological disciplines are encouraged to continue their work and offer practical definitions for use in academic papers. This addition might seem to add yet another issue on the pile of unresolved definitions (like “lone wolf terrorism” or terrorism in general), but definitional issues are important to resolve to develop academically rigorous studies.

### ***Expand the Database***

Although not a specific research topic, but of immediate importance, researchers require a dedicated database and repository of individual terrorists from which to draw data and conclusions. As many, many social scientists have noted, there is a significant

lack of primary source information on the study of individual terrorists.<sup>275</sup> Although this realization is noteworthy, reality dictates there will always be difficulty finding primary sources for terrorism research due to a significant number being incarcerated or killed; relying on secondary source information is an unavoidable aspect of terrorism research in most cases. However, one way to at least mitigate some of the negative impacts of using secondary sources is maintaining a repository of empirically defensible information. Currently, the ‘gold standard’ of this type of data is the Global Terrorism Database. Although far from perfect, it represents an empirically evaluated, rigorous repository of terrorist attacks useful for a wide variety of research and evaluation.

As a research community, the lack of development of a database which is available for research and data manipulation on specific individuals is almost shameful. There have been a few efforts, such as datasets started by Hamm and Spaaij, but they lack easy access or data manipulation tools to tease out specific data (like the GTD does for incidents).<sup>276</sup> The variety of data sets used by various researchers over the years makes evaluation and duplication of studies problematic. A publicly available database of known SSGT terrorists which includes elements of demographic data, social backgrounds, attack (or attempted attack) information is vital for researchers and

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<sup>275</sup> For example, see Gill, Horgan, and Deckert, “Bombing Alone,” 426; Ramón Spaaij and Mark S. Hamm, “Key Issues and Research Agendas in Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 3 (March 4, 2015): 175, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2014.986979; Brannan, Esler, and Anders Strindberg, “Talking to ‘Terrorists,’” 5.

<sup>276</sup> Hamm and Spaaij, “Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies.”



practitioners. One process which elevates the stature of the GTD centers on their use of peer review of each violent instance before being submitted for inclusion in the database. Incorporating a vetting process like the GTD's as well as a strong set of coding rules, and even a flag for 'probably but not confirmed' terrorists to include outliers, significantly contributes to making the database beneficial. Future studies into SSGT and individuals will meet impediments until overcoming this situation.

## Conclusion

This study of "lone wolf terrorism" proved an ambitious project, but one that successfully argued against a vague, meaningless, and academically detrimental phrase. It asked the question, "Is the concept 'lone wolf terrorism' academically and practically useful?" and provided a clear answer to that question in the negative. "Lone wolf terrorism" is an outdated and hackneyed phrase lacking a shared understanding and causing confusion for researchers and policymakers. Stated boldly by Emma-Kate Symons, "[t]he catch-all explanation is dishonest and dangerous. It allows politicians and law enforcement to shrug their shoulders over another so-called 'random nutter,' as they cover up their intelligence failings."<sup>277</sup>

The SSGT framework introduced is critical to future research. First, it demonstrates a new way to think about so-called "lone wolf terrorism." It breaks the

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<sup>277</sup> Emma-Kate Symons, "The 'Lone Wolf' Terrorist Is a Convenient Lie That No One Should Believe | Heat Street," July 22, 2016, <http://heatst.com/politics/the-lone-wolf-terrorist-is-a-convenient-lie-that-no-one-should-believe/>.

traditional academic rut of thinking about this type of terrorism regarding the quantity of individuals involved. It focuses more on articulable characteristics of the individuals who commit these violent acts allowing analysis and policy making without wasting time on redundant academic debate.

Second, it brings back to the forefront of the empirical inquiries questions relating to the psychological and social psychological characteristics of individuals who commit political violence. These two topics have receded a bit over the past few years and deserve a more significant role in future literature. It even suggests a more interdisciplinary approach to investigating SSGT by taking a second (or first) look at recent work on the psychology and sociology of violence.

Third, the analysis revealed some significant findings, especially with regard to ideology, broadcasting, and demographic information regarding members of SSGT. It will help drive future investigations, but more importantly, it will drive practical developments in counter-terrorism mitigation strategies for those whose role is to stop or minimize the terrorist threat. As noted in the introduction, many high-ranking politicians worry about the increasing threat of “lone wolf terrorism,” yet they struggle to understand what they are even concerned about. SSGT will inform their decision making to develop more robust policy and laws aiding those who implement them.

