THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE EXPANSION OF JIHADIST TERRORISM IN THE

UNITED STATES

by

Shakira Natalee Anglin

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

2023

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE EXPANSION OF JIHADIST TERRORISM IN THE

UNITED STATES

by

Shakira Natalee Anglin

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2023

APPROVED BY:

Larry D. Anthony, Ph. D.
Committee Chair

Jeffrey Fox, Ph. D.
Committee Member

Fred C. Newell, Ph. D.
Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to understand the role social media plays in the expansion of jihadist terrorism in the United States for sixteen participants at the sites: the Mary Lynch building in Columbia, Maryland, and a Club House conference room in Hanover, Maryland. The theories that guided this study were Social Structure and Social Learning Theory (SSSL) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). Jihadist terrorism has a symbiotic relationship with the tenets of Social Structure and Social Learning Theory, which postulates that criminal behaviors are learned through social interactions. Danielle and Klein (2018) contended that Aker's Social Structure and Learning Theory focused on integrating both micro and macro approaches (Danielle & Klein, 2018). This integration illustrated some fundamental variables which suggested that a learning process contributes to crime and deviant behaviors. Felty (2019) emphasized that Social Identity Theory rests on the assumption that individualities are socially constructed. This process facilitates the creation of self-worth and, most importantly, an identity based on group association (Felty, 2019). This framework was appropriate in exploring jihadist terrorism and social media as the phenomena's core principles illustrated a correlation among group association, individual identity, and behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection source. Scholarly articles, government websites, and textbooks were used as secondary sources. Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step data analysis method and the ATLAS.ti website were the data analysis methods employed in the study.

Keywords: Terrorism, Jihadist, Social Media, Radicalization, Recruitment, and Terrorist Organizations.

Copyright Page

Dedication

This manuscript is as a result of assiduous efforts by many, but it is dedicated to my baby Akayliah Adrianah Anglin. You are the source of my strength, and you continuously give me the will to win, despite challenges. I love you so much!!

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my gratitude to Jehovah El Rachum, who provided the gift that kept on giving throughout this entire process. In times of fatigue, hopelessness, and total despair, He continued to swim so I would not drown, and paved the path for my success. For that, I want to say you are my Elohim forever!

To my committee, Dr Anthony, and Dr Fox, I would like to thank you for your tireless support and dedication to this cause. As a team, you constantly pushed me beyond my limits, and displayed a level of personal commitment that was unmatched. I am forever indebted to this team because I could not have made it without your guidance and most importantly your patience.

To everyone else who offered words of encouragement and or a shoulder that I could have rested my weary head, a huge thank you!

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC)

Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

Institution Review Board (IRB)

Internet World Stats (IWS)

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Structure and Learning Theory (SSSL)

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Terrorism is a comparatively ageless issue; however, it has been forcefully propelled into global discourses, following 9/11. This issue is characterized as both a domestic and international security threat. As a result, understanding and subsequently addressing it is an increasing priority for individuals at both national and global levels. Addressing jihadist terrorism has remained an expanding challenge because of the complexities that seemingly contribute to the persistence of the issue (Dew, 2019, Petroski, 2017 & Tsesis, 2017). Much like other nations around the globe, the operational landscape in the United States has grown increasingly fluid and multifarious (Dew, 2019). Jihadist terrorist organizations have proven to be substantial threats to the nation's stability. Over time, numerous countermeasures have been put in place to contain those threats, due to their demanding existence (White House, 2018). The United States is characterized as a vanguard for collective and individual freedoms and civil liberties. The emergence and continued evolution of social media networks to include, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Blogs, Instagram, Google+ (Ugwuanyi et al, 2019) heighten those luminous principles and uniqueness that characterize the United States. However, the parallel accession of social media has redefined the threat environment, by revolutionizing terrorism.

Both theoretical and empirical evidence have illustrated that technological advancements play a prominent and expanding role in the progression of jihadist terrorism (Salo, Mäntymäki & Islam, 2018; Oludare, 2018 & Ugwuanyi et al, 2019). The birth and subsequent growth of social media platforms have significantly strengthened the operational capabilities of jihadist terrorist organizations worldwide. Domasneanu-Miulescu (2019) asserted that the features of social

media channels enable the quick and easy distribution of information to a large number of people with internet availabilities. As a result, terrorist organizations continue to develop and feed the increasing inclinations to use these platforms to strengthen their operational efforts. Domasneanu-Miulescu (2019) also posited that social media platforms are instrumental in critical jihadist terrorist functions, such as recruitment and training of prospects. These platforms significantly aid in shaping the operational tactics and techniques of terrorist organizations (Ronczkowski, 2018). Social media networks' features allow for the cautious exploitation of elements such as expediency, controllability, and affordability (Domasneanu-Miulescu, 2019). Social media networks have emphatically supplemented the current threats posed by jihadist terrorist organizations. Primarily, because these platforms accelerate the effortlessness with which information gets transmitted between terrorist organizations and their potential target audiences.

Jihadist terrorist organizations also use social media platforms as primary avenues to ascertain and preserve social and organizational bonds with potential recruits. Additionally, social media platforms are also useful for their data mining efforts and the coordination of their actions (Soral, Liu & Bilewicz, 2020). To this end, they have maintained an expanding virtual presence, thus making the threat more dynamic. Jihadist terrorist organizations employ available recruitment and radicalization tools like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to attain and preserve effective organizational structure and growth (Soral, et. al, 2020). This is because those tools assist in the reinforcement of continued membership, which translates into the persistency of the organizations (Tsesis, 2017). Overtime, social media platforms continue to strengthen the operational capabilities of jihadist terrorist organizations. Jihadist groups like

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in particular, used social media platforms to augment their abilities to influence the operational environment (Swenson, 2018).

Background

The relevance of jihadist terrorist organizations and their use of social media platforms have increased tremendously over the years (Bérubé, et al, 2019). The expanding emergence of new social media networks has contributed to a spectacular operational society with respect to its communication pattern and trends. In general, it seemingly normalizes a culture that enables the growing infamy of jihadist terrorist organizations. Swenson (2018) postulated that prior to the advent of social media platforms, jihadist terror groups relied on different means of communication. They often physically meet with prospects or email them in order to bring the recruitment and radicalization processes to fruition (Swenson, 2018). To date, social media networks enable the connection of over 2.3 billion users around the globe (Ronczkowski, 2018). This connection permits for the quick relay and dissemination of messages and contents in real-time to active users (Ronczkowski, 2018).

As evidenced in the literature, social media platforms are instrumental in the rifeness of terrorist activities (Soral, et. al, 2020; Swenson, 2018). Both jihadist terrorism and social media have a synergistic relationship, which amplifies the persistence of the former. It is imperative to examine and understand this relationship because of the ubiquitous implications that it underscores. As a global issue, the persistence of jihadist terrorism affects limitless people, and as such, addressing the problem is imperative. Social media continues to be a pivotal contributor to the permeation and sustainment of terrorism. This is because it serves as a principal medium in the growth of the activities that define terrorism. In the United States, social media continues to be a growing part of every one's life. Young adults in particular, show an expanding

gravitation to those networks. According to Pew Research Center (2019), at least 73% of adults between ages 18-24 own Snapchat. Seventy five percent of that age group own Instagram, 70% own Twitter and over 90% use YouTube, while at least 79% own Facebook (Conway, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2019). This is essential to terrorist organizations' recruitment efforts as such age range is quite appealing to their operational functions. Furthermore, Conway (2017) alluded that alarming percentages of 88, 70.5 and 48 account for internet penetration in North America, Europe, and the Middle East respectively. Those numbers further support the assumption that the availability of the internet and social media, influence jihadist online activities (Conway, 2017).

Kharmi (2018) posited that the development of the internet, in conjunction with social media networks, serve as an essential communication tactic employed by jihadist terrorist organizations to realize their objectives. In the digital age, the internet has been a primary communication strategy for terrorist groups to achieve a variety of motivations, including disseminating their ideological contents. In favor of the previous argument, Berman (2019) emphasized that the emergence of social media networks has facilitated the radicalization of an increasing number of people from all over the globe. This is because terrorist organizations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda use those platforms to disseminate their content to potential recruits (Berman, 2019). Ogunlana (2018) advanced a supporting view, indicating that social media platforms have created a new and exploitable haven that accentuate terrorist organizations' operational competencies. This haven allows those organizations to thrive as they are able to incite mass fear though the dissemination of techniques and tactics to ferment disarray and upheavals. Research indicates that social media networks have helped terrorist organizations to assume alarming and almost unparalleled dimensions in their quest to recruit and radicalize new members. Ogunlana (2018) also mentioned that Twitter is among the most popular platforms

used by terrorist organizations and has also been used by British Jihadist to disseminate threats to the United States.

The efficacy of this research is conceived under the impetus that the information presented will add to the ability to achieve sustained changes to the issue of jihadist terrorist organizations' use of social media at the national and global level and will bridge a lack of scholarly focus on identifying and implementing factors that will dissuade the growing use of social media platforms to engage in jihadist terrorist activities. Using Aker's Social Structure Social Learning theory and Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, connections can be made in how behavior is learned and manipulated through engagements social media. This process can be replicated and applied to any media and/or organization, seeking to discover different ways that deviant or jihadist or other terrorist behaviors are developed and nurtured through the use of social media platforms.

Figure 1

Terror Groups' Social Media Usage
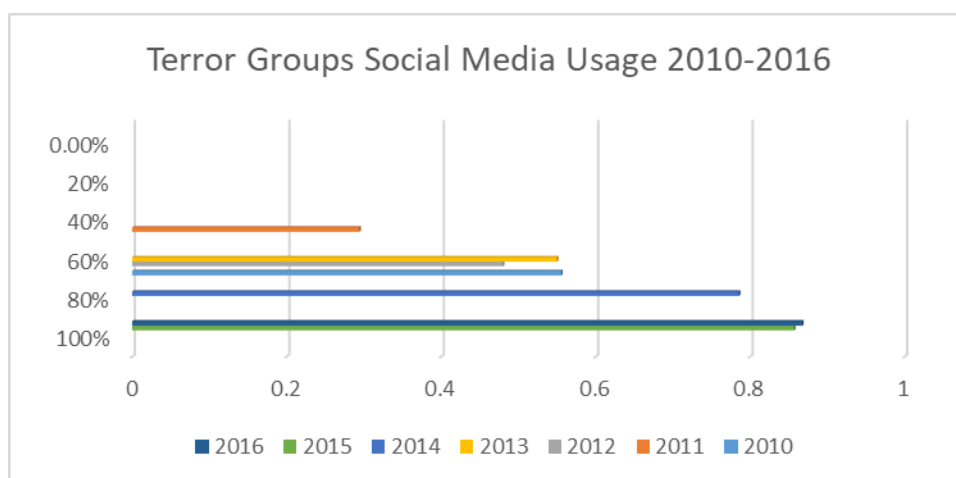
Note: The figure illustrates the statistical use of social media by terror groups from 2010-2016. Copyright 2018 by Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

Situation to Self

A large number of factors have shaped my motivation to conduct this study. The ever-growing relevance of jihadist terrorism and its ties to social media engagements has significant influence on both national and global security. Over time, these factors have solidified my interest in the area of study and reinvigorated my desire to follow an agile direction that will positively impact the solution of the identified problem. The philosophical assumptions that drive this qualitative study are ontological. Creswell and Poth (2018) propounded that the ontological assumption seeks to explore the characteristics of existing realities. The premise is founded on the idea that researchers are cognizant that realities are multi-dimensional, and they draw pieces of evidence from different forms in order to capture diverse perspectives and experiences and then report them as themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructivism is the interpretive framework through which the philosophical assumption (ontological) for this study is applied. Creswell and Poth (2018) acquiesced that this paradigm allows individuals to subjectively perceive and interpret their own experiences by giving meaning to them and oftentimes, those meanings are wide-ranging. This enables the researcher with the flexibility to seek complexity from those meanings as they rely on the participant's social and historical experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Problem Statement

Alfifi, Kaghazgaran and Caverlee (2018) used a dataset of Tweets and Retweets of the ISIS accounts to explore the organization's operational reach. The authors indicated that at the time of the study, 2015, available statics showed over 23,000 active ISIS accounts that generated 17 million tweets (Alfifi et al, 2018). Alarmingly, there were more than 400, 000 retweets, that were posted by over 550,000 users (Alfifi et al, (2018). The widespread and growing embrace of

social media networks by jihadist terrorist organizations has encouraged their activities. As social media progress, it will continue to shape global communication panorama. Over time, social media has allowed for a borderless society in which cultural or geographical boundaries cease to exist. While the preceding argument illustrates social media as a massive boost to social interaction, it can also be an irrefutable detriment to shared, domestic, and international safety. Oludare (2018) asserted that social media is the driving force behind the persistence of the threats posed by jihadist terrorist organizations. Based on the available literature, it is fair to suggest that information designed to inform practices to deter engagements in terrorist activities is necessary. In the United States, social media has helped to develop and empower new dissidents. The dissidents are now changing the designs and expectations of threats, thus outmoding both traditional domestic and national conflict activities.

Jones (2020) expertly provided an acute analysis using dataset of 893 terrorist plots and attacks that occurred in the United States between the early 90's and 2020. The author asserted that both far-right and far-left networks' activities have increased dramatically as social media platforms help in establishing robust alliances through its undeniable virtues and features. The formation of those sustained alliances are direct results to in the persistent capabilities by jihadist terrorist organizations (Jones, 2020). As advanced by Petroski (2017), despite its continued relevance, this area of interest is grossly understudied. The patent benefits of social media are indubitable, and as such, there will be a continued expansion in their social significance. The connection between social media and jihadist terrorist organization's use of the same continues to catapult its societal relevance as well. Applying the single instrumental case study (Creswell and Poth, 2018) research design will help to define and detail the significance of the key concepts.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to describe a comprehensive framework that examined and categorized the roles that social media plays in the expansion of jihadist terrorism in the United States for sixteen participants at the sites: Mary Lynch building in Columbia, Maryland and a Club House conference room in Hanover, Maryland. Furthermore, the study aimed to discover findings to close the research gap regarding deterrent factors for future generations' engagement in terrorist activities. The definitions of both social media and terrorism are always changing based on various parameters that are critical to the interpretation of each concept. By and large, social media can be described as different applications and webpages that are created by servicing networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, among others (Bányász, 2018). The primary defining features of these applications and web pages are their user-generated characteristics, user-friendliness, and guaranteed pseudonymous use (Bányász, 2018). According to Wright (2020), terrorism can be defined as the use of threat or violence to perpetuate collective fear, by a state or group against a more massive social structure. These actions are generally designed and pursued in order to achieve political, religious, or social objectives by the group perpetuating the intimidation (Wright, 2020).

Social Identity and Social Learning Theories are the theoretical orientations that will guide this study. Eswaran and Neary (2018) agreed that the tenets of Social Identity Theory (SIT) build on the assumption that there is a seminal division between concepts categorized as in group and out-group. These categories further frame the widely accepted premise of an 'us' versus 'them' sensation (Eswaran & Neary, 2018). This sensation is instrumental to one's understanding of the jihadist terrorist organizations' agendas and, most importantly, the social institutions that they perceive as opposing regimes. According to Chwialkowska (2019), Social

Learning Theory (SLT) underlines and advances the assumption that all behaviors are learned. The socialization process is instrumental as it allows for the relay of information during social interactions, which is underscores the way behavioral norms are diffused (Chwialkowska, 2019). Using social media and subsequently engaging in terrorist activities are learned behaviors, hence, the applicability of the Social Learning Theory (SLT) framework.

Significance of the Study

As time progresses, social media has reformatted almost all aspects of the communication sphere in modern-day societies. Social media platforms continue to be an increasing and integrated part of the lives of people around the globe. In essence, social media platforms are widely acceptable sources of information. The free and easy exchange of information and knowledge-enabled by these platforms have revolutionized terrorist organizations' activities. This is done through the expansion of collective awareness and concerted efforts on which the sustainment of those organizations depends (Kim, Jung & Chilton, 2016). The nature and scope of jihadist terrorism have changed exponentially since the advent of social media networks (Mitts, 2017). Jihadist terrorist organizations have managed to use social media to attract foreign fighters, with diverse characteristics, to advance and sympathize with their cause (Mitts, 2017). The phenomena of this research will continue to be a growing area of study, based on relevance. It is against that background that this study will expand and redefine aspects of the existing literature and unearth realistic solutions to the identified issue.

The relationship between the jihadist terrorist organization and social media usage is continuously evolving. Hence, current, and applicable research must be available to guide decision-making activities and response efforts to the problem. Such actions will guarantee and sustain societal benefits, which is a feat of great significance. The development of practical

research plays a very strategic role in coining and executing policies (Muluk & Winoto, 2018). The rationale of this study is further solidified by the urgent need to formulate universal instruments geared towards addressing engagements in terrorist activities. The onus is on researchers to provide useful theories, precise and pertinent studies to different phenomena (Muluk & Winoto, 2018). The conversation of jihadist terrorism within the United States and social media applies to such a requirement. This is because it congeals the premises on which effective counter-terrorism policies are developed, and most importantly advances the general populace's understanding of the phenomena.

Research Questions

The research questions were formulated with careful consideration of the growing need to establish the exact role social media plays in the furtherance of terrorist activities. Additionally, to also provide substantial findings that will fulfill the knowledge gap in the existing literature regarding deterrents to engagement in terrorism.

RQ1. How do jihadist terrorist organizations use social media for recruitment and radicalization purposes?

The focus of the above research question is supported by Alarid (2016), who postulated that terrorist organizations employ social media as a calculated tactic to recruit and radicalize people around the globe. Their use of social media is appropriate and beneficial based on cost-benefit analysis, with the latter working in their favor (Alarid, 2016).

RQ2. How can future engagements in jihadist activities be prevented?

Reducing and ultimately eradicating terrorist capabilities to promulgate their ideologies both in the cyber and physical domain is quintessential to deterring future engagements in jihadist terrorism. Macdonald, Correia and Watkins (2019) agreed that it is increasingly vital that

social media serving providers become more pre-emptive and prompter in weakening terrorist organizations' capabilities, who are exploiting their platforms. The quickness with which information gets disseminated on social media requires an even faster and feasible response to prevent the sharing of their contents (Macdonald et al., 2019). Admittedly, the response focus should be redefined to the extent of automatically removing those contents offline before they are shared (Macdonald et al., 2019).

RQ3. Why does social media as a recruitment tool for jihadist terrorist organizations, differ

      from traditional tools?

      The primary difference between social media and traditional terrorist recruitment tools centers on the elements of time and cost-effectiveness. Conway (2017) speculated that terrorist organizations use their adeptness to create alluring content online, which is geared towards mass incitement. The materials are designed to instantly attract and resonate with recruits who are potentially frustrated with individual institutions within society (Conway, 2017). Using traditional means such as letter correspondences take a longer time to reach potential recruits, diametrically opposing the anticipated effectiveness.

RQ4. How effective is social media in jihadist propaganda activity?

      Social media platforms are prototypical for jihadist propaganda activities as they afford unregulated communication, strengthening the organizations' functional capabilities. According to Cambron (2019) the growth of social media has largely contributed to the ideological strand which forms the basis of jihadist groups. Badawy and Ferrara (2018) agreed that jihadist groups like ISIS use a wide range of social media platforms to disseminate its messages. Social media platforms afford those organizations with the ability to maintain an online battalion. This

translates into the existence of over 2000 individuals, with strong online presence, reiterating and sharing narratives that are beneficial for the jihadist organizations.

Definitions

1. *Terrorism*: terrorism can be defined as the use or threat of violence to perpetuate collective fear, by a state or group against a more massive social structure. These actions are generally designed and pursued in order to achieve political, religious, or social objectives by the group perpetuating the intimidation (Wright, 2020).

2. *Radicalization*: A process that involves the adoption of extremist ideologies by individuals or groups about political, religious, and or social issues (Vargas, 2017).

3. *Social Media*: social media can be described as different applications and webpages that are created by servicing networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, among others (Bányász, 2018).

4. *Jihadist Terrorism*: jihadist terrorism can be defined as the subscription of extreme and violent ideologies by broadly dispersed groups (Conway, 2017).

Summary

Chapter 1 prefaces the study by providing a comprehensive illustration of terrorist organizations' use of social media. This illustration is backed by both historical and present-day information, coagulating the soundness and dynamism of the examination. The widespread and growing inclinations of terrorist organizations to use social media will continue to augment their functional might. The new communication landscape has altered global operations by creating a new normal, as it relates to social interactions. Despite the positive effects of such an invention, there are also overwhelming associated safety drawbacks. As evidenced throughout the literature, terrorist organizations benefit from those weaknesses. The purpose of this qualitative

case study is to provide a comprehensive description of the roles that social media plays in the expansion of terrorism. Additionally, the study also sought to unearth findings to close the research gap regarding deterrent factors for future generations' engagement in terrorist activities.

It is a perceptible assumption that social media networks are a much-welcomed advancement to the global communication climate. However, the features of the networks also permit the endorsement of less than desirable actions, such as jihadist terrorist activities. The covert and overt characteristics of social media are instrumental to the pervasiveness of those activities. In essence, social media plays a dual role in social interaction, one being positive, and the other negative. Jihadist terrorist organizations use social media platforms to strengthen and demonstrate their operational usefulness. This is because the omnipresent characteristics of digital gadgets coupled with social media networks, continue to contribute to the increase of terrorist activities around the globe. As both phenomena evolve, the need for related academic explorations will continue to increase.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this literature review is to explore current and applicable literature on the topic being studied. This is an essential undertaking as it seeks to provide the foundational knowledge on which the current research is based. This foundational knowledge is critical as it allows for pivotal contributions to this research. The literature review will also illustrate the theoretical frameworks that will provide the structures that guide the study. The literature review will identify and explore themes across the existing literature that correlate and or inconsistent, as well as the illustration of areas of interest that are understudied. Most importantly, those identifications will be used to help solidify the significance of the current research. As evolving phenomena, there are many available studies about social media and jihadist terrorism, but in a general context. To address the requirements in the current research, applicable data relating to the phenomena will be included.

This literature review will be organized into four sections, namely Overview, Theoretical Framework, Related Literature, and Summary. To survey the literature, the ProQuest Central and ProQuest Dissertation & Theses databases were primarily employed. Search terms to include terrorism, social media, radicalization, recruitment, and terrorist organizations were used to find applicable data. Over time, both the concepts of social media and terrorism have been receiving expanding research attention. Scholars across the literature have agreed that there are strong correlations between both concepts. The internet and, by extension, social media have overhauled the conventional means of communication (Alarid, 2016). Celebrated as the primary and leading sources of global communication, it is not surprising that terrorist organizations have gravitated to the increasing use of social media (Alarid, 2016).

According to Petroski (2017), there is an increasing need to identify practical considerations that will deter future generations from engaging in terrorist activities. That area of interest goads the current research as it justifies the significance of determining the relationship between the two concepts. The advent of social media has changed communication around the globe. Likewise, terrorism is an international phenomenon. To deter future engagements in terrorism, it is essential to identify and examine primary sources of recruitment that terrorist organizations use. By and large, this will help to unearth possible reasons for those engagements, and ultimately useful contributors to void those attractions. According to Alarid (2016), the survivability of terrorist organizations hinges on their following, which constitutes their membership statistics. From a historical perspective, with declining members, terror groups will lose operational capacities and soon become irrelevant (Alarid, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that guided this study are Social Structure and Learning Theory and Social Identity Theory. The Social Structure and Learning Theory is an expansion of the Social Learning Theory (SLT) which was coined by Albert Bandura. The tenets of the theory rest on the assumption that learned individual behaviors are achieved by watching and imitating other people (Floridia, 2017). The Social Structure and Learning Theory underwent significant revision by (Akers 1985, 1998), who added influential contributions to its rationale (Floridia, 2017). Akers posited the premise that the learning process is accentuated by individuals who emulate the way other people behave. Individuals tend to follow and respect those being explicitly observed if the observed are being compensated for the behaviors that they display (Floridia, 2017). The individuals watching will often opt to adopt, replicate, and continue those behaviors to the degree that the actions are differentially strengthened (Floridia, 2017). That is,

there is a plausible balance of punishment versus rewards associated with those types of

behaviors (Floridia, 2017). Specific behaviors like aggression are learned from both individual

experiences as well as the environment in which they operate (Floridia, 2017). Social Structure

and Learning Theory facilitates the assumption that mere observation enables individuals to learn

a vast amounts of behavioral patterns by displayed examples (Williams, 2017). This theory

applies to the research topic as it advances the assumption that both social media usage and

related terrorist activities are learned processes. The concepts of social media and terrorism

encompass social group dynamics, which are monumental for the learning process to occur. The

group dynamics expose and subsequently introduce individuals to both social media and terrorist

organization's behavioral standards, which ultimately shapes those individual's behaviors. In

essence, individuals who engage in terrorist activities have strong persuasions of specific desired

results, which fortify their continued display of those behaviors. Terrorism is presumed to be

underscored by traits of aggression, which also furthers the relevance of this theory to the

research topic underway.

