

RADICALIZATION DISCOURSE IN THE UNITED STATES: ANALYSIS OF THE
JULY 15, 2015 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE HEARING ON THE RISE OF
RADICALIZATION

by

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family and my loving wife, Jenna, who has been a constant light of encouragement throughout our seven years of marriage.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
List of Abbreviations and/or Symbols	iix
Abstract	x
Chapter One - Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of Problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study	4
1.4 Need for the Study	6
1.5 Main Research Question and Sub-Questions	7
1.6 Definition of Terms	8
1.7 Conclusion	11
Chapter Two - Literature Review	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 What is Discourse?	14
2.3 What is Genealogy?	18
2.4 What is Radicalization?	20
2.4.1 A Brief History of Radicalism	27
2.5 What is De-Radicalization?	33
2.6 2011-2012 Congressional Hearing Case Study	38
Chapter Three - Methodology	42
3.1 Introduction	42
3.2 Main Research Question	42
3.3 Method	42
3.4 Methodology	43
3.5 Data and Collection Procedures	46

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure	48
3.7 Limitations of Study	50
Chapter Four - Analysis & Discussion	51
4.1 Introduction	51
4.2 Background to Hearing	51
4.3 Speech Reference Abbreviation	54
4.4 Vocabulary Analysis	54
4.5 Hard vs. Soft Power Responses	56
4.5.1 Hard Power	60
4.5.2 Soft Power	61
4.6 Conclusion	72
Chapter Five - Conclusion & Recommendations	74
Appendix A	82
References	84

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1 Kuhle and Lindekilde Findings.....	22-23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1 Foucault's Power/Knowledge Chart	16
Figure 2 The Radicalization Process as outlined by the FBI	24
Figure 3 Soft Power Approaches	62

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

September 11, 2001	9/11
Countering Violent Extremism	CVE
Department of Homeland Security	DHS
Federal Bureau of Investigations	FBI
Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	ISIS
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersexed Community	LGBTQI
United Kingdom.....	UK
United States	US

ABSTRACT

RADICALIZATION DISCOURSE IN THE UNITED STATES: ANALYSIS OF THE JULY 15, 2015 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE HEARING ON THE RISE OF RADICALIZATION

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George Mason University, 2015

Thesis: Dr. Richard Rubenstein

This thesis examines the ongoing discourse of the term ‘radicalization’ and the impact this discourse has in the discussion and implementation of various counter-radicalization initiatives in the US. The thesis will highlight how the current radicalization discourse has prevented the implementation of an effective de-radicalization initiative as an applicable measure in countering the threat of radicalization in the US. The author has used the critical discourse analysis methodology to review the July 15, 2015, US House of Representative Committee on Homeland Security hearing titled “The Rise of Radicalization: Is the US Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?” in order to denote which counter-radicalization initiatives are being promulgated as the best methods for countering the domestic radicalization threat.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

How a government compartmentalizes and responds to political violence directed towards it can often be just as effective in characterizing the government as it can in characterizing their violent aggressors. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the discussion of terrorism and the reasons why individuals would commit such horrendous acts was largely curtailed through the assumption that nothing could explain these evil acts beyond the rancorous mindset of the individuals who committed them. Terrorism essentially became an ‘evil ideology’ that required no further exploration.¹ The scholars who did seek to understand the reasoning for these acts often formulated the assumption that terrorists and those seeming to be their ideological partners in the Muslim communities were ‘unreformable’ and no political or economic change could thwart their malevolence.² The only way this ‘evil ideology’ could be defeated was through overwhelming coercive force portrayed through the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. This desire for retribution and for the prevention of further acts of terror led to the

¹ Johnson, Richard. “Defending Ways of Life The (Anti-) Terrorist Rhetorics of Bush and Blair.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 4 (August 1, 2002), pg. 211.

² Kundnani, Arun. “Radicalisation: The Journey of a Concept.” *Race & Class* 54, no. 2 (October 1, 2012), pg. 4, doi:10.1177/0306396812454984.

development of a wide range of policies and strategies largely calculated to subdue terrorism rather than to undermine its appeal.

By 2004, these policies and strategies were viewed as successful means for combating terrorism as the US invasion of Iraq was considered a ‘victory.’ However, the sectarian violence and counter-insurgency that emerged from the invasion sparked another round of international attacks, this time occurring in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, respectively. With these continual acts of terror occurring around the world, many states were forced to reevaluate their counterterrorism approaches. It was growing apparent that the killing and capturing of these ‘radicalized’ individuals as the only method of countering the threat was unsuccessful and thus required a new strategy that could result in better long-term success. As a result, new innovative responses were needed to complement the traditional tools in countering the ever-evolving threats posed by terrorists and violent extremists.

What emerged from this discussion was a concept that would be utilized by policy-makers and academics to explore the manner by which a terrorist was produced and to offer a systematic foundation for preventative stratagems that could be effective beyond the threat of violence or detention: ‘radicalization.’

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Western governments have struggled to understand the complexities of why or how individuals become terrorists. In their endeavors to understand what makes a person become a terrorist, Western governments have created an array of programs and projects to understand this phenomenon. Mike German, a Fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School, describes how a

“mini-industry” has been created in which “think tanks, university terrorism programs, law enforcement, intelligence task forces and agencies” have all tried to come up with models for radicalization.³ This is all in an effort to identify certain indicators that Western governments can then use to stop violence or prevent an attack before it actually occurs.

Radicalization is not a new groundbreaking phenomenon. Over the past few decades, academics and policy makers have attempted to establish various guidelines and indicators to explain why individuals become a terrorist. Arun Kundanani, author of the book *The Muslims are Coming! Islamaphobia, Extremist, and the Domestic War on Terror*, describes how the concept of radicalization tends to blur the distinction between “someone being involved in some kind of criminal violence, and the political ideas that are associated with that violence.”⁴ The idea of the new radicalization theory is to somehow link the ‘radical’ violent acts to a particular political interest and then derogate the political interest as collaborating with or aiding the violent actor. The discourse surrounding the radicalization theory makes very little distinction between violence and non-violence, but rather focuses the bulk of its attention on the political position these ‘radicalized’ individuals are taking. This is one of the foremost drawbacks of the present theory and a major concern discussed throughout this research paper.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

³ “Transcript of Arun Kundnani | Brennan Center for Justice.”
<http://www.brennancenter.org/transcript-arun-kundnani>.

⁴ Ibid.

The terms ‘radicalization’ and ‘de-radicalization’ are widely used in terrorism studies, but the precise meaning of ‘radicalization,’ the triggers that cause it, or how to ‘de-radicalize’ individuals who are considered ‘radicals,’ violent extremists, or terrorists have been a painstaking endeavor for terrorism experts to fully understand. An Australian team of authors concluded that:

“Defining what radicalization is or who radicals are is as difficult as defining terrorism...about the only thing that radicalization experts agree on is that radicalization is a process. Beyond that there is considerable variation as to make existing research incomparable. It is like comparing eggs to oranges and concluding that oranges, therefore, come from chickens.”⁵

The discourse surrounding the term ‘radicalization’ has grown to encompass the understanding, explanation, and prevention of young individuals from engaging in what Western society deems ‘radical activity.’ In a sense, the term ‘radicalization’ has been put into contention against the status quo and transformed into an ideology that diametrically opposes ‘radicalism’ to ‘moderation.’ The concept has been linked to questions in the West concerning “home-grown terrorism,” particularly with the increase in Western individuals “self-radicalizing” and traveling to war-torn regions to fight for their newfound sentiments. Thus it is important to understand how and why this discourse has evolved, particularly since 9/11, and the impact it can have in the near-term, especially on the emerging concept and theories of ‘de-radicalization’ or ‘counter-radicalization.’

⁵ Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review” (Canberra: Australian Government, Department of Defence, March 2011), pg. 13, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA543686>.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

No longer do we live in the days where our focus can only be on the dangers posed by al-Qa'ida or its affiliates, or even those inspired by their ideology. Extremists today can come from a broad range along the ideological spectrum, varying from those who engage in small 'self-starter groups' to those who act out as 'lone wolves.' Thus 'radicalization' is a term that has been adopted and has become synonymous when describing all the actions that take place prior to a bomb detonating or gunmen attacking a religious or cultural center. This term has grown to have many definitions and cover a variety of contexts—security context, integration context, and foreign-policy context.⁶ This confusion over the exact definition and scope of the term has allowed for a variety of interpretations to be adopted to fit one's own political agendas.

Thus, it is important to discuss the discourse surrounding the term 'radicalization' and its impact on the concepts and theories of 'de-radicalization' and 'counter-radicalization.' For this thesis, the intention is to research this discourse in order to understand how the definition and context in which the term 'radicalization' has evolved. This will be accomplished by analyzing how this evolution of the term has impacted the propositions and implementation of various non-coercive 'de-radicalization' or 'counter-radicalization' initiatives directed towards 'radicalized' Muslims, particularly in the US. Given the limited time frame for this study, this research paper will place greater

⁶ Mark Sedgwick. "The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 4 (September 14, 2010) pg. 479, doi:10.1080/09546553.2010.491009.

emphasis on the analysis of Islamist radicalization and its derivatives ‘de-radicalization’ and ‘counter-radicalization.’

The aim of the research is to address the way the ‘radicalization’ discourse is explained in terms of properties of social interaction and more specifically the social structures of today’s society. The research will extrapolate on the concepts of ‘radicalization’ and how the discourse challenges the relations of power and dominance in society. It is through the increased knowledge of these relations that the paper can then turn its attention to the concepts and theories of ‘de-radicalization’ and ‘counter-radicalization’ and all their elements.

1.4 Need for the Study

Although the concepts and theories of radicalization and its derivatives de-radicalization and counter-radicalization have been researched by academics that have attempted to ascertain their intricacies in the development of a better understanding, very little research has been accomplished in understanding the evolution of the concepts and its impact on today’s society. The discourse surrounding these terms and their evolution over the past half-century have resulted in policies and decisions that have benefited certain groups while categorizing other ethnic and religious groups in a not so positive manner.

The term ‘radicalization’ has become very politicized, much like the term ‘terrorism,’ by which politicians use the term to label and attribute blame. The labeling of radicals has been placed on only one side of the spectrum – non-state actors – and the idea that governments can also be subjected to radicalization has been cast by the

wayside. Dr. Alex Schmid, a Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism at The Hague and Director of the Terrorism Research Initiative, notes “‘radicalization’ is not just a socio-psychological scientific concept but also a political construct, introduced into the public and academic debate mainly by national security establishments faced with political Islam in general and Salafist Jihadism in particular.”⁷ In my study, I am not merely trying to describe the discourse that is being reproduced in a way that abuses power and incites dominance and inequality, but trying to explain how the discourse is confirmed, legitimized, and reproduced.

1.5 Main Research Question and Sub-Questions

1. What impact does the current radicalization discourse in the US, as promulgated in US governmental hearings from 2015, have to the emerging theories and concepts of de-radicalization and counter-radicalization?
 - a. What can the history or genealogy of the term ‘radicalization’ teach us about the new ‘radicalization model’ that is being promulgated in society today?
 - b. How has the lack of a cross-cultural or an international agreed-upon definition regarding the term ‘radicalization’ contributed to the primarily negative framing?

⁷ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, March 2013), pg. 19, <http://www.icct.nl/download/file/ICCT-Schmid-Radicalisation-De-Radicalisation-Counter-Radicalisation-March-2013.pdf>.

- c. What impact has the framing of the term ‘radicalization’ by Western scholars and governments had on the prospects of implementing ‘de-radicalization’ and/or ‘counter-radicalization’ programs?

1.6 Definition of Terms

Radicalization – Most definitions of ‘radicalization’ are quite short and lack the complexity needed to fully define and understand the phenomenon. In the literature review section I will highlight various definitions of this term; however, for the purposes of this introduction I have decided to use Alex Schmid’s definition, as it is the most comprehensive definition available:

An individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarization, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict dyad in favor of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging. These can include either (i) the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion, (ii) various forms of political violence other than terrorism or (iii) acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes. The process is on the side of rebel factions, generally accompanied by an ideological socialization away from mainstream or status quo-oriented positions towards more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous worldview and the acceptance of an alternative focal point of political mobilization outside the dominant political order as the existing system is no longer recognized as appropriate or legitimate.⁸

De-radicalization – This term encompasses any effort aimed at preventing the concept or theory of ‘radicalization’ from occurring. Often the de-radicalization process is in the form of a program or rehabilitation program, typically geared towards individuals who have radicalized, with the intention of reintegrating individuals back into society or at the very minimum dissuade them from committing violence.

⁸ Ibid., pg. 18.

Counter-Radicalization – The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Task Force

defines ‘counter-radicalization’ as:

Policies and programs aimed at addressing some of the conditions that may propel some individuals down the path of terrorism. It is used broadly to refer to a package of social, political, legal, educational and economic programs specifically designed to deter disaffected (and possibly already radicalized) individuals from crossing the line and becoming terrorists.⁹

Therefore, given this definition, counter-radicalization efforts are not aimed at the ‘radicalized’ individuals themselves but are intended to support and reassure the community where these individuals may emerge.

Terrorism – This term is shrouded in controversy in both the academic and geopolitical senses. In Joseph Truman’s book *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*; he delves into the etymology of the term:

The original use of the word in English is often believed to have derived from the Latin word *terrere*, meaning, “to tremble.” When combined with the French suffix *isme*, referencing “to practice,” it becomes more like “to practice the trembling,” or “to cause or create the trembling.” *Trembling* here obviously is another word for fear, panic, and anxiety—that we today call terror.¹⁰

Over the centuries, the term *terrorism* has been used to describe violence in confrontations over power and control around the globe. It has been used to describe labor disputes and violent protests against management regarding production control, armed or revolutionary struggles to achieve independence or statehood, as well as violent

⁹ “First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism That Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes” (New York: United Nations Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force, September 2008), pg. 5. <http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/pdfs/radicalization.pdf>.