The years 2014 and 2015 proved to be deadly by those we now call SSGT. The Pulse nightclub shooting, the San Bernardino Shooting, and the attempted bombing in

New Jersey and New York, have made headlines and give the impression to the general public that SSGT is primarily a jihadi issue.<sup>278</sup> However, dozens of terrorist incidents, just in the United States in 2014 and 2015, met the criteria of SSGT from all three categories. A shooting by four white supremacists against a Black Lives Matter protest on November 23, 2015, on September 30, 2015, a single assailant set fire to a Planned Parenthood clinic in Thousand Oaks, CA, an individual with suspicion of mental illness threatened a Baptist church in Bullard Town, TX, the anti-governmental attack in Las Vegas in June 2014 and possibly 34 others just in the United States alone appear to fall within the scope of SSGT.<sup>279</sup> The SSGT framework does not simply provide a categorization schema for these terrorist incidents; it provides understanding and the ability to continuously update our knowledge to see where threats are trending.

The trend will only continue. The SSGT framework will not predict or stop attacks such as these from happening; no amount of academic research will solve that riddle. However, the research presented in this dissertation can provide decision and policy makers with tools to reduce the threat by looking to apply these concepts to various aspects of their evaluations of counter-terrorism strategies.

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<sup>278</sup> Marc Santora, "Last Call at Pulse Nightclub, and Then Shots Rang Out," *The New York Times*, June 12, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/13/us/last-call-at-orlando-club-and-then-the-shots-rang-out.html>; "FBI Will Investigate San Bernardino Shootings as Terrorist Act"; "New York, New Jersey Bombings: Suspect Charged with Attempted Murder - CNN.com," accessed October 29, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/19/us/new-york-explosion-investigation/>.

<sup>279</sup> All incidents taken from the GTD for years 2014 and 2015 searching for "unaffiliated individual."

This dissertation does not assume the phrase “lone wolf terrorism” will evaporate from the literature, media, or lexicon of terrorism studies any time soon. Optimistically, it hopes the scholarly community will begin to realize indiscriminately lumping together those individuals and small groups who commit political violence will serve little analytical purpose, and it appears as if people are starting to take notice. Scholars, researchers, and even the media have started to question whether “lone wolf” is an appropriate description of these types of attacks. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross wrote a piece for *Foreign Affairs* “The Myth of the Lone Wolf,” Jim Treacher jokes in his title “Another ‘Lone Wolf’ Islamic Terrorist Turns Out to Have a Pack” and Daniel Byman writes “Rethinking Lone-Wolf Terrorism” in an NPR report.<sup>280</sup> These authors and many others have begun to realize what this dissertation firmly established: “Lone wolf terrorism” represents an overused, meaningless phrase. The Singular and Small Group Terrorism framework presented here clearly embodies a better way forward.

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<sup>280</sup> Gartenstein-Ross and Barr, “The Myth of Lone-Wolf Terrorism | Foundation for Defense of Democracies”; Jim Treacher, “Another ‘Lone Wolf’ Islamic Terrorist Turns Out To Have A Pack,” *The Daily Caller*, July 21, 2016, <http://dailycaller.com/2016/07/21/another-lone-wolf-islamic-terrorist-turns-out-to-have-a-pack/>; Daniel Byman, “Rethinking Lone Wolf Terrorism,” *NPR.org*, July 15, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/07/15/486145082/rethinking-lone-wolf-terrorism>.

## APPENDIX I – CODEBOOK

For a terrorist to be included within the SSGT database, apply the following coding rules against each instance:

1. Was the individual state-sponsored? Specifically, the definition of SSGT does not contain cases of state-sponsored terrorism. Those directed, commanded, or coerced into committing violence to further the interests of a state. For purposes of coding for this project, a state is considered any formally recognized country, military, or government entity. **If a state sponsored the individual to conduct the act of terrorism, then they are not to be entered into the SSGT database.**
2. Did the individual commit or attempt to commit an act of terrorism? For this project, terrorism is defined as an instance of violence or threat of violence targeted at a civilian, government, or military population/entity/infrastructure. In the case of a military objective, the attack occurs outside of a military battlefield. The violence or attempted violence should be conducted to further a political, religious, or ideological agenda. Although financial gain could be a side benefit or serendipitous gain of the terrorist attack, the main and significant purpose for conducting or attempting to conduct the violence should be to support the ideology of the individual or small group. Financial gain or personal interest cannot be the genesis or driving factor for conducting the violence. **If the person did not commit or was in the planning stages to commit an act of terrorism, then they are not to be entered into the SSGT database.**
3. Was the individual part of a Singular or Small Group of Terrorists? As detailed in Chapter 2 within the section *Singular and Small Group Terrorism*, individuals to be considered as SSGT should not have actively engaged with, planned attacks with, been a member of, regularly met, or regularly communicated with a terrorist group consisting of more than nine individuals. **If the person belonged to a terrorist group of ten or more, then they are not to be entered into the SSGT database.**

4. Only those instances where an individual committed, or was actively planning and preparing to commit terrorism, should be included in the database. To qualify as actively planning, usually some determination by a third party such as law enforcement, intelligence agencies, military, or legal system will meet this standard. **If the individual did not commit or plan/prepare for a politically/religiously motivated violent act, then they are not entered into the SSGT database.**
5. Only include people in the database with enough information available to determine their Group Association and Mental State. **If there is not sufficient information regarding the individual's Group Association or Mental Illness, then they are not entered into the database.**
6. If the individual was part of a small group, all persons of that group will be entered into the database individually. The individuals will assume the categorization of the formal/informal leader of the group. If a leader cannot be determined, then the individual with the most information available for inclusion will be used to categorize the individuals within the remaining individuals of the group. **Enter all persons of a small group individually and members of the group will assume the categorization of the leader of that group.**