The Social Identity Theory is founded on the guiding principles that individuals' social

identities and self-images are perceived based on the social groups with which they identify

(Berman, 2019). By and large, the individuals' sense of self in correlation to their social group,

prefaces behavioral patterns (Fujita, Harrigan & Soutar, 2018). As individuals associate

themselves with specific groups, they simultaneously augment the 'in and out-group' (Eswaran

& Neary, 2018) assumption. The Social Identity Theory is instrumental in framing this study as

it adds depth, context, and consistency to the arguments presented about terrorism and social

media. Specific to terrorism, social identity reinforces the practical divide among groups in

society by perpetuating the 'them' versus 'us' (Eswaran & Neary, 2018) rhetoric. The tenets illustrated by the theory, advance its germaneness to the research.

<div align="center">**Related Literature**</div>

The Evolution of Social Media

The evolution of internet technology to include social media platforms have made an ineffaceable mark on the existence of humankind. As a phenomenon with global attributes, this new sensation has changed how humans communicate, and overall operate (Budhijanto, 2018). Data made available through the Internet World Stats (IWS) documented statistical pieces of evidence, indicating that up to 2017, there were approximately 3,739,698,500 of the total population of 7,519,028,970 inhabitants, who used the internet (Budhijanto, 2018). The available data solidifies considerable global growth in internet use. According to (Nelson 2019), the emerging characteristics of social media have contributed to the associated complexities with its definition. Hence, to date, there is little agreement on an acceptable definition of the concept. Kharmi (2018) agreed with that assumption, contending that a scholarly definition for social media is continuously evolving because of the mutable characteristics represented by the networks. According to Ugwuanyi et al, (2019), social media platforms include different types of internet-enabled communication forums. These forums enable the prompt and timely exchange of information in various forms to add videos, images, and text (Ugwuanyi et al, 2019).

The new and emerging features of social media networks implicate consistent changes in the roles and capabilities of the networks, further complicating a definition (Kharmi, 2018). According to Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana, Patil, Dwivedi and Nerur (2018) social media includes but is not limited to communication applications and websites. Those applications and websites accelerate the forming of relationships and interactions among users of varying backgrounds,

despite cultural, financial, ideological geographical differences (Kapoor et al., 2018). There is a growing consensus across the literature, which assumes that social media networks have reinvented the communication landscape. That is, the monopolistic feature of traditional media outlets has been rendered obsolete. This is because social media networks have seeped in and assume the roles once carried out by traditional media platforms.

Social media platforms are commonly accepted as the primary means of communication for billions, both on national and global levels. Admittedly, social media has primarily benefitted global conversation based on its accessibility and instantaneous features (Domasneanu-Miulescu, 2019). According to Cambron (2019), the increase of social media networks has catalyzed terrorist organizations' abilities to disseminate their ideologies. These networks have successfully eradicated organizational costs to share those ideologies (Cambron, 2019). Conversely, they allow terrorist organizations to quickly create an inclusive, well-thought-out scope of threat (Cambron, 2019). Thus, the grim reality is that social media networks have become a significant part of the modus operandi of terrorist organizations around the world, putting collective security under robust scrutiny. According to Petroski (2017), the advent of social media networks is monumental to the existence of terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, among others. These groups are taking exploiting the features of social media networks by creating and instantly disseminating their ideologies to vulnerable target groups, for membership advancement and sustainability (Petroski, 2017).

With specific internet advancements, social media platforms have developed and infused the communication landscape since the mid-2000s (Petroski, 2017). As the internet and subsequently, social media network access continues to grow, the operational behaviors of terrorist organizations are changing as they adapt and employ the efficacy of the evolutions

(Petroski, 2017). Mansour (2018) argued that social media had redefined terrorist activities by creating opportunities for them to expand their operational reach, thus increasing the number of new people to which they can advocate their causes. In recent times, social media channels have been increasingly used by terrorist organizations to create and share enticing content with a wide range of people (Mansour, 2018). As a microblogging network, the Twitter channel enables terrorist organizations with the ability to instantly share messages through either words or images to people throughout the globe.

Ghingoor (2019) advanced an analogous perspective, upholding that the social media revolution has led to a globe, interwoven by competing ideologies, which strengthens the way both traditional and non-traditional actors communicate with each other as well as their specific target audiences. Furthermore, narratives created on social media can appeal to various individuals. Since social media emphasize user-generated content features, users can create and share anecdotes that appeal to individuals' emotions, thus altering their social, cultural, religious, and or political perspectives (Ghingoor, 2019). Mansour (2018) agreed, mentioning that in recent years, technological advancements, including social media, have introduced new and exciting opportunities for virtual engagements. Social media networks facilitate the successful creation of those engagements, allowing users to generate, share, collaborate, and disseminate their content (Mansour, 2018). Domasneanu-Miulescu (2019) agreed with Petroski (2017), averring that social media networks are user-friendly, which translates into and add to the built-in capabilities and cost-effectiveness of those networks.

In that context, the usage of social media by terrorist organizations is solidified based on both appropriateness and effectiveness. Cambron (2019) furthered the prior assumptions by pointing out that terrorist organizations are employing the use of social media networks because

of the opportunities that exist for them to adapt their content, with emphasis on cultural trends. That is, organizations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda are adept in the use of pop culture references used to entice the attraction of recruits who are younger (Cambron, 2019). These pop culture references are artistically designed using the 'jihadi cool' technique to change the younger generation's perception of the goals and objectives of the terrorist organizations (Cambron, 2019). Like different scholars across the literature, Hussain (2019) agreed with the prevailing assumption that the evolution of social media had increased international communication capabilities and connectivity. This emerging connectivity has significantly reduced the globe's geographical parameters, making it easier to create and share information instantaneously (Hussain, 2019; Pak, 2018; Rowland, 2017)).

To further this premise, Ding (2017) argued that social media networks play seminal contributions to the globe's compacted feature. The first email transfer in 1971 marks the beginning of the communication media revolution (Ding, 2017). Since then, the introduction of different social media networks has further amplified the collective communication capabilities (Ding, 2017). Pak (2018) concurred that Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram are leading social media networks. These networks afford terrorist organizations with interminable communication opportunities (Pak, 2018). These opportunities allow them to publicize and proliferate their organizational values and intentions to individuals all over the world (Pak, 2018). By and large, the celebrated agility and adaptableness of terrorist organizations have worked remarkably well in their effort to operate anonymously, thus evading societal, legal controls (Pak, 2018). Formukong (2017) maintained that the expanding use of the Facebook network accounts for terror groups' gravitation and frequent use, to further their organizational objectives.

According to (Rubitski, 2019), in 2018, the Counter Extremism Project discovered a number of different accounts that were owned and operated by individuals associated with terrorist organizations (Rubitski, 2019). Furthermore, more than half of the accounts discovered to enable the promotion and dissemination of extremist ideologies (Rubitski, 2019). Rusumanov (2016) reiterated the idea that the evolution of humankind is defined by different eras with emphasis on idiosyncrasies for each identified period. Modern societies are characterized as a digital era, one in which technological gadgets, communication services, and networks are growing in significance (Rusumanov, 2016). Needless to say, the communication world is changing rapidly, with social media networks being rated as both negative and positive (Rusumanov, 2016).

Social media platforms have made a visible and practical impact on jihadist terrorist organization functions, boosting their utility of those networks (Johnson, 2018 & Rusumanov, 2016). Arguably, the operational reach of social media networks is a significant feat for terrorist organizations, hence their continued utilization of the networks. Pak (2018) also agreed that the convenience, cost-efficiency, and efficacy of social media networks in the dissemination of terrorist organizations' rhetoric in the virtual community, is also an impetus to their use of the networks. Formukong (2017) theorized the notion that individuals' use of social media networks has long surpassed any other means of social engagements known to humanity. That assumption was solidified based on the results of a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016 (Formukong, 2017). Statistical evidence documented by (Ding 2017) illustrated an estimated 2.4 billion social media accounts with active users around the globe, accounting for approximately 31% of the world's population. Zarate (2017) stated that as social media networks emerge, terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda and ISIS continue to demonstrate accelerating adaptations.

Despite the geographically dispersed nature of global terrorist threats, social media networks facilitate the intensification and thriving of terrorist organizations (Zarate, 2017). Social media networks allow for a metastasizing effect on the terrorist organization through the globe, thus amplifying the existing threats posed by those organizations (Zarate, 2017). Adherents of terrorist organizations can use social media networks to learn the tactics, techniques, and procedures of each other (Zarate, 2017). Thus, leveraging their operational might, by exploiting vulnerabilities, resulting in their effectiveness (Zarate, 2017).

In a seminal article, Dragomir (2017) specified that the emergence and hasty expansion of social media networks have led to specific changes, specifically, acceptable communication patterns and behaviors. There are significant changes concerning the way individuals access information as well as disseminate the same. Social media networks have fundamental features such as making viral content, instant messaging capabilities, and most importantly, in most cases, limitless access (Dragomir, 2017). On a global scale, social media networks are being used for both personal and professional reasons, accounting for a considerable number of active accounts (Dragomir, 2017). Jihadist terror groups have been employing social media tools incessantly. The use of those tools has resulted in those organizations being exceptionally successful at creating and sharing their dangerous ideologies (Sultan, 2016). With consideration to historical references, technological advancements in modern societies have enabled terrorist organizations with the capability to easily access mines of billions of people (Sultan, 2016). A significant consideration that shapes the ideology of terrorist organizations is the promulgation of fear. Using social media has allowed those organizations to capture the attention of people, and they instill fear in them through propaganda schemes (Sultan, 2016).

Nashit (2019) furthered the existing assumptions that relate to social media's association with the expansion of terrorist activities. Like different scholars in the scientific community, the author agreed that the internet, and by extension, social media has redefined the information exchange process (Nashit, 2019). The emergence of social media networks has risen notably overtime, allowing individuals in otherwise repressed areas to communicate on a global front. It is against that background that it has become increasingly more accessible for terrorist groups to create a digital space in which they can thrive through the sharing of information (Nashit, 2019). Terrorist organizations have opted to weaponize social media networks while preserving them as information hubs for the prolongation of their cause and organization (Fassrainer, 2020). The use of social media networks accounts for the growing number of organized terrorist activities on the internet, with a rough estimate of 90% (Fassrainer, 2020). Undoubtedly, social media networks facilitate the succinct and discrete dissemination of information before, during, and after organized attacks (Fassrainer, 2020). The continued use of social media networks by terrorist groups has added new elements to global warfare by augmenting their activities (Morgan, 2016).

Like other identified authors, Morgan (2016) maintained that the global reach of the internet, coupled with social media, is escalating, thus shaping the context of current and future global (Morgan, 2016). Tropotei & Deac (2019) acquiesced with assumptions made by Fassrainer (2020), which stated that the social media revolution has resulted in the significant, unmatched global communication mutations, which provide a firm basis for modern-day interactions. The ways that individuals currently interrelate and interact globally, continue to see substantial shifts, which bear stark emblems of positivity in some cases and negativity in others (Tropotei & Deac, 2019). Throughout the globe, terrorist organizations have quickly learned and adapted to the idea that the use of technological inventions like social media is invaluable. This

is because those networks can gradually penetrate everyday realities, creating a more attractive and viable market space for them to dominate (Tropotei & Deac, 2019).

Planning, Radicalization, and Recruitment

Previous studies confirmed that social media networks are excellent sources that reinforce jihadist terrorist activities (Awan, 2018; Mansour, 2018). Mansour (2018) also asserted that social networks could be deemed as inadvertent allies to terrorist organizations. Those networks accelerate the ease with which the organizations recruit, radicalize, and ultimately train their prospective members (Mansour, 2018). In essence, the use of social media adds value to terrorist organizations' operational survivability as it also facilitates fundraising efforts (Mansour, 2018). The successful execution of recruitment and radicalization terrorist activities extend beyond sheer aspiration. For those activities to be active, terrorist organizations meticulously pursue avenues of opportunities, availability, and persuasion (National Institute of Justice, 2017). Terrorist organizations are aware of the influential role that social media play in their operational efforts. They use social media in their planning and recruitment activities, which produce incalculable results, with the increasing frequencies of acts of terror being the most prominent (Sanchez, 2018). Awan (2018) agreed with previously mentioned scholars that social media facilitate a very substantial reach of a global audience.

Social media networks like YouTube boast, on average, over a billion users monthly (Awan, 2017). Similarly, the Twitter network averages over 350,000 tweets minutely and in excess of 500 million tweets daily, as illustrated by Twitter 2014 (Awan, 2017). As the largest and most widely used social media network, in 2014, Facebook had over 500 million active accounts (Awan, 2017). Hence, jihadist terrorist organizations like the ISIS and Al Qaeda use those networks to recruit and radicalize prospective members (Awan, 2017). Furthermore,

terrorist organizations use Twitter and Facebook networks as tools to facilitate their propaganda

objectives (Awan, 2017). Through these networks, they are able to communicate successfully

and promulgate and ideology that underpins the 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric (Awan, 2017).

Rusumanov (2016) advanced the notion that despite the widespread belief that terrorist

organizations use social media networks for recruitment, the anonymity features on those

platforms make verification and scope of use significantly harder (Rusumanov, 2016). Another

unexplored view is that to understand these contemporary methods of recruitment, and it is

imperative to understand the ways terrorist organizations influence those who use social media

networks (Rusumanov, 2016). For context, Cambron (2019) mentioned that the jihadist group

ISIS is quite influential on Twitter. The organization uses its expertise on that network to surpass

the recruiting capabilities of any other terrorist organization (Cambron, 2019).

Brzica (2017) agreed with the preceding, noting that Max Abrahams advances the idea

that the ISIS has documented extraordinary accomplishments in recruiting adherents via social

networks. Brzica (2017) further examined the assumption that the online recruitment techniques

that ISIS is also counterproductive. This is because it solidifies the basis on which the global

security response against the organization is founded. An official report published by Twitter in

2017 indicated that between the middle of 2015 and around March of 2017, the network

deactivated over 630,000 accounts associated with terrorism (Brzica, 2017). Such perceived

triumph was fleeting, as terrorist organizations were quickly able to create new accounts in order

to facilitate their online engagements. Liberman (2017) maintained that the unfettered and

limitless characteristics of the internet and social media networks allow terror groups to craft and

hastily use propaganda to reach a seemingly broad audience. They are able to tailor their

message so that it appeals to a large number of potential recruits, some of whom ultimately join

their organizations. Like Cambron (2019), Liberman (2017) believed that the unparalleled

technological expertise of ISIS, strengthen its recruiting efforts. This is mainly because social

media can reach a broad audience in a little time; thus, it is both time and cost-efficient, much to

the advantage of terror groups (Liberman, 2017). Terrorist organizations continuously exploit the

viral feature of the social media network to spread their messages, resulting in both passive and

active recruiting returns (Morgans, 2017). In 2014, ISIS increased their membership with over

6,000 individuals recruited through the virtual community (Morgans, 2017).

Enomoto and Douglas (2019) added that terrorist organizations' use of social media as

advanced by Conway (2006) strengthens information dissemination while broadening their

powerful capabilities. Most importantly, these organizations are able to recruit new members

based on useful data mining (Enomoto & Douglas, 2019). The features on social media that

translate languages benefit terror groups as it further reduces operational boundaries as they

communicate and recruit (Enomoto & Douglas, 2019). The recruitment capabilities of both the

ISIS and Al Qaeda are predominantly defined by the availability and their use of the internet and

social media networks (Prezelj, Kocjančič, & Marinšek, 2018). The internet and social media

networks afford the terrorist organizations the opportunity to filter and focus on prospects based

on specific characteristics and perceived inclinations (Prezelj et al., 2018). This widely expands

the probabilities of new members joining those organizations (Prezelj et al., 2018). Intriguingly,

Formukong (2017) also matched the viewpoint that the increasing virtual recruiting presence of

terrorist organizations serves as a very calculated endeavor. Rubitski (2019) furthered the

previous assumption, noting that the propaganda technique is instrumental to the terrorist

organizations' patterns of behaviors and, most importantly, the successes that they have achieved

to date. This is because this technique helps to shape those organizations' functional agenda,

which is primarily geared towards appealing to a multitude of recruits, which will eventually join

and advocate for the same organizational causes (Rubitski (2019).

The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2018) website, mentioned that in

recent times, there had been an increase in social media networks' use for radicalization

purposes. Social media networks are critical in facilitating data mining; hence, it is becoming

increasingly more accessible for terrorist organizations to identify specific targets for the

radicalization process. The website documented an interesting analogy, stating that terrorist

organizations had a measured acceptance of the social media wave. However, their adeptness

allows the networks to work phenomenally well in their favor as they recruit and radicalize

(Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2018). Rusumanov (2016) defined

radicalization as a process that individuals' singlehandedly or through group effort opt to adopt

extremist behaviors. According to Stewart (2019), as documented by previous studies such as

Sanchez (2018), there are specific factors that define prospects who terrorist groups opt to

pursue, recruit, and radicalize. Some of the agreed factors that are consistent throughout the

literature are personal, political, social, and or religious frustrations (Stewart, 2019). These

frustrations are frequently underscored by marked vulnerabilities and dissatisfaction based on

perceived individual inadequacies (Liberman, 2017).

Terrorist groups then exploit those vulnerabilities by establishing social bonds and a

sense of kinship, giving those individuals an alternate reality in which those frustrations are

nullified (Liberman, 2017). Prior studies have explored the relationship between social media

and the radicalization process. Social media is one of the principal means used by terrorist

organizations to disseminate radical ideologies (Brzica, 2017). These ideologies are reaching the

most vulnerable groups in society, such as the younger generation. Consequently, that creates

and sustains a societal divide by elongating the radicalization risk. Rusumanov (2016) postulated that ISIS slogan 'Baqiyah wa-Tatamaddad,' which translates to remaining and expanding, is indicative of the organization's intention as it relates to their functionality. The organization will continue to reach individuals through social media in order to maintain the radicalization and recruitment success the networks guarantee. According to Enomoto & Douglas (2019, Conway (2012), specified the shooting incident of two U.S. Airmen in the Frankfurt Airport in 2010, the London bombers in 2005, and the Fort Hood shootings in 2009 as having possible connections to virtual radicalization. Sugihartl, Suyanto, and Mun'im, (2020) presented the substantial assumption that terrorist organizations will continue to use social media to achieve and strengthen the way they realize their strategic goals. They are using those networks to spread their influence and ideologies in order to radicalize prospects (Sugihartl et al., 2020). These above researchers employed surveys and interview research designs, with participants being proclaimed radicals.

Jihadist terrorist organizations have mastered and continue to refine the art of creating and sharing digestible content that will ultimately radicalize their target audiences (Sugihartl et al., 2020). An intriguing finding from the study indicates that while some individuals who review the original contents become consumers, others are prosumers (Sugihartl et al., 2020). That is, they consider and recirculate the radical contents on social media, extending its reach (Sugihartl et al., 2020). Schils & Verhage (2017) agreed with previous studies that terrorist organizations deem social networks as the most beneficial way to extend their offline activities. Hence, they will continue to focus on penetrating the online community with radicalized messages masked as the initiation of collective identity and the corroboration of social unanimity in order to entice their audiences (Schils & Verhage (2017). Tsesis (2018) also emphasized that the internet is

inundated with radicalized contents and rhetoric which appeal to young people in the hope of building up terrorist organizations' membership. In essence, social media is the mainstage that enables terrorist incitement (Tsesis, 2018). This assumption is also furthered by Stewart (2019), who speculated that the advent of the internet and, by extension, social media networks are enablers to increasing radicalization process throughout the international community. Social media networks have provided terrorist organizations with the opportunity to share experiences with billions of people. That is, regardless of cultural or physical limitations that would have otherwise prohibited social interaction (Stewart, 2019).

Shallcross (2017) alluded that social media networks facilitate some of the world's most nefarious activities to include radicalization and recruitment processes by jihadist terrorist organizations. In essence, these networks, as prominent interaction domains, serve as weapons for those organizations to infiltrate the lives of people around the globe (Shallcross, 2017). Admittedly, the use of social media networks engenders an atmosphere that supports immoral indulgence, built on obscurity (Shallcross, 2017). Petroski (2017) also supported the rationale mentioned above, using results from a case study conducted in 2010 by the Department of Homeland Security. The results were indicative that social networks, Facebook, in particular, operates as one of the most prominent and favorable recruitment and radicalization tools employed by terrorist organizations (Petroski, 2017). Bányász (2018) also acknowledged the significant role that Facebook plays in terrorist activities. However, the author offered a different perspective, which suggested that YouTube is also an essential social network tool for terrorist organizations (Bányász, 2018). These organizations have opted to use YouTube to showcase the illustrative contents of mass murders and other heinous activities (Bányász, 2018). The terrorist organizations publish those videos and imageries, which are artistically crafted to appeal to their

target audience, in an effort to obtain new membership eventually. Florio (2018) furthered the preceding by concluding that social media networks are practical tools for terrorist organizations. The author noted that, in 2015, there was an estimated 90% of organized terrorism that was carried out via social media. Such an alarming success rate can allude to the direct access and connection of terrorist organizations and their target audiences (Florio, 2018; Hernandez & Olson, 2019).

Much like legitimate businesses, terrorist organizations have to establish and maintain a consistent flow of capital in order to remain successful. These organizations use social media networks to secure their capital flow through fundraising activities and solicitations, making their survivability less onerous (Durr, 2016; Wang, Zhang &Yang (2017). It is against that background that the usefulness of social media in the terrorist organization's planning is incontestable. This is because those networks allow the terrorist organizations to expeditiously solicit a vast audience for financial support, translating into organizational efficacy (Durr, 2016). Keatinge & Keen (2019) also agreed that social media is a useful tool for generating and sustaining the financial capabilities of terrorist organizations. However, the authors also postulated that understanding the extent that terrorist organizations use social media for financial solicitations is challenging (Keatinge & Keen, 2019). The challenge is primarily centered on the notion of anonymity that social networks facilitate (Keatinge & Keen, 2019). Nevertheless, it is a convincing assumption that the confluence of social media and terrorist organizations' expertise has contributed to the way the organizations generate and sustain financial flow (Keatinge & Keen, 2019).

Social Media and Propaganda

Jihadist terrorism continues to grow to unprecedented levels as the internet and social media platforms contribute to the unparalleled heights of consolidated communication control for jihadist groups. By and large, propaganda is a pivotal feature of a doctrine designed to spread ideologies to large mass of people, while inculcating fear. At the core of propaganda, is the willful need to persuade the targeted audience to believe the message that has been conveyed (Rusu & Herman, 2018). Most importantly, propaganda can be interpreted as a communication strategy, shaped by a concerted effort to revolutionize, and influence social changes for egotistic benefits (Rusu & Herman, 2018). According to Badawy and Ferrara (2018) extremist groups have always exhausted the use of the traditional media and subsequently internet accessibility to disseminate propaganda. However, time has repeatedly publicized the notion that jihadist terrorist groups have grown savvier with manipulating social media platforms, to further their propaganda competencies, and fortify their virtual presence. Having a seizing presence in the cyber domain is critical to the existence of jihadist terrorist groups. Hence, effective propaganda remains among their most critical functions, which define their sustainability (Melki & Jabado, 2016).

An expanding number of scholars have agreed that the tools that make up the virtual space in modern societies are enablers to effective propaganda for jihadist groups (Rusu & Herman, 2018; Sweet, 2020). With consideration to such fact, jihadist groups exhaust those means in order to maintain their relevance and digital supremacy. By being adroit, intuitive and inventive, those terrorist groups are able to extend their target base, increasing their ability to remain as protracted threats in society. This is because they are able to improve their sophisticated approach to dominate modern day societies with the proliferation of their

ideological content and narratives (Sweet, 2020). Rusu and Herman (2018) suggested that the global reach of the internet and the accessibility of smart devices have translated into a reality where physical boundaries have elapsed. With those boundaries eradicated, jihadist groups are able to take advantage of the instantaneous and direct means of sharing their ideologies on a global scale (Rusu & Herman, 2018). Social media networks have contributed to the virtual landscape gradually becoming a diabolic vector, strongly built on jihadist inspiration and propaganda. ISIS and Al Qaeda continuously share their ideologies via social media platforms to supporters and prospects alike. The meticulous and calculated illustration of those ideologies have allowed for a sustained reputation and a steady increase in membership base. This is because the circulated propaganda of seemingly unfair treatments toward Muslims serves as a strong indicator, which validates the actions of jihadist terrorist groups (Rusu & Herman, 2018).

Numerous scholars have agreed that social media platforms have helped to put jihadist terrorist organizations in a very celebrated position, in relation to operation might. According to Wang, Zhang, and Yang (2017), social media networks are very instrumental in the formation and execution of functional strategies like organization and maneuvering techniques that are used by ISIS. The features of social media platforms are critical fronts to the organizations' propaganda capabilities (Wang, Zhang & Yang, 2017). ISIS uses social media network to spread its relative appealing ideology, resulting in the recruitment and radicalization of individuals around the world (Rusu & Herman, 2018; Wang, Zhang & Yang, 2017). The elusive nation of ISIS propaganda is the defining feature for its prolonged existence. The fact is, ISIS continues to publicize its ideological content and benefit from the far-reaching effects guaranteed by social media networks (Wang, Zhang & Yang, 2017). Arslan and Petrone (2017) agreed with the foregoing, indicating that social media networks have greatly assisted jihadist terrorism in

penetrating the cognitive, informational, and physical dimension of the information environment. Combatting jihadist propaganda remains a pressing global issue, hence, the United States and Turkey agreed on a $200 million initiative in 2013. The initiative was designed to counter jihadist propaganda through the establishment of training programs for vulnerable youths that are targeted by jihadist groups (Arslan & Petrone, 2017).