¹⁰ Joseph S. Tuman, “Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism,” in *The Struggle to Define Terrorism* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), pg. 4, <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/communicating-terror-2e/n1.xml>.

struggles regarding supremacy of ideologies such as Marxism, communism, and capitalism.¹¹ The international community has failed to develop an accepted comprehensive definition of terrorism mainly due to the “differences of opinion between various members about the use of violence in the context of conflicts over national liberation and self-determination.”¹² This lack of a definition has made it difficult to create laws and methods for dealing with those who engage in this act. Today the term is often synonymous with acts of violence from groups with political, religious, or ideological aims. Thus for the purposes of this research paper I am going to utilize John Horgan’s definition of “acts involving the use, or threat of use, of violence as a means of attempting to achieve some social or political effect,” as it appears to be the broadest description possible by which the international community can reach a consensus.¹³

Extremism/Extremists – This term is often applied to a group that utilizes or advocates the use of violence against the will of society at large. Often those described as extremists do not accept that what they practice or advocate constitutes as violence and would instead view their actions as a form of resistance or militant action. For the purpose of this paper, when referencing *extremism/extremist* I am referring to the ideology and methodology of Islamic *extremism/extremist* which is characterized as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental democratic values, rule of law, individual

¹¹ Ibid., pg. 7.

¹² Angus Martyn, “The Right of Self-Defence under International Law-the Response to the Terrorist Attacks of 11 September” (Parliament of Australia, February 12, 2002), http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/CIB/cib0102/02CIB08#international.

¹³ John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Revised and updated second edition., Cass Series on Political Violence (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014). pg. 11.

liberty, and mutual respect of those who adhere to different faiths and beliefs.¹⁴ This is not to assert that all individuals who believes or practices Sharia oppose democratic values or rule of law, but that they are often characterized as opposed to Western concepts of democracy, rule of law, and toleration.

Disengagement – This is another misunderstood term as it is often used as a synonym for de-radicalization when in fact de-radicalization is just one of the four steps in the disengagement process as outlined by Gordon Clubb in his article *Re-evaluating the Disengagement Process: The Case of Fatah*. Clubb defines disengagement as “the process by which terrorist groups reach and conclude—successfully or not—the final state in their life cycle or at least came to end the use of terrorist tactics as a form of waging political conflict.”¹⁵

1.7 Conclusion

The remaining portion of this paper will be divided into four chapters. Chapter two will consist of a literature review of the concepts of radicalization, de-radicalization, and counter-radicalization. Chapter three will discuss the methodology for this project, to include the data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter four consists of an in-depth analysis and discussion of the main research findings of this project. The paper will conclude with Chapter five, where I will discuss the impact of my findings and provide some recommendations for future research.

¹⁴ Dominic Casciani, “How Do You Define Islamist Extremism?,” *BBC News*, n.d., <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-27777892>.

¹⁵ Gordon Clubb, “Re-Evaluating the Disengagement Process: The Case of Fatah,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no. 3 (November 27, 2010), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/75>.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Much of the literature pertaining to the term ‘radicalization’ focuses primarily on Islamist extremism and jihadist terrorism. The events occurring in all corners of the world today certainly contribute to this narrow scope of analysis. However, in order to stimulate further discussion and a re-analysis of one of the most widely used concepts in terrorism studies – ‘radicalization’ – as well as its byproducts ‘de-radicalization’ and ‘counter-radicalization,’ the goal of this research project is to understand how the discourse surrounding the term ‘radicalization’ has evolved and how this discourse has impacted the proposition and/or implementation of various non-coercive endeavors aimed at de-radicalizing or counter-radicalizing individuals throughout Western Europe and North America.

While it is known that there has been a great deal of efforts placed into garnering support for some non-coercive endeavors in Western Europe such as the PREVENT program in the UK, or the community outreach programs in Denmark or The Netherlands, the majority of Western society, including the US, remains hesitant to pursue these endeavors. Why is this? Is it out of ignorance of what such a program would entail, a lack of research regarding the long-term effectiveness of the programs, or some other reason? Perhaps it is because people tend to believe they understand what fits

into their preconceived picture of the world. There are rarely instances where people would perceive their own beliefs as wrong or misguided. Instead, individuals tend to uphold their own beliefs and produce this notion that *'if another individual does not believe the things I believe (which is moral), then that means they must be immoral.'*

Henri Tajfel and John Turner would describe this as an “us vs. them” or a “good vs. evil” narrative based on the social identity theory of intergroup behavior.¹⁶ This creation of social group categories often leads to discrimination and prejudice within societies, which can create an imbalance of power between the dominant social group and those deemed subservient to the dominant group.

This literature review has been broken down into five sections with the intention to introduce various theories, concepts, and perspectives formed by scholars regarding the role discourse plays in the construction of a term's genealogy, particularly in relation to the term 'radicalization.' The first two sections will outline what discourse and genealogy entail in order to provide a baseline for further analysis for the remainder of this project. The third section will discuss the topic of 'radicalization.' This section will be broken down into two separate sub-sections with the first sub-section discussing the varying definitions of the concept of 'radicalization' and the second sub-section detailing the history of the term and its evolution to present day. The fourth section will discuss the concept of 'de-radicalization' highlighting the various purposes and objectives of the concept. The final section will detail a case study conducted by Jonathan

¹⁶ Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior,” in *Political Psychology: Key Readings*, ed. J. T. Jost and J. Sidanius, Key Readings in Social Psychology. (New York, NY, US: Psychology Press, 2004).

Edwards, which discussed the discourse of ‘domestic radicalization’ and how the concept has been a central focus in debates pertaining to homegrown Islamic terrorism and homeland security.

2.2 What is Discourse?

Michel Foucault was a French philosopher who wrote numerous articles and books regarding the relationship between power and knowledge and how these concepts are used to establish social control through societal institutions. He is also considered the father of discourse, having written extensively on the subject. Foucault defined discourse as:

Ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge's and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern.¹⁷

Discourse can be characterized as a group of statements that provide a context to explain and confer meaning on a specific topic at a particular point in history. Discourse essentially constructs the topic by defining it or giving it meaning. This in turn produces the objects of our knowledge. The pre-eminence of discourse is that it is an activity that can be initiated by a single author. Discourses are not linguistic systems or just text; they are also practices, such as the scientific discourse of psychoanalysis and its institutional, philosophical, and scientific levels.¹⁸ In discourse, you must analyze statements—single

¹⁷ Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996), pg. 108.

¹⁸ Christopher Horrocks and Zoran Jetvic. *Introducing Foucault: A Graphic Guide*. Icon Books, 2004. pg. 86.

units that constitute a discursive formation—that enable us to see their limitations and where they position the speaker or author.

Much of Foucault's research focus throughout his career regarded the understanding of the power of discourse and how it forms meaningful statements or systems that eventually manifest themselves into being accepted 'truths.' These 'truths' often dominate how we see and organize ourselves and society while other alternative discourses are depreciated or suppressed. Yet, these alternative discourses can also give rise to contestation, challenges, or even resistance to the hegemonic practices being promulgated based on the dominant discourse. Given that Foucault viewed 'knowledge' as an invention or social construction of ideas and 'truth' as merely an interpretation of these knowledge's, he dedicated his life's work to showing and explaining the correlation between knowledge, discourse, and the notion of power.

Foucault, throughout his writings, was inherently critical of the ideas of "truths." Foucault interpreted "truth" as "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements"; it is linked "by a circular relation to systems of power which produce it and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which redirect it."¹⁹ His criticism of truth rested largely with how modern societies created what he coined "regimes of truths," which are enforced and

¹⁹ Daniele Lorenzini, "What Is a 'Regime of Truth'?", *Foucault Blog*, October 28, 2013, <http://www.fsw.uzh.ch/foucaultblog/featured/28/what-is-a-regime-of-truth>.

promulgated by “truth-generating apparatuses of society” such as schools, disciplines, professions, or laws.²⁰

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power... truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.²¹

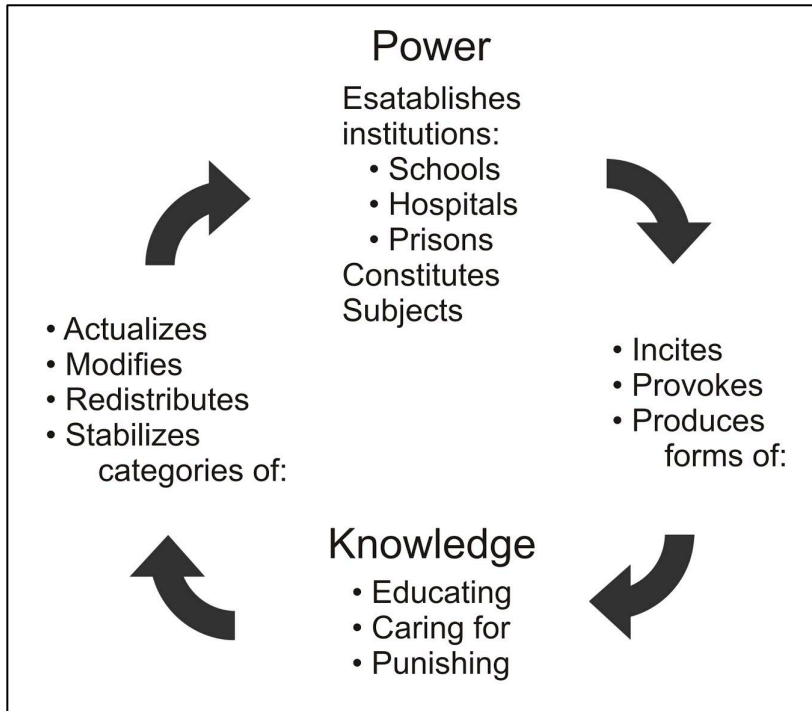


Figure 1 – Foucault’s Power/Knowledge Chart

²⁰ Martin Irvine, “Notes on Kuhn and Foucault” (Communication, Culture, & Technology Program Georgetown University, n.d.), <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/CCTP748/Foucault-Outline.html>.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Pantheon Books, 1980), pg. 131.

In his book, *Archeology of Knowledge*, he introduced the theory of analysis he refers to as “archeology.” Christopher Horrocks and Zoran Jetvic describes this archeology theory as “the investigation of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought, implies an excavation of unconsciously organized sediments of thought.”²² It is in this book that Foucault discusses his idea of the *episteme* or “underground network,” in which the organizations of thoughts is created in each historical time period. For example, in our current society when we think of the term madness we tend to associate it with someone who is mentally handicapped. However, this interpretation of madness was not always the case.

Slavoj Zizek explains how during the Renaissance, great writers like Cervantes or Shakespeare associated madness with a phenomenon of the human spirit by “those obsessed by demons, saints, or comedians” like prophets or possessed visionaries.²³ Despite their madness, they were treated with awe, “like messengers of sacred horror.”²⁴ As a result, our knowledge or truths are not original. Instead, they are a product of constructed frameworks that our society has created. Our society has created the meaning and perceptions of terms and ideas in order to generate cohesiveness and denote what is acceptable or not. Foucault developed his theory of discursive formations by studying the conception, structures, and forms of organization of knowledge that generate these discourses.

²² Christopher Horrocks and Zoran Jetvic, *Introducing Foucault*. pg. 64.

²³ Slavoj Zizek, “Cogito, Madness and Religion: Derrida, Foucault and Then Lacan” (EBSCO, n.d.), <http://www.lacan.com/zizforest.html>.

²⁴ Ibid.

2.3 What is Genealogy?

Derek Hook defines genealogy as “a coupling of scholarly erudition and local memory that allows us to constitute a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today.”²⁵ Essentially, genealogy is an investigative method that uses historical perspectives to conduct an elemental critique of the present. It allows individuals to critically analyze the relationships between power, knowledge, and human subjects in our modern society. This critical analysis enables individuals to understand how historical forces have constructed their thoughts and beliefs. Genealogy as a method emerged from the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and other German philosophers. In 1887, Nietzsche wrote the book *On the Genealogy of Morals*, which questioned the significance of our moral judgments.²⁶ In the book, Nietzsche discusses his findings through the use of his genealogical method, whereby he examined the origins and meanings of our different moral concepts. Foucault, in addition to his other writings, also wrote extensively on this subject offering both a critique of Nietzsche’s earlier writings while also producing his own methodological approach.

Foucauldian genealogy, as it is sometimes referred, is a way to examine history in correlation to what has commonly been accepted as “truth” to other more obscure ideas or discourses on “truth” at various points in history. This method is not trying to uncover the origins of the discourse but instead is attempting to reveal how power has influenced

²⁵ Derek Hook, “Genealogy, Discourse, ‘effective History’: Foucault and the Work of Critique,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2005), pg.6. doi:10.1191/1478088705qp025oa.

²⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Vintage Books ed.. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

the notion of the “truth.” The process of genealogy is to enable individuals to gain the awareness that those truths, ideas, concepts, beliefs, viewpoints, etc. have not always been as they are perceived today:

It wasn't [always] as a matter of course that mad people came to be regarded as mentally ill; it wasn't self-evident that the only thing to be done with a criminal was to lock him up; it wasn't self-evident that the causes of illness were thought to be sought through the individual examination of bodies.²⁷

Genealogy's task is to separate the apparent progressions of events, to fragment the interrelation of objects and to intentionally dispute comparisons of 'necessary sameness' (that the 'now' is necessarily like the 'then'; that the 'here' of the analytical context is necessarily like the 'there' of that being analyzed).²⁸ The study of a term's genealogy by analyzing the discourse surrounding it can give credence to how the term has evolved to encompass various meanings. It is imperative to analyze the discourse, whether it is through speeches, policy documents, media, or another source of communication, to identify the role played by power in creating the knowledge that in turn becomes the accepted “truths.”

Foucault's philosophy on the power/knowledge dynamics and its impact on 'truth' making will assist in this project's analysis of the discourse regarding the concept of radicalization and the international community's many attempts to define the concept. Within a Foucauldian conceptualization, knowledge and power are relatively intertwined, and when accesses to both are involved it can have an influential impact on the ability of individuals to act politically. Foucault claims that there is “no power relation without the

²⁷ “Michel Foucault - Questions of Method,” *Scribd*, pg. 226.
<https://www.scribd.com/doc/235376401/Foucault-M-Questions-of-Method>.

²⁸ Hook, “Genealogy, Discourse, ‘effective History.’” pg. 11.

correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute the same time power relation.”²⁹ How societies use certain terms can have the ability to grant, frame, or deny power as well as empower some while marginalizing other individuals actions, perspectives, and choices.³⁰ This next section will elaborate on the discourse surrounding the term ‘radicalization’ in order to confer the impact this discourse is having in instituting discriminatory practices that are being created on the basis of the perceived ‘truths’ of what is a “radical.”