## APPENDIX II – DATA DICTIONARY<sup>281</sup>

### Demographic Information

ID:	Identification Number. A unique number provided to each individual within the database.
First Name:	First name of the individual.
Last Name:	Last Name of the individual.
Aliases:	Any other names the individual was known by, including nicknames or common names given by the media.
Date of Birth:	Date of birth of the individual. “Unknown” if unknown.
Country of Birth:	Country of birth of the individual. “Unknown” if unknown.
State of Birth:	State of birth of the individual if born in the United States. “N/A” if not born in the in the United States. “Unknown” if unknown.
City of Birth:	City of birth of the individual. “Unknown” if unknown.
Gender:	Gender of the individual. “Male” or “Female.”
Citizenship:	Country of citizenship of the person at the time of the attack. “Unknown” if unknown.
Education:	Education level of the individual at the time of the attack. “No HS - No high school”, “HS - Some High School Completed/Graduated High School”, “GED - GED”, “Attended CC - Attended accredited community or trade college without completing a degree”, “Completed CC - Completed a degree from a community of trade college”, “Attended College - Attended an accredited 4-year

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<sup>281</sup> This codebook borrowed heavily from the International Center for the Study of Terrorism’s “Lone Actor Codebook.” I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Paul Gill for sharing this information.

college, but did not complete a degree”, “Bachelors - Completed an undergraduate/baccalaureate degree”, “Attended Grad - Attended an accredited graduate school but did not complete a degree”, “Masters - Completed an accredited Master’s degree”, “Doctorate - Completed an accredited doctoral degree”, “Unknown - unknown”, or “None - no known formal education”.

### **Professional information**

- Occupation:** Category of the profession of the individual at the time of the attack. “Unemployed,” “Student,” “Service Industry,” “Professional,” “Construction,” “Clerical/Sales/Admin,” “Agriculture,” “Other,” or “Unknown.”
- Detailed Occupation:** Specific detail of occupation of the individual at the time of the attack. i.e.: Employer, specific duties, etc. N/A if unknown or no further information.
- Military:** Branch of the military, if the individual served. “N/A” for an individual who did not serve in the military. “Unknown” if the individual served, but the branch of service is unknown. This field includes participation in the National Guard, Reserves, or a foreign military. Count service only if the military branch was sponsored by a legitimate government entity which is internationally recognized. “Air Force,” “Army,” “Coast Guard,” “Marine Corp,” “Navy,” “Unknown,” or “N/A.”
- Foreign Military:** Was the military the individual participated in a non-U.S. military service? “Yes,” “No,” or “N/A” if the individual did not participate in the military.
- Current Military:** Did the individual commit the attack, or was the attack interrupted/disrupted while the individual was currently serving in the military? “Yes,” “No,” “N/A” if the individual did not serve in the military, “Unknown” if it is unknown or could not be determined.

### **Psychological Information**

- Mental illness:** Was the individual mentally ill while planning or conducting the first attack? Usually determined by court records and formal psychological evaluation, significant emotional childhood



trauma, descriptions by people who had frequent contact with this person in the past, or other, less formal, psychological analysis can help determine the value of this field. Mental instability does not necessarily mean a psychosis which was debilitating, rather, instances of mental issues which could have influenced an attack or mindset which led to the assault. "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.

**Ideology:** What was the ideology of the individual at the time of the attack or when the attack was interrupted/disrupted? "Nationalist," "Left-Wing," "Right Wing," "Single Issue," "Religious," "Other," or "Unknown."

**IQ:** What was/is the individuals IQ compared to the population? "Higher than Average," "Average," "Lower than Average," or "Unknown."

**Social Isolation:** Did the individual seek social isolation frequently or shun group gatherings in the past or leading up to the date of the attack or interruption/disruption? "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.

**Socially Awkward:** Did the individual struggle with social relationships? Examples would be difficulty maintaining several friendships, difficulty maintaining a connection with the opposite sex or difficulty maintain professional relationships.

### **Attack information**

**Activity Date:** Date of the first act of violence. If the attack was interrupted or disrupted for some reason, the date of the interruption/disruption should be noted. The date should be exact if possible, Month/Year, or Year. "Unknown" for unknown or could not be determined.

**Group Association:** Did the individual identify or associate with a larger, established terrorist organization? With Group Association, the individuals would have, at best, incidental contact or communication with a person who is part of the larger terrorist organization. An individual identifies with a groups goals and motives without actually participating in the group. "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.