The identity of jihadist terrorist groups is largely characterized by their growing abilities to infiltrate and ultimately dominate the virtual landscape, with his ideologies. Social media platforms have facilitated those groups in the sharing of their contents unimpeded, to those with access to the internet and digital devices within the global realm (Liang, 2017; Rusu & Herman, 2018). Jihadist terrorist groups are able to use those forums to artistically craft their contents in over twenty-eight different languages, and share via Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram (Bányász, 2018; Liang, 2017). Many scholars have agreed that jihadist terrorist groups are among the most globalized and notorious organizations around the globe (Liang, 2017; Melki and Jabado, 2016). The infamy and subsequent resolve of those organizations are centered on effective propaganda. According to Melki and Jabado (2016), ISIS use social media networks to effectively share their stories and branding potentials. To achieve those objectives, the organization focus on different discreet aims. Some of the aims include but are not limited to continuous international exposure and strengthening of its brand; sharing a misapprehension of a cohesive group and demonstrate the Caliphate life as the defensible alternative to the perceived atrocities of western cultures (Melki & Jabado, 2016). Awan (2017) furthered the foregoing by stating that Al Hayat Media Centre serves as the hub and continuum for ISIS social media communication. Some of the messages conveyed by this center portray ISIS as humanitarian

actors, thus appealing to a growing range of sympathizers and supporters, giving the group functional cogency (Awan, 2017).

Communication Strategies

Jihadist terrorist organizations' communication capabilities are lauded as being among the factors that contribute to the protracted existence of those organizations. Petroski (2017) mentioned that the new and improved viral features of social media, its global reach effect enabled by the internet define its effectiveness as an appropriate means of communication. It is not inexplicable that terrorist organizations are using social networks as their primary means of communication. As agreed by previous scholars, the uncharted and unregulated characteristics of social media networks also contribute to them being choice instruments of communication (Petroski, 2017). The author agreed that terrorist organizations strategically use social networks to collect, organize and propagate ideological rhetoric in an effort to inflate their cause, increase reputational characteristics, and, most importantly, membership expansion (Petroski, 2017). Nwammuo & Salawu (2018) illustrated that the energetic essence of community-based cooperation, interface, and exchange of information are underlining features of communication. Social media embodies those features as it is framed by a model founded on information transmission (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018). The central tenet of that model is servicing sources (social networks and receivers (target audiences) (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018). The social media model stands in sharp contrast to conventional means of communication, as the latter is a single source of information trying to penetrate a broad target audience (Nwammuo & Salawu, 2018).

Terrorist organizations have militarized social media for the advancement of their systematic objectives (Boyte, 2017). The user-generated feature of social media has allowed those organizations to adequately create and exchange content with their target audiences based

on organizational inclinations (Boyte, 2017). That is, they are able to tailor those content based on their own ideologies and objectives. Gunaratna (2018) mentioned the Telegram and Threema as an emerging social network that the terrorist organizations are using to communicate with potential members. The Telegram and Threema apps allow those organizations to exchange encrypted dialogues (Gunaratna, 2018). The author claimed that approximately 14 terrorist attacks occurred in Indonesia, of which Telegram was an effective means of communication for the terrorist organization that directed those attacks (Gunaratna, 2018). Interestingly, Durr (2016) also added ISIS use social media as a means of communication, which facilitates the publicizing of their well-known, matchless propaganda. Additionally, ISIS also use the Fajer Al Bashaer or Dawn of Glad Tidings application that they recently created to strengthen their communication capabilities. The app is aimed at mostly imitating the features of the renowned Twitter network (Durr, 2016).

Cipolla & Siino (2017) uniquely illustrated that on account of globalization, the known communication incompatibilities that existed between national and global actors have diminished. It is with that perspective that it is agreed that social media offers new and emerging alternatives to communication capabilities. As recognized by many scholars, the accessibility and rifeness of social media networks serve as concrete communication instruments that allow for information exchange of all kinds (Cipolla & Siino, 2017). Over time, the internet, and, most importantly, social media have significantly changed the communication behaviors of individuals around the globe. Celik (2019) asserted humankind has grown to understand and assume their communication roles, and the way social media influences those roles in the virtual space. Hence, social media is used as a means of communication for legal actors as well as those who want to exploit and debase identities that are in contrast to theirs (Celik, 2019). As social

networks grow, terrorist organizations continue to use them as communication media to incite and ultimately recruit members (Lavi, 2020). The author agreed with previous scholars like (Gunaratna, 2018 & Sugihartl et al., 2020) that the terrorist organizations use social networks like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter as virtual intermediaries to meet individuals, form social, political, and or religious clusters, exchange and promote extremist content, thus proliferating their organizational agendas (Lavi, 2020). Like many other scholars, Pak (2018) claimed that social media networks are among the most frequently used communication tools employed by terrorist organizations. The features of social media networks manage to exchange the practices and beliefs of those organizations with their target audiences, thus augmenting the scope of the threat that they pose to collective security.

Lavi (2020) assumed that that the expanding occurrences of global terrorist attacks has a direct correlation with the organizations' use of social media networks as communication tools. Like Petroski (2017), Lavi (2020) also mentioned that the features of YouTube permit the exchange of explicit videos by terrorist organizations. Some of those videos are categorized by distinct violence and inestimable savagery by those organizations, which appeal to specific individuals triggering emotions of sympathy to terrorist groups' ideologies (Lavi, 2020). YouTube, as well as other social networks, also enables the sharing of imageries and violent attacks in real-time based on live streaming features (Lavi, 2020). The videos disseminated by terrorist organizations are inventively designed to appeal to new empathizers as well as sympathizers. Their contents are created with the intention to send well-defined, articulate messages to those groups in an effort to sever the control of social, political, and or religious institutions in society (Petroski, 2017). By and large, the terrorist organizations are using social

media networks to communicate because they strengthen the way their activities are planned and most importantly, executed (Lavi, 2020).

Figure 2

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) beheading that went viral on social media.

Note: The figure illustrates images from a video of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria beheading someone. Copyrighted by Fuentes, 2016.

Jihadist terrorist groups' exhaustive, yet adept use of social media networks as communication tools is a growing, global security concern (Vaivode, Magiur, Ammar, and Driur, 2019). The organization's use of social media and the associated results that they have acclaimed ignited those concerns for legitimate actors. The latter also use those platforms to communicate personally and professionally (Vaivodet al.al, 2019). Previous studies unearthed that social media networks like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook enable ISIS with the ability to disseminate powerful messages that are keeps their membership growing (Vaivode et al., 2019). The interactivity features, among other structural designs of social media, assist the organization in garnering unprecedented success. With social media platforms, ISIS can communicate,

inspire, radicalize, and recruit individuals from all over the globe to include western societies (Vaivode et al., 2019). According to Fuentes (2016), as communication tools, social media networks are deemed as accelerants to recruitment and radicalization processes. The operational reach of those networks helps the terrorist groups to disseminate their contents globally, thus creating and sustaining social bonds and interactions among its members (Fuentes, 2016).

Burke & Sen (2018) agreed that social media networks had transformed both the communication and operational aspects of society. The younger generations are more attracted to the use of new and emerging technologies and or more disengaged from traditional information exchange outlets (Ben & Sen, 2018). The terrorist organizations are aware that younger people are more enthusiastic adopters to technological advancements as well as new political, religious, or discourses (Ben & Sen, 2018). Consequently, the organizations target the younger generation to communicate with and ultimately radicalize. To corroborate with the previous assumption, Fuentes (2016) mentioned Salma and Zahra Halane, twin girls who lived in the United Kingdom and were successfully recruited by ISIS via Twitter and Instagram. Arslan and Petrone (2017); Tuttle (2016) also supported the foregoing indicating that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated that roughly 100 recruits from the United States, over 500 from the United Kingdom and over 700 from France were recruited via social media and joined ISIS. Most importantly, officials assumed that all the recruits mentioned above were below 25 years old, supporting the jihadist terrorist groups' attraction to the younger generation (Tuttle, 2016).

Like many other scholars, Ramluckan et al. (2016) claimed that the two-way collaborative feature, coupled with the accessibility of social media networks, underscore the terrorist organizations' unremitting use of the platforms. As the prominence of social media networks continues to heighten, the role of traditional information sources continues to dissipate

in relevance (Herrero-Jiménez et al., 2018). Jihadist terrorist organizations have opted to use

social media networks as communicative tools based on the effortlessness; they facilitate in

creating and sharing user-generated content (Herrero-Jiménez et al., 2018). The user-generated

feature of social media is among the most critical and meticulous for terrorist organizations. A

general consensus across the literature is that the most striking feature of social media networks

is not merely information relay. Instead, it is the capability of the user to frame the messages

they wish to convey. This is because such a feature allows those organizations to display

strategic influence on their target audience (Hacker & Mendez, 2016). That is, with the contents

that they create, jihadist terrorist organizations are able to frame their target's opinions,

essentially informing them while transforming their perspective and attitudes (Hacker &

Mendez, 2016). Jihadist terrorist groups' use of social media to communicate has augmented

their functional capabilities in comparison to other terror groups (Riglietti, 2017). These

operational capabilities include but are not limited to recruiting, radicalization, financing, and

planning and carrying out attacks (Riglietti, 2017).

Wray (2019) made some seminal contribution to the literature, indicating that social

media helps the terrorist organization become more prolific and operationally competitive. The

features of social media networks have created and sustained a space that enables terror groups

to build their membership with the use of terrorist operatives (Wray, 2019). Like previous

scholars, the author agreed that as virtually unregulated space, social media networks function as

communication tools, disseminating propaganda to people all over the globe (Wray, 2019).

Riglietti (2017) furthered the previous thoughts adding that the use of the internet and social

media and the internet has maximized the potential and proficiency of the terrorist groups. Social

media and the internet allow those groups to communicate in both national and international

languages, Farsi, Pashto, Dari Urdu, and English, Arabic, respectively (Riglietti, 2017). This amplifies information exchange and guarantees successful transmissions as receivers and recipients are synchronized. Shkolnik & Corbeil (2019) claimed that with the expanding use of social media as communication tools, the terrorist organizations are constantly revamping and reinventing developments to strengthen their operations. In recent times, those organizations have established the celebrated virtual entrepreneurship innovation Shkolnik & Corbeil (2019). With such innovation, the terrorist organizations require their operatives to employ available social networks that permit the transmission of encrypted communication (Shkolnik, & Corbeil, 2019). With those communication capabilities, the terror groups are able to use their leverage to strengthen and expand their global cell connections (Shkolnik, & Corbeil, 2019).

To further expound on the 'virtual plotters' development, Shkolnik & Corbeil (2019) indicated that previous studies confirmed ISIS use of that advancement. With this development, the terrorist organization uses virtual planners who design and enable successful terrorist attacks (Shkolnik, & Corbeil, 2019). Social media networks help planners in creating social bonds and relationships with potential recruits who will ultimately carry out those attacks (Shkolnik, & Corbeil, 2019). Goodman (2019) argued that social media networks are useful for terrorist organizations as they help to facilitate the way recruits are trained. Employing social media networks enables terror groups to continuously create apprehension among the populace, by enticing recruits to carry out organizational activities (Goodman, 2019). Over time, terrorist organizations have learned that harnessing social media networks as a means of communication is beneficial (Fisentzou, 2019). This is because those networks are enablers of intelligence gathering and dissemination, which are fundamental functions for organizational effectiveness (Fisentzou, 2019).

Power Acquisition

The expansion and accelerating use of social media networks have given jihadist terrorist organizations and global societies an operational edge that has translated into coveted functional power. These networks have helped to define the accepted identity and subsequent ascendency of the terrorist organizations. The forward-thinking ideological ilk garnered by the terrorist organizations is supplemented by continuous power attribution. The social practice of information dissemination is the common denominator in terrorist operatives' engagements (Leitch, 2018). These organizations deem themselves as brands with reputational characters to maintain, giving the element of power unadulterated significance. Leitch (2018) offered a fascinating perspective on power acquisition, defining power as the inculcated motivation, strength, and ability to achieve things. Power as it relates to terrorist organizations as brands reinforce the capability of actors within those organizations to achieve their objectives while highlighting other actors who are unable to affect those achievements (Leitch, 2018). Such an assumption is indicative of a power disparity in relation to goal achievements.

Terrorist organizations are founded on and guided by the principle of achieving reputational supremacy, influence, and unwavering control. As postulated by different scholars across the literature, the user-generated feature of social media networks contributes to such authority. This is because that feature enables open dialogue, collaboration, and information exchange (Shallcross, 2017). The author also agreed that social media has been weaponized by the terrorist organization and used as an instrument of formidable organizational power (Shallcross, 2017). Durr (2016) supported the analogy mentioned above, citing a 2015 video shared by ISIS. The video had two hostages, for whom the terrorist organization demanded a ransom fee of approximately $200 million for their release (Durr, 2016). However, subsequent

attempts by responding officials to reach the organization were unsuccessful. That solidified the terrorist organization's interest was centered on power demonstration as opposed to the perceived financial procurement (Durr, 2016). Social media networks inculcate voices into individuals and groups, allowing them to be heard globally. By and large, social media networks create a fluid operational environment in which the dimensions that confine the physical, functional space is not applicable (Shallcross, 2017). Over time, Al Qaeda's progress is indicative of a continuous quest for power acquisition as well. Al Qaeda exhaust all available options to strengthen its operational reach and overall effectiveness (Pak, 2018). The motivation behind those actions is founded on the organization's need for dominance. This anticipated supremacy is geared towards defeating conventional governments, who are guided by the principles of Western societies (Pak, 2018).

Some authors offered alternative definitions of power, thus advancing the interpretation of the supremacy and control narrative (Bányász, 2018 & Kharmi, 2018). Power is applicable to collective engagements and the expansion of situational awareness (Kharmi (2018). Social media networks augment both of those themes, thus their formative contributions to the terrorist organizations' power acquisitions. Kharmi (2018) concluded that Twitter, among other social media networks, accelerates instant message dissemination, with emphasis on global reach. Again, the user-generated feature, coupled with plusses like the viral, mention, retweet, and hashtag sub-feature, are instrumental to the terrorist organizations' controllability (Kharmi, 2018). The most prominent features of social media networks allow terrorist operatives to create and disseminate content and discourses that will incite specific trends and appeal to a wide range of individuals (Kharmi, 2018). The central theme of those actions is ensuring that the terrorist organizations remain in control of the narratives that are being shared and, most importantly,

controlling the recipients' perceptions. This is a self-serving endeavor for those organizations as it will allow them to not only increase membership but also show expanding technical and operational knack in the process (Kharmi, 2018). Concerning the power narrative, Rowland (2017) advanced a contrary yet significant perspective. The author opined that while social media networks amplify the power of terrorist organizations, the servicing providers of those networks have the most power (Rowland, 2017). Hence, owners of networks like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube need to act pre-emptively in control account holders who are associated with the terrorist organizations (Rowland, 2017).

The collective concern of the ongoing fight of freedom versus privacy weighs heavily on the social media networks' ability to control the users' accounts (Rowland, 2017) single-handedly and successfully. The size and scope of social media shape the indisputable argument that it plays an essential role in modern communication. Domer (2020) posited that social media networks are aware of the influence that they have in relation to regulating interactions on their platforms. As it relates to terrorism, the application of such authority lies in the networks' ability to make a clear distinction between speech and conduct. This helps in determining whether the laws that shape such influence comport with the tenets of the First Amendment (Congressional Research Service, 2019). The previous assumption presented a contrast to the argument of Rowland (2017), as it illuminates the possible limitations to the perceived power that social media networks have in controlling terrorist organizations' accounts. Redish & Fisher (2017) furthered that assumption by exploring some of the legal tenets of the First Amendment. Some proponents of the First Amendment agree that it is imperative that freedom of expression and the exchange of ideas are protected at all costs (Redish & Fisher, 2017). Most importantly, the protection of criminal or objectionable exchanges as restricting speech will produce more harm

than it will produce collective favor (Redish & Fisher, 2017). Johnson (2018) furthered the preceding, indicating that in the United States, extremist speech is protected by the Constitution. The speech clause of the First Amendment makes it significantly harder for laws to be passed to protect against radical expression (Johnson, 2018).

Corcoba, Raigam and Jafet (2019) conceded that the unfounded yet perceived, innate desire of the public to observe violence as opposed to peace is a driving force behind the terrorist organizations' weaponization of social media networks. Admittedly, social media networks fueled by the internet serve as an expanding, powerful catalyst for terrorist activities (Corcoba et al, 2019). By and large, the terrorist organizations that have mastered the art of perpetrating resilience and succession planning are ever-evolving (Corcoba et al, 2019). ISIS experienced numerous battlefield losses over time (Gunaratna, 2018). The persistence of the organization backed by the dissemination of its impelling propaganda narratives depicts strength, appealing to more sympathizers globally (Gunaratna, 2018). To further the preceding, Rowland (2017) highlighted the command succession of Al Qaeda. Several years ago, the leadership and structure of Al Qaeda were demolished (Rowland, 2017). However, new adroit replacements have assumed the roles of their predecessors, burgeoning the existence of the organization (Rowland, 2017).

Additionally, Klausen (2016) mentioned that the power and structure of jihadist terrorist groups are direct correlations to the leverage and ultimate success that the organizations have in the operational environment. Jihadist groups like ISIS understands the efficacy of social media networks concerning the activities that drive the organization (Klausen, 2016). This understanding and mastering of the variables that define a successful organization gives a competitive edge to terror groups, which is the hallmark of power (Klausen (2016). The star

network is the structural arrangement that frames social media networks. That is, the communication pattern includes a dominant hub to which the nodes are connected. This communication pattern is founded on interconnectedness, which is the basis of the power dynamic that exists within the terrorist organizations (Klausen, 2016).

Like previous scholars, Melki and Jabado (2016) asserted that social media platforms are useful in power acquisition for jihadist groups like ISIS. The growth in the ethical, social, and legally abhorrent practices of the terrorist organizations, paired with their continued use of social media networks, establish, and coagulate their assimilated power (Melki & Jabado, 2016). Bertram (2016) agreed with other scholars in previous studies by alluding that the advent of social media has, in fact, empowered terrorist organizations. The built-in capabilities of those networks allow for unparalleled levels of secrecy, cementing furtive ways for information exchange (Bertram, 2016). Most importantly, those capabilities help to augment terrorist activities, including those that are designed to cause mass hysteria and promulgate terror (Bertram, 2016). These activities also include the actions that are geared towards virtually sabotaging critical infrastructures and critical resources, translating into operational power (Betram, 2016).

To dominate the virtual space, the ISIS developed an astonishing propensity to use digital weapons to control the operational environment. Melki & Jabado (2016) postulated that despite their less seemingly lethal characteristics, social media networks are enablers of the power the terrorist organizations seek. From new and improved trailblazing videos that are frequently shot using drone capabilities, to the growing use of Twitter, boosted by its multilingual messaging features, the power of those organizations is always ignited (Melki & Jabado, 2016). The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also pride in ensuring that the videos that they share are produced

and choreographed with great technological vim and persuasiveness (Melki & Jabado, 2016). This is essentially a functional attempt to appeal to target audiences within Western societies (Melki & Jabado, 2016). A fundamental part of the terrorist organizations' operational strategy is the exploitation of the user-to-user interaction (Bertram, 2016). This strategy helps those organizations to indiscriminately expand their activities, as it permits the development of a complex operational network (Betram, 2016). That is, they are able to illustrate hierarchical relationships among key actors within their functional domain, which shows control (Bertram, 2016). There is a general consensus across the literature that social media networks allow terrorist organizations to reach multiple audiences at the same time. This global and instantaneous reach effect, specifically with Twitter, is valuable for terrorist organizations (Jones & Mattiacci, 2019). Like other dissidents, terrorist operatives are able to use disintermediation, which means they are able to exchange information without interference from mainstream media outlets (Jones & Mattiacci, 2019). Thus, such information is unfiltered and presented in accordance with organizational intents, free of bias from external media sources (Jones & Mattiacci, 2019).

In addition to the global reach effect, Jones & Mattiacci (2019) presented the intriguing assumption that with social media networks, terrorist organizations are able to engage in scale shifting. Scale shifting is the ability to draw global attention to national concerns while being in charge of the narrative that is being presented (Jones & Mattiacci, 2019). This is a power heightening mechanism as the terrorist organizations are not only able to interpret domestic events, put disseminate the version of their interpretation on an international scale (Jones & Mattiacci, 2019). The power of the terrorist organizations is illustrated through their expanding online presence. Sultan (2016) hypothesized that the ongoing portrayals of the terrorist

organizations had branded videos showing executions, available training that is meticulously designed, overwhelming expansionism, among other activities, confirm deep-seated organizational potency. Tucker (2017) examined the widespread assumption that social media networks operate as double-edged swords. The author presented a simple yet effective framework to shape a collective understanding of social media and power at the user level. Social media networks have provided a voice to those who would have been conventionally excluded from social and or political discourses, specifically on a global scene (Tucker, 2017). Terrorist organizations have opted to use this newly found voice to aid their movement by sharing their cause, to further fortify participation from global actors (Tucker, 2017). This enhances power as the available communication tools democratize information, allowing actors who would have otherwise not been privy to such information, access (Tucker, 2017).

Additionally, Valentini (2020) added that social media networks allow for network building in the virtual domain, a key element of power. Al-Ali (2019) presented an alternate yet interesting perspective on the aspect of power in relation to terrorist organizations' social media networks. Social media networks control the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of information (Al-Ali, 2019). This allows critical players in terrorist organizations to be able to edit and distribute information to their target audiences (Al-Ali, 2019). To further advance power notion, Paavola et al. (2016) concurred that as the volume of available information continues to accelerate, so does the element of unpredictability, giving increased power to the sources of the data. This is because the structure of terrorist organizations continues to become increasingly opaque, making it harder to implement countermeasures against (Paavola et al., 2016). Hakim (2020) concluded that social media networks enhance the terrorist organizations' operational

capabilities by utilizing algorithms geared at amplifying custom-made content, which is based on organization predispositions.

Counterterrorism Since 9/11

The porous and disturbing nature of jihadist terrorism continues to be of grave concern within the United States. As social media innovations and the consumption thereof peak, so does the rationale that motivates jihadist terrorism. Jihadist terrorist groups are determined to benefit from all available resources that satisfy their functional objectives. Those available means include the ongoing capitalization of the inherent capabilities of social media platforms (Rudner, 2017). Hence, government officials around the world continue to grapple with formulating and implementing effective measures to counter the efficacy of those groups. As purported by the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the United States is faced with a full range of terrorist threats that are within and beyond its geographic location, accelerated by internet accessibility (White House, 2018). As a result, the use of all available domestic and global capabilities is essential in countering jihadist terrorist activities (White House, 2018).

In the United States, it is intuitively plausible to believe that jihadist terrorism has receded since 9/11(Bergen, Sterman & Salyk-Virk, 2019). However, the increasingly acute challenge is domestic terrorism which is often influenced by jihadist propaganda (Bergen et. al, 2019). Furthermore, the authors notes that ISIS has been very instrumental in an extraordinary number of Americans who have engaged jihadist terrorism ((Bergen et. al, 2019). Approximately eighty individuals were charged in 2015, for their engagement in jihadist terrorism activates (Bergen et. al, 2019). According to Jones and Markusen (2018), the U.S. government officials have recognized the ongoing difficulty and conceded that counterterrorism strategies are founded on the grounds of collective actions. This is primarily because the nation has accepted that

jihadist terror groups' adroit abilities to use social media, maximizes the threat level that the groups pose (Jones & Markusen, 2018). In response, several strategic initiatives have been put in place to mitigate the risks associated with those threats. Those measures include a series of pilot programs in different cities across the U.S., aimed at reaching relevant authorities, who are instrumental in the identification and ultimate eradication of jihadist terrorist activities (Bergen et. al, 2019). The scholars acquiesced that the U.S. has made exorbitant investments into its counterterrorism initiatives. Between 2002 and 2017, the nation allotted approximately $2.8 trillion dollars to those initiatives (Bergen et. al, 2019). Comparably, prior to 9/11 the United States' "No Fly" since account for about 16 people. In 2016, that list had increased to over 81,000 people (Bergen et. al, 2019). Additionally, the establishment of the National Counterterrorism Center, Transportation Security Administration and the Department of Homeland Security are among the response measures (Bergen et. al, 2019).

Figure 3.