2.4 What is Radicalization?

What exactly is meant by ‘radicalization’? Since 2001, a clear priority has emerged in terrorism studies, “who becomes a terrorist and why.”³¹ Academics have researched relentlessly to construct a single theory or model that could explain the concept of ‘radicalization.’ However, this endeavor has yet to succeed and instead created even more confusion with a multitude of definitions and ideas cluttering the discourse of the concept.

Much like the term ‘terrorism,’ there is not a collectively accepted definition of ‘radicalization’ in either the academic or government communities. Some scholars, policy makers, and practitioners define radicalization exclusively in terms of individuals using violence to achieve some ideological or political goals, while others include the

²⁹ Michel Foucault and Translated from French by Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, n.d.), pg. 27. <https://zulfahmed.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/disciplineandpunish.pdf>.

³⁰ Robert Heath, Judy Motion, and Shirley Leitch, “Power and Public Relations: Paradoxes and Programmatic Thoughts,” n.d., pg.3. http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Power_PublicRelations.pdf.

³¹ John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*. pg. 77.

mere acceptance of these actions or other undemocratic behavior or beliefs.³² By the multitude of varying definitions regarding the term, it is apparent that the concept of radicalization is not nearly understood to the level that so many individuals assume. Too often the terms ‘radicalization’, ‘radicalize’, and ‘radical’ are utilized in a fashion that insinuates they are a self-explanatory concept. What is worse is that the terms are often used in a circular fashion: a radical is someone who has radical ideas or who has been radicalized.³³

In addition, the number of defining properties varies greatly between definitions. It seems that with each new definition that is created to explain radicalization the authors select several defining properties found in other definitions and place them in a different order to create their own definition. This only furthers the headache of delineating an all-encompassing definition for the concept. In Kuhle and Lindekilde’s report, “Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Aarhus” they wanted to showcase this trend and uncover some of the more popular defining properties by analyzing a sample of definitions from influential research reports on radicalization as well as definitions proposed by Danish authorities. The summary of their findings, including the source, the definition, and the defining properties, can be found in Table 1 below.³⁴

³² Lene Kuhle and Lasse Lindekilde, “Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Aarhus” (Centre for Studies in Islamism and Radicalization (CIR), January 2010), pg. 22.
http://www.ps.au.dk/fileadmin/site_files/filer_statskundskab/subsites/cir/radicalization_aarhus_FINAL.pdf.

³³ Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review.” pg. 13.

³⁴ Lene Kuhle and Lasse Lindekilde, “Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Aarhus.” pg. 24.

Table 1 - Kuhle and Lindekilde Findings

Source	Definition	Properties
AVID, 2004:14 (Dutch research report)	‘The (active) pursuit of and/or support to far-reaching changes in society which may constitute a danger to (the continued existence of) the democratic legal order (aim), which may involve the use of undemocratic methods (means) that may harm the functioning of the democratic legal order (effect)’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance/support • Undemocratic/violent means • Undemocratic goal
Slotman & Tillie, 2006:15 (Dutch research report)	‘An increasing loss of legitimacy for the democratic society, where the final form of radicalism (extremism) is seen as the antithesis of democracy’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed process • Undemocratic/violent means • Undemocratic goal
Municipality of Amsterdam, 2007:18 (Dutch research report)	‘The growing preparedness to strive for and/or support deep interventional changes in society that are at odds with the democratic legal order and/or whereby undemocratic means are employed’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed process • Acceptance/support • Undemocratic goal • Undemocratic/violent means
Silber & Bhatt, 2007:16 (New York Police Department definition)	‘Local residents or citizens gradually adopt an extremist religious/political ideology hostile to the West, which legitimizes terrorism as a tool to affect societal change. This ideology is fed and nurtured with a variety of extremist influences. Internalizing this extreme belief system as one’s own is radicalization’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed process • Hostility to the West • Terrorism • Extremist beliefs • Individual
European Commission, 2008:138 (European Commission definition)	‘The phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrorism • Extremist beliefs • Individual
PET: Centre for Terrorism Analysis 2008 (Danish Police Intelligence)	‘A process in which a person is increasingly accepting the use of undemocratic or violent means, including terrorism, in an attempt to achieve a specific political/ideological goals’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed process • Acceptance/support • Undemocratic/violent means

Service)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrorism • Individual
Regeringen, 2009: 8 (Danish government)	‘Radicalization is the process by which a person gradually accept extremist ideas and methods and possibly supports organized groups’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed process • Acceptance/support • Extremist beliefs • Individual

By glancing at the definitions and the corresponding defining properties in Table 1, it is apparent that most of the definitions share many of the same properties. However, what is also apparent is the number of defining properties and how, when compiled in different orders, they can create great variations in their meaning. These variations are what play a major role in creating the discontinuity and incoherence of the concept of radicalization. In addition, the inclusion of concepts like ‘extremist’, ‘terrorism’, and ‘democratic’ lead to further confusion as they in themselves are contested concepts without their own definitive definitions.

Another key take-away from Kuhle and Lindekilde’s research is in regards to the widely shared defining property that radicalization has to do with a directed process. This directed process concept is an idea that individuals take incremental steps along a linear path towards greater radicalization. For example, the FBI utilizes a four-step radicalization model (Figure 2 below) to denote what “step” in the directed process an individual has “radicalized” to. In the definitions in Table 1, this directed process is described with words like ‘increasingly’, ‘growingly’, or ‘gradually’. Thus, these

directed processes are an effort to link them to the theory of radicalization, which argues that radicalization unfolds through more or less distinct and succeeding phases.³⁵

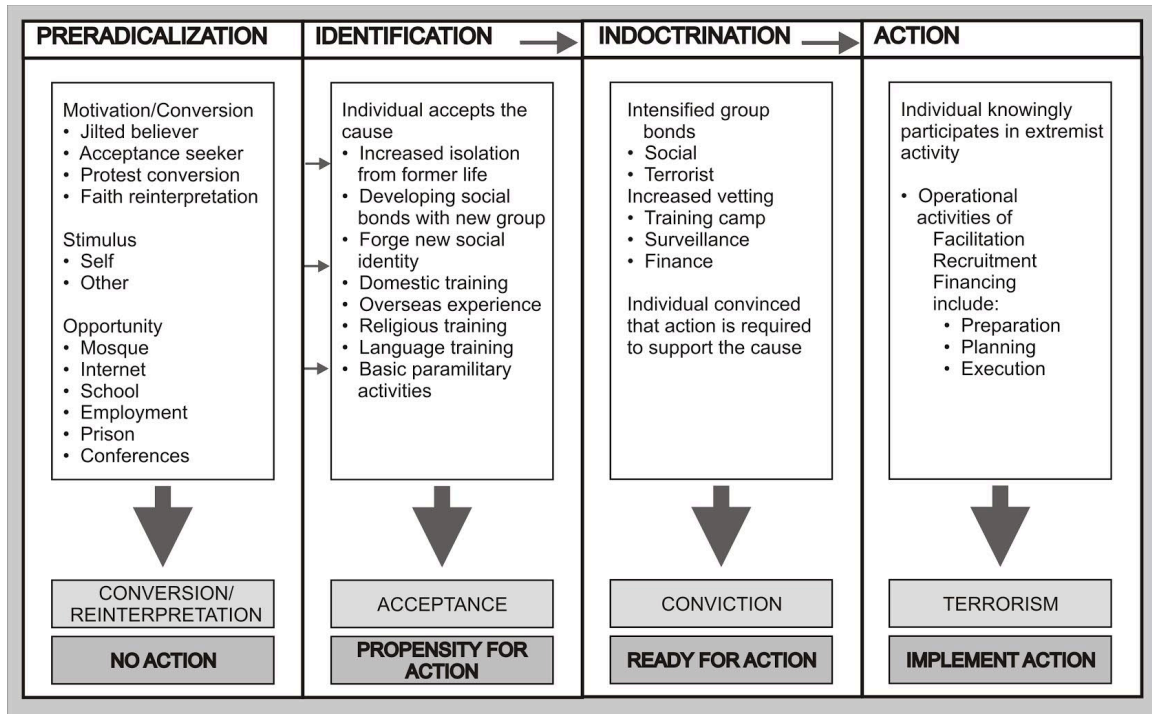


Figure 2 – The Radicalization Process as outlined by the FBI

However, in order to understand further the complexity of defining radicalization it is imperative to review other attempts by academics and governments to define the concept. Some attempts to define radicalization tend to be so broad that they criminalize

³⁵ Lene Kuhle and Lasse Lindekilde, “Radicalization Among Young Muslims in Aarhus.” pg. 25.

any individual who holds a legitimate political opinion that is outside the normative social acceptance:

- “The process whereby individuals transform their worldview over time from a range that society tends to consider to be normal, into a range that society tends to consider to be extreme.”³⁶
- “A growing readiness to pursue and support far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a direct threat to, the existing order.”³⁷
- “The active pursuit or acceptance of far-reaching changes in society, which may or may not constitute a danger to democracy and may or may not involve the threat of or use of violence to attain the stated goal.”³⁸

Githens-Mazer’s definition is so vague to the point where it appears to be all encompassing and arbitrary:

Revolutionary thought or actions; shifting from peaceful activity to violent ‘extremism’; becoming sympathetic to militant action; recruitment; becoming hyper-conscious of critical issue and willing to act violently; thinking that is at odds with social norms; thinking at odds with political norms of society; becoming violent; becoming irritable or irrational.³⁹

In Donatella della Porta and Gary LaFree’s introduction, titled *Processes of Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation*, to the special issue of the International Journal of Conflict and Violence (2011) they included or quoted seven different definitions alone

³⁶ Greg Hannah, Lindsay Clutterbuck, and Jennifer Rubin, “Radicalization or Rehabilitation: Understanding the Challenge of Extremist and Radicalized Prisoners,” Technical Report (RAND Corporation, 2008), pg. 2.
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/2008/RAND_TR571.pdf.

³⁷ Jocelyne Cesari and Daniela Pisoiu, “Radicalization,” in *The Oxford Handbook of European Islam*, ed. Jocelyne Cesari (Oxford University Press, 2014), pg. 2.

³⁸ Tinka Veldhuis and Jorgen Staun, “Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model” (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, October 2009), pg. 4.
http://diis.dk/files/media/publications/import/islamist_radicalisation.veldhuis_and_staun.pdf.

³⁹ Minerva Nasser-Eddine et al., “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review.” pg. 13.

for radicalization.⁴⁰

- [...] in the 1970s, the term radicalization emerged to stress the interactive (social movement/state) and processual (gradual escalation) dynamics in the formation of violent, often clandestine groups. In this approach, radicalization referred to the actual use of violence, with escalation in terms of forms and intensity;
- Radicalization may be understood as a process leading towards the increased use of political violence;
- [...] radicalization is understood as an escalation process leading to violence;
- Many researchers conceptualize radicalization as a process characterized by increased commitment to the use of violent means and strategies in political conflicts. Radicalization from this point of view entails a change in perceptions towards polarizing and absolute definitions of a given situation and the articulation of increasingly ‘radical’ aims and objectives. It may evolve from enmity towards certain social groups, or societal institutions and structure. It may also entail the increasing use of violent means.
- Radicalization may more profitably be analyzed as a process of interaction between violent groups and their environment, or an effect of interactions between mutually hostile actors
- Functionally, political radicalization is increased preparation for an commitment to inter-group conflict. Descriptively, radicalization means change in beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the group;
- Radicalization [...] can be] understood to be the strategic use of physical force to influence several audiences.⁴¹

With such a variety of definitions, it is no wonder the international community has had such a difficult time understanding the concept of ‘radicalization.’ Perhaps an analysis of the history of the concept of radicalization by looking at its root form “radicalism” could provide a better understanding how the concept of radicalization should be utilized.

⁴⁰ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg. 6.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg.6. Derived from Donatella Della Porta and Gary LaFree, “Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization,” *International Journal of Conflict & Violence* 6, no. 1 (2012), pg.4.

2.4.1 A Brief History of Radicalism

Much like what Foucault expressed in his philosophy of the archeology of knowledge, how we give meaning and define certain terms often depends on who, where, and when we are. Not everyone is located at the exact same point along a political, religious, or ecological spectrum of what is deemed acceptable, common, or mainstream. In addition, not everyone has the same perception of what that moderate point along the spectrum between the radical positions on the right or left should be. Timothy McCarthy, lecturer on history and literature at Harvard University and co-editor of *The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition* notes that “the word radical has always meant different things to different people” and that at its core it refers to “a more far-reaching vision of what society should be like.”⁴²

Many of us were taught during our high school civics class that the term ‘radical’ is associated with individuals who find themselves on one extreme of the so-called political spectrum. We hear this terminology today with phrases like “radical left” or “radical right.” In reality, the term radical can be traced back to 18th century Europe and the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions in which it often referred to a certain political agenda that advocated for comprehensive political and social reform.⁴³ In the 19th century, political parties began to adopt the term as a self-expression to advocate for certain issues like “republicanism rather than royalism,” or to plead for the

⁴² Heidi Stevens, “What’s ‘Radical’ Really Mean?,” *Chicago Tribune Newspaper*, January 19, 2011, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-01-19/features/ct-tribu-words-work-radical-20110119_1_religious-radicals-spectrum-term.

⁴³ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg.6.

“introduction of a system of democracy in which the right to vote was not linked to the possession of property or to gender.”⁴⁴ These individuals, unlike their predecessors, were interested in reform rather than revolution.

The suffragettes of the 19th and early 20th century were considered ‘radical’ at the time as their public demonstrations advocating for women’s right to vote were considered illegal, but not criminal, especially by today’s standards.⁴⁵ In fact, these movements and other like them that had advocated for ‘radical’ changes have become conventional rights today. It is interesting to see how much the concept of ‘radical’ has changed in just one century. While the 19th century ‘radical’ referred primarily to “liberal, anti-clerical, pro-democratic, progressive political positions,” the contemporary use when describing ‘radical Islamism’ the projection is in the opposite direction, “embracing an anti-liberal, fundamentalist, anti-democratic and regressive agenda.”⁴⁶ Given the above information, it’s apparent that ‘radical’ is a relative concept, which falls in line with what Mark Sedgwick advocates:

The best solution for researchers is probably to abandon the idea that ‘radical’ or ‘radicalization’ are absolute concepts, to recognize the essentially relative nature of the term ‘radical,’ and to be careful always to specify both the continuum being referred to and the location of what is seen as ‘moderate’ on that continuum.⁴⁷

Thus, conceivably it is imperative to differentiate and cease associating terms like ‘radicalism’ and ‘radicalization’ with terms like ‘extremism’ particularly if we want to

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg. 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pg. 7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pg. 7.