- Group Participation:** Did the individual formally belong to, actively and continuously participate, and was considered to take part by acknowledgment of others a known or established terrorist organization before conducting the attack or being interrupted/disrupted? In this context, participate would “Yes,” “No,” or “Unknown” for unknown.
- Group Rejection:** Did the individual attempt to take part in an established terrorist organization before conducting the attack or being interrupted/disrupted but was rejected by that established terrorist organization? “Yes,” “No,” or “Unknown” for unknown.
- Weapon Stockpile:** Did the individual stockpile weapons before the attack or being interrupted/disrupted? “Yes,” “No,” or “Unknown” for unknown.
- Weapon Sophistication:** Did the individual any training in the use of weapons. Formal training would include any instance where weapons/explosives are part of a formal training program such a military or law enforcement but could include any instances of where formal training would be part of the profession. An example would be construction or demolition where there is training in explosives. Also included within the formal training would be a formal education in chemistry or explosives if that knowledge appeared to be used to develop weapon sophistication. Informal training would be seeking training out from some other source such as a shooting clubs or ranges, belonging to a club/organization which provided experiences or training. “High” for formal training, “Medium” for informal training, “Low” for self-taught or self-researched, or “None” for no training or seeking of weapon knowledge.
- Virtual Interaction:** Did the individual interact with people from an established or known terrorist organization through e-mail/chat/forums/social media or other avenues available through the Internet before the attack or interruption/disruption? “Yes,” “No,” or “Unknown” for unknown.
- Command and Control:** Did the person receive direction through some method of command and control before conducting the attack or before the assault was interrupted/disrupted? “Yes,” “No,” or “Unknown” for unknown.

Recruitment:	Did the individual attempt to recruit others to help him/her conduct the attack? "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.
Associate ID:	The ID number of any associates and members of the Small Group this individual participated with while planning or conducting an attack.
Broadcast:	Did the individual publish a manifesto, in any format, before the assault or interruption/disruption? "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.
Multiple Attacks:	Did the individual engage in multiple attacks? If the individual was interrupted/disrupted, did it appear as if the individual was preparing to participate in multiple attacks? Multiple attacks in this context would be incidents that seem to be separately planned and executed over more than a 24-hour period. If multiple attacks occurred on the same day, then this one be considered one attack. "Yes," "No," or "Unknown" for unknown.
Number of Deaths:	The number of fatalities, in total, caused by the individuals' political violence. Deaths caused as the result of criminal violence should not be included in the total. In the case where several people were part of a small group who committed the terrorist act causing one or more deaths, the number of fatalities was divided evenly between the perpetrators. If the number of fatalities could not be split evenly among the perpetrators, then the additional death was attributed to the leader of the small group. Note that it is entirely possible than one individual committed an act of terrorism which resulted in death before joining a small group which could increase the number of deaths for that individual of the small group. In the instances where there are inconsistencies in the reporting on the death toll, the lowest number reported was used.
Number of Injuries:	The number of injuries, in total, caused by the individuals' political violence. Injuries caused as the result of criminal violence should not be included in the total. In the case where several people were part of a small group who committed the terrorist act causing one or more injuries, the number of injuries was divided evenly between the perpetrators. If the number of injuries could not be split evenly among the perpetrators, then

the additional injuries were attributed to the leader of the small group. Note that it is entirely possible than one individual committed an act of terrorism which resulted in an injury before joining a small group which could increase the number of injuries for that individual of the small group. In the instances where there are inconsistencies in the reporting on the number of injuries, the lowest number reported was used.

Target Selection:	What was the target of the attack or attempted target of the assault? In instances of more than one attack, select "Other." "Government," "Business," "Private Citizen," "Unknown" or "Other."
Comment:	Any additional information regarding the individual.
Citation1:	Citation for information about this specific record.
Citation2:	Citation for information about this specific record.
Citaiton3:	Citation for information relating to this specific record.
URL:	Website/URL of pertinent information relating to this record.

