

“I Pledge Allegiance to:” A New Type of Terrorism

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is a concept that affects every aspect of a person's life in many countries around the world, and after September 11, 2001 this became especially true for the American people and the United States' government. The phrase, *one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter* has been used for over forty years. While old habits can be hard to break, scholars, governments, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement need to acknowledge that the terrorist attacks carried out in the United States do not apply to any of the existing types of terrorism. These attacks have indicators from both lone wolf terrorism and terrorist networks, but also contrast greatly in their objectives, tactics, level of affiliation and autonomy. This thesis argues that the threat is bandwagon terrorism, and it exists because of the spider's web network of a hybrid netwar established by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and al-Qaeda.

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INTRODUCTION

There has to a limit in which attaching additional terms to an already highly, contested concept, idea, or phrase before the identity, understanding, and assessment of the original concept loses value. In this thesis, I test the limit of terrorism by arguing that the existing counterterrorism strategies have not been working on the terrorist attacks in the United States since 2013, because the American citizens carrying out the terrorist attacks in the name of international terrorist networks, alone or in couples are not lone wolf terrorists or members of a terrorist network, but rather bandwagon terrorists. “There are few neutral terms in politics, because political language affects the perceptions of protagonists and audiences, and such effect acquires a greater urgency in the drama of terrorism. Similarly, the meanings of the term change to fit a changing context.”¹ The purpose of identifying the type of violence used in an attack is about more than providing the information to the public in order to satisfy the desire to know everything. Identifying violence is essential for governments, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement, because without fully understanding the threat it is unlikely that the policies put in place will prevent the next attack. The objective of an act of violence is the key characteristic that separates the type of violent acts. A terrorist attack is identified if the objective is political, which means those who act because of personal grief, revenge, financial profit, or fame are not terrorists.²

The act of pledging allegiance or being inspired by a person, movement, ideology, object, or terrorist network is much different than copying the actions, tactics, or ideology of another individual because of sympathy or inspiration. Pledging allegiance means that an individual is acting or behaving in accordance with a person, movement, ideology, etc. to prove his or her devotion or loyalty in an attempt to either be an affiliate or be recognized as being an affiliate of the person,

¹ Martha Crenshaw. *Terrorism in Context* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 7.

² Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij. *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 16.

This is important to understand that the mass shootings at Columbine, Sandy Hook, and Virginia Tech were not acts of terrorism.

movement, ideology, etc. he or she is pledging to. A lone wolf is a person who would rather work, act, or live alone rather than within a group, organization, or network so he or she would not act or behave to be seen as an affiliate of a terrorist network. A lone wolf terrorist is an individual that has at some point been a member, or had direct communication with a member or affiliate. The actions of a lone wolf terrorist may align with ideologies of a terrorist group, organization, or network he or she was affiliated with before, but it is their individual motives that led to the attack and their objective that the attack is carried out in order to achieve. Therefore a lone wolf terrorist would not be inspired by or pledge allegiance.

In 2016, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contractor known for his contribution on enhanced interrogation techniques, Dr. James E. Mitchell released a ‘tell all’ about his role in the War on Terror after 9/11. Dr. Mitchell interrogated several top-level al-Qaeda members while they were being held in CIA black sites. The highest ranked member he interrogated was Khalid Sheikh Mohammad or KSM. In one of the interrogations KSM acknowledged the fear many Americans felt after 9/11 by telling Dr. Mitchell, “terror attacks were good, but the ‘practical’ way to defeat America was through immigration and by outbreeding non-Muslims...They will wrap themselves in America’s rights and laws for protection, ratchet up acceptance of Sharia law, and then, only when they were strong enough rise up and violently impose Sharia from within.”³ Several years after 2001 when he said this, the government and intelligence communities assumed he was referring to the ‘sleeper’ cells they believed to be inside the United States. “Polls taken every year since 9/ 11 have found that four out of ten Americans worry that they or a family member will be the victim of an act of terrorism.”⁴ They were wrong about the sleeper cells and the threat he was referring to.

³ James E. Mitchell. *Enhanced Interrogation: Inside the Minds and Motives of the Islamic Terrorists Trying to Destroy America* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2016), 189.

⁴ Peter L. Bergen. *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* (New York: Broadway Books, 2016), 18.