⁴⁷ Sedgwick, “The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion.” pg. 491.

keep the concept analytically useful. If we fail then, as we have seen, politicians will utilize these terms to label their selected political enemies and their far-out positions from their own more moderate middle ground stance they support.

Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko have advocated this disentanglement between terms in their article “Measuring Political Mobilization: The Distinction Between Activism and Radicalism.” In this article, they defined ‘activism’ as the “readiness to engage in legal and non-violent political action” while defining ‘radicalism’ as the “readiness to engage in illegal and violent political action.”⁴⁸ However, while this distinction should certainly be welcomed, the article raises another issue that must be contended with: by what benchmarks are ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ being measured? If these benchmarks are not justified and set through international law then it should be noted that both democratic and authoritarian governments have the ability to amend or change national laws that could allow certain activities to be consider both legal ‘activism’ and illegal ‘radicalism’ from one day to the other.⁴⁹ For example, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree in 2013 that banned any type of rally or demonstrations not authorized by the government that many people assessed was in response to the growing LGBTQI movement which the Russian government has strongly opposed.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Sophia Moskalenko and Clark McCauley, “Measuring Political Mobilization: The Distinction Between Activism and Radicalism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21, no. 2 (March 31, 2009), pg. 240, doi:10.1080/09546550902765508.

⁴⁹ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg. 7.

⁵⁰ “Russia: Freedom in the World 2014” (Freedom House, 2014), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/russia#.Va0o-NrBzGc>.

Another question that this article raises is whether the concepts of ‘activism’ and ‘radicalism’ are perhaps responses to perceived repression by government agencies? The distinction between the concepts of ‘activism’ and ‘radicalism’ loses much of its explanatory power when it falls outside the respect for a state’s constitution or the rule of law. In addition, it is important to remember that individuals and groups who have been categorized as ‘radicals’ have been both non-violent and violent, and their radicalism has been both illegal and legal.⁵¹

The current and popular use of the term ‘radicalization’ is a relatively new occurrence. Prior to 2001, the term was rarely used in the media and was only occasionally used in academia.⁵² Between 2005 and 2007, the press began to use the term more frequently suggesting that the current popularity of the term, as assessed by Mark Sedgwick, can be derived “from the emergence of ‘homegrown terrorism’ in Western Europe.”⁵³ The focus on understanding radicalization since 2005 has been welcomed especially since its aim is to understand the long-absent search for the “root causes” of terrorism. This search for the “root causes” is quite fitting given that the term ‘radical’ is actually derived from the Latin word *radix*, which means ‘root.’

Peter Neumann, the director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence in London, believes radicalization’s use in conjunction with terrorism was due to the political climate following 9/11:

⁵¹ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg.8.

⁵² This comment was based on the limited review of articles that contained the term prior to 2001 using the Google News search.

⁵³ Sedgwick, “The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion.” pg. 480.

There is a long and well-established discourse about the ‘root causes’ of terrorism and political violence that can be traced back to the early 1970s. Following the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, however, it suddenly became very difficult to talk about the ‘roots of terrorism’, which some commentators claimed was an effort to excuse and justify the killing of innocent civilians...It was through the notion of radicalization that a discussion about the political, economic, social and psychological forces that underpin terrorism and political violence became possible again.⁵⁴

Despite the opportunity this concept has provided to analyze Islamist terrorism and its “root causes” the research has often been imperfect from the beginning. Unlike the early discourse on terrorism that emerged immediately following 9/11 through which the main focus was on the circumstances, ideologies, the group, and the individual, the main focus of the concept of radicalization has been on the individual. This largely neglectful inclusion of research regarding circumstances, or in other words “the root causes,” has enabled the creation of an overtly negative perception of radicals, but, in particular, Islamist radicals. Sedgwick assesses that “as long as the circumstances that produce Islamist radicals’ declared grievances are not taken into account, it is inevitable that the Islamist radical will often appear as a ‘rebel without a cause.’”⁵⁵

Finally, society tends to assume that radicalization is something that only the “other side” or non-state actors can do without suggesting their own governments or societies have ‘radicalized’ through the polarization of views in response to terrorism. Some of the government policies instituted under the Bush-Cheney administration

⁵⁴ “Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence: Papers from the First International Conference on Radicalisation and Political Violence” (London: The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, January 17, 2008), pg.4. <http://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1234516938ICSRPerspectivesonRadicalisation.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Sedgwick, “The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion.” pg. 481.

following 9/11 could be interpreted in terms of radicalization. For example, the use of torture techniques (waterboarding, kidnapping of foreigner abroad) is a radical departure from the democratic rule of law and international human rights standards the US and international community is meant to uphold. In McCauley and Moskalenko's book *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* they discuss the potential for governments to radicalize in the face of terrorism:

Political radicalization of individuals, groups and mass publics occurs in a trajectory of action and reaction, and the end of the trajectory can seldom be controlled by either side alone. Radicalization emerges in a relationship, in the friction of intergroup competition and conflict that heats both sides. It is this relationship that must be understood if radicalization is to be kept short of terrorism. Focusing on them is not enough. Focusing on us is not enough. Focusing on the dynamics of conflict over time is essential.⁵⁶

As is apparent, there are many shortcomings in the literature on radicalization. To conclude this section, and to illustrate the shortcomings of the existing literature I will summarize Alex Schmid's analogy of radicalization research characterized as a tennis match: If a sports play-caller is describing an ongoing tennis match only in terms of what is occurring on one side of the net, we would rightfully complain we are only getting half of the story. However, in terrorism studies this one-sided discourse is widely accepted with many analysts examining the "causes of radicalization" purely from the side of non-state actors. It might well be that many, perhaps even the majority of "root causes" of radicalization are indeed on one side of the net, but the almost systematic disregard for government counter-terrorist behavior is nevertheless conspicuous. Government actions and counter-terrorism policies (e.g. targeted assassinations, drone attacks, torture), have

⁵⁶ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 223.

the ability to exacerbate a critical situation, causing radicalization on the other side of the conflict or reinforcing radicalization further.⁵⁷

Individuals should remember that two of the most important social movements in US history—worker rights and racial justice—were the works of individuals who had been labeled ‘radicals.’ To me, the term ‘radicalism’ takes on a different meaning than what is being promulgated in society today. To me, radicalism refers to the actions individuals undertake to improve their communities, households, or relationships. It is the actions that are undertaken by individuals who long for substantial societal changes that are needed to challenge oppression, poverty, and despair that millions of individuals face on a daily basis. It is not this rigid or narrow idea that it is being proclaimed in society today, and it certainly extends well beyond the actions of “radical Islamists” which has been the main focus of the concept for much of the past two decades.

2.5 What is De-Radicalization?

Given that radicalization is an ambiguous concept; the same is true for de-radicalization. John Horgan and Tore Bjorgo have studied this issue longer than most others in the terrorism field, and they have concluded “having worked on these issues for a number of years, we find the lack of conceptual clarity in the emerging discourse on de-radicalization striking. De-radicalization often appears to be understood as any effort aimed at preventing radicalization from taking place.”⁵⁸ Other individuals see de-

⁵⁷ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg.37.

⁵⁸ Tore Bjorgo and John Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individual and Collective Disengagement* (London: Routledge, 2009). pg.3.

radicalization more in terms of de-programming those who have already radicalized rather than preventative measures to hinder the radicalization process from even beginning.

John Horgan and Max Taylor discuss how the term ‘de-radicalization’ has become a term synonymous with a growing list of terms that range from “policy aspirations to programmatic objectives to outcome expectations (implicit or otherwise) and priorities” that “frequently overlap and are rarely mutually exclusive.”⁵⁹ These terms included:

- Rehabilitation
- Counseling
- Reconciliation
- De-mobilization
- Disengagement
- Deprogramming
- Reform
- Re-integration
- Amnesty
- Disbandment
- Dialogue
- Counter-radicalization

Regardless of the views of how to define de-radicalization or how it should be conducted, what is apparent is the need for greater research on the concept especially with its growing interest. In 2007, Time magazine considered “reversing radicalism” as one of the most revolutionary ideas of the 21st century.⁶⁰ This article’s assertion was quite a dramatic change from the initial response following 9/11 and the widespread call for military action to defeat anything that threatened America’s freedom. In addition,

⁵⁹ Rik Coolsaet, John Horgan, and Max Taylor, *Jihadi Terrorism and the Radicalisation Challenge: European and American Experiences* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013). pg. 175.

⁶⁰ Amanda Ripley, “What’s Next 2008 - TIME,” *Time*, http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1720049_1720050_1722062,00.html.

there has been a growing number of states that have come to accept the view that their national security interests may be best served by exploring how to facilitate and manage the reintegration of convicted terrorists back into society.⁶¹

Mark Dechesne discussed how deradicalization should be considered a strategic tool to fighting terrorism, as it is a means to “prevent further escalation of violence.”⁶² In the article, Dechesne elaborates on his four observations of the concept de-radicalization: (1) De-radicalization is not soft, but strategic, (2) Deradicalization is not new, (3) Deradicalization may arise spontaneously, (4) It is important to differentiate between physical and psychological forms of disengagement.⁶³ This idea of using de-radicalization as a strategic measure relates to the idea that counterterrorism policies should strive to break the cycle of violence rather than contributing to its continuation. Terrorist acts usually result in government reactions against the perpetrators. These reactions, as we saw with the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan by the US military, can create a new pool of recruits for terrorist groups. Dechesne asserts that de-radicalization could be an effective tool in breaking this cycle of violence “whereby radicals abandon violence and are brought back into society.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programs: Towards a Scientific Approach to Terrorism Risk Reduction,” *Countering Violent Extremism*, September 2011, pg.158.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/95226/ucounterviolentextremismfinalapprovedforpublicrelease28oct11.pdf>

⁶² Mark Dechesne, “Deradicalization: Not Soft, but Strategic,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 55, no. 4 (February 16, 2011), pg.287. doi:10.1007/s10611-011-9283-8.

⁶³ Ibid., pg. 288.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pg.288.

So what are the various types of de-radicalization programs and what are their objectives or purposes? The United Nations/Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UN/CTIFT) identified eleven key strategic issues or types of national programs in their 2008 report, which is based on the responses from 34 member countries engaging in the endeavors:

- Engaging and working with civil society
- Prison Programs
- Education
- Promoting alliance of civilizations and inter-cultural dialogue
- Tackling economic and social inequalities
- Global programs to counter radicalization
- Internet policies
- Legislation reform
- Rehabilitation programs
- Developing and disseminating information
- Training and qualifying agencies involved in implementing counter-radicalization policies⁶⁵

With this many different issues being tackled by countries around the world, it is also important to note the various objectives of de-radicalization programs. Bjorgo and Horgan highlight eleven different objectives of de-radicalization programs:

- Reducing the number of active terrorists
- Reducing violence and victimization
- Re-orienting ideological views and attitudes of the participants
- Re-socializing ex-members back to a normal life
- Acquiring intelligence, evidence and witnesses in court cases
- Using repentant ex-terrorists as opinion builders
- Sowing dissent within the terrorist milieu
- Providing an exit from terrorism and ‘underground’ life
- Reducing the dependency on repressive means and make more use of more humane means in counter-terrorism

⁶⁵ “First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism That Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes.” pg.5.

- Reducing the economic and social costs of keeping a large number of terrorists in prison for a long time
- Increasing the legitimacy of the government or state agency⁶⁶

From a preliminary reading of these objectives, it is hard to comprehend why countries may be opposed to entertaining the idea of de-radicalization programs given the impact they could potentially have. Perhaps it is because many of these programs are still in their infancy and determining their effectiveness is difficult. Determining the effectiveness of de-radicalization/counter-radicalization programs is one aspect that has been highly neglected in terrorism research. In 2006, Campbell Collaboration, an organization that publishes systematic peer-reviews regarding evidence from various policy topics, released a review of literature pertaining to counterterrorism, and its results were quite astonishing. The review notes how very little literature there is in attempting to answer the question about the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies. “Of the 20,000 reports regarding terrorism that we located, only about 1.5% of this massive literature even remotely discussed the idea that an evaluation had been conducted of counterterrorism strategies.”⁶⁷ In total, only seven, or 0.035%, of those 20,000 studies on terrorism actually attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies.⁶⁸

Finally, while determining effectiveness may perhaps be a drawback for some countries to create such programs, it is my assertion that it is the negative discourse

⁶⁶ John Horgan and Kurt Braddock, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of De-Radicalization Programs: Towards a Scientific Approach to Terrorism Risk Reduction.” pg.158-159.

⁶⁷ Cynthia Lum, Leslie Kennedy, and Alison Sherley, “The Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Strategies: A Campbell Systematic Review,” January 2006, pg.13 http://www.rutgerscps.org/publications/Lum_Terrorism_Review.pdf.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pg. 16.

surrounding the term ‘radical’ and the perception that comes with it that is influencing decisions on how to deal with individuals who’s beliefs may fall outside of the socially constructed norms of society. Recently in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the US began an experiment to see if Americans who are lured by Islamic extremism could be de-radicalized.⁶⁹ The test case was Abdullahi Yusuf, a US teenager who in 2014 attempted to travel to Syria to join a terrorist organization. As part of the experiment, Yusuf was sent to a halfway house where he would partake in a tailor-made curriculum aimed at reintegrating him back into American society. John Horgan noted that “all eyes are on Minneapolis...any failure associated with it will inevitably be used to discourage future efforts” as there is limited openness in the US to alternatives to incarceration since they are perceived as high risk.⁷⁰ This perceived failure came to fruition in May 2015 when Yusuf was ordered back to prison to await his trial because of an undisclosed “issue” at the halfway house.⁷¹ While this experiment did not result in a positive outcome, it should be utilized as a learning experience to build from for future endeavors. Time will tell if this will be the case.