## APPENDIX III – SSGT Database

ID	Last Name	First Name	SSGT Category	Aliases	Date of Birth	Country of Birth	State of Birth	City of Birth	Gender	Citizenship
1	Kaczynski	Theodore	Zealot	Unabomber	5/22/1962	USA	Illinois	Chicago	Male	USA
2	Hasan	Nidal	Strategist	Ft. Hood Shooter	9/8/1970	USA	Virginia	Arlington	Male	USA
3	McVeigh	Timothy	Opportunist	N/A	4/23/1968	USA	New York	Pendleton	Male	USA
4	Breivik	Anders	Zealot	N/A	2/13/1979	UK	N/A	London	Male	Norway
5	Ivins	Bruce	Zealot	N/A	4/22/1946	USA	Ohio	Lebanon	Male	USA
6	Copeland	David	Zealot	N/A	5/15/1976	UK	N/A	Isleworth	Male	UK
7	Amir	Yigal	Opportunist	N/A	5/23/1970	Israel	N/A	Herzliya	Male	Israel
8	Nichols	Terry	Opportunist	N/A	4/1/1955	USA	Michigan	Lapeer	Male	USA
9	Tsarnaev	Tamerlan	Strategist	Boston Bomber	10/21/1986	USSR	N/A	Kalmyk	Male	Russia
10	Rudolph	Eric	Opportunist	N/A	9/16/1966	USA	Florida	Merritt Island	Male	USA
11	Tsarnaev	Dzhokhar	Strategist	Boston Bomber	7/22/1993	Kyrgyzstan	N/A	Kyrgyzstan	Male	USA
12	Van de Graaf	Volkert	Zealot	N/A	7/9/1969	Denmark	N/A	Middelburg	Male	Denmark
13	Fortier	Michael	Opportunist	N/A	12/15/1968	USA	Maine	Augusta	Male	USA
14	Goldstein	Baruch	Opportunist	N/A	12/9/1956	USA	New York	Brooklyn	Male	USA
15	Fuchs	Franz	Zealot	N/A	12/12/1949	Austria	N/A	Gralla	Male	Austria
16	Pimentel	Jose	Zealot	Muhammad Yusuf	11/8/1984	Dominican Republic	N/A	Unknown	Male	USA
17	Stack	Joseph	Opportunist	N/A	Unknown	USA	Unknown	Unknown	Male	USA
18	Von Brunn	James	Opportunist	N/A	7/11/2020	USA	Missouri	St. Louis	Male	USA
19	Kasi	Mir Aimal	Opportunist	Qazi	10/22/1964	Pakistan	N/A	Quetta	Male	Unknown
20	Loughner	Jared	Zealot	N/A	9/10/1988	USA	Arizona	Unknown	Male	USA
21	Reid	Richard	Strategist	Shoe Bomber	8/12/1973	UK	N/A	Bromley	Male	UK
22	Helder	Luke	Zealot	Smiley Face Bomber	5/5/1991	USA	Minnesota	Pine Island	Male	USA
23	Franklin	Joseph Paul	Zealot	James Clayton Vaughn	4/13/1950	USA	Alabama	Mobile	Male	USA
24	Haq	Naveed Afzal	Zealot	N/A	9/23/1975	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Male	Unknown
25	Furrow	Buford	Zealot	N/A	11/25/1961	USA	Washington	Lacey	Male	USA
26	Burt	Leo	Opportunist	N/A	4/18/1948	USA	Pennsylvania	Darby	Male	USA
27	Armstrong	Karl	Opportunist	N/A	Unknown	USA	Unknown	Unknown	Male	USA
28	Armstrong	Dwight	Opportunist	N/A	8/29/1951	USA	Wisconsin	Madison	Male	USA
29	Fine	David	Opportunist	N/A	3/18/1952	USA	Delaware	Wilmington	Male	USA
30	Watson	Dwight	Opportunist	N/A	9/28/1952	USA	North Carolina	Whitakers	Male	USA
31	Berkman	Alexander	Opportunist	Ovsei Berkman, aka Sasha	11/21/1870	Lithuania	N/A	Vilnius	Male	Russia
32	Uka	Arid	Opportunist	Abu Reyann	2/8/1990	Yugoslavia	N/A	Kosovska Mitrovic	Male	Germany
33	Waagner	Clayton Lee	Opportunist	N/A	8/25/1956	USA	North Dakota	Unknown	Male	USA
34	Shahzad	Faisal	Strategist	Times Square Bomber	6/30/1979	Pakistan	N/A	Unknown	Male	USA
35	Hussain	Hasib	Strategist	London Bomber	9/16/1986	UK	N/A	Leeds	Male	UK
36	Kahn	Mohammed Sidique	Strategist	London Bomber	10/20/1974	UK	N/A	Leeds	Male	UK
37	Tanweer	Shehzad	Strategist	London Bomber	12/15/1982	Strategist+D39	N/A	Bradford	Male	UK
38	Umsay	Germaine	Strategist	London Bomber	9/23/1985	Jamaica	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
39	Duka	Shain	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Yugoslavia	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
40	Duka	Dritan	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Yugoslavia	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
41	Duka	Eljvir	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Yugoslavia	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
42	Tatar	Serdar	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Turkey	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
43	Shnewer	Mohamad Ibrahim	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Jordan	N/A	Unknown	Male	USA
44	Abdullahu	Agron	Strategist	Fort Dix Five	Unknown	Yugoslavia	N/A	Unknown	Male	Unknown
45	Reilly	Nicky	Zealot	Mohammad Rasheed	10/5/1986	UK	N/A	Plymouth	Male	UK
46	Buda	Mario	Opportunist	N/A	10/13/1884	Italy	N/A	Savignano sul Rubicone	Male	Italy
47	LaRosa	Coleen	Strategist	N/A	6/5/1963	USA	Michigan	Unknown	Female	USA
48	Zasuilich	Vera	Opportunist	N/A	8/8/1949	Russia	N/A	Mikhaylovka	Female	Russia
50	Adulmutallab	Umar Farouk	Strategist	Underwear bomber	12/22/1986	Nigeria	N/A	Lagos	Male	Nigerian
51	Lusha	Krenar	Opportunist	N/A	8/12/1980	Albania	N/A	Unknown	Male	Albania
52	Choudhry	Roshonara	Strategist	N/A	Unknown	UK	N/A	London	Female	UK
53	Kurbegovic	Muharem	Zealot	Alphabet Bomber	Unknown	Yugoslavia	N/A	Sarajevo	Male	USA