Terrorism-Related Cases in the U.S. from 2015-2019
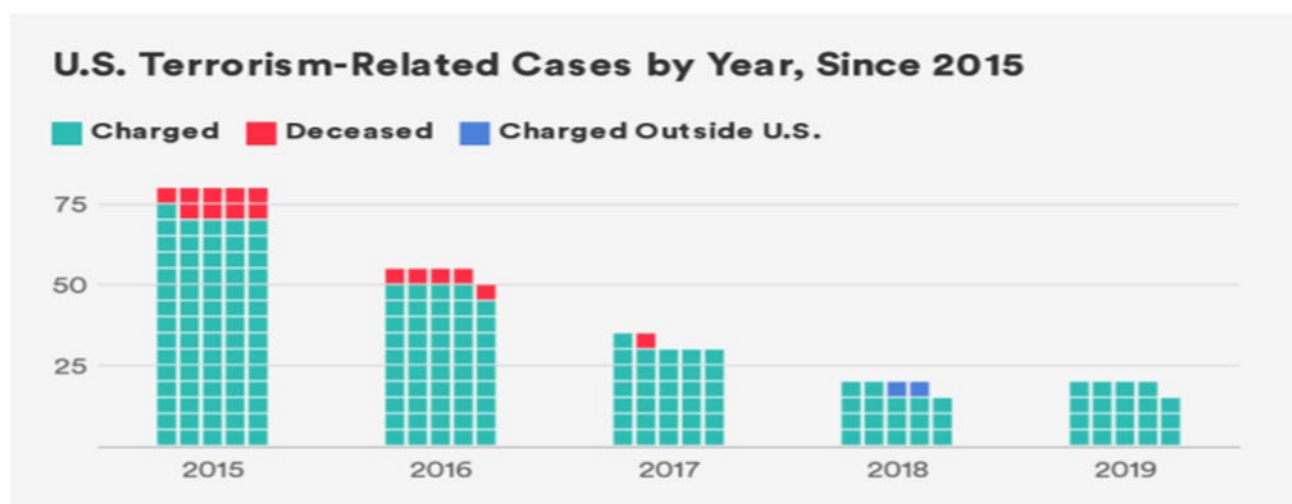
Note: The figure shows cases related to terrorism in the United States from 2015 to 2019. Copyrighted by Bergen et. al, 2019.

Yonah (2018) advanced that the increasing urge by some social media users to gravitate and become inspired by jihadist rhetoric is preposterous. The growing inclination of those individuals to find those alleged narrative appealing, is the basis on which the threat is built (Yonah, 2018). It is imperative that U.S. continues to take proactive measures to ensure mitigate those threats. An important feature of that mitigation effort is the legal provisions that aid responding officials in their quest to access electronic evidence, without violation of individual rights and liberties (Yonah, 2018). According to Thompson (2019) the ubiquitous characteristics of social media platforms have contributed to the complexity of the risks associated with their use. As people become more immersed into features of those networks, vulnerabilities and risks increase. With the increased use of social media networks, servicing providers play a major role in the preventing the permeation of vile content to include jihadist terrorist activates (Thompson, 2019). The United States' national security is of significant importance, and as such continued practical and pre-emptive efforts are vital to safeguard same. Hence, social media companies must be held accountable for their deterrence efforts or the lack thereof (Thompson, 2019).

Some scholars have agreed that some social media networks have implemented measures to counter the terrorist activities in cyberspace. According to Hernandez & Olson (2019), in 2016 social media networks like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube among others, formed a partnership dedicated to strategizing and eliminating terrorist contents from their platforms. The initiative included a shared database that detects and flags terrorist contents, resulting in an automatic block when a user attempts to repost the flagged material (Hernandez & Olson (2019). The United States' National Strategy for Counterterrorism illustrated a number of priority actions to counter terrorism. The strategy aims to acquire and sustain resources that ensure counterterrorism measures are in pace with the ever-changing features of the operational

environment (White House, 2018). An important feature of the aim is the holistic development of measures that are built on coordination and integration among government agencies and applicable private companies. Government officials remain resolute in their pursuit to use state of the art tools, to address challenges posed by technological advancements, in relation to the enduring character of jihadist terrorism (White House, 2018).

Legal and Ethical Implications of Counterterrorism

According to Speckhard and Ellenberg (2020) policymakers, academic scholars and practitioners have all agreed that jihadist groups are extremely prolific in the use of social media platforms. It is against that assumption that counter measures that include social media platforms are created. Since 9/11, the United States have implemented and enacted different policies and regulations to help in the fight against jihadist terrorism. Crenshaw and LaFree (2017) pointed out that the issue of ethical and legal dilemmas is an ever-present synthesis in those policies. That is because the counter measures that are geared towards security are also interpreted as invasion of collective privacy, making them ethically and legally objectionable (Crenshaw & LaFree, 2017). The continued evolution of social media networks and the subsequent jihadist threat it accommodates, further compound the tactical and ethical imperatives that underscore counterterrorism initiatives (Crenshaw & LaFree, 2017).

The U.S.A Patriot Act is among the most significant legislative actions that the United States took, following 9/11. At its core, the provisions of this law permit the expanding authority of the federal government, in pursuance of collective national safety (Taylor & Swanson, 2019). However, those provisions also inadvertently deplete the democratic fiber on which the United States is founded. That is because they have provoked an unwarranted balance between individual freedoms and national security (DeRosa, 2017; Taylor & Swanson, 2019). According

to Taylor and Swanson (2019), the Patriot Act was created in an effort to protect the people of the United States from further acts of terrorism. The provisions of the law give the federal government and by extension the intelligence community a greater level of functional autonomy. According to DeRosa (2017), the U.S.A Patriot Act amended the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), authorizing roving wiretaps. The author postulated that such authority allows officials to intercept communication lines with the use of court documents (DeRosa, 2017). The contention within such autonomy is that that the lines to be intercepted are not specified in those documents, thus their applicability to communication lines based solely on authorities' inclinations. The Patriot Act (2017) website mentioned that the U.S.A Patriot Act diametrically violates the provisions of the Fourth Amendment. The violations are founded on the exhaustive authority of the federal government to monitor everyone's communication activities in an effort to counter jihadist terrorist activities.

The legal tradition within the United States is largely influenced by the tenets of its Constitution. Hence, the elements of perceived guilt and innocence; fair trial proceedings and proper legal representation among other themes, are pertinent to all law breakers, to include jihadist terrorist (Crenshaw & LaFree, 2017). As a result, the guilt of terrorist cannot be presumed, but rather extensively proven. Additionally, alleged terrorists are allowed due process, which sometimes can moderate the use of calculated force, in certain aspects of counterterrorism policies (Crenshaw & LaFree, 2017). The International Peace Institute (2018) website supported the forgoing, indicating that the effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts is largely dependent on the approach that guides those efforts. Oftentimes, some approaches can be at odds with the rules of the nation, blurring the line between legality and necessity (International Peace Institute,

2018). Consequently, counterterrorism measures can have negative repercussions for the individuals that they are designed to provide protection for.

Preventions to Future Engagements in Terrorism

The area of prevention to future engagements in jihadist terrorist activities is grossly understudied. In fact, the research focuses on most available studies, in relation to deterrent activities are mostly built on reactive as opposed to pre-emptive models. Prior research emphasized the causes of engagements more than deterrents to those engagements. Hutchinson (2019) augmented the significance of those research by indicating that understanding the objectives that drive specific actions are critical to effective deterrence. Deterrence can be regarded as the ability to prevent something from happening (Hutchinson, 2019). Admittedly, such prevention can occur by either making it costly (punishment) or difficult (denial) for those occurrences to be successful (Hutchinson, 2019). United Nations (2023) website indicated that engagement in terrorism continues to decay the developmental fabric of the younger generation, depriving them of holistic growth opportunities. It is imperative that modern societies endeavor to create and implement practical, all-inclusive socio-economic, political, and legal frameworks to coagulate the disengagement process (United Nations, 2023).

Lorraine et al. (2019) made a concerted effort to examine the impetuses behind individuals' involvement in terrorism. There is a ludicrous assumption that they are typically different from other members of the populace, thus defining them as the outgroup (Lorraine et al., 2019). The authors highlighted narcissistic and mental illnesses as some manifestation tendencies to engage in terrorist activities (Lorraine et al., 2019). Cyrus et al. (2019) conceded with the foregoing, indicating that individuals with paranoia, unstable personality disorders, and anti-social behavior traits are connected to terrorist activities. Conversely, the authors also

mentioned that previous studies have failed to agree on an exact psychological profile that shapes individuals' involvement in terrorist activities (Cyrus et al., 2019). With keen consideration of the causes of engagements in terrorist activities, Bensalah (2017) proposed that the basis of terrorist threats is founded on the exploitation of both national and global vulnerabilities. The continued expansion of terrorism is an account that factors that are provocations to engagement in terrorism are not always identified and appropriately addressed. Thus, terrorist profiles and activities continue to gain strongholds in the operational environment (Bensalah, 2017). The author used a qualitative research method with a case study approach to unearth data about Moroccan youths' engagement in terrorist activities. In Morocco, the younger generations' involvement in terrorist activities is a significant phenomenon (Bensalah, 2017).

Contrary to popular belief, the religious affiliation of participants as a contributory factor to such endeavors is secondary (Bensalah, 2017). As agreed in previous studies, the accessibility of terrorist propaganda on social media networks is attracting youths to terrorism at an alarming rate. To that assumption, Bensalah (2017) also concurred, presenting the belief that such accessibility is enticing female jihadists at relative levels. The author claimed that the generation of practical policy solutions like reforms in Morocco is deemed as a supplementary antidote to the youths' involvement in terrorist activities (Bensalah, 2017). Those reforms are founded on the collection ambition to create an atmosphere that provides teenagers and all citizens alike with religious, socio-economic, and political inclusion (Bensalah, 2017). Thus, enhancing collective and sustainable human security, a principal part of the national security strategy. Peptan (2019) introduced a less than a widespread assumption, hypothesizing that deterring engagements in terrorist activities is dependent on the capabilities of the available intelligence services. The security onus is on the intelligence services, and as such, they have to be able to anticipate and

provide accurate predictions of the changes within the security environment (Peptan, 2019). This makes the prevention, mitigation, and or elimination of the risks of terrorism less arduous (Peptan, 2019). Innes et al. (2017) furthered that premise by stating that the overall effectiveness of any type of preventative measure rests on calculated predictions of the risks and threats supported by threat intelligence. Given such information, it makes it easier to either interdict and or interfere with those risk factors to reduce vulnerabilities and impact (Innes et al., 2017).

Like other scholars, Schiano, Chebly and Ruiz (2017) maintained that the proliferation of terrorist organizations through online forums has increased in prominence in relation to global consciousness. The authors presented the notion that terrorist organizations are able to remain persistent because of the targets with whom they opt to engage (Schiano et al., 2017). Their target audiences include the vulnerable, alienated individuals who have been marginalized by the environment (Schiano et al., 2017; Woodhams, 2016). To that end, the disengagement process for those individuals would start with methodically addressing the factors on which the element of marginalization is predicated. Much like Bensalah (2017), the authors agreed that moving forward, the provision of pioneering political and socio-economic participation opportunities for the marginalized is significant. Such an approach helps in the creation of meaningful alternatives to unethical practices such as engagement in terrorist activities (Schiano et al., 2017). Nguyen (2019) expanded the previous premise, adding the community policing approach a contributing deterrent to engagements in terrorist activities. This efficacy of this approach is grounded on its iconic, all-inclusive feature that allows law enforcement officials and the strategic public to operate in unison (Nguyen, 2019). As a collaborative tactic, the community policing approach has moored Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) controls. Those initiatives allow for the

mobilization of local communities to work together to reduce and ultimately eliminate engagements in terrorist activities (Nguyen, 2019).

Meleagrou-Hitchens (2017) expanded on the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives, highlighting potential weaknesses. The author claimed that in the United States, National Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) controls relating to counter-messaging and involvement in terrorist activities have been ineffectual in many ways (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2017). It is against that background that the State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC), now emphasize strategies designed to amplify global Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2017). Think Again Turn Away initiative is among the efforts of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) that is designed to counter online terrorist rhetoric and subsequent engagements in those activities (Meleagrou-Hitchens, 2017). According to Ehiane (2019), deterring involvements in terrorist activities is complicated. However, successful efforts should be founded on the principle of education. Countering the permeation of radical ideologies starts with educated moderates (Ehiane, 2019). Additionally, consideration of cultural, political, and socio-economic inclinations of the target audiences is critical (Ehiane, 2019; Bensalah, 2017).

Some scholars across the literature acquiesced that the younger generation is more susceptible to the promulgation of terrorist ideologies, thus translating into their involvement in those activities (Bastable, 2017; Sugihartati et al., 2020). Technological advancements are an expanding and regular part of both teenagers' and young adults' lives. There active and growing use of social media continues to increase the propensity of them becoming exposed and or introduced to terrorist activities (Sugihartati et al., 2020). Studies have shown that terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), through the use of social

media, consistently manipulate and influence their target groups' perception of contrasting realities (Sugihartati et al., 2020). The authors further assumed that the emergence of the internet and social media networks had created those new realities for both teenagers and young adults alike. Hence, both the former and latter tend to become social recluses, on account of their social media usages, giving the terrorist operatives a more excellent opportunity to engage with them and generate a commitment to their cause (Sugihartati et al., 2020). A contrary, yet a thought-provoking narrative is that teenagers and young adults are typical abhorrent to information presented via mainstream media sources (Bastable, 2017).

Consequently, they have grown increasingly reliant on social media networks as sources of information. The narratives presented on social media networks are typically distorted, giving fanatics like the terrorist organizations a place to thrive (Bastable, 2017). Some scholars have agreed that social media networks allow the terrorist organizations to indiscriminately misinform teenagers and young adults, provoking their curiosity and resulting in altered perceptions and their eventual involvement in terrorism (Bastable, 2017; Cambron, 2019).

Speckhard, Shajkovci, and Ahmed (2019) provided qualitative research using the case study approach. They presented data supporting the narrative that terrorist organizations tend to exploit and ultimately recruit and radicalize the vulnerable. In the study, the authors used focus groups from Somali American population. The findings indicated that the communities in which the participants lived are at risk for the penetration of terrorist activities (Speckhard et al., 2019). The authors suggested that intricate, entrenched grievances within the also population heighten that risk factor (Speckhard et al., 2019). Most importantly, identity crisis, that is, individuals who are on a quest to find themselves is also a key contributor to those who become radicalized within the population as well (Speckhard et al., 2019). Those perceived identity crisis stem from

broken family structures, personal frustrations, among other push factors (Speckhard et al., 2019). To successfully address the issue of teenagers and young adults' involvement in terrorism, responding officials must complement the typical repressive approach (Schils & Verhage, 2017). Spalek (2016) also confirmed that families play an instrumental, psychological role in individuals' involvement in terrorist activities. Some authors believed that individuals who are exposed to the radicalization process assume new identities, thus disconnecting from their family and other social institutions within society (Speckhard et al., 2019; Spalek, 2016).

In formulating potential tactics, techniques, and procedures to deter individual engagements in acts of terrorism, it is imperative to consider the assumption that potential terrorist operatives reject the structure of their existing environment (Schils & Verhage, 2017). That is, the social, political, economic, and possibly the religious structure diametrically oppose their viewpoints in those regards. Consequently, it should be the anticipation that they will also tend to reject deterrence factors put in place by the said environment (Schils & Verhage, 2017). Hence, it is vital that preventative policies and practices informed by appropriate research are developed to eliminate the inclinations of potential targets to engage in terrorist activities (Schils & Verhage, 2017). Ali, Mohamed, Moss, Barrelle, and Lentini (2017) added to the previous, noting that in instances where policies and practices challenge the personal values of potential recruits, they will remain more predisposed to engaging in acts of terrorism.

Lobnikar, Mraović and Prislan (2019) examined accountability as an essential deterrent factor to engagement in terrorism in their study. The theme of accountability, as assessed by the authors, is in relation to identifying and respecting the needs of potential target audiences (Lobnikar et al., 2019). Such actions will permit the utility of preventative and intervention measures in those environments, strengthening the response capabilities of the vulnerable

(Lobnikar et al., 2019). Ingram (2018) also evaluate the importance of accountability in his qualitative research. The author maintained that accountability and its effectiveness in deterring engagement in terrorism rest on the principles of the individual within the environment, the strategic public, the rule of law, and proportionality (Ingram, 2018).

Summary

In culmination, Chapter 2 of this study is entitled literature review. However, for purposes of organization, structure, and navigation, the chapter is comprised of four different sub-sections, namely: Overview, Theoretical Framework, Related Literature, and Summary. The overview section of the study documented a precise yet comprehensive illustration of the way the chapter is organized. It provided a synopsis of the information that the chapter covered. Additionally, it provided a purpose statement, coagulating the importance of the literature review as well as the theoretical orientations that guided the study. The overview section also highlighted the research techniques and databases used to collect the information that made up the chapter. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Social Structure and Learning Theory (SSSL) are the frameworks highlighted in the Theoretical Framework section. These theories were examined with consideration to their usefulness in understanding the fundamental concepts of the research questions. The related literature section presented a thematic analysis of the surveyed literature, exploring the efficacy of five different themes, namely: The Evolution of Social Media, Planning, Radicalization, and Recruitment; Social Media and Jihadist Propaganda; Communication Strategies; Power Acquisition; Counterterrorism since 9/11; Legal and Ethical Implications of Counterterrorism and Prevention to Future Engagements in Terrorism. Each of the themes explored averaged 6 pages of information and included twenty (20) or more scholarly references used to solidify the application of the related literature. Overall, the summary section

concluded the undertakings of chapter 2, with emphasis on the previously mentioned three sub-

sections.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this case study was to provide an inclusive framework that examined, detailed, and categorized the roles that social media plays in the expansion of terrorism. The study also seeks to unearth findings that are geared towards closing the knowledge and research gap, regarding factors that can prevent future generations' engagement in jihadist terrorist activities. The ubiquitous expansion of social media use is an appealing virtue for law-abiding citizens. This is because of the interconnectedness that it permits, allowing engagements, despite geographic locations (Domasneanu-Miulescu, 2019). Likewise, it also serves the same purpose for jihadist terrorist organizations, much to the detriments of those citizens. Based on the foregoing, it is a fair assumption that the internet and by extension social media, facilitates both good and malevolent activities. Jihadist terrorist organizations continue to use social media to strengthen their activities as they are battling for supremacy in the cyber domain. These organizations exploit the anonymity, accessibility, and somewhat unregulated element of social media platforms (Domasneanu-Miulescu, 2019). This remains a major, unassailable threat to both domestic and international security. The primary purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed examination of the data collection procedures, the research design, and data analysis method.

Design

This qualitative research adopted the single instrumental case study design. Swenson (2018) advanced the assumption of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), indicating that qualitative data are a source of well-informed, descriptive data that seeks to explain human behaviors and practices. Qualitative research allows for the preservation of chronological flow of

occurrences and consequences in specific settings (Swenson, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) furthered that assumption and added that qualitative research allows for the exploration of phenomena in a natural setting, and the interpretation of same, be elucidated through words. Qualitative research helps to reveal a more detailed understanding of an issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Most importantly, it allows the researcher to explore the phenomena, and also individuals with experiences relating to those issues, can share their perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative research does not always require numerical values. Rather, it uses words to provide in-depth understanding of a particular issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017). To adequately understand the problem being analyzed in the study, the qualitative research method allows for the production of applicable information, which places emphasis on reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Queirós et. al, 2017). By contrast, quantitative research emphasizes significant features such as quantifiable data inferred from samples of a larger population (Queirós et. al, 2017). It is against that background that qualitative research methodology was chosen as being the most appropriate for this study.

Single Instrumental Case Study

As a qualitative research design, the single instrumental case study is appropriate for the research underway. The single instrumental case study design is fundamental to the study as it allows the research to focus on the central research question of jihadist terrorist use of social media, using the United States as the bounded case to illustrate the phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This case study design allowed for the exploration of real-life, contemporary-bounded system overtime, through exhaustive data collection which includes the use of different methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research topic fits seamlessly into the frame of a case study, as it has some of the defining features of the design. The use of social media and terrorism

can be characterized as the events in the case being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Both

concepts are bounded, that is they can be adequately demarcated and labelled based on dominant

considerations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018), case

study design provides a higher level of flexibility that is not necessarily presented by other

qualitative approaches. The case study design is valuable to the research because it is malleable

and is designed to be applicable to the case, and most importantly the research questions.

Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) noted that the expanding frequency and constant evolution in

understanding technological innovations and advents, requires the application field-based

research designs like case studies.

Research Questions

This research aims to construct a theoretical foundation that will provide answers to the

following research questions:

RQ1. How do jihadist terrorist organizations use social media for recruitment and radicalization

purposes?

RQ2. How can future engagements in jihadist activities promulgated by social media be

prevented?

RQ3. Why does social media as a recruitment tool for jihadist terrorist organizations differ from

 traditional tools?

RQ4. How effective is social media in jihadist propaganda activities?

Sites

A suite in the Mary Lynch building in Columbia, Maryland and a Club House conference

room in Hanover, Maryland are the sites used to facilitate the data collection technique for this

research. Both buildings are secured with digitalized doors, which requires codes for access.

These sites were purposefully selected based on features such as physical security, travel convenience and adequate spacing. The Mary Lynch building is a high-rise building designed for very high occupancy of different professionals. However, there are suites within the building, with different offices within those suites, which is added security. This suite was chosen because it allows both the researcher and the participants to feel safe to communicate about the phenomena within the study. There is a pyramid-shaped hierarchical structure within this suite, the researcher has a top-tier position, and hence, it was a selective process that the suite was unoccupied on interview days. The participants in this study will be identified using pseudonyms **P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16.** The interview for participants **11** through **16** were conducted at this site.

The Club House conference room is in a one-story building but is also a very secured and quiet environment. The researcher was allowed access to that room on the criterion that it is a part of home community features. The use of the room was prescheduled four weeks in advance to ensure availability. The clubhouse setting was beautifully arranged, quite aesthetically pleasing with couches as opposed to office desks. This aura helped the participants to be more relaxed in the way the information was shared with the researcher. The organizational structure of the clubhouse was very functional, and the guaranteed security proved to be advantageous. As such, the clubhouse is independently managed, so there was not a conflict of scheduling as it relates to availability. The interviews for participants **P1** through **P10** were conducted using this site.
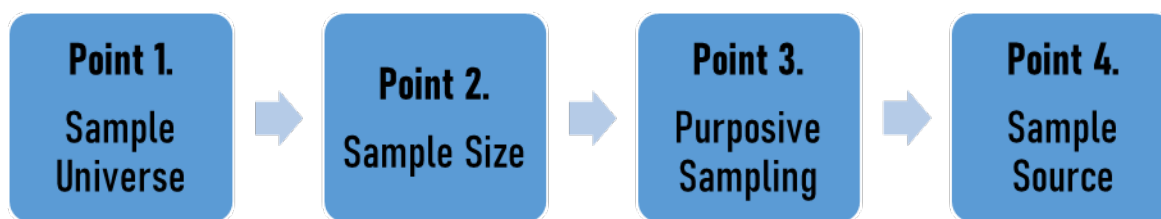
Participants

For this study, the researcher conducted a purposeful sampling based on its applicability to the research design. The four-point approach, illustrated in figure 3, which was adopted by Ogunlana (2018), guided the participant selection. Benoot, Hannes and Bilsen (2016) mentioned that purposeful sampling allows for the selection of cases that are rich in information that can inform in depth inquiries. Such criterion is the defining efficacy of purposeful sampling as those cases afford the opportunities to learn more about the central phenomena in the study (Benoot et. al, 2016). The purposeful sampling as the name suggests was useful in the study as it allows the researcher to use sound judgment to select the sample pool with strong considerations to the information needed for the study (Benoot et. al, 2016, Shine, 2019 & Stratton, 2019). Shine (2019) conceded that the usefulness and power of purposeful sampling is the ability to target specific individuals to obtain data to inform the study or evaluation. The sample pool was selected from a plethora of men and women who work in related professional background who were fluent speakers of the English Language. These backgrounds included Law Enforcement, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, Cybersecurity Corporations, and the Office of Director of Intelligence.

The sample size is a total of sixteen (16) participants, 11 males and five females. According to Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe and Young (2018), experts in qualitative studies have conceded that there is not a definitive number to appropriate sample size. This is primarily because sample sizes are contingent on different factors to include systematic principles and the element usefulness (Vasileiou et. al, 2018). Ideally, sample pools for qualitative studies are usually smaller as that is relevant to supporting depth associated with those types of inquiry. Most importantly, purposive sampling is designed to provide exhaustive information that is

pertinent to the phenomena being studied (Vasileiou et. al, 2018). The participant's ages ranged

between twenty-one and sixty years old. This selection was deliberate because the researcher

wanted participants who were acquainted with both pre and post social media and terrorism era.

Having a sample pool that has lived professional and personal experiences with the phenomena

can arguably provide more substantive insights, much to the furtherance of the research. Patino

and Ferreira (2018) supported the foregoing narrative by advancing that for superior study

practices, it is standard for researchers to establish inclusion and or exclusion criteria for study

participants. Specifically for inclusion criteria, critical details include but are not limited to

geographic traits and demographics (Patino & Ferreira, 2018).

Participants were recruited for the research by contacting Army Intelligence

Headquarters, Navy Intelligence Headquarters, Local Law Enforcement Public Relations

Officers, and the Office of Director of Intelligence via telephone, as well as the use of my own

relevant professional network. The purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to the

representatives for each organization. To further stratify the population sample, critical

information like age, gender and years of professional experience were duly emphasized. An

email template and the interview protocol as shown in Appendix A, was subsequently sent to

potential participants, who responded with the willingness to participate. An informed consent

form illustrated in Appendix B was also sent to the participants. The final number of participants

in the study was sixteen.