2.6 2011-2012 Congressional Hearing Case Study

Jonathan Edwards, a professor at the University of South Carolina, conducted a review of the 15-month long US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland

⁶⁹ Miriam Jordan and Tamara Audi, “A Test Case for ‘Deradicalization,’” *Wall Street Journal*, May 6, 2015, sec. US, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-test-case-for-deradicalization-1430944585>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Alistair Bell, “Somali-American Back in Prison after ‘Deradicalization’ Attempt,” *Reuters*, May 13, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/13/us-usa-security-idUSKBN0NY2ER20150513>.

Security hearing on “The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and That Community’s Response.” This study focused on how the language of domestic radicalization has been applied in the recent debates regarding the threat homegrown Islamic terrorism has on homeland security. Edwards argument was that “the adoption of this language damages security efforts and harms American Muslim communities by minimizing the agency of radical actors, insufficiently differentiating between radical beliefs and violent actions, and minimizing the legal protections offer to non-violent critics of the language and its effects.”⁷²

Edwards begins the article with a review of the growing discourse of the term radicalization specifically in relation to the academic and political discussions of domestic terrorism and homeland security. He then showcases how the US Representative from New York, Peter King-led hearings in 2011 and 2012 illustrated the shift in the language of public policy and national security.

Edwards explored how different speakers during the hearing used the term radicalization and its variants through the rhetorical figure of polyptoton. Polyptoton is a figure in which a word appears as different parts of speech in the same text in an attempt to enhance the beauty of a text through parallel structure and sound similarity; however, in Greek and Latin rhetoric, the figure was also employed to magnify the effect of a concept by showing its consistency across multiple forms.⁷³ Typically the polyptoton

⁷² Jonathan Edwards, “Figuring Radicalization: Congressional Narratives of Homeland Security and American Muslim Communities,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (January 2, 2015), pg. 103. doi:10.1080/14791420.2014.996168.

⁷³ Ibid., pg. 107.

begins with a commonly accepted concept and translates it to the particulars of the cause under consideration.⁷⁴ More than a figure of style, enhancement, or translation, polyptoton draws our attention to the fluid and contextual processes through which ideological language comes to be inscribed in our political and societal narratives.⁷⁵

Edwards utilized this concept to analyze various excerpts from the hearings to include Peter King's opening statement when he said:

Despite what passes for conventional wisdom in certain circles, there is nothing *radical* or un-American in holding these hearings. Indeed Congressional investigations of Muslim-American *radicalization* is the logical response to the repeated and urgent warnings which the Obama administration has been making in recent months [emphasis added].⁷⁶

Edwards breaks down this quote and several others to denote how the use of language regarding radicalization has evolved to define and shape the available arguments and define the "legitimacy of participants (and non-participants)."⁷⁷ Edwards surmises that the discourse of radicalization "intersects with other words describing infection, extremism, and manipulation; it intersects with other parts of speech against which and through which is derives meaning for our present controversies about security and freedom, religion and citizenship, and the appropriate limits of cooperation and surveillance."⁷⁸

Finally, given everything that has been stated thus far in this literature review it is apparent that the 'radicalization' discourse has evolved to some extent over the past few

⁷⁴ Ibid., pg. 107.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pg. 107.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pg. 107.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pg. 102.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pg. 116.

decades. This evolution has created various perceptions and opinions on what the best methods for countering violent extremism. By applying some of the ideas produced by Michel Foucault regarding the creation of knowledge and the power dynamics that can influence it, it is my intention to discuss how this discourse continues to evolve today and the impact it is having in the US with implementing de-radicalization or counter-radicalization programs.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss in greater detail my research question and the method by which I intend to answer it. After conducting this preliminary introduction, I will delve into the method I intend to use to answer the question and explain my rationale for choosing this particular method, as well as its advantages and disadvantages for this study. In addition, I will discuss the data I have collected, how I have analyzed it, and how I intend to present my findings for the purpose of this study. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the limitations I incurred in conducting the study.

3.2 Main Research Question

“What impact does the current radicalization discourse in the US, as promulgated in US congressional hearings from 2015, have on the concept of de-radicalization?”

3.3 Method

The main focus of this research project is to understand the evolution of the radicalization discourse, particularly in the US, and the impact this discourse is having to the emerging theories and concepts of de-radicalization. In order to understand the complexity of the radicalization discourse, it is best to utilize a research methodology that takes into account the various elements that contribute to the understanding of how certain discourses are promulgated. As was discussed in the literature review, those in

power who create “regimes of truth,” which help reinforce other “truth-generating apparatuses of society” such as schools, disciplines, professions, or laws, are typically the ones who propagate various discourses.⁷⁹ Thus, in order to understand the discourse being supported at various US Congressional hearings in early 2015 regarding the concept of radicalization, I have decided to utilize the methods and practices corresponding with the qualitative research methodology of critical discourse analysis.

3.4 Methodology

Critical discourse analysis usually refers to the exploration of inequalities in social or political settings, which are manifested through conversations and language (discourse). Some of the most notable scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis include Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, among many others. These individuals have examined a variety of methods of discourse—text, speeches, conversations, documents, music, and videos—in order to identify the features that perpetuate, legitimize, and exemplify inequalities.⁸⁰ In addition, as noted in the literature review, Foucault also wrote extensively on the subject of discourse particularly on how discourses are created and upheld by individuals of power.

It has been noted that in critical discourse analysis there are three levels of discourse context: Macro, Meso, and Micro. At the Macro level, the researcher is to analyze the context or subject in order to determine the relationship between the texts and

⁷⁹ Martin Irvine, “Notes on Kuhn and Foucault.”

⁸⁰ Simon Moss, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Psychlopedia: Everything Psychology*, November 21, 2008. <http://www.psych-it.com.au/Psychlopedia/article.asp?id=215>.

the broader social process or ideology, for example, what social issues are of particular importance at the time the texts was created.⁸¹ At the Meso level, the researcher focuses on the production of the text and how it is received; where was the text made? Who was it written by? What perspectives might this person promote? What kind of person might read this text? etc.⁸² At the final level, Micro level, the researcher looks at what is being stated in the text and what linguistic features (active or passive voice, naming, pre-modifiers, indirect quotes) are being used to depict a certain idea.⁸³

Critical discourse analysis is a useful methodology to utilize in this research project as it enables me to analyze what is being communicated in the various speeches and documents produced by US congressional apparatuses. This will enable me to grasp an understanding of how the discourse regarding radicalization is being situated at the governmental level, which has an impact on the establishment of various policies and decisions that have the potential to create social injustice, for example, through the mislabeling of individuals who may fall outside what is deemed acceptable along a political or social spectrum. In addition, theses policies and practices are dictating the best methods for interacting and dealing with individuals who have been deemed ‘radical’ or ‘radicalized.’ Thus, it is important to ensure all available options are being discussed and if this is not occurring then to understand why this is the case.

⁸¹ “Example Research: Critical Discourse Analysis - All About Linguistics – Original.” <https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/all-about-linguistics/branches/discourse-analysis/example-research>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

By utilizing the critical discourse analysis method when analyzing the speeches and documents I have selected to include in this study, I intend to discover the underlying meanings of what is being stated as “truths” regarding the concept of radicalization. Upon conducting this analysis I will then deduce how these communicative acts have imbued the concept of ‘radicalization’ in a negative manner, and the impact this negative perception regarding individuals who have ‘radicalized’ is having in regards to discussion of counter-measures regarding radicalization. Much of the discourse regarding US initiatives to combat radicalism has been to take a counter-radicalization stance in an attempt to prevent the process of radicalization from even beginning. This was put on display during the February 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.⁸⁴ However, what I have witnessed from my research from various US congressional hearings in 2015 is that the question of “what to do with individuals in the US who have already radicalized” is rarely discussed? Through conducting my analysis, I have outlined several potential reasons why the radicalization discourse may be influencing the US initiatives to overlook de-radicalization as a means of combatting domestic terrorism.

There are several advantages for utilizing critical discourse analysis for this study. The first is that no technology or funds are needed to conduct this study. Since I am analyzing documents, I do not have to rely on other individuals to assist me in creating my data set. The information I have collected is already out there, and anyone can access

⁸⁴ “FACT SHEET: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism,” *Whitehouse.gov*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism>.

it easily. In addition, the critical discourse analysis methodology does not necessarily have a structured outline of how to conduct a study. It has allowed me to place my own perspectives on this given topic, which has allowed for extensive personal growth and a high level of creative fulfillment in conducting my analysis. However, this lack of a structured outline for conducting a critical discourse analysis study can also be a disadvantage and could lead to difficulties for other individuals to replicate the same study. Given that individuals perceive information and interpret discourses in different manners the same study conducted by another individuals could yield different results. In addition, discourse analysis is not a “hard” science and cannot provide definite answers as the discourses are always evolving with new insights and knowledge’s being debated.

3.5 Data and Collection Procedures

In discourse analysis, it is essential to have multiple texts to analyze in order to understand and interpret the discourse that is attempting to be provided. Given that I have selected a very politically motivated topic, I decided the best approach to understanding the impact the radicalization discourse is having on de-radicalization measures was to look at how the subject is being discussed at the governmental level. I assumed this was the best approach given that many of the decisions regarding how to deal with ‘radicalized’ individual’s stems from policy decisions at the federal level.

I utilized the Proquest Congressional database, which contains an index and abstract of Congressional publications (bills, hearing, committee reports, etc.) from 1789 to present day, to collect all of my data for analysis. I wanted to use the most recent information available regarding the discourse, so I set the search window parameters

from 01/01/2015—07/30/2015. I used the Boolean search with the following search code “radical” or “radical*” AND “counter” or “de”. This search resulted in two different government hearings and a bill produced by the House of Representatives. I decided to utilize the hearing conducted by the Committee on Homeland Security in the House of Representatives from July 15, 2015, titled “The Rise of Radicalization: Is the US Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism.”⁸⁵ I decided this hearing would be more appropriate than the other which dealt with the evolution of terrorist propaganda, particularly in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris. In addition, I was more interested in finding some speeches from a hearing that would enable me to think critically about what is being said, instead of reviewing a bill that is still in development at the House of Representative level and subject to change given the long process of bill developments.

Representative Michael McCaul (R-Texas) led this selected hearing with the intentions of examining the threats posed by international and domestic extremists towards the US as well as to examine the effectiveness of the Federal government’s efforts to counter the growing threat of terrorism and other violent extremists. The hearing consisted of three witness statements (Seamus Hughes – Deputy Director, Program on Extremism, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, George Washington University; Farah Pandith – Adjunct Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations; and

⁸⁵ Michael McCaul et al., *The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?*, July 15, 2015, <http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/rise-radicalization-us-government-failing-counter-international-and-domestic-terrorism>.

Richard Cohen – President, Southern Poverty Law Center) and was followed by a brief discussion that included recommendations for Federal government actions to counter violent extremists.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

In conducting my analysis for this project I utilized a ten step process that was produced by Florian Schneider in the article “How to Do a Discourse analysis.”⁸⁶ Step one required me to establish a context for the speech; Who conducted the speech? What was its context? Was it in response to a major event? How was it received? Step two consisted of exploring the production process, which entailed doing additional research on the individuals involved in the hearing and additional research on similar hearings about the topic. Step three is where I began to prepare the material for analysis. I began this step by reviewing the speeches several times in order to discern the various themes and identify the key ideas that are being constructed.

Having identified the various themes and key ideas I was then able to begin the process of coding, which is step four. In conducting the coding I assigned different attributes to the paragraphs, sentences, and individual words in the speeches in order to see if there was a pattern of meaning that could help me answer my research question. More information regarding the codes I used will be discussed in the following Analysis and Discussion chapter. Step five consisted of examining the structure of the speech to see if the orators only dealt with one specific discourse or if they spoke about multiple

⁸⁶ Florian Schneider, “How to Do a Discourse Analysis,” *PoliticsEastAsia.com*, <http://www.politicseastasia.com/studying/how-to-do-a-discourse-analysis/>.

discourses. If they spoke about multiple discourses, then I outlined how these different discourses overlapped. Also, I examined how the orators situated their argument; did they discuss issues one by one? Did they at first make a counter-factual case, only to refute that case and make the main argument?

Step six is where I collected and examined in greater detail the discursive statements I had found in step four and analyzed to see what “truths” the orators were trying to establish. In step seven, I looked at how the context of the different orator’s statements informed the main discourse; does the material contain references to other sources, or imply knowledge of another subject matter? The eighth step was the most labor intensive and most difficult given that I was identifying the linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms in the speeches. I was looking for specific word groups, the variations in active and passive voice, if the orators used naming to perpetuate certain ideologies, or to see if pre-modifiers were used to create varying views of a specific topic. In these previous eight steps, I have conducted all of my analysis and in step nine I began to interpret the data and formulate a way to present my findings. I kept several questions in mind when interpreting the data that coincided with my main research topic: What are the positions being taken on the discourse of radicalization? How do the arguments outlined draw from and in turn contribute to the “accepted knowledge” of the radicalization discourse? Who is benefiting from the discourse that my sources are constructing? The tenth and final step consisted of how I am to present my findings.

As will be shown in the next chapter, the research analysis for this project will consist of a discussion of my findings with regards to the relationship the ongoing

radicalization discourse in these speeches is having on various counter-radicalization initiatives in the US. The main finding which I will discuss in much greater detail in the proceeding chapter is that the language and discourse in this selected hearing is adamant about supporting some avenues for combatting radicalization in the US, mainly in the form of counter-radicalization initiatives; however, very little thought is given to the potential viability of implementing de-radicalization initiatives.

3.7 Limitations of Study

This study is quite specific in its efforts to understand the current discourse of radicalization and its impact on de-radicalization efforts in the US. As noted in the introduction, this paper is placing emphasis on the analysis of Islamist radicalization. Given a longer time frame in which to conduct this study, it would have been beneficial to include the ideologies of right-wing, left-wing, anarchist, and ethno-nationalists in the study of the discourse of radicalization. In addition, given that discourse regarding specific topics is always evolving, my analysis of the discourse of radicalization is specific to this time period and my own interpretation of the language used in my selected data sets. In discourse analysis, there can be no claim made for an absolute truth, as competing claims regarding the discourse are always possible.

CHAPTER FOUR – ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings in relation to my main research question of “What impact does the current radicalization discourse in the US, as promulgated in US congressional hearings from 2015, have on the concept of de-radicalization?” I will begin this chapter by providing some background on why this hearing was conducted as well as provide additional information on the major events that occurred just prior to when this hearing commenced. This will be conducted in order to provide a better context of the information that was delivered in these speeches during this hearing. In addition, I will provide a comprehensive review of my analysis of the four speeches by highlighting the main findings from the research. Upon discussing my main findings, I will end with my final conclusions regarding how the current radicalization discourse in the US is impacting the soft power initiative of de-radicalization.