The threat KSM was referring to is that of bandwagon terrorism. American citizens are able to legally access online propaganda from international terrorist networks without causing attention from the government; they are able to legally purchase firearms made accessible in the United States or buy the ingredients needed to make a bomb, which were provided by the Internet. Instead of recognizing the threat is already inside the United States and using strategies to counter it at home, the current administration has focused on the threat from abroad by increasing military force and even trying to prevent people from countries considered to sponsor terrorism from entering the U.S. These actions will not prevent the future threats similar to the attacks used in this thesis, but they could make it worse.

The terrorist attacks in Europe are significantly different than those in the United States. The propaganda that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) use has called for Westerns from around the world to join the terrorist network and become a foreign fighter. Those who cannot travel to the ISIS held territories are told to carry out attacks at home. The terrorist attacks seen in Europe are carried out by members of affiliated cells, or individuals who have been able to travel to camps for training in the Middle East, Eastern Asia, or Africa and return to carry out the attack. It is also important to understand that even though other Western nations have and still do participate in actions related to the War on Terror, this is America's war, which the cases in this thesis demonstrate to be seen as the reason the U.S. has remained a main target for Islamic influenced terrorism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2002, David C. Rapoport introduced his concept of the *wave phenomena*, which explains development of terrorism starting in Russia during the 1880's where *modern terror began*.⁵ This concept set forth a debate that is still being contested by top terrorism scholars today. According to

⁵ David Rapoport. *The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism*, in Audrey Kurth Cronin and James Ludes (eds.) *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 47.

Rapoport, there are four waves that are made up of organizations that usually disappear before the wave is complete, which is when the energy of the wave is not able to inspire new organizations.⁶ Since the Anarchist Wave, Anticolonial Wave, and the New Left Wave each spanned about forty years, the start of the forth wave or Religious Wave in 1979 with the occurrence of the Iranian Revolution, the beginning of a new Islamic century, and the unprovoked invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets will not end for maybe another eight years. Rapoport's *wave phenomena* has proven to be accurate so far, but it does not provide the much needed explanation of who the actors that are carrying out the terrorist attacks are or why this is happening specifically in the United States, post-9/11. The purpose of my research is not to suggest there is a fifth wave, but rather develop a concept that accurately defines the threat that exists specifically in the United States and in the fourth wave. Rapoport explains the waves as being made up of organizations, but for the attacks after 2009 the terrorist attacks have been autonomous actors involved in a terrorist network otherwise referred to as terror Netwar.

Anarchist terrorism is the foundation of the wave phenomena Rapoport devolved after 9/11. This wave began in 1880 with revolutionary individuals murdering heads of states and anyone believed to being a member of the bourgeoisie. While this wave may have been considered to achieve the least by scholars like Peter Neumann, a strategy that still inspires acts of violence today, *propaganda of the deed*, was created.⁷ Carlo Pisacane came up with the strategy not to entice violence, rather to encourage an intellectual revolution saying: “ideas spring from deeds and not the other way around.”⁸ Even though Pisacane started *propaganda by the deed* with good intentions, this strategy would not only fuel the anarchist terrorists until the end of the wave in 1905, but also be the vanguard for literature and ideologies for every type of terrorism that followed. With a strategy that

⁶ Rapoport, *The Four Waves of Terrorism*, 48.

⁷ Peter R. Neumann. *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2016), 10.

⁸ Neumann, *Radicalized*, 11.

encourages action, it must have not taken much for an anarchist or a “person who rebels against any authority, established order, or ruling power,”⁹ to be deemed a terrorist, since a collective aspect of terrorism is a political objective. A civilian murdering a president, or member of government to start a revolution does not get much more political and violent than that. Therefore a working definition of anarchism terrorism is an act of political violence carried out against any authority, established order, or ruling power in order to start a revolution. The act of violence carried out by an anarchist or a group of anarchists is what makes them a terrorist, not the amount of people who participated in the action. Since the concept of anarchist provides the target and/or reason of why this person or people are acting, it would be unnecessary and really inefficient to use a micro or meso-level analysis to develop tactics to deter or stop the threat.

Rapoport’s second and third waves of *anti-colonial* and the *new left*, like his first wave have terms that when combined with terrorist or terrorism do not need much more explanation as to what the problem, target, and even in some cases solutions are. The fourth and current *religious wave* however brought about the conceptual debate of terrorism that seems to be more persistent than ever with the rise of the ISIS. It is very hard to deny his claim of being in a religious wave, but his choice of terminology is creating more problems than it is answering. The idea of a wave having terrorist organizations or lone wolf terrorists is obviously not new, but the significance of meaning of these concepts has never been as much as an issue until the fourth wave. This problem is neither Rapoport’s fault, or even something he may have predicted would occur, however the solutions many scholars have provided over the years are in many cases making it worse. There is no specific skin, hair, or eye color, type of clothing, language, or nationality of an anarchist, anti-colonial, or new-leftist that can help identify whether or not that individual or group of individuals are or will be

⁹ Merriam Webster Dictionary

a terrorist.¹⁰ The additional term was added to terrorism because of why he or she turned to political violence, and/or who or what the target of the violent act was going to be towards. Religious terrorism can only follow this pattern if a person is to assume the sect of the religion he or she identifies with, and a full understanding of the religion to know who or what could be considered an enemy to be a target. Unfortunately, this is exactly what happened and still does.