Last Name	Education Level	Occupation	Occupation Detail	Military	Foreign Military	Currently Military
Kaczynski	Doctorate	Unemployed	Factory worker prior to being fired. Prior to that he was a University Professor	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hasan	Masters	Professional	Psychiatrist in the U.S. Army	Army	No	Yes
McVeigh	Attended CC	Unemployed	He sold guns at shows for money, but did not have a steady job.	Army	No	No
Breivik	Attended CC	Unemployed	Previously self employed running an outsourcing programming company.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ivins	Doctorate	Professional	Worked at Fort Detrick Army base as a microbiologist.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Copeland	HS	Construction	Electrician	N/A	N/A	N/A
Amir	Attended College	Student	Attended religious university in Israel	Army	Yes	No
Nichols	Attended College	Unemployed	Self employed selling guns at gun shows with McVeigh	Army	No	No
Tsarnaev	Attended CC	Unemployed	Had worked at one time as an amateur boxer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rudolph	Attended College	Unemployed	Rudolph survived off the sale of his house, selling marijuana, and surviving off the land.	Army	No	No
Tsarnaev	Attended College	Student	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Van de Graaf	Attended College	Other	Van de Graaf worked at a variety of organizations devoted to helping animals.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fortier	Completed CC	Service Industry	Worked as a hardware store clerk	Army	No	No
Goldstein	Doctorate	Professional	Worked as a doctor, both civilian and within the Army	Army	Yes	Yes
Fuchs	Attended College	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pimentel	Attended College	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stack	Attended College	Professional	Software engineer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Von Brunn	Bachelors	Unemployed	Retired	Navy	No	No
Kasi	Unknown	Service Industry	He was a courier who drove past CIA HQ everyday.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Loughner	Attended CC	Student	Attending Community College	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reid	HS	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Helder	Attended College	Student	Attending college	N/A	N/A	N/A
Franklin	HS	Unemployed	Money for living came from robbing banks and donating blood	N/A	N/A	N/A
Haq	Bachelors	Unemployed	Last reported to have worked at Home depot	N/A	N/A	N/A
Furrow	Unknown	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Burt	Attended College	Student	Writer for local school paper	N/A	N/A	N/A
Armstrong	Attended College	Student	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Armstrong	HS	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fine	Attended College	Student	Writer for local school paper	N/A	N/A	N/A
Watson	Unknown	Agriculture	Farmer	Army	No	No
Berkman	HS	Other	Worked for a newspaper	N/A	N/A	N/A
Uka	HS	Service Industry	Postal worker at the airport	N/A	N/A	N/A
Waagner	Unknown	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shahzad	Masters	Professional	An account analyst	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hussain	Attended College	Student	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kahn	Bachelors	Unemployed	Was laid off from being a social worker	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tanweer	Attended College	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lindsay	HS	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Duka	HS	Construction	Owned a roofing business	N/A	N/A	N/A
Duka	HS	Construction	Owned a roofing business	N/A	N/A	N/A
Duka	HS	Construction	Owned a roofing business	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tatar	HS	Service Industry	Works at 7-11	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shnewer	Attended CC	Service Industry	Cab driver	N/A	N/A	N/A
Abdullahu	Unknown	Service Industry	Works at a shopright	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reilly	Unknown	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Buda	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LaRosa	HS	Unemployed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zasuilch	Bachelors	Clerical/Sales/Admin	Worked as a bookbinder and secretary	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adulmutallab	Attended Grad	Student	He was a student at an Islamic school in Yeman	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lusha	Unknown	Other	Worked at a Plastics factory	N/A	N/A	N/A
Choudhry	Attended College	Student	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kurbegovic	Bachelors	Professional	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Last Name	Mental Issues	IQ	Social Isolation	Socially Awkward	Activity Date	Ideology	Group Association	Group Participation	Group Rejection	Weapon Stockpile
Kaczynski	Yes	Higher than average	Yes	Yes	1978	Other	No	No	No	Yes
Hasan	No	Higher than average	No	No	2009	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
McVeigh	No	Higher than average	Yes	Yes	1995	Right Wing	No	No	Yes	No
Breivik	Yes	Higher than average	No	No	2011	Other	Yes	No	No	No
Ivins	Yes	Higher than average	No	Yes	2001	Other	No	No	No	Yes
Copeland	Yes	Average	No	Yes	1999	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Amir	No	Higher than average	Yes	No	1995	Right Wing	No	No	No	Yes
Nichols	No	Average	No	No	1995	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Tsarnaev	No	Average	No	No	2013	Religious	Yes	No	Yes	No
Rudolph	No	Average	Yes	Yes	1996	Single Issue	No	No	No	No
Tsarnaev	No	Average	No	No	2013	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Van de Graaf	Yes	Higher than average	No	No	2002	Single Issue	No	No	No	No
Fortier	No	Average	No	No	1995	Right Wing	No	No	No	Yes
Goldstein	No	Higher than average	No	No	1994	Religious	No	No	No	No
Fuchs	Yes	Higher than average	Yes	Yes	1993	Right Wing	Yes	No	No	No
Pimentel	Yes	Lower than average	No	No	2011	Religious	Yes	No	No	Unknown
Stack	No	Unknown	No	No	2010	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Von Brunn	No	Higher than average	No	No	2009	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Kasi	No	Unknown	No	No	1993	Religious	No	No	No	No
Loughner	Yes	Unknown	No	Yes	2011	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Reid	No	Average	Yes	No	2001	Religious	Yes	Yes	No	No
Helder	Yes	Average	No	No	2002	Right Wing	No	No	No	No
Franklin	Yes	Unknown	Yes	Yes	1976	Right Wing	Yes	No	No	No
Haq	Yes	Higher than average	Yes	Yes	2006	Religious	No	No	No	No
Furrow	Yes	Average	No	No	1999	Right Wing	Yes	Yes	No	No
Burt	No	Higher than average	No	No	1970	Left Wing	No	Yes	No	No
Armstrong	No	Unknown	No	No	1970	Left Wing	No	Yes	No	No
Armstrong	No	Unknown	No	No	1970	Left Wing	No	Yes	No	No
Fine	No	Unknown	No	No	1970	Left Wing	No	Yes	No	No
Watson	No	Unknown	No	No	2003	Other	No	No	No	No
Berkman	No	Unknown	No	No	1892	Left Wing	No	No	No	No
Uka	No	Unknown	No	No	2011	Religious	No	No	No	No
Wagner	No	Higher than average	No	No	2001	Single Issue	No	No	No	Yes
Shahzad	No	Average	No	No	2010	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Hussain	No	Average	No	No	2005	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Kahn	No	Higher than average	No	No	2005	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Tanweer	No	Higher than average	No	No	2005	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Lindsay	No	Higher than average	Yes	No	2005	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Duka	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Duka	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Duka	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Tatar	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Shnewer	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Abdullahu	No	Average	No	No	2007	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Reilly	Yes	Lower than average	Yes	Yes	2008	Religious	No	No	No	No
Buda	No	Unknown	No	No	1920	Left Wing	No	Yes	No	No
LaRosa	No	Unknown	No	No	2009	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Zasulich	No	Higher than average	No	No	1878	Left Wing	No	No	No	No
Adulmutallab	No	Higher than average	No	No	2009	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Lusha	No	Unknown	No	No	2008	Religious	No	No	No	Yes
Choudhry	No	Higher than average	No	No	2010	Religious	Yes	No	No	No
Kurbegovic	Yes	Higher than average	No	No	1974	Other	Yes	No	No	Yes