4.2 Background to Hearing

This hearing was held in response to the growing interest by the US government in finding alternative avenues for dealing with violent extremism and to highlight the US government’s shortfalls in preventing the radicalization of US citizens. On June 25, 2015, US House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Michael McCaul introduced a bill in US Congress, *Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015*, H.R. 2899, which aims

to streamline and prioritize the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) efforts to counter violent extremism. This bill was in response to the growing fear within the US that violent extremism is "sweeping the nation" as "extremist groups have recruited Americans in all 50 states" as stated by Chairman McCaul.⁸⁷ This bill and hearing were an effort to elevate the ideas and concept of countering violent extremism (CVE) as a key priority at DHS.

There were a couple major events that transpired domestically in the US less than three months before the hearing occurred that were mentioned in opening statements of the speeches. These events, which I will briefly discuss, assist in highlighting the importance of this hearing. The first major event was the May 3, 2015, attack on the Curits Culwell Center in Garland, Texas, orchestrated by US citizens Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi. These individuals conducted the attack in response to the American Freedom Defense Initiative exhibition that was being held at this location in which artwork depicting the Muslim Prophet Muhammad was being shown. This attack obviously attracted news headlines, as it was another example of the radicalization of two US citizens by terrorist affiliates that resulted in a violent attack on US soil. This attack was just two months after the White House concluded their CVE summit that was convened in order to generate ideas on how to prevent incidents like this from occurring.

⁸⁷ "McCaul Leads Government Efforts To Counter Violent Extremism: Committee To Hold Hearing Examining If The Government Is Doing Enough To Counter International & Domestic Terror," *Committee On Homeland Security Chairman Michael McCaul*, July 9, 2015, <http://homeland.house.gov/press-release/mccaul-leads-government-efforts-counter-violent-extremism>.

The other event was the June 17, 2015, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, by US citizen Dylan Roof that resulted in the death of nine individuals. This attack was important as it showcased the rising impact of right-wing terrorism in the US. As I noted in my introduction, the main focus of this research has been on Islamic radicalization; however, it is worth noting this attack.

This attack is important because it has empowered and ignited a nationwide discussion of the rising impact of non-Islamic related domestic radicalization and terrorism. Radicalization can occur to many individuals, as it does not transpire through one specific ideology. Thus, this attack highlighted the need for greater expansion of US government generated CVE efforts to extend beyond the scope of Islamic radicalization and into the broader US communities where right-wing, and anti-governmental extremism continue to flourish. Richard Cohen, one of the four individuals involved in this hearing I utilized for this project, discussed at length the growing threat posed by non-Islamic domestic extremists:

Violence committed by non-Islamic domestic extremists also has continued at alarming levels. A July 2014 intelligence assessment by the DHS warned of a “spike within the past year in violence committed by militia extremists and lone offenders who hold violent anti-government beliefs.” In February 2015, the DHS released a report warning of attacks by “sovereign citizens”—extremists who do not recognize the authority of the government—citing 24 acts of ideology-based violence, threats or plots (mostly against law enforcement targets) since 2010. The data we’ve collected reflects an uptick in racist crimes and terrorist plots in recent years. The backdrop to this increase is important. A 2013 study by West Point’s Combating Terrorism Center found that right-wing violence in the 2000-2011 period surpassed that of the 1990s by a factor of four.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ J. Richard Cohen, “Testimony of J. Richard Cohen for the Hearing on The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism?,” n.d., pg. 2.

4.3 Speech Reference Abbreviation

In order to streamline the discussion in the next couple of sections, I have created the following abbreviations for the readers of this thesis. I will use these abbreviations to denote which speech the information is coming from by providing the abbreviation for the author of the speech.

- MC = Michael McCaul
- CO = Richard Cohen
- HU = Seamus Hughes
- PA = Farah Pandith

In addition, more information regarding these authors and their basis for expertise in this hearing can be found in Appendix A.

4.4 Vocabulary Analysis

In this section, I will discuss my findings of the vocabularies and linguistic projections the authors utilized in their speeches. The data I collected and analyzed displays patterns consistent with the predominantly negative perception of individuals deemed “radical.” In conducting my initial review of the speeches, I was looking for how the authors characterized individuals who are deemed “radical” or “terrorists.” I was not really surprised to see these individuals painted in an overtly negative manner. On two occasions, MC uses the term ‘fanatic’ to describe these individuals:

- But we cannot bow down in the face of terror, and we must refuse to live at the mercy of *fanatics*.
- These *fanatics* have warped a peaceful religion into deceitful propaganda, designed to convince vulnerable young people to embrace inhuman barbarism.

<http://docs.house.gov/meetings/HM/HM00/20150715/103739/HHRG-114-HM00-Wstate-CohenJ-20150715.pdf>.

PA uses terms synonymous in explaining the spread of an infectious disease to explain the extremist ideology and the radicalization phenomenon by including terms like “contagion”, “contagious virus”, “infected”, and “morph”:

- Extremist ideology is an insidious and *contagious virus* that has successfully moved across our planet, specifically targeting Muslim millennials.
- Although extremism is not a new threat, it has *infected* every region of the globe and continues to *morph*, taking on different forms in different places.
- We must look at this like we would any other *contagion*, rooting out its hosts globally and destroying its defenses.

However, what is more striking is the insistent notion that women and youth are the most susceptible to the propaganda and ideology that radical individuals are professing. During the hearing, there are six references to women being susceptible to radicalization and fourteen references to “youth”, “young individuals”, or “millennials”. This framing of “radical” individuals as preying on women and youths certainly does not assist in portraying “radicals” in a positive manner, but rather depicts them as manipulative individuals that will do whatever is necessary to spread their ideology and goals. This plays a role in how policy makers and everyday citizens perceive is the best avenue for dealing with radical individuals, whether it be through hard or soft power initiatives.

I would argue that the references to the women and youth are a tactic used by the authors to “pull at the heart-strings” of the public by giving the impression that these women and youth are victims rather than willing recipients to this adversarial ideology. Teun Van Dijk calls this phenomenon “manipulative prototypes”, which is a strategy that utilizes specific kinds of fallacies that could influence or persuade individuals to believe

or do something.⁸⁹ This form of power abuse is utilized in order to paint the recipients (women and children) of this “radicalization” manipulation as the victims who are unable to “resist, detect, or avoid” this type of manipulation because they do not have the resources or ability.⁹⁰ PA discusses at length the changing perception of the female population throughout the Islamic world as becoming more conservative by rejecting established traditions of dress and society and opting to “veil” when their mothers and grandmothers had not, as well as how they listen to radical sermons on satellite TV, download music, poetry, and blogs that celebrate isolation and hatred of the “other.”

This framing of Islamic women as accepting of this adversarial ideology has lead Western individuals opposed to this “radical” ideology to confer that this is what “those” individuals now believe and changing their beliefs or perceptions is impossible or unfeasible. This is apparent from the largely hard power stance being taken by many Western governments in dealing with the radicalization phenomenon. Instead more needs to be done in the soft power realm perhaps through the creation of a counter-radicalization narrative or the development of more community-outreach programs, which can assist in monitoring and preventing the spread of the radical Islamic narrative.

4.5 Hard vs. Soft Power Responses

This brings me to my next point of analysis for this project in which I examined the suggestions by the authors on how to best deal with “radicalized” individuals. This was one of the main themes throughout the speeches given this hearing was aimed at

⁸⁹ Teun Van Dijk, “Discourse and Manipulation,” *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 2 (n.d.), pg. 375.

<http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Discourse%20and%20manipulation.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pg. 375.

understanding the shortfalls by the US government in countering violent extremism and how best to overcome these shortfalls. I have broken down my analysis in this section into two parts: references to hard power responses and references to soft power responses. However, before going any further into my analysis, it is essential to discuss the concepts of hard and soft power.

Hard power is a rather simple and natural form of power that is much older than the concept of soft power. Hard power has the ability to manifest itself in a very practical and concrete form, which makes it easier to see and to measure its impact.⁹¹ Hard power can be defined as the capacity to get what you want through the use of military force or superior economic power. Realists tend to use the idiom of the “carrot and stick” approach to explain the concept of hard power in relation to international relations. The carrot symbolizes a reward that an individual or country will receive if they meet the demands of the dominant stakeholder, while the stick symbolizes the punishment that the weaker stakeholder will endure if they do not obey.⁹² In relation to the concept of radicalization and terrorism, the US has largely utilized this hard power approach through their use of drone strikes, interrogation tactics, and the arresting of individuals suspected of engaging in terrorist activities. While the use of hard power may have induced compliance in some instances, it has also presented several shortcomings in regards to

⁹¹ Matteo Pallaver, “Power and Its Forms: Hard, Soft, Smart” (The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011), pg. 81.

http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/220/1/Pallaver_Power_and_Its_Forms.pdf.

⁹² James Andreoni, William Harbaugh, and Lise Vesterlund, “The Carrot or the Stick: Rewards, Punishments, and Cooperation,” University of Oregon Economics Department Working Paper (University of Oregon Economics Department, August 20, 2002), <http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/oreuocwp/2002-01.htm>.

wielding greater legitimacy and credibility. If a country's credibility abroad deteriorates, attitudes of mistrust tend to grow while international cooperation diminishes, thus making it more difficult for the country to achieve its objectives.⁹³ This deterioration of credibility and legitimacy has occurred domestically in the US as well. Many communities where CVE efforts have been established in the US remain hesitant to engage fully with the US initiatives for fear their family and friends may face punishment if they cooperate. There is largely no incentive for these communities to cooperate, which has made the US hard power approach less effective. Given this difficulty in achieving optimal results the US has engaged in more soft power approaches to deter domestic radicalization.

Joseph Nye, an American political scientist and the former Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, coined the term "soft power" in his 1990 book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*.⁹⁴ He defined the term as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion."⁹⁵ Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others, without having to resort to the use of force, coercion, or violence. Soft power is largely about legitimacy and cooperation. If a country's objectives are legitimate, then they are more likely to persuade others and encourage cooperation in achieving a unitary goal. In

⁹³ Joseph Nye Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs*, June 2004, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2004-05-01/decline-americas-soft-power>.

⁹⁴ Joseph Nye Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books, 1991).

⁹⁵ "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics." <http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20040413/index.html#section-10815>.

addition, Nye notes, “Appealing to others’ values, interests, and preferences can, in certain circumstances, replace the dependence on carrots and sticks.”⁹⁶ This is particularly true in today’s society where “militaries are well suited to defeating states, but they are often poor instruments to fight ideas.”⁹⁷ Islamic Terrorism today is largely a battle of ideological agendas between a group of people at the extreme who are trying to use force to impose their vision of a pure form of their religion on the moderate majority. This moderate majority longs for the same things the rest of the world’s population strives to gain: a better life, health care, education, opportunities, and a sense of dignity.⁹⁸ Unlike hard power, which attempts to criminalize individuals who refuse to abide by the coercive approach, soft power can be effective in attracting individuals to steer clear of terrorism by offering opportunities to better their lives without the fear of potential harm should they fail to live up to the standards asked of them.

As will be discussed further, in these speeches there appears to be a growing interest in soft power initiatives as many of the hard power references are viewed as a limitation of the debate on how best to counter violent extremism. However, the scope and alternatives outlined in these soft power initiatives will remain one of the main focuses for this discussion.

⁹⁶ Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye Jr., “CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America” (Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2007), pg.6. <https://www.nyu.edu/brademas/pdf/publications-moving-forward-csis-smart-power.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pg.6.

⁹⁸ “Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.”

4.5.1 Hard Power

Across the four speeches, there are 11 references to hard power or hard power initiatives. MC in his opening statements notes the hard power initiative of arresting individuals and the various US authorities disruption of attacks including an ISIS-inspired attack on an American university. MC also references the disruption of plots to “behead law enforcement officers, to detonate explosives in New York City, and to conduct mass shootings of Americans.” Arresting individuals appears to be one of the main solutions utilized by the US government to countering domestic violent extremism, but it is apparent from the hearing that pursuing this method alone is not enough to stem the spread of radicalization. HU emphasizes, “this year, 50 were arrested and charged with various terrorism-related offenses.” Despite these efforts, MC still notes how “we are nowhere close to reducing the threat.” MC discusses the lack of resources and manpower being dedicated to combating domestic radicalization:

Our Committee asked the top agencies responsible for CVE how much money and how many people they have assigned to the problem. They could only identify around \$15 million being spent and around 2-dozen people working full-time to combating domestic radicalization. That’s it. That means we’ve arrested twice as many ISIS recruits in the United States this year than there are full-time officials working to prevent ISIS from radicalizing Americans in the first place. In a high-threat environment, this is unacceptable.

It is apparent from the information above that these authors view the US governments largely hard power approach for dealing with the radicalization phenomenon as insufficient. The authors cite the need for more resources to be dedicated to the combating domestic radicalization and for the refocusing of the US government’s mission in countering radicalization by understanding the root causes and how to prevent

the radicalization process from even beginning.

PA states, “Hard power responses such as retrieving passports are a start, but we need to do much more to prevent recruitment of new terrorists.” PA’s suggestion is to deal with the radicalization issue from the root source, the recruiting of individuals. PA notes, “Attacking extremist recruiting proactively rather than relying on reactive and exponentially costlier “hard power” interventions once military threats have already materialized. Remember, without recruits, there are no troops.” HU appears to support this endeavor as well as he discusses the need for alternatives to potentially assisting these radicalized individuals rather than “locking them away for 25 years.” Each of the speakers dedicated much of their time to discussing these alternatives.

4.5.2 Soft Power

Throughout the four speeches, there was significant interest in utilizing soft power initiatives to counter radicalization and violent extremism. PA was the main proponent of the use of soft power initiatives as she continually referenced the need to deal with the “ideological threat” by “investing significantly in soft power the way we did during the Cold War. We must give soft power as much credibility as we do hard power.” In order to catalog and recognize the various soft power initiatives, I organized the 22 references to soft power into eight categories. The breakdown of the various soft power approaches and the number of times they were advocated can be found in Chart 1 below.