Among all of the top scholars who have written about terrorism there are two particular names that are very difficult to avoid when writing on terrorist networks, lone wolf or lone actor terrorism, or both specifically in regards to the United States. Those two names are Bruce Hoffman and Marc Sageman. Both scholars have extensive background in terrorism mostly due to their career history. Hoffman's past and current experiences focus more on counter-terrorism, while Sageman has published more about post-9/11 radicalization and the theories of what has or will come of it. In the May 2008 issue of the *Foreign Affairs* journal, Bruce Hoffman criticized Sageman's newly released book, "Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century" saying: "the claim that 'leaderless' militants unconnected to a formal terror group were now the main threat to American security was a fundamental misreading of the al-Qaeda threat."¹¹ Hoffman then suggests that they are 'leader-led jihad,' which is more accurate to the type of terrorism in Europe rather than the United States.

Sageman's concept, 'leaderless jihad' is based off of Louis Beam's 1994 theory of *Leaderless Resistance*. Beam's theory refers to the establishment of an organization based on the experience of right-wing militia groups in the United States to prevent state or government intervention. "It relies on the 'lone wolf'-type individual initiatives to act for a common cause with minimal or no

¹⁰ To clarify, profiling for any reason is not justifiable. However it is more problematic if the person is not already known to be a terrorist. Once a terrorist organization has been established, and the identity of the individuals within the group become public there are many cases in which the groups share distinct characteristics that have been used for both positive and negative reasons. For example: the KKK or Neo-Nazi's clothing or clothing, or even the hair color and last names of members of the IRA.

¹¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 106.

conspiracy contacts between like-minded militants.”¹² The term ‘leaderless,’ with or without resistance or jihad does not describe the attacks in the United States from 2013 until the present. The objective of the terrorist attacks in the United States are to influence, intimidate, or coerce a behavior or action of the state or government, in which the perpetrator(s) belong too, but the impact of the behavior or actions is not being experienced by the perpetrator(s) directly or indirectly, since the narrative is the War on Islam and they belong to the West.

Sageman admits that there are no known cells active or ‘sleepers’ that exist in the United States¹³ like in Europe. If this is true, then why would it take almost eight years after 9/11 for an American citizen to carry out an attack with Islamic motivations, but have no leader? Terrorist attacks influenced by Islamic views on American soil did not start until 2009. Once al-Qaeda realized they could not have members travel to the United States to carry out the attacks, they instead started to encourage U.S. citizens to carry out attacks for them. Propaganda made by Anwar al-Alwaki and other al-Qaeda members, and then later in 2014 by the ISIS continued this call for attacks in the West for anyone who was unable to travel to terrorist network held areas as a foreign fighter.

The discussion of homegrown jihad and a new threat to the West was at large in 2016 with the release of two books by Peter Neumann and Peter Bergen. Neumann focuses on the threat to all Western countries caused by the rise of ISIS. The difference between the United States and Europe is primarily due to their radicalization process. “Jihadists view America as the country whose global dominance and military aggression is the principal cause of all the Muslims suffering. Yet those who are closest to the ‘head of the snake’—American Muslims—are less susceptible to jihadist ideology and violence than their European brethren.”¹⁴ Peter Bergen describes the new threat as American

¹² Alex P. Schmid, trans. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 656.

¹³ Marc Sageman. *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 106.

¹⁴Neumann, *Radicalized*, 138.

Jihadist Terrorists. They are “motivated by a mix of factors, including a dislike of U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world; a cognitive opening to militant Islam, often precipitated by a personal disappointment or loss; and the desire to attach themselves to an ideology or organization that could give them a sense of purpose.”¹⁵ The threat in the United States is new, but the threat in Europe is neither new nor similar.