Figure 4.

Four Point Approach for Participant Selection

Note: The figure illustrates the four-point approach for the study's participant selection logic (Ogunlana, 2018).

Point 1. Sample Universe

Ogunlana (2018) and Robinson (2014) acquiesced that the target population is the most quintessential part in the participant selection process. This process defines and illustrates the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selected sample population (Robinson, 2014). The researcher chose law enforcers, practitioners, security experts and private sector affiliates.

Point 2. Sample Size

Both theoretical and applied considerations influence the sample size for qualitative studies (Robinson, 2014). A sample size is determined in the preliminary stage of the research based on the objectives of the study. Typically, a permanent number is not provided, rather a range guestimate of minimum to maximum (Robinson, 2014 & Vasileiou et. al, 2018). Data saturation and sample size depend on the research method and approach. There is much discussion on what is the best sample size for qualitative research. Data saturation is reached when the researcher logically assumes no new information is being gained (Creswell, 2013; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Patton, 2015). The researcher opted to use a sixteen-participant sample size, which was presumably practical.

Point 3. Purposive Sampling

Once the sample universe and sample size have been defined, the process to determine appropriate sampling is important. The purposive sampling strategy is one of the strategic options that can be used. The use of a purposive sampling strategy is indicative that the researcher's understanding of the research questions and topic that is being studied, determine that a specific target audience has the appropriate insight to further the study (Robinson, 2014).

Point 4: Sample Source

Upon determining the sample population, size and strategy for the study, the next practical step is to find the participants (Robinson, 2014). This stage of the process is critical as it requires strong ethical and organizational skills. The onus is on the researcher to provide applicable information to the prospective interviewees. This information includes research objectives and overall participation process (Robinson, 2014).

Procedures

For this data collection procedure, approval was sought from the Institution Review Board at Liberty University. Creswell and Poth (2018) agreed that before the data collection can start, seeking and obtaining the approval from the Institutional Review Boards is vital. This is because it is of great significance that the approach and data collection techniques of the study underway, are appropriate based on specific guidelines (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The review process and the ultimate approval, illustrate that the study does not present any deviation from ethical standards within the research process. Once the Institutional Review Board's approval was granted, the researcher contacted the local Army Intelligence Headquarters, Navy Intelligence Headquarters, Local Law Enforcement Public Relations Officer, and the Office of Director of Intelligence via telephone to narrow down the potential sample.

The sample population was chosen from a team of experts within the above organizations based on professional experiences which translates into knowledge value. Swenson (2018) stated that the use of social media and jihadist terrorism are specialized disciplines. Hence, it is important that experts are appropriately identified to facilitate the gathering of profound and valuable data to advance the study. The selection of experts from those organizations also diversified responses as they have all worked in, or close to the phenomena of jihadist terrorism and social media, but in different operational spaces. This selection helped the researcher to garner information from various perspectives to interpret, analyze and code, to uncover reoccurring themes and thought patterns (Swenson, 2018).

To further solidify the organizational selections, Nagengast (2021) mentioned that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2017), advised that there are a limited number of individuals within the intelligence community that are qualified to participate in this study with consideration to the phenomena. Following the phone call to the person of contact for each organization, an email was received with a list of potential participants. A response email using the Email to Potential Participants (Appendix A), was then sent to that sample pool. In addition to that email, the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C1-C3) were also sent to the sample. The researcher required both completed and signed documents, before the sample was confirmed. Seven participants were interviewed via Microsoft Teams and two via the telephone, and eight in person. For the virtual interview methods, both the researcher and the participants were in safe sites behind at least one closed door. The interviews were recorded using the Rev Recorder App on an iPhone, which is also a transcription App. Both written and verbal requests for consents were provided to the participants prior to the recording of all the

interviews. All interviews were conducted on different days, at different times based on participants' availabilities and convenience, with consideration to time zone differences.

The Researcher's Role

I have worked primarily in logistics in the United States Army for 10 years and have a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and a Master of Arts in Homeland Security. The participants for the selected sample pool did not have any pre-existing relationship with me. Thus, voiding the possibilities of any concerns that relate to conflict of interest and subsequent relay of partiality in the data provided. Throughout the research process, I made a concerted effort to employ open-mindedness as a defining skill to guide personal responses and maintain focus. Weatherford and Maitra (2019) described that effort as bracketing, suggesting that it allows the researcher to desist judgment based on personal proclivity, and entertain different perspectives and opinions. It is against that background those alternative theories, evidence and opinions were valued (Ogunlana, 2018). The researcher's professional experience as a Chaplain Recruiter helped to enhance skills such as active listening, emotional maturity and discernment, which served as great efficacy to the research. Targeting a specific audience is among the core competencies of an effective Chaplain Recruiter. I have mastered that competency with potential for growth, which largely assisted me in this research process. Specifically in the definition of my sample universe and sample sourcing.

Data Collection

The data collection techniques used for this study were semi-structured interview (primary) and analysis of scholarly journals, government websites and books (secondary). According to Sergeant (2012) interviews, document review and observation are some of the most widely used data collection methods used in qualitative studies. These data collection methods

can be used in combination or isolated (Sargeant, 2012). Ogunlana (2018) mentioned that Rubin and Rubin (2012) assumed that the usefulness of semi-structured interviews are relevant when the study seeks to provide answers to 'how' and 'why' questions. Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson and Kangasniemi (2016) agreed that semi-structured interviews offer a high level of flexibility and are frequently used in qualitative research, which contributed to its adoption to the study. There were thirteen open-ended questions that were designed to uncover information about Jihadist terrorist organization's use of social media as opposed to traditional media, and ways to deter future engagements in terrorist activities. The questions were specifically intended to uncover a great level of profundity about the phenomena. The data obtained from the interviews were recorded using the Sony UX560F digital tape recorder. This tape recorder was appropriate as its features included built-in USB connection and high-sensitivity microphone. The researcher then used ATLAS.ti for transcribe and code the manuscript.

Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interviews were conducted using different modes of communication depending on the availability and liking of the participants. According to Priyadarshini (2020) semi-structured interviews are beneficial as they are designed with strong consideration to an interview guide which emphasizes specific topics and themes to be discussed. Semi-structured interviews offer a higher level of structural flexibility when compared to structured interview (Priyadarshini, 2020). Semi-structured interviews technique allows for a very interactive data collection process. Through such interactions, the researcher is able to glean perspective on the ways the individuals' process and understand the realities of their environments (Iyamu, 2018; Nagengast, 2021; Ogunlana, 2018). Polak and Green (2016) contended that the semi-structured interview technique is a suitable method when the phenomena being studied is multifaceted

(Iyamu, 2018). According to Ogunlana (2018) semi-structured interview as a qualitative research method, allow researchers to collect data from experts from the fields associated with the phenomena. The six open-ended questions were designed to answer the research questions in the study.

1. What are the most common methods jihadist terrorists use on social media to radicalize a user?

2. Why do some social media users become involved in terrorist activities?

3. What are some methods that can be used to discourage social media users from engaging in Jihadist terrorist activities?

4. Why are social media platforms more appealing to terrorist than other media outlets?

5. What are some distinctive features of social media platforms that benefit jihadist terrorist organizations?

6. How effective is the use of social media in radicalization in propaganda for jihadist terrorist groups?

Figure 5

Objectives of the Interview Questions

☐ Design to probe participant's knowledge of jihadist terrorist activities and their use of social media.
☐ Explore possible pull factors that participants think influence social media user's engagement in jihadist terrorist activities.
☐ Identify and discuss plausible solutions to dissuade social media users from engaging in jihadist terrorism. Discuss practical tools and approaches that social media providers can use to assuage engagements in jihadist terrorism.

☐ Delve into the participant's awareness of the features of social media and the ways those features serve jihadist terrorist organizations
☐Query participant's understanding of the benefits those activities provide to jihadist terrorist organizations. Allows participants to reflect on personal and professional awareness of jihadist terrorism and social media users
☐Discuss the relevance of social media in jihadist terrorist organizations' propaganda and radicalization.

Note: The figure above provides a detailed explanation of the purpose for each of the open-ended interview questions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis section of the study was a critical element as it allowed the researcher to synthesize and made sense of the available data. Priyadarshini (2020) hypothesized that Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990) defined the data analysis process as an awareness of the distinctions in the meaning of the available data. The data analysis process referred to the distinguishing feature of possessing acuity, the ability to give meaning to the data presented, the capacity to understand it, and the ability to separate the relevant data from data that is not useful (Priyadarshini, 2020). Sargeant (2012) furthered the preceding narrative by indicating that the purpose of data analysis is to understand the available data and the ensuing patterns and themes, to further enable a greater level of understanding of the phenomena of the research.

This case study adopted the Colaizzi's phenomenological methodology to analyze the data. This methodology is applicable because it facilitates the fundamental process through which lived experiences of complex phenomena can be consistently explored (Wirihana et. al,

2018). To expedite the research process, the data collection and data analysis were conducted simultaneously. That is, as interviews were scheduled and recorded, they were subsequently uploaded to ATLAS.ti for transcription. Nagengast (2021) mentioned that ATLAS.ti is a very flexible software that is renowned for performance excellence in audio recordings. The dynamism of this software allowed for the acceleration of the process, resulting in it being far less overwhelming. As each transcription became available, they were sent to the respective participants for revision and confirmation of the findings that were captured.

Figure 6

Colaizzi (1978) Seven-step Data Analysis Method

Note: The above figure illustrates the data collection method coined by Colaizzi (1978) and used by Wirihana, Welch, Williamson, Christensen, Bakon & Craft (2018).

Step One: Read and Reread the Transcript

Once the interview manuscripts were transcribed and properly coded, it was important to repeatedly read and reread it. This process helped the researcher to gain a comprehensive sense of the phenomena by becoming exhaustively familiar with the content. It also made certain that statements made by the participants remain at the core of the data analysis (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Two: Identify Significant Statements

While becoming familiarized with the content of the manuscript, the researcher identified participant statements based on their applicability to the phenomena (Wirihana et. al, 2018). . The participant statements that relatable to the phenomena and shaped by the participants' experiences were deemed significant (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Three: Frame Meanings from Significant Statements

Once significant statements were identified, the researcher formulated relevant meanings to those statements. The significant statements lack efficacy until meanings were formulated and attributed to them (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Four: Create Theme Clusters and Themes

With the formulated meanings, the researcher created theme clusters and themes based on relatedness among participant's accounts of the phenomena. The formation of theme clusters involves the grouping of significant statements and their attributed meanings (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Five: Describe the Essence of the Phenomena

The interview manuscript was used to identify themes and clusters and the significant meanings were periodically reassessed (Wirihana et. al, 2018). This process helped the

researcher identify alternative perspectives and ensure that the essence of the phenomena is appropriately and thoroughly documented (Wirihana et. al, 2018). Following the cautious re-analysis, the researcher and participants validate the description of the phenomena (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Six: Generate Central Structure of the Phenomena

Wirihana et. al (2018) agreed that the primary purpose of this step as purported by Colaizzi 1978 & Shosha 2012, is to eliminate any inapplicable or misrepresented descriptions of the phenomena. During this step, the researcher completed a rigorous examination of the description of the phenomena, removed all unnecessary information, and revealed the central structure of the phenomena (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Step Seven: Participant Validation of Findings

The researcher shared the final version of the central structure of the phenomena with the participants. This was in an effort to obtain confirmation that the participants' experiences as it relates to the phenomena were sufficiently and aptly documented (Wirihana et. al, 2018).

Trustworthiness

According to Nagengast (2021) trustworthiness is a very important element in qualitative research because it helps to validate the assumption that the findings of the research are significant. As advanced by Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules, (2017), qualitative studies need to have transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility, which are key components of trustworthiness (Nagengast, 2021). To establish, increase and maintain trustworthiness in this study, the researcher systematically documented the data collection and analysis procedures. The use of a verifiable and relevant approach and software were used to analyze the data. Hadi and Closs (2016) agreed that there are many different approaches that are used to ensure

trustworthiness in qualitative research. It is recommended to use at least two of those strategies in any give qualitative research (Hadi & Closs, 2016).

The researcher used triangulation, member checking and prolonged engagements strategies. Triangulation is the process of using more than one related data source to reduce the possibility of intrinsic bias (Hadi & Closs, 2016). The researcher chose at least two participants from each respective organizations from which the sample pool derived to facilitate the triangulation process. The researcher used the member checking strategy which involved the careful study of the conclusions made by the participants. This process is designed to ensure increased reliability and credibility of the study (Hadi & Closs, 2016). Once the commitment to participate in the study was generated, the researcher established and maintained a sustained professional relationship with the participants. The prolonged engagement strategy allows for the building of trust. Once the trust is built, the likelihood of the researcher receiving pertinent information from the participants, about the phenomena increases exponentially (Hadi & Closs, 2016).

Credibility

Korstjens and Moser (2018) posited that credibility is a weighty element in the qualitative research process. It is the foundation on which the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the findings is built. Credibility helps to establish plausibility in the interpretations of the participants' perspectives and ultimately the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher considers the sample pool to be a team of experts in their respective professional field. Hence, the information gathered had profound richness as it was original insights, thus strengthening credibility. The adoption of the ATLAS.ti software and the Colaizzi (1978) seven-step data analysis method largely improved the researcher's analytical skills. The triangulation,

member checking and prolonged engagements approaches also contributed to the credibility of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Dependability and Confirmability

Nagengast (2021) advanced the assumption proposed by Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012 that research is considered dependable if the processes are deeply consistent and executed with careful consideration to the recognized rules and conventions of the type of study. According to Nagengast (2021), Tobin & Begley, 2004 believed ensuring that the structure of the research and specifically the analytical process is well documented and rational is one way to safeguard the study's dependability. As purported by Tong, Flemming, McInnes, Oliver, & Craig, 2012, appropriate documentation and details of every step in the research process is important to guarantee dependability as it heightens confidence in the stability of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Nagengast, 2021). The researcher used Sony UX560F, a state of the art recording device for the interview recordings and ATLAS.ti, a renowned software for the transcription, analysis and coding process. This recording device and the software helped in providing and maintaining a very accurate account of the data provided. Confirmability seeks to provide evidences that support the assumption that the findings of the study are believable. It focuses on illustrating the idea that the findings are unswervingly resulted from the data gathered and ae not mere inventions from the researcher's own imagination (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Nagengast, (2021) stated that Tong et al., 2012 believed confirmability ensures the elimination of bias from the research. Creswell & Creswell (2017) supported that claim, indicating that eliminating bias makes it easy for future researchers to confirm the analysis and findings of the research (Nagengast, 2021).

Transferability and Replicability

According to Nagengast (2021) transferability as the name suggest, refers to the degree to which findings of a qualitative research study can be transferred or aspects of it applied to another study. The assumption is that the replication would be able to take place in different contextual settings with different participants (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Nagengast, 2021). The results of this study are applicable to other disciplines and contexts because jihadist terrorism and social media are evolving and complex issues. Hence, the findings within this study are not bounded to the precincts of this research. The knowledge obtained can be applied to similar phenomena being explored in either the same or similar context, if the research process for such context permits. The researcher used data collection and data analysis methods that are appropriate for this type of study and research design.

Developing and maintaining replicability criteria in qualitative research is important. Aguinis and Solarino (2019) agreed that replication in qualitative research can either be exact, empirical or conceptual. Exact replication is the process of replicating a study using the same sample population and the same procedure (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). Empirical replication allows for previous research to be replicated by use of a different sample, but same procedure. Conversely, conceptual replication includes the replication of a study, using sample but different procedures (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). This research can be replicated using either of the aforementioned types of replications. The findings of the research are completely reproducible and as such the exact replication procedure is applicable (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Bergh et al., 2017; Tsang & Kwan, 1999). The empirical replication can be applied to this research since maintaining different participants, while keeping the same procedure is practical (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). Conceptual replication is applicable to this study because the same sample

population but different methodology, procedure and data collection instrument can also be used in the replication of another study (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). In general, the phenomena explored in this study are embryonic by nature. Having the flexibility to replicate a study as exact, empirical or conceptual will help to further validate the findings of this research, coagulating its overall efficacy (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019).

Ethical Considerations

According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), Haggerty, 2004; Held, 2006; Zegwaard, Campbell, & Pretti, 2017 maintained that it is important to monitor personal and professional activities during the research process. Placing strong emphasis on ethical conducts has grown in relevance because of the increasing expectations to hold researchers accountable to uphold ethical standards (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). As indicated earlier in the chapter, the researcher had no prior relationship with the sample population. However, in an effort to gain trust and establish rapport, the researcher maintained a professional relationship solely embodying researcher and participant roles with the sample population prior to the interviews. Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) added Denzin & Lincoln, 2011advanced that informed consent is a very important part of ethical considerations in a research process. To protect the participants and the research process, informed consent form illustrated in Appendix C was sent to each participant. The signed form by each participant solidified the binding agreement between the participants and the researcher. The content of the consent form provided an in depth understanding of the research process for each participant. In addition to the goals and objectives of the research, it adequately expounded the voluntary nature of the research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Nagengast 2021).

Another important ethical consideration is the privacy and confidentiality obligations of the researcher to the participants. Keeping the participants' identity anonymous as well as their information confidential is critical in an effort to protect against potential harm (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). In this study, the participants' anonymity was not possible as their information was known to the researcher. However, participant's confidentiality was guaranteed as the researcher concealed each participant's personally identifiable information, making identification impossible. The researcher assigned random personal identifiers to each participant's interview manuscript. There was no personally identifiable information attached to the manuscripts, making it impossible for the data provided to be connected to any participant.

The researcher was the only one who knew the participants from whom the data was gathered. The randomized personal identifiers for the participants were used in subsequent chapters, in instances that the participant's data was referenced. This attempt was an added layer of protection of the information for those participants. The microSD card slot for the Sony UX560F digital tape recorder was used to record the interviews. This attempt was a deliberate one, as it facilitated the removal of data for storage in a safe controlled by a fob key owned by only the researcher. Once the interviews were transcribed, the documents along with the researcher's field notes pads were also retained in the same controlled area for protection against information leak.

Summary

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the research design, analysis, data collection method, research questions, data collection sites, procedures, sample pool, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations in the research process. This qualitative study adopted the single instrumental case study design. Based on previous studies, the context of this research and the

objectives of the research questions, that research study design was appropriate. Considering the magnitude and significance of the data gathered, employing credible data analysis methods were importance. Both Colaizzi (1978) seven-step data analysis method and ATLAS.ti software were appropriate to aid in the analysis process. The data collection sites were selected with consideration to physical security, availability and the participants' preferences. The research sample comprised of representatives from Army intelligence, Navy intelligence, law enforcement, cybersecurity professionals and experts with connections to related academia. The sample pool was chosen based on the conventions of the design and research type.

Moreover, the sample brought interesting dynamism to the research based on their professional and personal experiences with the phenomena. The researcher faced no ethical dilemmas throughout the research process. Considerations were duly given to critical elements of trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The researcher used the appropriate participant recruitment documents and consent forms to validate the data collection process. The data obtained on the microSD card was securely retained in a fob-controlled vault, with anticipation to delete after three years. The ethical standards outlined by Liberty University and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures were appropriately adhered to during the research process (please see Appendix A, B & C). The data protection methods employed simplified an acceptable standard of data protection.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Social media platforms are characterized primarily by their ubiquity, which has allowed users at both domestic and global levels to influence the communication landscape significantly. Concerning jihadist terrorism in the United States, social media has been perceived as a desirable opportunity to augment conventional means of controlling people worldwide. Over time, the use of social media by jihadist terrorist groups has continuously matured, thus becoming a significant part of public consciousness (Arslan & Petrone, 2017). This chapter will provide an in-depth exploration of relevant themes obtained from the findings, as guided by the research questions. The chapter will follow the sequential order of participants, results, and summary. This case study aimed to describe a comprehensive framework that examines and categorizes social media's roles in the expansion of jihadist terrorism in the United States. Additionally, the study will seek to uncover findings that will close the research gap regarding deterrent factors for future generations' engagement in jihadist terrorist activities in the United States.

Participants

The sample population for this study consisted of 16 voluntary participants, who provided a wealth of knowledge relating to the roles of social media in the expansion of jihadist terrorism within the United States. The age, gender, race, and educational background varied across the sample, which added significant value to the study. Despite the disparity in specific demographic features, the participant's professional backgrounds and experiences amplified their perspectives, thus serving as valuable to the quality of the data gathered. The sample aggregated decades of expertise from several different entities, including public and private sector organizations.

Figure 7

Participants' Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Years of Experience	Race
P1	36	F	15	White
P2	33	M	13	Asian
P3	49	M	19	Asian
P4	38	F	17	White
P5	48	M	16	Pacific Islander
P6	42	M	14	White
P7	40	M	14	Pacific Islander
P8	31	F	7	Black
P9	37	M	11	American Indian
P10	45	M	15	Black
P11	33	M	9	American Indian
P12	47	M	17	American Indian
P13	49	M	21	Black
P14	55	M	21	American Indian
P15	40	F	17	Asian
P16	34	F	11	White

Note: The above figure illustrates the demographics of the research sample.

P1 and **P16** have an exorbitant amount of professional and academic experience, having served as warrant officers for the last twenty-four (24) years in the portfolio of Army Intelligence. They have both obtained Master of Science with cognates in International Security. The functions of the department have prepared and equipped the participants to operate as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the field of analyses relating to both social media usage and jihadist terrorism. Both participants have worked extensively in creating and implementing response measures to protect national defense intelligence at both the domestic and global levels. The participants served as significant contributors to operational planning efforts in several units that they were assigned, thus shaping their versatility. They contributed to several counterintelligence operations, which neutralized potential threats posed by jihadist organizations.

P2 and **P3** work as counterterrorism analysts within the department of Navy Intelligence. They have both played pivotal roles in several research endeavors, thus, safeguarding their organization against the pernicious threats from jihadist terrorism. Both participants have been able to ascertain critical information about leaders' impetuses, capabilities, objectives, techniques, and procedures within jihadist terrorist organizations. They have served in that capacity as senior officers for thirteen (13) and nineteen (19) years respectively. Their jobs include but are not limited to making informed assessments of jihadist terrorist groups' operational might. Thus, enabling the department to identify potential threats, mitigate risks and preempt attacks. Over the years, the participants have worked assiduously to collate and analyze information about jihadist terrorist organizations. Their acquired skills and ingenuity allowed them to apply appropriate techniques and procedures, successfully annihilating several destruction and threats posed to the homeland.

P4 and **P15** has seventeen (17) years of experience within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, holding positions from Intelligence Network Assessment Analyst to Counterterrorism Assessment Officer. Both participants hold a master's degree in international relations with a minor in Political Science. Their academic achievements have fully equipped them to function and exceed the standards of their department. They serve as critical contributors to identifying threats and their successful mitigation. They are proficient in gathering and sharing essential information with salient partners related to jihadist terrorism, among other threats. Both participants are instrumental in various research activities to provide products shaped by fundamental analysis. Their professional expertise and knowledge of strategic planning responses have aided policymakers within the organization in taking timely actions.

As Fusion Center Analysts **P5, P6** and **P7** have an aggregated thirty-five (35) years of experience. They have amassed many experiences in independently carrying out tasks in assessing and analyzing intelligence pertaining to jihadist terrorism and social media use. The participants have also collectively acquired many experiences relating to the performance of different intelligence activities, including research, critical assessments, data collection, intake, appropriate dissemination, and documentation of data correlating to homeland security and jihadist terrorism. The participants all had prior experiences in cybersecurity and cyber analysis, which augmented their capabilities in their current positions. They all worked extensively with military facilities and defense entities, telecommunication agencies, and law enforcement communities at the federal, state, and local levels to identify collective behavioral patterns, operational structures, and trends to decipher criminal conduct, emphasizing jihadist terrorism.

P8 and **P9** both work as Information Security Analysts with an accumulated eighteen (18) years of professional experience. They have created, implemented, and enforced safety standards for their organization by developing functional information systems and generating accurate and comprehensive reports on operational data. They have been critical contributors to several investigations that involved jihadist terrorist groups. Both participants streamlined the development and maintenance of numerous analytical tactics and procedures, which helped their organization to meet and exceed the ever-changing requirements of the operational environment. **P9** also possesses an extensive background in producing and compiling strategic counterterrorism research and assessment initiatives, which have helped policymakers and practitioners in security decisions that were made to minimize targeted vulnerabilities.

P10 and **P11** have accumulated over twenty-two (22) years of collective experience in law enforcement. They worked at the federal and state level as active participants in gathering,

analyzing, and sharing relevant data relating to understanding jihadist terrorist organizations and their use of social media. **P12** and **P13** spent twenty-one (21) years working in Army Space Command as field officers. They have been instrumental in the implementation of several transformational initiatives that were founded on counterterrorism mandates. They have been deployed to various countries across the globe, exposing them to foreign cultures and their effect on international security. They have had the opportunity to help create some of the most pioneering technologies that give tactical plusses to the current operational environment. **P14** worked in the National Counterterrorism Center for fourteen (15) years and has since retired. Ten of those fifteen years were spent gathering and analyzing information that led to the prevention of attacks from jihadist terrorist organizations. In addition to that, it added protracted value to understanding similar emerging threats and the strategic analysis of those threats.