Last Name	CBRN?	Weapon Sophistication	Virtual Interaction	Command and Control	Recruitment	Small group	Associate ID	Manifesto/Leakage	Multiple Attacks	Number of Deaths
Kaczynski	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	3
Hasan	No	High	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	13
McVeigh	No	High	No	No	No	Yes	8, 13	No	No	168
Breivik	No	Medium	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	No	77
Ivins	Yes	High	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	5
Copeland	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	3
Amir	No	High	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	1
Nichols	No	High	No	No	No	Yes	3, 13	No	No	0
Tsarnaev	No	Medium	Yes	No	No	Yes	11	No	No	2
Rudolph	No	High	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	2
Tsarnaev	No	Low	Yes	No	No	Yes	9	No	No	1
Van de Graaf	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	1
Fortier	No	High	No	No	No	Yes	8,3	No	No	0
Goldstein	No	High	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	29
Fuchs	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	4
Pimentel	No	Low	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Stack	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	No	1
Von Brunn	No	Medium	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	1
Kasi	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	2
Loughner	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	No	6
Reid	No	Medium	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Helder	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	0
Franklin	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	7
Haq	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	1
Furrow	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	1
Burt	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	27, 28, 29	No	Yes	0
Armstrong	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	26, 28, 29	No	Yes	0
Armstrong	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	26, 27, 29	No	Yes	1
Fine	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	26, 27, 28	No	Yes	0
Watson	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Berkman	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Uka	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	2
Wagner	Yes	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	0
Shahzad	No	Medium	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Hussain	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	36, 37, 38	No	No	13
Kahn	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	35, 37, 38	No	No	13
Tanweer	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	35, 36, 38	No	No	13
Lindsay	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	35, 36, 37	No	No	13
Duka	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	40,41,42,43,44	No	No	0
Duka	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	39,41,42,43,44	No	No	0
Duka	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	39,40,42,43,44	No	No	0
Tatar	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	39,40,41,43,44	No	No	0
Shnewer	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	39,40,41,42,44	No	No	0
Abdullahu	No	Low	No	No	No	Yes	39,40,41,42,43	No	No	0
Reilly	No	Low	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Buda	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	38
LaRosa	No	Low	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	54	No	No	0
Zasulich	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Adulmutallab	No	Low	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Lusha	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	0
Choudhry	No	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	No	1
Kurbegovic	Yes	Low	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Yes	3