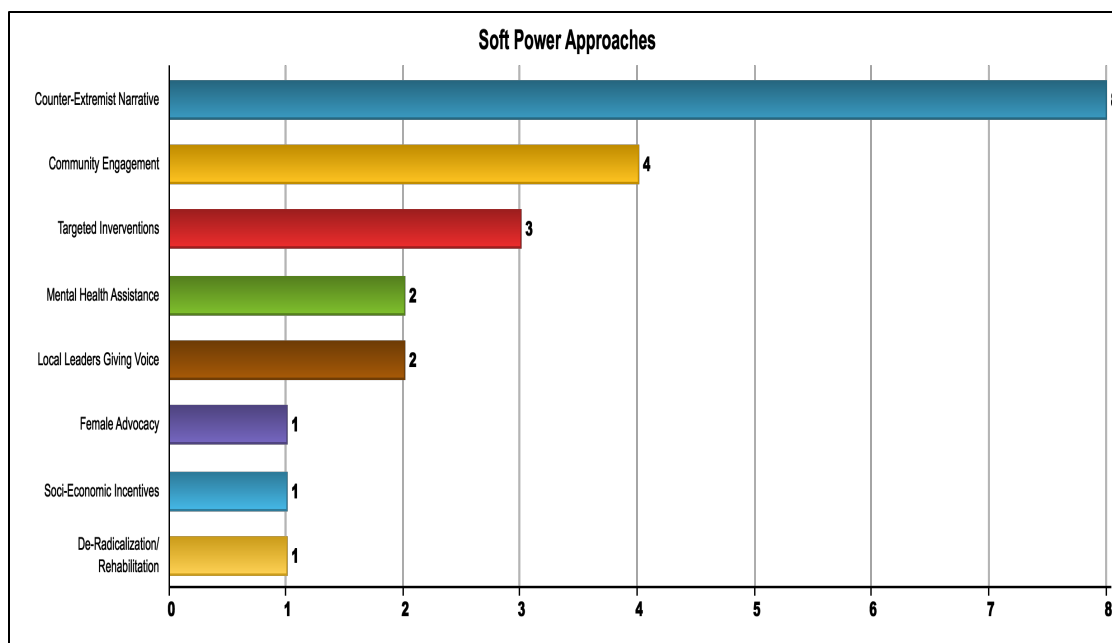


Figure 3— Soft Power Approach

The development of a counter-extremist narrative was the most popular soft power approach advocated during the hearing. PA noted the need to “boost credible voices, helping them to drown out extremists in the global marketplace of ideas” in order to prevent the recruitment of new terrorists. In addition, PA called for “monopolizing the marketplace of ideas online and offline” which PA asserts would enable the “spawning [of] credible voices that give new agency and purpose to this generation.” It is intriguing for PA to use this metaphor “marketplace of ideas.” British philosopher John Stuart Mill first introduced the “marketplace of ideas” metaphor in 1859 in his book *On Liberty*. In this book, Mill describes the situation in which people speak and exchange ideas freely

much like in a market economy where people are free to choose which products they wish to purchase after carefully weighing their relative quality.⁹⁹ Mill was enamored with the idea that in order for society to progress each individual must be able to express themselves freely for “human progress is served by the intermediate end of the self-development of each individual, and this end is served only if independent thought is allowed to flourish among all in society.”¹⁰⁰ However, there is one flaw in Mill’s mentality and that is if all individuals are allowed to speak and express their ideas freely then that allows for individuals to openly exchange falsity for truth, which has the ability to negatively impact the “marketplace of ideas.”

Perhaps PA would agree with that assertion which is why she and many others around the world continue to advocate for a counter-extremist narrative to offset the false pretenses being portrayed as “truth” by terrorist organizations. If our society is to follow Mill’s interpretation of the marketplace of ideas then it must be assumed that the ideas that endure or prevail will be those advocated and embraced either by the most powerful or the most numerous in the society.¹⁰¹ However, a major flaw with the belief that a counter-extremist narrative is the most effective solution to countering violent extremism and radicalization is that it does not do enough to address the root causes which is contributing to the radicalization of individuals. This is where the second most mentioned solution to solving the radicalization issue could be impactful, community engagement.

⁹⁹ Jill Gordon, “John Stuart Mill and the ‘Marketplace of Ideas,’” *Social Theory and Practice* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1997), pg. 235.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pg. 238.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pg. 240.

A major focus of the CVE White House summit was on how best to assist local communities in understanding and recognizing the early stages in the radicalization process. MC noted, CVE is “about warning communities, helping them spots signs of radicalization, training State and local law enforcement, combating extremist propaganda, and developing “off-ramps” to radicalization.” These efforts should be viewed as a preventative method to counterterrorism, which will assist in providing an alternative to the hard power stance of simply arresting individuals. HU mentioned the community engagement programs in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Los Angeles, and Boston as endeavors that should be continued. Each of these programs have their own focus and serve a purpose for further development of so-called “off-ramps” to radicalization; however, all of them center on the need for community engagement and better trust building between the local populations and the local/state/federal apparatuses. It is the individuals in these communities that offer the best hope of stemming the radicalization of individuals within their own community because it is their own family members and friends that are the focus of these CVE initiatives. PA advocated for providing local leaders with the chance to voice their opinions on the matters impacting their community in order to “inoculate the communities against extremist techniques and appeal.”

Nevertheless, there remains the stigma in these communities that these pilot programs are being created to monitor or spy on the local communities which makes many individuals hesitant to cooperate.¹⁰² These programs have held community forums

¹⁰² Teresa Welsh, “Sowing Trust at Home,” *US News & World Report*, July 2, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2015/07/02/minneapolis-somali-community-struggles-with-islamic-state-recruitment>.

and listening sessions to hear directly the concerns of the local population with their law enforcement in order to overcome these challenges through the building of better trust.¹⁰³ However, these local communities could view the labeling of these programs as CVE initiatives as a drawback. These initiatives are often centered on spotting the warning signs of radicalization and preventing its spread through interventions or another approach. In other words, these initiatives are a means for “containment” rather than for addressing the underlying causes and conditions like social, political, and psychological implications that produce radicalization. Perhaps the concept of CVE should be rethought. A reevaluation of the language and approaches the government uses still coincides rather closely with counterterrorism efforts. This can lead to communities feeling stigmatized and targeted especially when the targeted communities are predominantly Muslim. It would be beneficial if the discourse regarding radicalization and CVE could be changed from a counterterrorism angle to one more focused on promoting safety throughout the communities and addressing the underlying causes that create the environment that enables radicalization to flourish.

Once greater trust has been established between the leaders and the communities the third most popular soft power initiative should be easier, targeted interventions. HU stressed how better community engagement could assist in “targeted interventions with individuals who have become radicalized but have not mobilized to violence.” These targeted interventions, HU notes, should include “potential alternatives to prosecution.” HU does note that some individuals should be arrested and “put way for a considerable

¹⁰³ Ibid.

time”; however, he does also advocate that there are some individuals that could still be persuaded before “they make a choice that will irrevocably alter the government’s ability to take any action other than arrest.” This opinion that individuals could be “persuaded” appears to fall in line with the concept of de-radicalization in which individuals are “persuaded” or assisted in changing their perceptions of a certain ideology or goal. This was the first mention of any concept slightly related to de-radicalization in this hearing. Unfortunately, as will be discussed in the discussion below on the soft power approach of de-radicalization, this method was perceived by HU as an unnecessary soft power approach for the US to engage in.

Mental health assistance was the next most popular soft power initiative with two references in the hearing. PA was the individual who made both references citing the need to work closely with mental health professionals to “understand the adolescent mind” that could assist in developing programs that could help stem radicalization. Given the previously noted perception that terrorists and other radicals prey on youth to garner more recruits, this endeavor could prove beneficial in understanding the identity problems many Muslim millennials currently struggle with. Upon understanding the identity or other socio-political problems these individuals face, better initiatives could then be developed in order to assist these young individuals in making an alternative decision to radicalization. The issue of mental health intervention could certainly benefit from more discussion especially given the stigma that individuals who follow some form of radical Islam are often deemed crazy or unstable psychologically.

The CVE efforts to combat the Islamic radicalization has largely been centered on understanding the ideology which many individuals claim to be “the root source for the radicalization of potential followers of al-Qa’ida and other Islamic terrorist organizations around the world.”¹⁰⁴ Fathali Moghaddam, a professor in the Department of Psychology at Georgetown University and member of the organization Psychologists for Social Responsibility, examined this assertion during the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on July 10, 2011 as part of the panel discussing “The Roots of Violent Islamist Extremism and Efforts to Counter It.” He discussed how an ideology does not arise in a vacuum, nor does it influence behavior in a vacuum.¹⁰⁵ Instead, Moghaddam discusses how an ideology can influence behavior under given conditions. He notes the most important psychological process that influences behavior is the “subjective interpretations of material conditions, perceptions of fairness, and adequacy of identity.”¹⁰⁶

Millions of Muslims are faced with a collective relative deprivation and lack of adequate identity, as they often feel dissatisfied with the way they are depicted in international media and feel they are treated unfairly based on their religious beliefs.¹⁰⁷ Moghaddam notes how when individuals view their voice is not being heard in the decision making process they can become more dissatisfied and detached; however, when

¹⁰⁴ Fathali Moghaddam, *Violent Islamist Extremism in Global Context*, 2008, pg.2.
http://www.psyr.org/issues/terrorism/Moghaddam_Senate.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pg. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pg. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pg. 3.

their voice is heard, they tend to ‘buy into’ the system that listens to them.¹⁰⁸ This is what is occurring with some youth as they are misguided into believing the persuasive messages by Islamic extremists that articulate to them that the ‘root cause’ of their problems is the external enemies of Islam, particularly the US and other Western nations. It is imperative for greater research be conducted to understand the identity crisis Muslims are currently immersed in and the potential impact this can have on the mental health of individuals and their decision making processes.

Female advocacy and socio-economic development each garnered one suggestion in the hearing. Beginning with female advocacy, PA was the only individual to suggest the need for understanding what leads women to radicalize, which when understood could then be used to develop “new approaches to mobilize them against radicalism.” Women should play a major role in any CVE endeavor as they are often the first teachers of their children and thus have a great influence on future generations. All individuals go through a series of developmental stages as they age from a newborn to an adult. These physical, intellectual, emotional, and social developmental stages are essential in learning the important aspects of personhood and parents are often the most vital individuals to assist in this development. Underdevelopment in these characteristics can lead to increased difficulties for individuals as they age and thus is vitally important for parents to address.

HU advocated for the limited use of socio-economic development in communities designated to be most at risk for radicalization. He urged limited use due to his

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pg. 4-5.

perception that these communities in the US already enjoy high levels of integration. However, I would assert that greater socio-economic development in designated “at risk” communities could be one of the best remedies to solving the radicalization issue in the US. Poverty and ignorance often provides an environment that enables radicalization to take hold. Thus, socio-economic development could be a compelling and effective antidote. Economic deprivation and poverty are frequently cited as a major contributor to the origins of terrorism. Brock Blomberg, Gregory Hess, and Akila Weerapana conducted a study to explore the links between a country’s economy and the number of terrorist incidents. In their study, they analyzed the terrorist and economic variables of 130 countries from 1968 to 1991. They concluded that terrorism appears to be related to the economic business cycles of a country noting, “periods of economic weakness increase the likelihood of terrorist activities.”¹⁰⁹ Essentially, their conclusion is that individuals decide to engage in terrorism when there are less economic opportunities and greater economic constraints. Thus, it seems, terrorism becomes a rational and appealing behavioral alternative for individuals and social groups who are economically marginalized.

Another study, “Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism,” conducted by James Piazza analyzed the impact minority economic discrimination can have on the potential for domestic terrorism. The central argument in Piazza’s study was that because terrorism is not a mass phenomenon but rather an action

¹⁰⁹ S. Brock Blomberg, Gregory Hess, and Akila Weerapana, “Economic Conditions and Terrorism,” *European Journal of Political Economy*, The Economic Consequences of Terror, 20, no. 2 (June 2004): 463–78, doi:10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2004.02.002.

instigated by a politically marginalized group with often-narrow constituencies, the economic status of subnational groups is a crucial potential predictor of attacks.¹¹⁰ His study surmised that countries that feature minority group economic discrimination are considerably more likely to experience domestic terrorist attacks.¹¹¹ In addition, the study found that collective poverty within a society does not have as severe an impact on the potential for terrorist attacks in a given society, but rather when a minority group suffers more severe economic struggles than the rest of the population then the potential for terrorism increases.¹¹²

Unlike deeply rooted cultural or psychological grievances, which can be very difficult to solve in the short-term, plenty can be done in the social and economic sphere whether it is providing access to healthcare, education, jobs, or even housing. More can certainly be done if the US government is intent on assisting these populations targeted by Islamic extremists.

This brings me to the final soft power approach, de-radicalization. Unfortunately, Chart 1 is slightly deceiving in that while there was one mention of de-radicalization in the hearing it was actually viewed as a soft power approach not necessary in the US. HU discussed how European de-radicalization efforts seek to tailor interventions to each situation, which HU notes “complicates efforts to develop broad national programs with easily replicable best practices...[requiring] investing time to set up a network of community leaders with appropriate competencies.” What is important to understand

¹¹⁰ James Piazza, “Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 3 (May 2011), pg. 339.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pg. 350.

¹¹² Ibid., pg. 350.

about de-radicalization is that there is not a “one-size fits all” method. Each “radicalized” individual has his or her own personal trauma or reason that led him or her to radicalize. However, a great deal of research has been conducted by the international community on identifying some best practices for rehabilitating and reintegrating radicalized individuals back into society.

In June 2012, The Global Counterterrorism Forum created the *Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders*¹¹³, which outlines 25 good practices relating to program development, standards for prison facilities, intake and risk assessment, the roles of various actors (e.g. prison staff, psychologists, religious counselors, and family members), a variety of reintegration components (e.g. cognitive skills, basic education, vocational skills training, and employment assistance), and the inclusion of post-release monitoring mechanisms and aftercare programs to deter recidivism.¹¹⁴ The notion that it will be a lot of work and too complicated to engage in this endeavor is not a suitable excuse as over a dozen countries around the world have established these programs and shown the benefits they can create.