Results

This section of the research paper will be organized by identifying codes and developing relevant themes as well as research question responses. Coding is a fundamental process in the analysis of qualitative data and is reputed to be a word that allegorically gives comprehensive and profound denotation to portions of data (Rogers, 2018). Importantly, coding is the liaison that connects data collection and data analysis in a qualitative study (Rogers, 2018). The coding process is vital as it condenses the available data into more terse and digestible categories while facilitating the emergence of appropriate themes. Across available research, there is not an agreed frequency for which a code must appear in the collected data for it to be translated into a theme (Thompson, 2022). The underlying and most important requirement is that emerging themes should be fundamental to the explanation of the data, to the extent that the data would vastly be truncated without them (Thompson, 2022).

Figure 8

Theme Development

Codes	Themes	Direct Participants' Quotes
Control	Exploration of autonomy, empowerment, and significance.	**P3** "Social media platforms enable a lack of accountability, exacting the power sought by jihadist terrorist groups." **P15** "Jihadist terrorist groups receive publicity from social media that they would not have otherwise received via traditional media outlets."
Change vs. Tradition	Demonstration of advancement and development.	**P1** "Jihadist terrorist groups use social media for a variety of use to include permeation of their ideologies." **P4** "Social media outlets allow jihadist terrorist groups to create their narratives and their distribution in real-time settings."
Technology	Significant growth and innovation.	**P16** "Social media serves the interest of jihadist groups by acting as a catalyst and a burgeoning integrator." **P11** "Some Social media platforms have algorithmic features that help jihadist terrorist groups identify their target audiences."
Chaos vs. Order	Emanating fear and exploring personal and collective fulfillment.	**P9** "The use of social media by jihadist terrorist groups is a double-edged sword." **P8** "Social media is the greatest innovation of the last few decades. However, it has detrimental effects on national and global security".
Group Identity	Permeating a strong sense of belonging and freedom.	**P2** "Jihadist terrorist groups use social media as a bonding tool that shapes collective consciousness."

		P6 "Jihadist terrorist groups use social media to garner and mobilize supporters. It allows individuals with common interests to bond, creating collective commitment.
Passion and Secrecy	Continuous quest for collective discoveries.	**P13** "Jihadist terrorist groups are united in their approach to vigorously share their content via social media platforms." **P10 "**Jihadist terrorist groups continue interesting ways to mask their activities.
Advanced Communication	Networking and the formation of a unified front.	**P14** "Social media platforms facilitate the easy flow of information with features that emphasize anonymity." **P7** "Social media has allowed jihadist terrorist groups to remain interconnected, maintaining horizontal lines of communication, despite geographical locations.
Destruction	Advancing a cause built to cause constant damages.	**P12** "Jihadist terrorist groups use social media as a strength multiplier to weaken collective defenses." **P5** "Jihadist terrorist groups increasingly use social media platforms to disseminate propaganda, as well as coordinate and carry out vicious cycles of attacks."
Accessibility and Affordability	User-generated content guarantees quick dissemination of information.	**P16** "The unregulated feature of social media is among the greatest setback to the safety of this generation." **P1** "Using social media without regulatory autonomy coupled with affordability is a lethal combination."
Vulnerability	Compliance through coercion and manipulation.	**P13** "Desperation and inadequacy can inhibit individuals' judgment, and jihadist terrorist groups prey

		on those individuals. Those targets are attractive because they are assumed to be more gullible". **P4** "Individuals who lack education and training will comply to the fancies of jihadist terrorist growths because of pure ignorance."
Group vs. Society	Ongoing quest for discovery and sense of belonging.	**P2** "It is always easy for the already downtrodden to seek validation in climates that are presumably welcoming. To those individuals, by and large, society is a tough reality that they do not mind escaping". **P9** "Jihadist terrorist organizations disseminate innocuous material, organized in ways to stimulate sympathy from those who might feel social exclusion from mainstream society."
Good vs. Evil	Jihadist terrorist groups enable the prevalence of deceit and pain under the semblance of a worthwhile cause.	**P6** "The conscience of most people in society are often shocked when jihadist terrorist organizations attack. Their work encompasses immeasurable evil, yet it is built on a cause labeled as good, which allows one to reflect on the role of religion in understanding those attacks". **P3** "This thought might be archaic in nature, but good and evil have characterized defining moments for our generation to include acts of terror. Jihadist terrorist organizations continue to remain creative and successful, using that underlying mantra.

Shared Ideology	Common belief system is an assumed prediction of association and engagement.	**P15** "The proverbial expression birds of a feature flock together is important in understanding the significance of shared beliefs and interests, in relation to interaction. People with similar tastes, ambitions, and desires will often engage in." **P11** "Having similar beliefs makes it easier to rationalize certain behaviors to include acts of atrocities. One's belief system can sometimes arbitrarily become the deciding factor of right versus wrong. Based on observation, it is usually those with opposing belief systems to the majority, that tend to associate with jihadist terrorism".
Individualism	Most individuals want to have a defined identity and not feel alienated and excluded.	**P5** "A strong sense of self is a psychological need that humans have. A defined identity is paramount to individual development as it enables the element of choice, which is critical to social engagements". **P12** "People who do not know who they are, can be quite vulnerable. They tend to ride the waves of other people, their collective grievances, and circumstances. Jihadist terrorist groups play on the evident cognitive deficiency in those people and target them to garner their involvement".
Evolution and Adaption	The ever-changing nature of social media and the copious amounts of platforms are available.	**P10** "The use of social media was conceived out of humankind's desire to communicate using state-of-

		the-art technology. Over time, social media platforms have transformed from mere avenues of information exchange to a complete virtual lifestyle, which has caused an operational quandary". **P8** "I have personally lost count of the copious amount of modern social media platforms within our society. The growing predominance of the smart technology era has really redefined functional boundaries. This experience quadrupled the capabilities of jihadist terrorist groups".
Revenge	Jihadist terrorist groups advocate for the assumed voiceless who are believed by them to need avengement.	**P14** "At the core of every jihadist terrorist attack is perceived evilness, animosity, and pure hatred. A popular belief that a specific group is oppressed or was oppressed is the advancing narrative that justifies the need for avengement". **P2** "Jihadist terrorist group attackers have developed a new and disturbing form of terror in an attempt to show compassion, while at the same time garnering sympathy. They use violence to advance their cryptic belief that they must defend Muslim societies against the West".

Note: The figure above provides a detailed illustration of some of the applicable codes, themes, and direct participants' quotes.

Research Question Responses

RQ1. How do jihadist terrorist organizations use social media for recruitment and radicalization

purposes?

Jihadist terrorist groups have manipulated social media platforms, using them as the

principal tools of incitement to further their organizational agendas for decades. A participant

mentioned that "Jihadist terrorist organizations use social media to recruit and radicalize through

calculated efforts; they pride themselves on presenting an attractive cause that will capture the

minds of their target audiences" (**P1**, personal communication, 2022). This thought is exemplary

as it contributed to the creation of the category of the code control and the development of the

theme of autonomy and empowerment. As supported by the general acquiescence across the

data, it is evident that social media enables jihadist terrorist groups to control their messages by

determining what the news looks like and who receives it. Another participant posited that

"social media platforms have become the source of information sharing around the globe.

Embedded at their core are the demoralizing capabilities to modify the constructs of reality.

Jihadist terrorist organizations have leveraged those capabilities; as such, they can utterly garble

the understanding of their prospective targets, resulting in their thwarted and jaundiced opinions

and ultimately successful recruitment and radicalization (**P15**, personal communication, 2022).

The issue of recruitment and radicalization is multilayered, and so in some instances, they

are quite tedious to define, thus their continued persistence. One participant added that "one of

the unique capabilities facilitated by social media platforms is the development of one and one

recruitment process. Jihadist terrorist groups use this capability to create sustainable relationships

with their target audiences" (**P7**, personal communication, 2022). Such aptitude illustrates the

change versus traditional code and the theme of advancement and development. Jihadist terrorist

organizations have used their professed adroitness to create a very impenetrable international network. They have been successfully manipulating the virtual space and evading recognition from authorities while capturing the minds of their intended targets. Another participant further added, "the features of social media are quite different from what we are used to and are only advancing over time. It is quite concerning that one terrorist moderator can use a well-defined narrative, and in one click enter the confines of the homes of millions of people and initiate the recruitment process" (**P9**, personal communication, 2022). The value of harnessing the features of social media platforms will remain influential to jihadist terrorist organizations as that value maximizes the organizations' niche. A participant postulated an interesting thought noting that "when it comes to recruitment and radicalization, social media platforms will always work for jihadist terrorist organizations. They use the same platforms to carefully identify and pursue their targets with the intent to radicalize, as well as plan the execution of their subsequent attacks. It is a desirable package deal if you think about it" (**P12**, personal communication, 2022).

Jihadist terrorist organizations constantly laude the effectiveness of electronic communications in their operations. The organization acknowledges that adapting to the current operational landscape has required the organization to stay up to date with its digital capabilities. Another participant mentioned, "The central hub of the messages shared by jihadist terror groups is the main factor in successful recruitment and radicalization. Those messages are created with the uncanny desire to emote great sympathy from their recipients. Playing with the emotions of their target audiences' is very unconscionable, but it is what has worked for the recruitment and radicalization process for decades now" (**P14**, personal communication, 2022). This narrative is essential to the vulnerability code and further ties into the development of the theme of compliance through the use of coercion and manipulation.

RQ2. How can future engagements in jihadist activities be prevented?

Prevention is a critical line of effort when addressing any issue, and jihadist terrorism and their use of social media platforms are no different. Understanding the current operational environment is fundamental to developing practical prevention strategies with an emphasis on deterrence. A participant stated, "preventing future engagements in jihadist terrorism requires collective efforts. Individuals at all levels need to understand their role in the prevention process because I don't think that we do to date. In most instances, when targets are going through the recruitment process, the people with whom they interface with daily observe specific changes in behavior but do not do anything. This could be a result of ignorance; hence, it is important that we educate individuals on the warning signs and emphasis that those signs are not always universal" (**P5**, personal communication, 2022). Appropriate role assumption is essential to deterrence as it allows actors at all levels to take reasonable and timely actions to prevent incidences instead of having a devastating incident occur and having to embark on response strategies at that time.

The code of good versus evil and the ensuing theme of jihadist terrorist groups enabling the prevalence of deceit and pain under the semblance of a worthwhile cause is critical to the foregoing as they provide context for further analysis. Another participant declared, "despite the barrage of evil that faces our society, remember at the core, every human being has some kind of good in them. It is important to harness the modicum of good and take accountability to intervene at the earliest time convenient to protect each other against the fancies of jihadists. As a society, we have grown accustomed to avowedly normalizing the diffusion of responsibilities. That is, we are of the contrary view that someone else will come after us and intervene and subsequently prevent that potential incident from occurring. Prevention and deterrence to jihadist

engagement is a 'us' problem, and so holistic responses that are built on teamwork remain important to solving it" (**P3**, personal communication, 2022).

Creating and maintaining climates of collective acceptance, sense of belonging and social cohesion are essential endeavors to preventing engagements in jihadist terrorism. One participant cautioned, "there are so many people who feel isolated in today's society. It is believed in most instances, those alienations stem from a perceived lack of societal acceptance. Those individuals normally display some kind of cognitive or psychological deficit, and as such, they feel like they are different. It is important that an atmosphere of inclusivity is normalized. This is because when our society fails to do that, the jihadist terrorist group creates that for them, which significantly maximizes our problems" (**P12**, personal communication, 2022). The preceding narrative correlates with several of the identified codes and themes within this chapter. Some of the relevant codes of individualism are group versus society and group identity. Another participant noted, "I believe it is an innate human desire to have a defined identity because, I would imagine, feelings of exclusion and alienation are just awful. Feelings of belonging and love are a part of the hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow, and it has not and will never lose its significance. The onus is on us to ensure that we are sustaining that type of climate if we are to master prevention and deterrence" (**P9**, personal communication, 2022).

A participant claimed, "remaining adaptive is critical to effective prevention because the context in which jihadist terrorism operates is quite fluid, making it inherently challenging to prevent. Therefore, harping on any single method of prevention to engagement could be catastrophic in every sense of the word. As a nation, we must be equipped to keep up with the changing nature of the issue in order to safeguard against engagement from our society". By and large, when dealing with issues that include factors that have to be measured and assessed in

order to garner conclusiveness relating to its success, adaptiveness plays a critical role. A participant advanced the foregoing by stating, "completely severing and or reducing the existing digital connections is the single most important step in preventing future engagements in jihadist terrorism in the United States. To do this, it requires policies that are designed to hold social media platforms accountable for their roles in the dissemination of jihadist content. This all ties into the need for collective preparedness and compliance" (**P10**, personal communication, 2022).

RQ3. Why does social media, as a recruitment tool for jihadist terrorist organizations, differ from traditional tools?

The information age has opened a fusillade of advancements in communication opportunities. Jihadist terrorist organizations have continuously exploited these opportunities, much to the advancement of their organizational agendas. From the data gathered, change versus tradition and technology were among some important codes that were identified. From those codes, the themes of demonstration of advancement and development and significant growth and innovation were constructed. A participant stated, "social media platforms allow for easy two-way communication as opposed to traditional media outlets. The fact that users are able to comment and share the content serves as a major boost to the ease with which material gets consumed. That is one of the primary features that continue to work in favor of jihadist terrorist groups" (**P1**, personal communication, 2022). The way traditional media outlets are designed, it is impossible to alter a broadcast. However, social media platforms offer much more appealing alternatives as users can change information as they deem necessary. Another participant furthered those thoughts by indicating, "the internet and, by extension, social media has enabled the greatest sense of independence available to this generation. Jihadist terrorist groups are using this boundless freedom to supplement their functions" (**P4**, personal communication, 2022).

Conventional means of information sharing have become outmoded with the available social media platforms. In relation to the recruitment process, social media platforms best serve jihadist terrorist groups' agenda. This assumption was supported by the prevalence of the information that supports the identification of the code accessibility versus affordability. The imminent theme from that code became user-generated content that guarantees quick dissemination of information. A participant mentioned, "the features of social media are deliberate in both the establishment of reach and potential engagement. That is, the message will get to the intended audience and allows for further engagement, which is paramount to effective recruitment. Traditional media outlets do not have this advantage as their emphasis is primarily set on measurable influence as determined by the spread of that information" (**P16**, personal communication, 2022). This narrative supports previous assumptions that jihadist terrorist groups remain deliberate in crafting their messages with the intent to engender inescapable engagements from their target audiences.

Social media engagements occur in real-time, thus promising and defending the element of expediency for jihadist terrorist groups' recruitment. A delay in content sharing could translate to a lost opportunity, and as such, timeliness is the hallmark of the organization's recruitment activities. Another participant added, "the way that information is relayed by traditional media outlets provides a lapse that could contribute to dissuasion among targets. Social media, on the other hand, is immediate, it's cheap, it offers great consistency, and, most importantly, it is user-led. Hence, it will always be more worthwhile for jihadist terrorist groups to use social media as a recruitment tool as opposed to traditional media channels" (**P1**, personal communication, 2022).

RQ4. How effective is social media in jihadist propaganda activity?

Jihadist terrorist organizations' use of social media has steadily increased over the last few decades. This essentially solidified the organization's international dominance in establishing its self-proclaimed brand as an agent of change. A participant indicated that "jihadist terrorist organizations have been using the online sphere to communicate for a very long time. Social media platforms have subconsciously become the greatest enabler of communication efforts. These platforms have significantly enhanced their operational capabilities. Think about it, the average person from across rural America, who uses social media to connect with families and friends, now shares the same stage with a jihadist. They are exposed to contents created by those organizations intending to defraud, despite geographical boundaries" (**P14** "personal communication, 2022). The previous narrative is critical as it furthers the identification of the code of advanced communication and the nascent theme of networking and the formation of a unified front.

Another participant stated, "***I don't remember if it's someone famous or if it is an adage, but I find the thought 'justice suffers when men refuse to stand firm for what is right. If we don't fight lawlessness, it prevails'*** entirely appropriate. Social media facilitates unprecedented levels of lawlessness, and that is, unfortunately, working in favor of jihadist terrorist organizations. This is because the unregulated feature of social media carefully contrives a thriving existence for jihadists. Before his demise, al-Awaki declared jihadists' obsession with social media for purposes of advancing propaganda, positing that the available platforms changed the way the organization functioned" (**P7** "personal communication, 2022). This narrative is central as it supports several themes presented in the study. At its core, that account

echoes the elements of revolution and innovativeness, which illustrate some of the things that shape the effectiveness of social media concerning jihadist organizations' propaganda.

One participant stated, "social media activities are focused primarily on the intent to connect. The amount of people that the click of a button can connect is astronomical, and those connections are not always positive. Jihadist terrorist groups have been using social media platforms to create and maintain commonality among targets. The use of platforms is beneficial to jihadists' propaganda strategy as they help to establish a shared identity which further provokes growth and advancement for the organization" (**P15** "personal communication, 2022). Another prevalent code across the literature was shared ideology, from which the theme common belief system is an assumed prediction of association and engagement derived. It is plausible to make a direct correlation between jihadist terrorist organizations' established identity and that of their target audiences. A shared identity opposes functional mutiny, which translates into more effective engagements.

Another participant suggested 'there has never been a more opportune time to engage and potentially sustain new targets than it is with the emergence of social media platforms. The use of social media platforms as it easier to foster growth and development for individuals and groups with both good and questionable intentions. This is because social media platforms automatically bourgeon the recognition of jihadist organizations. Jihadist terrorist groups' propaganda continues to become more consumable because of the availability of technological advancements that are used to improve its quality" (**P11** personal communication, 2022). It is a reasonable assumption that the improved features of social media platforms have increased the capabilities of jihadist terrorist groups. This is based on the idea postulated throughout the data gathered, which indicated that the greater the target engagements by jihadist terrorist

organizations, there is an increased propensity that their propaganda will become more pervasive, thus boosting its embedment into the collective consciousness.

One participant noted, "most of us have watched jihadist terrorist organizations grow from a stage of infancy to what we perceived today as its adulthood stage. During its inception, the organization depended largely on traditional media outlets to disseminate evidence of its diatribes and ideological materials. Of course, their success required far more strategic planning and coordination, and their operational reach was limited. Today, social media platforms have created an inescapable glide path that facilitates pseudonymity and instantaneous" (**P1** "personal communication, 2022). The available data supported the preceding presumption by indicating that social media platforms have made it easier for jihadist terrorist organizations to carry out propaganda activities. The general features of the different capabilities that are embedded in each social media platform have allowed terrorist organizations to create excellent propaganda contents that are quite appealing.

Summary

In summary, this chapter documented a comprehensive capture of the findings from the data gathered. The subtitles covered in this chapter are overview, participants, theme development, results, and research question responses. The overview provided a concise yet informative narrative relating to the organization of the chapter. It proved beneficial because it allowed the reader to get a complete understanding of the way the information is organized, thus contributing to the structure of the paper. The participants' demographics and subsequent narratives helped to create a graphic picture of the sample. It provided an in-depth analysis of their overall involvement in the research process and coagulated their eligibility for such roles. The result section of the chapter was quite expansive as it documented sixteen codes and themes

that were identified and developed from the data. The identification of codes and development of themes is the section that connected the research. The pervasiveness of specific information across the data reiterated its significance in the process of identifying palpable findings. This sub-section was advantageous as it expansively captured the patterns and trends in the data, making it easier for the researcher to interpret.

The research question responses served as an important sub-section in this chapter as they provided responses from the interviews and showed direct parallels by forming significant nexuses between the development of the themes and the identification of the significant findings. The responses to the research questions also congealed the foundation of the problem that guided the overall research study. Furthermore, the questions provided strategic focus, necessitating the need for particular information from the participants. This added to the strength of the research findings as it offered a guide. Each research question was addressed in its entirety, and the cumulative supporting information was derived from direct quotations from different participants.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The establishment of jihadist terrorist organizations, paired with their rising use of social media platforms, has resulted in an enduring compounded issue for both domestic and global security. The purpose of this case study was to provide an exhaustive examination of social media's role in the expansion of jihadist terrorism in the United States. The study also aimed to understand and unearth findings that could close the research gap related to factors that could deter future generations' engagement in jihadist terrorist activities within the United States. This chapter will be sequentially organized into the following sub-sections: Summary of findings, discussion, implications, delimitations and limitations, recommendation and research, and summary.

Summary of Findings

The sample population for this study gained experiences from a wide array of disciplines, including Army intelligence, Navy intelligence, law enforcement, cybersecurity professionals, and experts with connections to related academia within the United States. The data obtained revealed a significant number of findings that were supported by the shared sentiments of all the study participants. Additionally, the results also illustrated suppositions that were consistent with previous literature. Some of the significant findings are: Social media is a primary mode of communication for jihadist terrorist organizations, social media contributes to jihadist terrorist organizations' operational power, traditional media outlets are far less effective than social media in radicalization and recruitment endeavors, the growing use of social media platforms have highlighted the most significant changes in communication advancements, and holistic education is the main deterrent to future engagements in jihadist activities.

Jihadist terrorist organizations have developed a seemingly healthy dependence on social media platforms; thus, it is deemed their ideal mode of communication. It is evident that using social media platforms has accelerated the performance capabilities of jihadist terrorist organizations. This is because it is very affordable, allows for easy access by the majority, intelligence gathering, and the ultimate weaponization of communication polarity by jihadist terrorist organizations. The effectiveness of terrorist activities such as recruitment, dissemination of propaganda, and radicalization is deeply embedded in the group's ability to leverage modern technological advancements. Social media platforms afford jihadist terrorist organizations the ability to infiltrate the collective consciousness of susceptible populations. As the globe continues to experience speedy growth in social media technologies, it is becoming increasingly easier for jihadist terrorist groups to communicate with groups and individuals.

The analogous relationship between lack of education (awareness) and the prevalence of jihadist terrorist activities is externally paradoxical. However, a comprehensive approach built on a collective understanding of education as a response technique should arguably be one of the most critical priorities of the current era. The results strongly implied that deliberate education through prevention and intervention response measures is vital to deterrence efforts as it relates to future engagements in jihadist activities. The findings further indicated that the required educational mantra needs to be built on an intentional definition of roles and their subsequent assumptions. That is because the effectiveness of education as a response technique will essentially depend on a comprehensive approach. It is imperative to remain proactive as jihadist terrorist organizations continuously hone remarkable skill sets that are aimed at defying practical prevention efforts.

Figure 9

Education/Prevention All-inclusive Approach
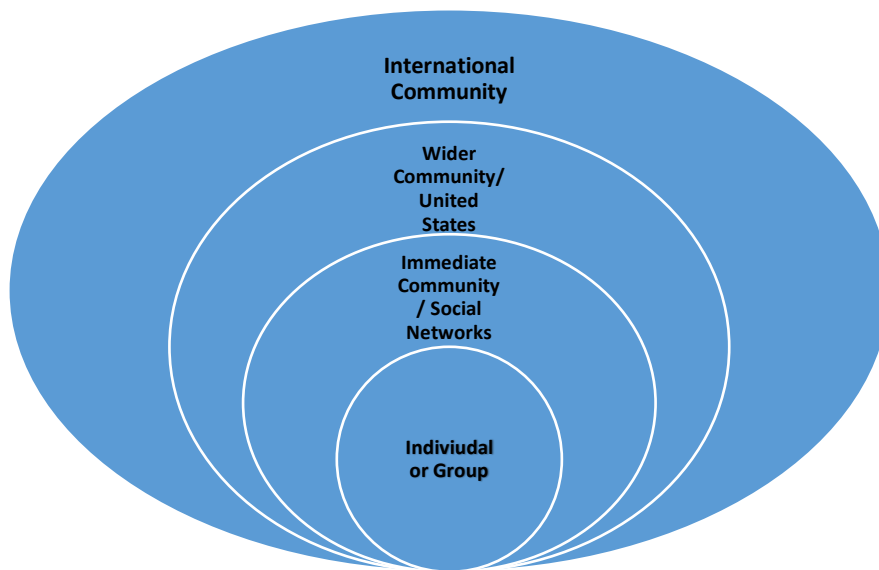
Note: The figure above illustrates the overlapping agents that would interplay for the education/prevention effort to be successful. Each pillar denotes the essence of interconnectivity, which implies that their success is marked by collective interdependency.

Most of the participants agreed that social media platforms are designed with advanced features that are assumed to be more captivating than traditional media outlets. At the core, social media platforms are intended to prolongate social networking. On the other hand, traditional media outlets are designed to relay information with an emphasis on one-way communication. The results demonstrated that social media as a recruitment tool for the jihadist organization is more effective than traditional media outlets. It gives the organization full autonomy over its content, and as such, they fully control its messages. That is, they can predetermine who receives their contents, the mode of conveyance, and, most importantly, what they receive. Traditional media outlets do not offer that kind of flexibility, and so using those outlets makes it impossible for jihadist organizations to personalize the recruitment process. A fundamental feature of the recruitment process is the one and one experience option which is

critical in the conversion step. The available data details social media's impact on the jihadist recruitment process, which is far more significant than that of traditional media outlets.

Discussion

The study's findings provided relevant responses to the research questions and affirmed several assumptions conceived in previous studies.

RQ1. How do jihadist terrorist organizations use social media for recruitment and radicalization purposes?

RQ2. How can future jihadist engagement promulgated by social media be prevented?