Kaczynski	23	Private Citizen	N/A
Hasan	30	Government	Determination could not be located, but was based on having an advanced degree from a prestigious institution (Walter Reed)
McVeigh	600	Government	N/A
Breivik	241	Other	Conflicting reports about mental issues.
Ivins	17	Other	N/A
Copeland	250	Private Citizen	N/A
Amir	1	Government	N/A
Nichols	0	Government	N/A
Tsarnaev	132	Private Citizen	Although they attacked several people over a three day period they were all related to Boston Bombing Tamerlan reportedly traveled overseas
Rudolph	111	Private Citizen	N/A
Tsarnaev	132	Private Citizen	Although they "attacked" several people over a three day period, they were all as a result of the Boston Bombing so they are not considered mu
Van de Graaf	0	Government	N/A
Fortier	0	Government	N/A
Goldstein	125	Private Citizen	IQ is based on the assumption of becoming a doctor.
Fuchs	0	Other	N/A
Pimentel	0	Government	N/A
Stack	13	Government	N/A
Von Brunn	1	Private Citizen	An earlier attack against the Federal Reserve Board could also be considered a terrorist attack. Medium was selected because he was in the Na
Kasi	3	Government	Other DOB used 1/1/67
Loughner	15	Government	The manifesto was in the form of Youtube videos
Reid	0	Private Citizen	N/A
Helder	6	Private Citizen	N/A
Franklin	3	Private Citizen	N/A
Haq	5	Private Citizen	N/A
Furrow	5	Private Citizen	N/A
Burt	1	Government	Part of the New Year's Gang
Armstrong	0	Government	Part of the "New Years Gang", Karl had committed a firebombing on his own prior to the formation of the group
Armstrong	1	Government	Part of the "New Years Gang"
Fine	0	Government	Part of the "New Years Gang"
Watson	0	Government	N/A
Berkman	1	Private Citizen	N/A
Uka	2	Government	N/A
Waagner	0	Private Citizen	N/A
Shahzad	0	Private Citizen	N/A
Hussain	175	Private Citizen	One of four of the London Bomber
Kahn	175	Private Citizen	One of four of the London Bomber
Tanweer	175	Private Citizen	One of four of the London Bomber
Lindsay	175	Private Citizen	One of four of the London Bomber
Duka	0	Government	Fort Dix Five
Duka	0	Government	Fort Dix Five
Duka	0	Government	Fort Dix Five
Tatar	0	Government	Fort Dix Five
Shnewer	0	Government	Fort Dix Five
Abdullahu	0	Government	Fort Dix Five - But Argon sold the weapons so he was sort of the sixth. He might have been in the Kosovo Army, but this is unconfirmed.
Reilly	0	Private Citizen	N/A
Buda	200	Private Citizen	N/A
LaRosa	0	Government	N/A
Zasulich	1	Government	N/A
Adulmutallab	0	Private Citizen	N/A
Lusha	0	Unknown	N/A
Choudhry	0	Government	N/A
Kurbegovic	35	Private Citizen	Threatened the use of WMD

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## BIOGRAPHY

Keith Ludwick currently serves as a Special Agent with the FBI. Over the past 21 years, he has worked in numerous positions conducting and supporting diverse national security investigations. Currently, SA Ludwick leads a team of analytical personnel in conducting social media and open source analysis for all criminal, counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence, and cyber investigation in the Tampa field office of the FBI. Prior to that, he served in various roles at FBI HQ managing world-wide technical operations for the United States Intelligence Community. SA Ludwick started his career involved with counter-intelligence investigations in New York City.

Prior to joining the FBI, SA Ludwick served for five years as an officer in the United States Air Force as a strategic airlift pilot conducting world-wide military, diplomatic, and humanitarian missions. He served in Operation Desert Storm and accumulated over 2,000 hours of flight time.

Among his awards, SA Ludwick received the Meritorious Unit Citation from the CIA in 1998, the FBI Director's Award for Distinguished Technical Advancement in 2004, the Naval Postgraduate School's award for Academic Excellence and Leadership in 2008, and the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement in 2009.

SA Ludwick is married with two children and enjoys boating, SCUBA diving, and brewing beer.