By making this endeavor a priority and continuing to conduct community outreach, finding community leaders with the appropriate competencies will eventually

¹¹³ “Rome Memorandum on Good Practices for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders” (Global Counterterrorism Forum, June 2012), <https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/159878/Rome+Memorandum-English.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ “Managing, Rehabilitating, and Reintegrating Violent Extremist Offenders,” Project Description (Global Center on Cooperative Security, September 2014), <http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/19-Sept-2014-GCTF-Rehab-project-description.pdf>.

occur; however, if the thought of these programs continues to be viewed as inefficient or a negative then the probability of a program being established will be minimal.

Immediately following HU's last statement, he asserted "the US does not need to replicate Europe's most ambitious CVE efforts, as it faces a significantly smaller radicalization challenge." Regardless of how significant or insignificant America's radicalization challenge is, there are still individuals being arrested, prosecuted, and placed in prison for long sentences for terrorism-related crimes. Will they be left alone in prison only to be allowed to recruit other individuals within the prison system garnering more support for their "radical" ideology? What is the justice system to do with them once their sentence has ended? Will they just be released back into society without any alteration to their ideological beliefs? These are the questions that must be addressed by the US government much like has been done by European governments. To compare and contrast the challenges of radicalization between Europe and the US and base the appropriate responses solely on that information is not the best approach to solving the radicalization issue in the US.

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no "one size fits all" solution to solving the radicalization issue in the US. What needs to be developed is a long-term and multi-pronged strategy, intended to support the institutional foundations of development, democracy, and security for all individuals. Every tool in the counterterrorism toolbox should be used if available, especially if other countries that have used that tool have found positive results. A great deal of money and time has been invested in developing CVE efforts and best practices

for assisting vulnerable communities. However, the government and community leaders should remember that CVE efforts should not be about criminalizing the beliefs held by individuals, but should be focused on the protection of communities and the safeguarding of susceptible individuals.

The speeches in this hearing have showcased the evolving discourse in the US in regards to best approaches to dealing with domestic radicalization. Slowly, it appears leaders are willing to introduce more soft power approaches to dealing with the radicalization issue instead of relying on the arresting of individuals deemed radical. However, the overall lack of interest in de-radicalization programs as a beneficial method is concerning. Ideally it would be great to address and solve all of the root causes of radicalization in order to prevent the further radicalization of individuals. However, there are still going to be individuals who slip through the cracks and radicalize. Greater interest and research on what to do with these individuals is needed in the US. Countries throughout the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Europe have embarked on this endeavor and established some great practices and approaches to integrating radicalized individuals back into their societies. While these cultures may be different or some of the practices employed may be viewed as difficult to garner support for, it is time for the US to realize more can, and needs to be done in dealing with individuals who have radicalized instead of just incarcerating them.

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research set out to understand the impact the US-based radicalization discourse is having on the political decisions on how best to counter the radicalization phenomenon. It is apparent from the 15 July 2015 House of Representative hearing on the rise of radicalization in America that there is increased support for soft power initiatives to counterbalance the largely hard power approach that has been prevalent for much of the past decade.

In conducting the research for this project I realized that many of the findings regarding the concepts of terrorism and radicalization are, at this point in time, theoretical and often only locally relevant or applicable within narrow, regional perspectives. However, there has been a variety of suggestions that refer to potential motives or triggers that can plausibly lead individuals or entire groups to radicalize. While a great deal of research has been conducted to understand these concepts, many of the findings have been quite diverse, failing to point in a similar direction that could help in identifying the principle root causes. This hindrance has prevented the development of effective responses to counteract the causes of terrorism and radicalization. This is not so much a reflection of the quality of the research being conducted but rather reflects how difficult studying terrorist organizations who operate largely underground or

clandestinely, the availability of raw data and control groups, and the political nature of the subject.¹¹⁵

Perhaps a reason why our society is having such a difficult time in understanding what motivates home-grown individuals or groups to engage in terrorism is because we are using the wrong framework to determine their motivations. John Mueller questions whether ‘radicalization’ is the right framework after examining 50 different American Islamists plots since 9/11. Mueller concluded:

It is common in the literature and in the case studies that follow to assess the process by which potential terrorists become “radicalized.” But now examining the cases as a group, it is not at all clear to me that this is a good way to look at the phenomenon. The concept tends to imply that there is an ideological motivation to the violence, but what chiefly sets these guys off is not anything particularly theoretical but rather intense outrage at American and Israeli actions in the Middle East and a burning desire to seek revenge, to get back, to defend, and/or to make a violent statement expressing their hostility to what they see as a war on Islam.¹¹⁶

John Horgan also acknowledged during a discussion at a Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) conference on 1 September 2011 that, “We should not have allowed to have radicalization to take center stage. I think our preoccupation, if not obsession, with radicalization, has come at the expense of increasing our knowledge and understanding of terrorist behavior. [...] We are stuck with radicalization.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg. 38.

¹¹⁶ John Mueller, “Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11,” (Paper, June 17, 2012), pg. 11. <http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/jmueller/00INTR7.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ John Horgan, *Lessons Learned Since the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001* (University of Maryland, College Park | National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2011), <http://www.c-span.org/video/?301326-1/lessons-learned-since-terrorist-attacks-september-11-2001>.

Regardless of these views, we cannot do away or forget about the concept of radicalization, as it does remain useful. However, Alex Schmid does note five distinct ways in which we might limit our use of the concept in order to prevent it from becoming overly politicized:

1. We should see radicalization as more of a process that can impact all parties in a conflict;
2. We should remain aware that radical opinions do not always lead to political violence or terrorism;
3. We should link radicalization to the process of growing commitment to, and engagement with, violent extremism instead of radical ideas;
4. We must apply it not only to individuals and small groups but to larger collectivities;
5. We must analyze radicalization not only at the micro- but meso- and macro-levels.¹¹⁸

Any difficulty we have at understanding or theorizing the concept of radicalization is likely to impact our understanding of CVE efforts to include de-radicalization. As noted in the introduction to this project, radicalization is a difficult concept to understand in its entirety and by extension the same is true for de-radicalization. However, while vast amounts of resources and time have been dedicated in the US to studying radicalization, de-radicalization has been largely neglected. Since the fundamental objective of all de-radicalization programs is to effect psychological change in individuals involved, an increased understanding of the principles that could create this change should be a focus for future research.

Throughout this study, I have analyzed the influence the radicalization discourse in the US has on the policy decisions on how best to counteract or engage individuals

¹¹⁸ Alex Schmid, “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review.” pg. 39.

who are deemed radical. What I have discovered from my research is that there is a growing interest by policy makers and terrorism experts to develop and implement soft power initiatives in order to curtail the radicalization of American citizens. However, while this growing interest in moving from hard to soft power initiatives is a great indication of the potential positive changes coming to US society, there remains continued hesitancy in US policy circles to entertain the idea of de-radicalization as a potential avenue for countering radicalization.

I am not advocating that de-radicalization be the first or only measure to be used in combating radicalization, but a supplementary approach used in conjunction with other soft power initiatives discussed in this project. In addition, I am not advocating the total removal of hard power initiatives, as these initiatives are still essential in defeating the likes of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. I am, however, opposed to the use of hard power initiatives to coerce moderate Islamists into following the US government's interpreted acceptable view of Islam, as it is my assertion that these actions are not the most effective way of generating support against radical Islam. In reality, the most important conditions that must be addressed in order to prevent radicalization are the solving of structural conflicts in the US. One specific structural issue that might be addressed is the elements of US foreign policy.

In my view, US foreign policy decisions to intervene in the regional affairs of predominantly Islamic societies throughout the Middle East have exacerbated the problem of terrorism for the US, both foreign and domestic. The international community has witnessed the rise of ISIS, which benefited from the power void in the

region left over from the collapse of the Iraqi government following the US invasion of Iraq. We have seen how US policy decisions to engage in international conflicts have impacted the recruitment efforts of terrorist organizations of our own US citizens. It is estimated that, as of September 2014, over 100 Americans and nearly 3,000 other Western individuals have traveled to Syria and Iraq to become foreign fighters for various terrorist organizations.¹¹⁹

It is conceivable that not all of these individuals who have traveled to the region will be a threat once they return to their home. This assertion is supported by the previous examples of large influx of foreign fighters who engaged in the conflicts such as Bosnia or Afghanistan during the 1980's and 1990's, where only a small portion of these individuals engaged in violent activities once they returned home.¹²⁰ In addition, Thomas Hegghammer, a researcher at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, conducted a study of the impact and potential threat faced by Western foreign fighters who returned home after fighting with terrorist organizations in Afghanistan and Somalia. What he concluded was that there is a clear minority of returning fighters who

¹¹⁹ Daniel Byman and Jeremy Shapiro, "Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq," Policy Paper (Washington D.C.: Brookings, November 2014), pg. 3.
<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2014/11/western-foreign-fighters-in-syria-and-iraq-byman-shapiro/be-afraid--web.pdf>.

¹²⁰ Georgia Holmer, "What to Do When Foreign Fighters Come Home," *Foreign Policy*, June 1, 2015, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/01/what-to-do-when-foreign-fighters-come-home-isis-islamic-state-syria-iraq/>.

present any truly lethal risk to their home country upon returning; however, governments should continue to monitor these individuals very closely upon their return.¹²¹

There is an urgent need to develop proficient strategies to respond to the eventual return of these individuals. How these individuals are received once they return home could play heavily into whether these individuals “live a life of peace or violence.”¹²² The strategies must be rooted in understanding why these individuals decided to return, but also what made them leave in the first place. In addition, there needs to be an emergence of more interest-based commitments for all individuals instead of initiatives fashioned in a way that upholds systems that limit social justice from being achievable for all.

The mid-February 2015 CVE conference at the White House discussed many topics in regards to CVE efforts to include building awareness for indicators of radicalization, countering extremist narratives through civil society-led narratives online, and emphasizing community-led interventions which empowered communities to disrupt the radicalization process before the individual engages in criminal activity.¹²³ We can see the narrowing of interest-based commitments being led even at this conference as no discussion was conducted on outlining what structural issues in US society are causing individuals to turn to radical Islam.

¹²¹ Thomas Hegghammer, “Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists’ Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting,” *American Political Science Review*, February 2013, 15, doi:10.1017/S0003055412000615.

¹²² Georgia Holmer, “What to Do When Foreign Fighters Come Home.”

¹²³ “FACT SHEET: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.”

One solution would be to generate more political and social involvement for American Muslim youth and women in places where the US government assesses the potential for radicalization to be most prevalent. This is a similar assertion that Richard Rubenstein foresaw back in 1987 while writing his book *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World*. In the book, Rubenstein notes the solution to terrorism is not military relations but political activism:

No solution to the problem of terrorism is conceivable that does not reconnect politicized young adults to society by involving them in mass-based movements for change. [...] Whatever policies the US government may favor, our policy must be to uproot the causes of terrorism by putting an end to American-sponsored oppression of classes, nations, and ethnic communities, and by permitting young intellectuals to be reunited through collective action with their people.¹²⁴

The radicalization phenomenon, whether based solely on religion or including components of social-psychological ideas, has motivated governments to establish national security practices that they believe can avert future terrorist attacks through the intensive surveillance of Muslims. The radical Islam ideology has been envisioned as a kind of disease that infects individuals it comes in contact with, either individually or in a combination with psychological processes. However, radicalization literature has thus far failed to offer any convincing evidence that can create a causal relationship between violence and theology. Furthermore, the concept of radicalization often manages to confuse inclinations to violence with radical beliefs. This has lead to the question of

¹²⁴ Richard Rubenstein, *Alchemists of Revolution: Terrorism in the Modern World* (New York, NY: Baic Books, Inc., 1987), pg. 228, 236.

what instigates violence to be insufficiently secluded from the question of how ideologies and belief systems come to be accepted.

This research has showcased the changing opinions on the best practices for dealing with radical individuals. All of the participants involved in the hearing noted the importance for the adoption of soft power approaches to effectively counteract the influence of the radical Islamic ideology. However, greater discussion and acceptance of all soft power initiatives should be discussed. Dozens of countries around the world have adopted de-radicalization programs in an effort to reintegrate “radical” individuals back into their societies. What makes the US so different that they remain opposed to the adoption of such an initiative? While it is imperative for the US government to prioritize the engagement in better community outreach programs, mental health assistance, socio-economic incentives, female advocacy, and understandably a counter-extremist narrative to prevent the further radicalization of US citizens; resources and strategies should also be implemented in order to bring radicalized individuals who have voluntarily disengaged from terrorist organizations in the hopes of peacefully reintegrating back into society.

My viewpoints may sound aspirational, but there are countless individuals who have been manipulated into supporting or engaging in terrorist activities. They should be given the chance, much like convicted felons, to alter their path if they genuinely agree to take part in a program that could assist them in realizing their wrongdoings.

APPENDIX A

Congressman Michael McCaul is currently serving his sixth term representing the Texas' 10th District in the US Congress. On January 3, 2013, he was appointed the Chairman for the House Committee on Homeland Security, which has oversight of DHS. As Chairman, McCaul has prioritized the threat of international and domestic terrorism as one of the primary threats facing US society today. Prior to Congress, he served as the Chief of Counter Terrorism and National Security at the US Attorney's Office, Western District of Texas, and led the Joint Terrorism Task Force charged with detecting, deterring, and preventing terrorist activity.¹²⁵

Richard Cohen is an attorney and the current president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, which is a civil rights organization founded in 1971. For more than three decades, this organization has been monitoring, issuing reports about, and training law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the US. In 2010, Cohen was invited to participate in the DHS's Countering Violent Extremist Working Group.

¹²⁵ "Full Biography," *Congressman Michael McCaul*.
<https://mccaul.house.gov/about/full-biography>.

Seamus Hughes is the Deputy Director of the Program on Extremism at the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington University. Prior to fulfilling this position, Hughes spent three years as a lead National Counterterrorism Center staffer on countering violent extremism issues. He and his colleagues held dozens of engagement events across the US to discuss with community leaders the best methods for preventing individuals from joining various terrorist organizations. His testimony was informed by those personal experiences on the forefront of the new CVE policy challenge.

Farah Pandith is an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. For eleven years she worked as the political appointee for the Bush Jr. and Obama administrations, most recently as the first-ever Special Representative to Muslim Communities. As Special Representative and as the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs she has traveled to over 80 countries focusing specifically on CVE efforts.

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BIOGRAPHY

Joshua Maynard graduated from Valley View High School, Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 2008. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies from American Military University in 2013. He is a veteran of the US Navy for which he served for six years.