RQ3. Why does social media as a recruitment tool for jihadist terrorist organizations differ from traditional tools?

RQ4. How effective is social media in jihadist propaganda activities?

Primary mode of communication

By and large, the data from this study corroborated the findings from previous research. There was unanimous agreement among the research participants that social media is increasingly becoming the primary mode of communication for jihadist terrorist organizations. In my estimation, some very compelling explanations for the finding mentioned above were also presented in previous literature. Nwammuo & Salawu (2018) agreed that social media is a direct embodiment of easy information sharing and the establishment of social networking with crucial elements of sources and receivers of information. Petroski (2017) and Arzroomchilar (2022) furthered the preceding by adding that the different features of social media platforms have heightened their performance capabilities, hence, their appropriateness and effectiveness as means of communication for jihadist terrorist organizations. Interestingly, Cipolla & Siino (2017) highlighted a significant point concerning social media as a primary mode of

communication for jihadist terrorist organizations. Social media platforms have offered new and emerging alternatives to functional communication capabilities, making them sought after as communication methods globally (Cipolla & Siino, 2017).

Deterrence to Future Engagements in Jihadist Terrorism

Understanding the root causes of jihadist terrorism is critical to identify practical deterrence activities. While there has been some concession among scholars, there has not been complete unanimity across the literature about the root causes of engagements in jihadist terrorism. Aceves (2020) claimed that the formation and subsequent rise of jihadist terrorism in the United States could be attributed to various factors. These factors include but are not limited to acts that are embedded in political, social, religious, and economic discontent (Aceves, 2020). The author also pointed out that the divergence in root causes has defined the preconditions of jihadist terrorism in the United States as multicausal (Aceves, 2020). The study participants agreed that the current operational environment is ironically marked by two competing priorities, information overflow, and a knowledge gap. This information is substantial because there is a preponderance of evidence supporting the presumption that knowledge is needed as a practical response strategy. United Nations (2023) agreed with the preceding, indicating that it is critical to respond to jihadist terrorism with a comprehensive socio-economic, political, and legal approach with particular emphasis on the element of disengagement. This assumption indicates that the hallmark of such a response is strategic education. It is believed that awareness through comprehensive education, personal accountability, and proactive role assumption should remain a top priority. This assumption is supported by the prevalence of the assumed missed opportunities and the overlooked warning signs that preface engagements in jihadist terrorist activities.

Social Media Platforms are more effective than Traditional Media

Taken together, the findings provided some predictive accuracy in relation to measuring the effectiveness of social media platforms versus traditional media outlets. The results indicated that social media platforms are more effective for jihadist terrorist organizations than conventional media outlets. This is believed because social media seemingly permits jihadist terrorist organizations to contact the target audience faster and much more accessible than traditional media outlets (Esfahani & Johnson, 2018). A significant amount of the participants agreed that social media platforms precipitate a considerable amount of interactivity which has transformed prehistoric communication patterns. The findings also highlighted the assumption that social media platforms have allowed individuals to play a more active role in the communication sphere than traditional media outlets. The preceding claims are consistent with the findings from previous scholars. Social media platforms are designed to allow users to engage collectively with different content in various ways, including the ability to alter and share information (Vaivode, Magiur, Ammar, and Driur, 2019). Unlike social media platforms, traditional media outlets do not allow the peer-peer sharing of content from across the globe and do not facilitate functional and co-generating users who can alter the information based on their own proclivity (Vaivode, Magiur, Ammar, and Driur, 2019). Esfahani & Johnson (2018) advanced the foregoing by claiming that in the past, conventional media platforms emphasized the strict adherence to command and control concerning the material they distributed. Social media platforms have broken that rhetoric and have transformed communication, making it a two-way channel (Esfahani & Johnson, 2018).

Operational Power

Power acquisition is a common theme that repeatedly emerged across previous studies in the assessment of jihadist terrorism and social media use in the United States. Different scholars agreed that the need to explore and attain power was among the primary tenets on which jihadist ideologies are formed. According to Leitch (2018), in jihadist terrorism, power is relative, but it is widely believed to be the intrinsic motivation that drives goal attainment. In relation to jihadist terrorism, power attainment shows concerted efforts to display strength and capabilities. This idea is further supported by the findings that jihadist terrorist organizations continue to explore autonomy in order to maintain significance. The study participants agreed that while jihadist terrorist organizations emphasize the 'why' in their cause, it is important to also highlight the subtle efforts they put into depicting the 'how.' One interpretation of such a finding is that jihadist terrorist organizations want to create and maintain the most profound virtual battlefield. Understandably, to that, they put significant efforts into creating the most sophisticated and well-designed campaigns in order to incite the most influence by spreading propaganda. Appropriating relevant tools and techniques that capture the essence of how they illustrate their cause is paramount as it maximizes public relations and increases the marketing value of those efforts.

<p align="center">**Research Contribution to the Field**</p>

The findings of the study extended the limited available research regarding dissuasion efforts to engagements in jihadist terrorism. This significant gap was filled by using empirical data to identify and examine factors that contribute to concentrations in jihadist activities and subsequent deterrence. The findings also highlighted some compelling evidence that helped develop a pragmatic framework designed to understand the most efficient ways to discourage

engagements in jihadist activities, specifically in instances where social media platforms play a contextual role. The study's results introduced some practical contributions to the field for practitioners and policymakers by providing information that could enable progress in response initiatives to jihadist terrorism and capacity-building efforts in the United States.

How the study extends Social Structure and Learning Theory and Social Identity Theory?

Social Structure and Social Learning (SSSL) Theory and Social Identity Theory (SIT are the theoretical frameworks that guided the research. The findings unequivocally support the applicability of those theories by furthering the assumptions that the use of social media and personnel engagements in jihadist terrorism are both imitable behaviors.

Additionally, the data is consistent with the presumption that positive self-image is congruent with group affiliation, ultimately shaping individual behaviors. The findings extended the tenets of both theories by emphasizing the relevance of the unpopular opinion that there is a divide in society that often praises personal strength while condemning communal efforts. The participants agreed that a sense of community is always necessary, while being strong individually is a well-sought-after peculiarity. By and large, humans have an inherent desire to feel they belong, are valued, and are needed. Hence, a group or individual who appears welcoming in any capacity will always be desired. It is important to note that engagements in jihadist terrorism seem to resonate more with the younger generation or people that live on the edge because of issues relating to self-esteem and group affiliations. New America (2023) offered a negative assumption, indicating that it is a misconception that jihadist terrorism only appeals to young loners. Rather involvement in jihadist terrorism has attracted individuals from various age ranges (New America, 2023).

Implications of Study

The results of this study build on existing research evidence that, over time, social media platforms have significantly changed all aspects of modern-day communication. Undisputedly, social media platforms have condensed the globe, making it easier for individuals and groups to interface as there are no longer conventional barriers like geographical and language. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that highlighted social media platforms as widely accepted methods of communication for jihadist terrorist organizations. Additionally, social media platforms have continuously increased the functionality of those organizations by increasing their capabilities. The emergence of social media platforms and their ultimate acquisition and use by jihadist terrorist organizations have diminished the relevance and effectiveness of traditional media outlets. The findings of this study bear vital significance for individuals, practitioners, and policymakers.

Jihadist terrorist organizations are using social media platforms to perniciously reach into the lives of individuals, communities, and nations. The participants agreed that to eliminate the threat of jihadist terrorism, honing personal responsibility for the end-users is a critical requirement. The issue of jihadist terrorism is constantly evolving into a new era. It appears that the current challenges to combatting jihadist terrorism do not lie in a lack of appropriate resources. Instead, it is more the seemingly minuscule issue of diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance. Individuals within the United States must be equipped with knowledge about jihadist terrorism and its connection to social media platforms. Ultimately, such knowledge could safeguard individual engagements and or provide appropriate skills and techniques that can be used to promote disengagement and reintegration of those who may have fallen prey to jihadist terrorism. This is significant because, as supported by the data, jihadist terrorist

organizations laude the recruitment process by emphasizing one-one contact. Hence, appropriate response measures at the individual level can be a very rewarding mitigant.

As jihadist terrorist organizations and their use of social media continue to grow, the need for societal changes to counter those efforts remains a growing priority. The study results are substantive for practitioners because they serve as practical reference points that can be used to guide the actions of different agencies that interplay with the phenomena studied. As practitioners seek to share knowledge and expertise across their respective operational domains, the pertinence of current information sharing remains a non-negotiable action. By and large, the findings will assist practitioners in obtaining the desired outcomes in the field through strategic approaches that are founded and or altered based on current data. Practitioners can employ the new data in creating educational materials that are widely distributed to ensure maximum engagement. Additionally, the findings could also solve a new area of study that other researchers could further explore to provide knowledge and close an identified research gap.

Some scholars have confirmed that social media platforms are primarily mishandled by jihadist terrorist organizations, thus allowing them to sabotage specific outcomes while advancing their organization (Esfahani & Johnson, 2018). This finding could be pioneering for policymakers as they seek to create new or revamp existing policies that could potentially annul those expansion opportunities for jihadist terrorist organizations. The increasing use of social media and its connection to jihadist terrorism is a constantly changing phenomenon, and so as they coexist, there is a growing concern of ambivalence which affects effective policymaking. In previous research, Hurley (2018) postulated that responding officials were initially taken by surprise by the deftness of jihadist social media campaign efforts. As critical players within the government prepare to continue countering those efforts, it is essential that policies that are

laudable in both principle and practice are created to repudiate and weaken jihadist terrorist organizations' capabilities to proliferate the virtual space (Hurley, 2018).

<div align="center">**Delimitations and Limitations**</div>

Simon & Goes (2013) agreed that delimitations of research are occurrences that are deduced from the limitations of that study. Limitations are characteristics that arise from the study that extends beyond the researcher's scope of control (Simon & Goes, 2013). Human subjects played an instrumental role in this study. Hence, such involvement predefined a study condition that was susceptible to some limitations and delimitations. This is because human subjects have varying traits and experiences that typically affect the way they interpret behaviors. This study aimed to use the qualitative research design, so features of and information relating to quantitative research will be excluded. Based on flexibility, the researcher used a semi-structured interview as an instrument for the data collection thematic analysis method to evaluate the data collected. The sample population size of 16 was determined using the researcher's judgment and the availability of information from previous research regarding the size requirements for qualitative studies. Scholars in previous research indicated that the ability to target the right people to get the appropriate information to advance a study is a critical step in purposive sampling (Shine, 2019). The researcher chose the sample population based on age criterion, professional and academic experiences, and English language fluency.

The empirical findings presented herein should be considered in light of some limitations. For this study, the researcher chose the single instrumental case study design, which enabled the gathering of rich and detailed information, and provided insight into future areas that could be explored. However, it limited the possibility of causal inferences and ruled out the possibilities of alternate explanations. The findings presented lack the applicability of generalization because the

study involved assessing individuals, groups, and organizations' behaviors. However, it might be challenging to replicate those same behaviors using other units of analysis, even given the same conditions.

Additionally, the sample size also contributed to the inefficacy in generality. Another significant limitation was the sampling strategy for the research. Although appropriate for the study, the purposeful sample strategy proved challenging as it sets the conditions for researchers' bias. This sampling technique also increased the probability of the sample population manipulating the data. That is, the information provided by the sample could have been a check the block criterion and not necessarily an accurate capture of their thoughts and perceptions on the phenomena studied. Time constraints were another limitation that affected the study because it was challenging to schedule the interviews at the convenience of both the researcher and the participants. The COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbated the time constraint challenge as some participants who were scheduled for in-person interviews requested the MS Teams option instead.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on this study's results and conclusion, future research with the same phenomena should be conducted using a different scope. It is believed that a very strategic approach could advance the themes of development and improvement. There are still various knowledge gaps in this area of study, so that additional research could benefit individuals, practitioners, and policymakers. An in-depth exploration of the jihadist terrorist organization and its use of social media in other countries could amount to helpful information that could strengthen individual and collective alliances. Considering the changing nature of the phenomena, the current research

will assist in maintaining a pre-emptive approach aimed at using finite resources to leverage personal readiness and adaptation in responding to jihadist terrorism.

The summative finding, which suggested that education endeavors built on a comprehensive approach are the main deterrents to future engagements in jihadist activities in the United States, is substantial. Practitioners and policymakers should develop and enforce mandatory curriculum requirements at all levels of the education system. The development of an intentional curriculum will help in filling the knowledge gap that exists among the vulnerable. Developing a system that facilitates supervisory and quality monitoring is among the principal requirements in ensuring program effectiveness. Making critical information digestible and accessible to the vulnerable could, over time, shows a significant decrease in engagement in jihadist terrorist activities. Having a complete understanding of jihadist terrorism is progressive, and so it is essential to be consistent in forming parallels with the findings from research and the susceptible. Hence, they could become less likely to fall to the whims and fancies of jihadist terrorism organizations.

Summary

In summary, the findings of this research contribute to a growing body of evidence that indicates social media is the primary method of communication employed by jihadist terrorist organizations. Additionally, social media contributes to jihadist terrorist organizations' operational power, traditional media outlets are far less effective than social media in radicalization and recruitment endeavors, and the growing use of social media platforms has highlighted the most significant changes in communication advancements and all-inclusive education is the main deterrent to future engagements in jihadist activities. Individuals, practitioners, and policymakers must understand their roles in relation to the research findings.

As appropriate functions are assumed, reforms and best practices will be advanced, creating

sustained efficiencies and ultimately reducing the significance of the problem.

A very significant implication of the study is captured in the summary that jihadist

terrorist organizations are using social media platforms to maliciously reach into the lives of

individuals, communities, and nations. The responses from the participants, linked with previous

scholars, indicated that the threat of jihadist terrorism is growing. Emphasizing accountability

and role assumption at the individual, community, and national levels are vital to response and

prevention strategies. This implication of the study also illustrates that individuals are not

equipped with the necessary knowledge to guide the required actions in response to jihadist

terrorism. The United States is a very nation, but the principles of its power are connected to the

strength of each individual. Hence, it is essential that appropriate actions are taken to ensure

there is a steady decline in the knowledge paucity of social media and its influence on the growth

and development of jihadist terrorism.

REFERENCES

Aceves, W. J. (2020). Avoiding the Terrorist Trap: Why Respect for Human Rights is the Key to Defeating Terrorism1RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2 by Tom Parker (review). *Human Rights Quarterly*, 42(3), 695-703. https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2020.0038

Al-Ali, F. (2019). The responsibility of the social media in the UAE towards terrorism from the perspective of the Emirati youth a field study on the Emirati audience. *Global Media Journal*, 17(33), 1-12. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2355840932%3Faccountid%3D12085

Alarid, M. (2016). Recruitment and radicalization: The role of social media and new technology. National Defense University. https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/780274/chapter-13-recruitment-and-radicalization-the-role-of-social-media-and-new-tech/

Alfifi, M., Kaghazgaran, P., & Caverlee, J. (2018). Measuring the impact of ISIS social media strategy. *Texas A&M University*. people.tamu.edu/~kaghazgaran/papers/alfifi2018mis2.pdf

Ali, R. B., Mohamed, Moss, S. A., Barrelle, K., & Lentini, P. (2017). Initiatives that counter violent radicalization but are perceived as suitable by targeted communities. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 32(1), 43-55. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s11896-016-9195-8

Aguinis, H., & Solarino, A.M. (2019). Transparency and replicability in qualitative research: The case of interviews with elite informants. *Wiley Online Library*. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/smj.3015

Arslan, H. T., & Petrone, A. (2017). A Proposed Strategy to Fight Religious Fundamentalism.

    Pakistan Journal of Criminology, 9(2), 102-121.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarl

    y-journals%2Fproposed-strategy-fight-religious-

    fundamentalism%2Fdocview%2F2194009967%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Arzroomchilar, E. (2022). Social Media and Religiousity A

    (Post) Phenomenological Account. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*,

    21(63), 96-112.

    https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-

    journals/social-media-religiosity-post-phenomenological/docview/2748494307/se-2

Awan, I. (2017). Cyber-extremism: Isis and the power of social media. *Society*, 54(2), 138-149.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s12115-017-0114-0

Badawy, A. and Ferrara, E. (2018). The Rise of Jihadist Propaganda on Social Networks.

    University of Southern California, Information Sciences Institute.

    https://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1702/1702.02263.pdf

Bastable, J. (2017). Preventing and countering extremism and terrorist recruitment. The

    International Schools Journal, 36(2), 82-86.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1926453006%3Faccountid%3D12085

Benoot, C., Hannes, K. & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative

    evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. *BMC*

    Med Res Methodology, 16(21). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-016-0114-6

Bensalah Alaoui, A. (2017). Morocco's security strategy: Preventing terrorism and countering

    extremism. *European View*, 16(1), 103-120.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s12290-017-0449-3

Bergen, P., Sterman, D., & Salyk-Virk, M. (2019). Terrorism in America 18 years after 9/11

    New America. doi:10.2307/resrep19976.5

Berman, E. R. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of counter-narrative tactics in preventing

    radicalization. *Dissertations & Theses Global*.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

    com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2303121236?accountid=12085

Bertram, L. (2016). Terrorism, the Internet and the Social Media Advantage: Exploring how

    terrorist organizations exploit aspects of the internet, social media and how these same

    platforms could be used to counter-violent extremism. *Journal for Deradicalization*.

    https://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/63/58

Bérubé, M., Tang, T., Fortin, F., Ozalp, S., Williams, M. L., & Burnap, P. (2020). Social media

    forensics applied to assessment of post–critical incident social reaction: The case of the

    2017 Manchester Arena terrorist attack. *Forensic Science International (Online)*,

    313http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1016/j.forsciint.2020.110364

Boyte, K. J. (2017). An analysis of the social-media technology, tactics, and narratives used to

    control perception in the propaganda war over Ukraine. *Journal of Information Warfare*,

    16(1), 88-111.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1968019509%3Faccountid%3D12085

Brzica, N. (2017). Potential adherents of radical Islam in Europe: Methods of recruitment and the age of perpetrators in acts of terror. Politicka Misao, 54(4), 161-184. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie w%2F1985791908%3Faccountid%3D12085

Budhijanto, D. (2018). The virtual jurisdiction to combating cyberterrorism in Indonesia. Central *European Journal of International & Security Studies*, 12(4) http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie w%2F2394978961%3Faccountid%3D12085

Burke, B. R., & Şen, A. F. (2018). Social media choices and uses: Comparing Turkish and American young-adults' social media activism. *Palgrave Communications*, 4(1) http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1057/s41599-018-0090-z

Cambron, R. J. (2019). World war web: Rethinking "Aiding and abetting" in the social media age. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 51(1), 293-325. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie w%2F2352082738%3Faccountid%3D12085

Celik, S. (2019). Experiences of internet users regarding cyber hate. *Information Technology & People*, 32(6), 1446-1471. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/ITP-01-2018-0009

Chwialkowska, A. (2019). How sustainability influencers drive green lifestyle adoption on social media: The process of green lifestyle adoption explained through the lenses of the minority influence model and social learning theory. *Management of Sustainable Development*, 11(1), 33-42. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.2478/msd-2019-0019

Cipolla, C., & Siino, A. R. (2017). In a new connected world. *Italian Sociological Review*, 7(2), 145-164. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1914860812%3Faccountid%3D12085

Congressional Research Service. (2019). Terrorism, violent extremism, and the internet: Free speech considerations. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R45713.pdf

Conway, M. (2017). Determining the role of the internet in violent extremism and terrorism: six suggestions for progressing research. *Studies in conflict & terrorism*, 40(1), 77–98. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1157408

Corcoba, J., & Raigam Jafet, M. P. (2019). Prediction model of propaganda characteristics used by the main jihadist groups. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 11(1), 59-66. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/JACPR-04-2018-0355

Crenshaw, M., & LaFree, G. (2017). Counterterrorism results: Can effectiveness be evaluated? In Countering Terrorism (pp. 165-194). *Brookings Institution Press*. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1hfr14r.9

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches. SAGE.

Cyrus SH, H., Quek, T. C., Ho, R. C. M., & Choo, C. C. (2019). Terrorism and mental illness: A pragmatic approach for the clinician. *BJPsych Advances*, 25(2), 101-109. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1192/bja.2018.49

Danielle, T. C., & Klein, J. L. (2018). College students' online pornography use: Contrasting

    general and specific structural variables with social learning variables. *American Journal*

    of Criminal Justice: AJCJ, 43(3), 551-569.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s12103-017-9424-4

DeRosa, M. (2017). Roving surveillance authority under FISA. Section 206.

    https://apps.americabar.org/natsecurity/patriotdebates/206-2#opening

Dew, A. J. (2019). Fighting for influence in open societies: The role of resilience and

    transparency. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 43(2), 151-165.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarl

    y-journals%2Ffighting-influence-open-societies-role-

    resilience%2Fdocview%2F2248254326%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Domasneanu-Miulescu, L. (2019). Social media effects on millennials' counterterrorism type of

    Behaviors. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

    com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2308181068?accountid=12085

Domer, P. (2020). De facto state: Social media networks and the first amendment, *Notre Dame*

    School of Law. https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol95/iss2/8

Dragomir, A. M. (2017). The fake news phenomenon in the social media era. *Strategic*

    Impact, (64), 54-65.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2154983734%3Faccountid%3D12085

Durr, B. (2016). ISIS: The use of social media. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*; Social

Science Premium Collection. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1868415862?accountid=12085

Ebneyamini, S & Moghadam, M.R.S. (2018). Toward developing a framework for conducting

case study research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1609406918817954

Ehiane, S. O. (2019). De-radicalisation and disengagement of the extremist group in Africa: The

Nigerian experience. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 6(2), 123-123–138.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.31920/2056-5658/2019/v6n2a6

Enomoto, C. E., & Douglas, K. (2019). Do internet searches for Islamist propaganda precede or

follow Islamist terrorist attacks? *Economics & Sociology*, 12(1), 233-247,367.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.14254/2071-789X.2019/12-1/13

Esfahani, L.M. & Johnson, L.W. (2018). Stakeholders' Engagement and Strategic Management

of Social Media. Journal of International Business Research and Marketing, 3(6), 47-56.

Eswaran, M. & Neary, H.M. (2018). Decentralized terrorism and social identity. *Vancouver

School of Economics*. https://thred.devecon.org/papers/2018/2018-013.pdf

Fassrainer, V. (2020). Tweeting terror live: Al-shabaab's use of twitter during the Westgate

attack and implications for counterterrorism communications. *Military Review*, 100(2),

85-95.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F2378917953%3Faccountid%3D12085

Felty, S. (2019). Social Identity Theory and intergroup conflict in Israel/Palestine. *Homeland Security Affairs,*

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fsocial-identity-theory-intergroup-conflict-israel%2Fdocview%2F2266265341%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Fisentzou, I. (2019). Blurred lines: social media in armed conflict. *Legal Information Management,* 19(1), 65-67.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/S147266961900015X

Fleming, J. and Zegwaard, K.E. (2018). Methodologies, methods and ethical considerations for conducting research in work-integrated learning. *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning*, Special Issue, 19(3), 205-213.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1196755.pdf

Floridia, R., & Hollinger, R. (2017). Social learning theory and the training of retail loss prevention officers. *Security Journal*, 30(4), 1013-1026.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1057/sj.2016.2

Florio, F.A. (2018). United to deter: Dealing with new means of supporting terror. *University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review.*

https://repository.law.miami.edu/umiclr/vol25/iss1/5

Forcucci, L. E. (2018). Cyber-jihad: Waging virtual terror to create an online. ProQuest *Dissertations & Theses Global*.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fcyber-jihad-waging-virtual-terror-create-online%2Fdocview%2F2150109919%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Formukong, G. C. (2017). The impact of social media on terrorism. *ProQuest Dissertations &*
Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1960623486?accountid=1208

Fuentes, K. M. (2016). Cyberterrorism: The use of social networking to recruit westerners an

informational guide for law enforcement agencies. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses*

Global; SciTech Premium Collection.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F1791468583%3Faccountid%3D12085

Fujita, M., Harrigan, P., & Soutar, G. N. (2018). Capturing and co-creating student experiences

social media: A social identity perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*,

26(1), 55-71. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/10696679.2017.1389245

Fusch, P. I., &Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research.

The Qualitative Report, 20(9), 1408-1416. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-

3715/2015.2281

Ghingoor, A. (2019). Social media's impact in the 21st Century: Redefining transnational

relations. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F2296357204%3Faccountid%3D12085

Goodman, A.E. (2019). When you give a terrorist a twitter: Holding social media companies

liable for their support of terrorism.

https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/plr/vol46/iss1/4

Gunaratna, R. (2018). Global threat landscape in 2018. *Revista UNISCI*, (46)

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2407636524%3Faccountid%3D12085

Hacker, K. L., & Mendez, V. R. (2016). Toward a model of strategic influence, international

    broadcasting, and global engagement. *Media and Communication*, 4(2)

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.17645/mac.v4i2.355

Hakim, N. (2020). How social media companies could be complicit in incitement to

    genocide. *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 21(1), 83-117.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2431038005%3Faccountid%3D12085

Hadi, M.A. & Closs, S.J. (2016) Ensuring rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research in

    clinical pharmacy. *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, 38 (3). pp. 641-646.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s11096-015-0237-6

Hernandez, D., & Olson, P. (2019, Aug 05). Isolation and social media combine to radicalize

    violent offenders; Social media is increasingly playing a role, especially among lone

    actors like the ones responsible for El Paso and Dayton shootings. Wall Street Journal.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspa

    pers%2Fisolation-social-media-combine-radicalize-

    violent%2Fdocview%2F2268435459%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Herrero-Jiménez, B., Carratalá, A., & Berganza, R. (2018). Violent conflicts and the new

    mediatization: The impact of social media on the European parliamentary agenda

    regarding the Syrian war. *Communication & Society*, 31(3), 141-157.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.15581/003.31.3.141-157

Hurley, M. (2018) Digital Counterterrorism: Fighting Jihadist Online (2018).

    https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BPC-National-

    Security-Digital-Counterterrorism.pdf

Hussain, M. N. (2019). Role of multiple social media platforms in online campaigns.

    ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

    com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2377711983?accountid=12085

Hutchinson, T., U.S.A.F. (2019). An economic approach to deterrence. *Air & Space Power*

    Journal, 33(1), 78-87.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2190335122%3Faccountid%3D12085

Ingram, H.J. (2018). Terrorism prevention in the United States. Program on Extremism Policy

    Paper.

    https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Terrorism%20Prevention%20Policy

    %20Paper.pdf

Innes, M., Roberts, C., & Lowe, T. (2017). A disruptive influence? "preventing" problems and

    countering violent extremism policy in practice. *Law & Society Review*, 51(2), 252-281.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1900034268%3Faccountid%3D12085

International Peace Institute. (2018). The tensions between counterterrorism approaches and

    international humanitarian law/principled humanitarian action.

    https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/IPI_April-26-

    workshop_Background-paper-2.pdf

Iyamu, T. (2018). Collecting qualitative data for information systems studies: The reality in

    practice. *Education and Information Technologies*, 23(5), 2249-2264.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s10639-018-9718-2

Johnson, B. G. (2018). Tolerating and managing extreme speech on social media. *Internet*

    Research, 28(5), 1275-1291. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/IntR-03-2017-

    0100

Jones, B. T., & Mattiacci, E. (2019). A manifesto, in 140 characters or fewer: Social media as a

    tool of rebel diplomacy. *British Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 739-761.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/S0007123416000612

Jones, S.G. (2020). The escalating terrorism problem in the United States. *Center for Strategic &*

    International Studies. https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-

    states

Jones, S., Toucas, B., & Markusen, M. (2018). From the IRA to the Islamic State: The Evolving

    Terrorism Threat in Europe (pp. 48-55, Rep.). *Center for Strategic and International*

    Studies (CSIS). doi:10.2307/resrep22489.8

Kallio, H, Pietilä, A, Johnson, M, & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological

    review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide.

    Journal of Advanced Nursing. 72. doi.10.1111/jan.13031.

Kapoor, K. K., Tamilmani, K., Rana, N. P., Patil, P., Dwivedi, Y. K. & Nerur, S. (2018).

    Advances in social media research: Past, present and future. *Information Systems*

    Frontiers, 20(3), 531-558. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s10796-017-

    9810-y

Keatinge, T. & Keen, F. (2019). Social media and terrorist financing what are the vulnerabilities

    and how could public and private sectors collaborate better? *Global Research Network on*

    Terrorism and Technology.

    https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20190802_grntt_paper_10.pdf

Kim, K., Jung, K., & Chilton, K. (2016). Strategies of social media use in disaster management.

    International Journal of Emergency Services, 5(2), 110-125. https://search-proquest-

    com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/docview/1843790440?accountid=8289

Klausen, J. (2016). The role of social networks in the evolution of Al Qaeda-inspired violent

    extremism in the United States, 1990-2015. *NCJRS.*

    https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250416.pdf

Korstjens, I & Moser, A. (2018) Series: Practical guidance to qualitative

    research. Part 4: *Trustworthiness and publishing, European Journal of General Practice*,

    24:1, 120-124, https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092.

Lavi, M. (2020). Do platforms kill? *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 43(2), 477-573.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2415857024%3Faccountid%3D12085

Leitch, S., & Merlot, E. (2018). Power relations within brand management: The challenge of

    Social media. *Journal of Brand Management*, 25(2), 85-92.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1057/s41262-017-0081-1

Liang, C. S. (2017). Unveiling the "united cyber caliphate" and the birth of the e-terrorist. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 18(3), 11-20. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Funveiling-united-cyber-caliphate-birth-e%2Fdocview%2F2087296664%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Lieberman, A. V. (2017). Terrorism, the internet, and propaganda: A deadly combination. *Journal of National Security Law & Policy*, 9(1), 1-44. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1869124877%3Faccountid%3D12085

Lobnikar, B., Mraović, I. C., & Prislan, K. (2019). Preventing radicalisation and extremism – the views of police students in Croatia 1,2. *Varstvoslovje*, 21(2), 161-183. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2426140698%3Faccountid%3D12085

Lorraine, B. G., Palasinski, M., & Shortland, N. (2019). Psychology perspectives on community vengeance as a terrorist motivator: A review. Safer Communities, 18(3), 81-93. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/SC-08-2018-0023

Macdonald, S., Correia, S.G., & Watkins, A.L. (2019). Regulating terrorist content on social media: automation and the rule of law. *Cambridge University.* https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744552319000119

Mansour, S. (2018). Social media analysis of user's responses to terrorism using sentiment analysis and text mining. Procedia Computer Science. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2018.10.297

Marshall, B., Cardon, p., Poddar, A. & Fontenot, R (2013) Does sample size matter in qualitative research? A review of qualitative interviews in is research, *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 54:1, 11-22, doi:10.1080/08874417.2013.11645667

Meleagrou-Hitchens, A. (2017). The challenges and limitations of online counter-narratives in the fight against ISIS recruitment in Europe and North America. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 18(3), 95-104. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2087296792%3Faccountid%3D12085

Melki, J. & Jabado, M. (2016). Mediated public diplomacy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: The synergistic use of terrorism, social media and branding. *Media and Communication*. https:// doi.org/10.17645/mac.v4i2.432

Mitts, T. (2017). Terrorism, Islamophobia, and radicalization. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1896114689%3Faccountid%3D12085

Morgan, M. F. (2016). The necessity for social media intelligence in today's evolving battlefields. *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, 42(2), 40-42, 45. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1860277553%3Faccountid%3D12085

Morgans, M. J. (2017). Freedom of speech, the war on terror, and what's YouTube got to do with it: American censorship during times of military conflict. *Federal Communications Law Journal*, 69(2), 145. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2026397638%3Faccountid%3D12085

Muluk, K. & Winoto, S. (2018). Role of research/academic in policy formulation. *Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia.*

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4a1d/e5d2939c2aa74d043c014cb5879affa6822f.pdf

Nagengast, J. D. (2021). Countering digital Terrorism: A qualitative study on information sharing to deny digital radicalization and recruiting. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fcountering-digital-terrorism-qualitative-study-on%2Fdocview%2F2491700940%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Nashit, M. (2019). Global cybercrimes, associated laws and befitting policies for Pakistan. *Defense Journal*, 22(10), 46-54.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2362253766%3Faccountid%3D12085

National Institute of Justice. (2017). The role of social media in the evolution of Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism. https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/role-social-media-evolution-al-qaeda-inspired-terrorism

New America (2023). Who is a Terrorist? https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/terrorism-in-america/who-are-the-terrorists/

Nguyen, N. (2019). "The eyes and ears on our frontlines": Policing without police to counter violent extremism. *Surveillance & Society*, 17(3), 322-337.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2290880823%3Faccountid%3D12085

Nwammuo, A., & Salawu, A. (2018). Are social media platforms not effective? analysis of social

        movements for the release of Nigerian school girl Leah Sharibu abducted by Boko-

Haram. Ubuntu, 7(2), 95-119. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.31920/2050-

        4950/2018/v7n2a5

Ogunlana, S. O. (2018). Countering expansion and organization of terrorism in

        cyberspace (Order No. 10978968). *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.*

        http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

        w%2F2138380725%3Faccountid%3D12085

Ogwu, D. M. (2018). Perspectives on how domestic terrorists become radicalized: qualitative

        case study. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

        http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertat

        ions-theses%2Fperspectives-on-how-domestic-terrorists-

        become%2Fdocview%2F2124411784%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Oludare, O.S. (2018). Countering expansion and organization of terrorism in cyberspace.

        ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. https://search-proquest-

        com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/2138380725/A60FA583675E4920PQ/26?a

        ccountid=12085

Paavola, J., Helo, T., Jalonen, H., Sartonen, M., & Huhtinen, A. (2016). Understanding the

        trolling phenomenon: The automated detection of bots and cyborgs in the social media.

        Journal of Information Warfare, 15(4), 100-111, III-V.

        http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

        w%2F1968019702%3Faccountid%3D12085

Pak, D. M. (2018). Social media networking: New challenges and strategies for counterterrorism. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*; Social Science Premium Collection. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2047504674?accountid=12085

Patino, C. M., & Ferreira, J. C. (2018). Inclusion and exclusion criteria in research studies: definitions and why they matter. *Jornal brasileiro de pneumologia: publicacao oficial da Sociedade Brasileira de Pneumologia e Tisilogia*, 44(2), 84. https://doi.org/10.1590/s1806-37562018000000088

Pepich, B. (2018). Understanding Al-Qaeda and Isis utilization of individual Jihadists to attack the West and establish a global caliphate. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Funderstanding-al-qaeda-isis-utilization%2Fdocview%2F2218585700%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Peptan, C. (2019). References of Romanian intelligence in preventing and combatting terrorism. *Analele Universitatii "Constantin Brancusi" Din Targu Jiu.Serie Litere Si Stiinte Sociale* (2), 52-62. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2332084119%3Faccountid%3D12085

Petroski, J. (2017). Terrorist group recruitment tactics using social media on the internet (Order No. 10621176). *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*; Social Science Premium Collection. (1955177532). http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1955177532?accountid=12085

Pew Research Center. (2019). Share of U.S. adults using social media, including Facebook, is

    mostly unchanged since 2018. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-

    of-u-s-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/

Prezelj, I., Kocjančič, K., & Marinšek, U. (2018). Islamist radicalisation towards extreme

    violence and terrorism 1. *Solsko Polje*, 29(5), 85-105,156-157,166-167.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2188098742%3Faccountid%3D12085

Priyadarshini, A. (2020). Conducting and analyzing semi-structured interviews: A study of

    conducting and analyzing semi-structured Interviews: A study of open innovation in food

    firms in Ireland. *Technological University Dublin.*

    https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=buschacart

Queirós, A, Faria, D & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and

    quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*.

    www.oapub.org/edu

Ramluckan, T., Subban, M., & McArthur, B. (2016). The relevance of South African legislation

    on social media as a strategic disaster and crisis communications tool. *Journal of*

    Information Warfare, 15(1), 60-74, VIII-IX.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1968046250%3Faccountid%3D12085

Redish, M.H. & Fisher, M. (2017). Terrorizing advocacy and the first amendment: Free

    expression and the fallacy of mutual exclusivity. *Fordham Law Review*, 86 (2).

    https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol86/iss2/10

Riglietti, G. (2017). Defining the threat: What cyber terrorism means today and what it could

mean tomorrow. *International Journal of Business and Cyber Security*, 1(2)

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F1936249736%3Faccountid%3D1208

Robinson, O.C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and

practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*.

https://www.academia.edu/6104407/Sampling_in_Interview_Based_Qualitative_Researc

h_A_Theoretical_and_Practical_Guide

Rogers, R. H. (2018). Coding and Writing Analytic Memos on Qualitative Data: A Review of

Johnny Saldaña's The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. *The Qualitative

Report*, 23(4), 889-892.

https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-

journals/coding-writing-analytic-memos-on-qualitative-data/docview/2036388128/se-2

Ronczkowski, M. R. (2018). Terrorism and organized hate crime. (4th ed.).

Taylor & Francis (CRC Press). ISBN: 9781138703469

Rowland, M. (2017). Jihad 2.0: The power of social media in terrorist recruitment. *Homeland

Security Digital Library*. https://www.hsdl.org/c/jihad-2-0-the-power-of-social-media-in-

terrorist-recruitment/

Rudner, M. (2017). "Electronic Jihad": The internet as Al Qaeda's catalyst for global terror.

studies in conflict & terrorism, 40(1), 10–23. https://doi-

org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/1057610X.2016.1157403

Rubitski, R. E. (2019). How domestic extremist groups use social media to advance their

ideologies. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2315539629?accountid=12085

Rusu, M., & Herman, R. (2018). The implications of propaganda as a social influence strategy.

Scientific Bulletin - Nicolae Balcescu Land Forces Academy, 23(2), 118-125.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarl

y-journals%2Fimplications-propaganda-as-social-

influence%2Fdocview%2F2258660438%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Rusumanov, V. (2016). The use of the internet by terrorist organizations. *Information &

Security*, 34(2), 137-150. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.11610/isij.3409

Salo, J., Mäntymäki, M., & Islam, A. N. (2018). The dark side of social media – and

0RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2Fifty Shades of Grey1RW1S34RfeSDcfkexd09rT2

introduction to the special issue: the dark side of social media. *Internet Research*, 28(5),

1166-1168. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/IntR-10-2018-442

Sanchez, G. (2018). An exploration of the evolution of the role of the internet in terrorism.

ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F2161186350%3Faccountid%3D12085

Sargeant J. (2012). Qualitative research part II: Participants, analysis, and quality Assurance.

Journal of graduate medical education, 4(1), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-11-

00307.1

Schiano, A., Chebly, J. E., & Ruiz, F. (2017). Sustainable development as a path to

    peacebuilding: Finding common ground to counter the extremist narrative. *Seton Hall*

    Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, 18(1), 25-37.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1928321872%3Faccountid%3D12085

Schils, N., & Verhage, A. (2017). Understanding how and why young people enter radical or

    violent extremist groups. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 11, 1C,1-17.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.4119/UNIBI/ijcv.473

Scrivens, R., Gaudette, T., Davies, G., & Frank, R. (2019). Searching for Extremist Content

    Online Using the Dark Crawler and Sentiment Analysis. *Sociology of Crime, Law and*

    Deviance, 24, 179-194. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/S1521-

    613620190000024016

Shallcross, N. J. (2017). Social media and information operations in the 21st century. *Journal of*

    Information Warfare, 16(1), 1-12.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1968020940%3Faccountid%3D12085

Shine, B. J. (2019). Documenting current practices in the management of deaf suspects in the

    USA. Policing, 42(3), 347-361. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/PIJPSM-

    02-2018-0026

Shkolnik, M. & Corbeil, A. (2019). Hezbollah's "virtual entrepreneurs:" How Hezbollah is using

    the internet to incite violence in is Israel. *Combating Terrorism Center*.

    https://ctc.usma.edu/hezbollahs-virtual-entrepreneurs-hezbollah-using-internet-incite-

    violence-israel/

Simon, M.K. & Goes, J. (2013). Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations.

   https://www.ders.es/limitationscopedelimitation1.pdf

Soral, W., Liu, J. H., & Bilewicz, M. (2020). Media of Contempt: Social media consumption

   predicts normative acceptance of anti-muslim hate speech and Islam prejudice.

   International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 14, 1-13.

   http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarl

   y-journals%2Fmedia-contempt-social-consumption-

   predicts%2Fdocview%2F2444990891%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Spalek, B. (2016). Radicalization, de-radicalization and counter-radicalization in relation to

   families: Key challenges for research, policy, and practice. *Security Journal*, 29(1), 39-

   52. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1057/sj.2015.43

Speckhard, A & Ellenberg, M. (2020). ISIS and the militant Jihad on instagram. *Homeland

   Security Today*. https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/cybersecurity/isis-and-the-

   militant-jihad-on-instagram/

Speckhard, A., Shajkovci, A., & Ahmed, M. (2019). Intervening in and preventing Somali-

   American radicalization with counter-narratives: Testing the breaking the ISIS brand

   counter narrative videos in American Somali focus group settings. *Journal of Strategic

   Security*, 11(4), 32-71. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.5038/1944-

   0472.11.4.1695

Stewart, C. J. (2019). He's got friends in online places: The presence of social media in

   Radicalization. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*.

   http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-

   com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2311052319?accountid=12085

Stratton, S. J. (2019). Data sampling strategies for disaster and emergency health research.

    Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, 34(3), 227-229.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/S1049023X19004412

Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. (2018). The use of social media by the United

    States extremists. *Research Brief*.

    https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_PIRUS_UseOfSocialMediaByUSExtremists_R

    esearchBrief_July2018.pdf

Sugihartati, R., Suyanto, B., & Mun'im, S. (2020). The shift from consumers to prosumers:

    Susceptibility of young adults to radicalization. *Social Sciences*, 9(4), 40.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.3390/socsci904004

Sultan, K. (2016). The "ISIS" online media war: A construction of ideology through

    terrorism. *Pakistan Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 1(2), 1-14.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2099256125%3Faccountid%3D12085

Sweet, J. I. (2020). Jihadist media networks and virtual propaganda in the Russian cyberspace.

    ProQuest Central.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertat

    ions-theses%2Fjihadist-media-networks-virtual-

    propaganda%2Fdocview%2F2439858028%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Swenson, T., Jr. (2018). The influence of the Islamic state's weaponization of social media on radicalization in the United States: A qualitative content analysis of case file and semi-s structured interview data. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. (2090744018). http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2090744018%3Faccountid%3D12085

Taylor, R. W., & Swanson, C. R. (2019). Terrorism, intelligence, and homeland security (2nd ed.). Pearson. ISBN: 9780134818146.

The Patriot Act. (2017). What is the proper balance between national security and individual rights? congressional rights foundation. http://www.crf-usa.org/america-responds-to-terrorism/the-patriot-act.html

Thompson, J. (2022). A Guide to Abductive Thematic Analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(5), 1410-1421. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5340

Thompson, R. (2019). Social media companies must be transparent about efforts to counter terrorism. Federal Information & News Dispatch, LLC. https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/central/docview/2218376837/36034AD2E26B479CPQ/20?accountid=12085

Tropotei, T., & Deac, I., PhD. (2019). Social media in intelligence analysis. *Strategic Impact*, (70), 69-78. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2348390590%3Faccountid%3D12085

Tsesis, A. (2017). Social media accountability for terrorist propaganda. *Fordham Law Review*. https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5444&context=flr

Tucker, J. A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M. E., & Barberá, P. (2017). From liberation to turmoil:

Social media and democracy. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 46-59.

http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1353/jod.2017.0064

Tuttle, M. (2016). Terrorism recruitment using internet marketing. Utica College, *ProQuest*

Dissertations Publishing. https://search-proquest-

com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1793408099/DFD4688F50CD4407PQ/10?accountid=1

2085

Ugwuanyi, C. J., Olijo, I. I., & Celestine, G. V. (2019). Social media as tools for political views

expressed in the visuals shared among social media users. *Library Philosophy and*

Practice,

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F2236685987%3Faccountid%3D12085

United Nations. (2023). Youth engagement and empowerment. UN Counter-terrorism Centre

(UNCCT). https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/youth-engagement-and-

empowerment

Vaivode, L., Magiur, & Ammar, S., Driur. (2019). The role of social media during and in the

aftermath of a terrorist attack. Acta Prosperitatis, (10), 131-144,160-161.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

w%2F2228576203%3Faccountid%3D1208

Valentini, D., Lorusso, A. M., & Stephan, A. (2020). Online extremism: Dynamic integration of

digital and physical spaces in radicalization. Frontiers in psychology, 11, 524.

https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00524

Vargas, J. M. (2017). Understanding the radicalization process of U.S. homegrown terrorists. *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F1952051632%3Faccoun

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterizing and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*. 18http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7

Wang, X., Zhang, W., & Yang, Y. (2017). Ideology, Global Strategy, and Development of the Islamic State and its Influence on China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative. *Journal of Global South Studies*, 34(2), 139-155. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1353/gss.2017.0016

Weatherford, J. & Maitra, D. (2019). How online students approach bracketing: A survey research study. Educational Research: *Theory and Practice*, 30(2), 91-102.

White House. (2018). National strategy for counterterrorism for the United States of America. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf

Williams, K. (2017). Using social learning theory to engage adults through extension education. *NACTA Journal*, 61(3), 263-264. http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2001047271%3Faccountid%3D12085

Winter, C. (2019). Researching Jihadist Propaganda: Access, Interpretation, & Trauma. *Revolve Network*. https://www.resolvenet.org/system/files/2019-09/RSVE_RVESeries_ResearchingJihadistPropaganda_CWinter_May2019.pdf

Wirihana, L., Welch, A., Williamson, M., Christensen, M., Bakon, S., & Craft, J. (2018).

    Using Colaizzi's method of data analysis to explore the experiences of nurse academics

    teaching on satellite campuses. *Nurse Researcher* (2014+), 25(4), 30.

    http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.7748/nr.2018.e1516

Woodhams, K. (2016). Connections among communities: Preventing radicalization and violent

    extremism through social network analysis (SNA) in the threat and hazard identification

    and risk assessment (THIRA) framework. *Homeland Security Affairs*, from

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2206254824%3Faccountid%3D12085

Wray, C. (2019). Global terrorism: Threats to the Homeland. FBI.

    https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/global-terrorism-threats-to-the-homeland-10301971

Wright, J. (2020). State terrorism: Are academics deliberately ignoring it? Journal of Global

    Faultlines, 6(2), 204-214.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F2409890377%3Faccountid%3D12085

Yonah, Jeremy, B. O. B. (2018). 'Terrorism is now moving at the speed of social media.'

    Top FBI counter-terrorism official talks to 'Post' about global terror challenges.

    Jerusalem Post.

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fnewspa

    pers%2Fterrorism-is-now-moving-at-speed-social-media-

    top%2Fdocview%2F2108102216%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085

Zarate, J. (2017). The future of counterterrorism strategy. *Hampton Roads International Security*

    Quarterly,

    http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.proquest.com%2Fdocvie

    w%2F1869841835%3Faccountid%3D12085

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Email to Potential Participants

Recruitment Email

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the Helms School of Government at Liberty University, I am conducting a research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The purpose of my research is to provide a comprehensive framework that examines and categorizes the roles that social media plays in the expansion of jihadist terrorism. Furthermore, the research seeks to unearth information about the ways that social media contribute to jihadist group's recruitment, radicalization and propaganda activities, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

To satisfy the purpose of this study, participants must be 21 years or older, male or female, and inclusion of all races. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an interview via Microsoft Teams, telephone, or in person. The timeframe for the interview is estimated for approximately 60 minutes. To enable a valuable exchange, names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain in strict confidence.

Please contact me via email or the telephone number listed herein for any additional information and or to schedule an interview.

If you choose to participate in this research, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Sincerely,

Shakira Natalee Anglin
Graduate Student

Appendix B: Interview Protocol: Role of Social Media in the Expansion of Jihadist Terrorism

---

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____

My name is Shakira Natalee Anglin, and I am researching the role that social media plays in the expansion of Jihadist terrorism. This is in partial fulfilment of my Doctor of Philosophy program at Liberty University. The goal of the research is to unearth new information as it relates to the nexus between social media and terrorism. Given your expertise and professional background, I value your insight. The duration of this interview will be recorded and subsequently the audio will be transcribed. A copy of the transcription will be issued to you, at that time, should there be discrepancies, we will work towards a prompt resolution, as no information from the transcription will be included in the study without your approval.

1. What are the most common methods jihadist terrorists use on social media to radicalize a user?

2. Why do some social media users become involved in terrorist activities?

3. What are some methods that can be used to discourage social media users from engaging in Jihadist terrorist activities?

4. Why are social media platforms more appealing to terrorist than other media outlets?

5. What are some distinctive features of social media platforms that benefit jihadist terrorist organizations?

6. How effective is the use of social media in radicalization in propaganda for jihadist terrorist groups?

Appendix C-1: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Project: The Role of Social Media in the Expansion of Jihadist Terrorism

Principal Investigator: Shakira Natalee Anglin, Graduate Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 21 years of age or older. You must be in one of the following career fields: Law enforcement; Intelligence, Homeland Security; Cybersecurity and or related disciplines. Both males and females are welcome to participate despite ethnic and racial affiliations. Be advised that taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this case study is to describe a comprehensive framework that examines and categorizes the roles that social media plays in the expansion of terrorism. Furthermore, the study will discover findings to close the research gap regarding the identification of factors that could discourage future generations' engagement in terrorist activities.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1.   Please contact me to confirm the most convenient time and mode to conduct the interview. To manage your expectations, the interview will be recorded, and the anticipated duration is 60 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, benefits to society include but are not limited to collective safety; improved resilience and operational autonomy; greater protection of human lives and property; increased economic and social competencies on both national and global scale.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Appendix C-2: Informed Consent Form

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

• Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms and codes. Interviews will be conducted in secured locations where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
• Data obtained during this research process will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
• Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study Shakira Natalee Anglin. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and/or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Larry Anthony at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations.

Appendix C-3: Informed Consent Form

The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

If your study involves audio recording, video recording, or photographing participants, retain the above checkbox and permission statement, leave the appropriate method of recording listed, and remove the method(s) you will not utilize. If you will NOT be recording your participant(s), please remove the checkbox and permission statement.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date