Terrorist attacks throughout the West, included both the United States and Europe, is indeed rising, but the number of actors carrying out the attacks have made it difficult to truly understand if the threat is the same. In the ten years after the attacks on American soil in 2001, twenty Americans were charged with jihadist-related activities each year, which is under half of the average for Britain. Of the two-hundred and five charged, ninety wanted to carry out attacks in the U.S., one-hundred and fifteen were providing financial assistance, participating in creating propaganda, or attempting to become foreign fighters, which leaves less than sixty Americans who should have actually been considered the threat to target.¹⁶

The use of the terms jihadists and homegrown is highly problematic. While Islam is the religion of many of the perpetrators the term *jihad* is specific to the religion, and has many interpretations. Using this concept presents two issues. The first is that *jihad* has more than one meaning and is meant to be understood on a personal level, so labeling all terrorists who are Muslim as jihadists leads to xenophobia. The second problem is that referring to the perpetrators as jihadists legitimizes the War on Islam, which provides the narrative of the terrorist networks with the justification they seek. The use of homegrown when referring to terrorists in the West is encouraging the idea that the West is waging war on Islam. Any white or non-Muslim terrorist is referred too as a domestic terrorist rather than homegrown, so this concept is again encouraging the idea that even an individual who is born in the United States or other Western countries, their Muslim identity makes

¹⁵ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 280.

¹⁶ Neumann. *Radicalized*, 139.

them different enough to have to specify they are homegrown rather than a perpetrator of a domestic attack. These two concepts led both Neumann and Bergen to make the mistake of using a micro and meso-level analysis of the radicalization process of the perpetrators to understand the threat, which has prevented them from being able to provide an accurate identification or assessment.

Jeffrey D. Simon's book, "Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat" provides a much different explanation for the new threat. Simon contributed to the literature on lone wolf terrorism by expanding on David Rapoport's *wave phenomenon* with a fifth, Technological Wave. "No single type of terrorist ideology will dominate this new wave in the same way that anarchism, anticolonialism, "New Left" ideology, and religious fundamentalism dominated the preceding four waves."¹⁷ Simon believes that the terrorists do more than take advantage of technology, but rather allowed it to create a new threat different than the ones in the religious wave. The advances in technology have had a significant impact on terrorism in terms of communication, accessibility in recruitment, and even in the tactics, but religion is still the essential driving force of majority of the terrorist attacks occurring around the world.

In the most recent literature of lone wolf terrorism¹⁸, Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij refers to the pattern of attacks carried out by individuals in the United States as copycat lone wolves. Hamm and Spaaij contributed to the research by focusing on radicalization of the perpetrators like the scholars who preceded them, however their contribution is slightly different, because they recognize the complexity of the causation and the influence of each the perpetrators' experiences. "Virtually all lone wolves have an affinity with some person, community, or group, be it online or in

¹⁷ Jeffrey D. Simon. *Lone Wolf Terrorism: Understanding the Growing Threat* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2016), 27.

¹⁸ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 15-16. Ramón Spaaij defines lone wolf terrorism as political violence perpetrated by individuals who act alone; who do not belong to an organized terror group or network; act without the direct influence of a leader or hierarchy; and whose tactics and methods are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command or direction.

the real world.”¹⁹ Affinity is seen as sympathy or having views or beliefs that are similar to the terrorist network, leader of the terrorist network, or a movement. “The shift from an affinity with extremist groups to an affinity with anonymous online sympathizers is one of the most important transformations in the history of lone wolf terrorism because it has expanded the base of support for leaderless resistance.”²⁰ Unfortunately even with the expansion of literature on lone wolf terrorism over the past several years, there is still not a concept that describes the current threat in the United States that has existed since 2013: American citizens carrying out terrorist attacks in the name of international terrorist networks alone or in couples, but do not fit the traditional lone wolf definition or act as a member of a terrorist network. This thesis answers the call for a concept that defines the new threat, by answering how to identify terrorist attacks, and what indicates the type of terrorism when an attack is carried out.

¹⁹ Ibid.,158.

²⁰ Ibid.,74.

CHAPTER 1- IDENTIFYING THE THREAT

Some definitions share many of the same key characteristics, but how can an individual be labeled a lone wolf terrorist or a member of a terrorist network, if scholars, governments, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement cannot agree on what makes a person a terrorist in the first place? Almost eight years after 9/11, a man named Carlos Bledsoe carried out an attack that set fourth the threat that exists today. In the seventy years before his attack in Little Rock, Arkansas, “not a single member of the U.S. armed forces was attacked by a lone wolf terrorist.”²¹ Only a few months later Major Nidal Hasan carried out a mass shooting in Fort Hood, Texas on November 5, 2009. These two attacks increased the number of deaths by terrorism in the United States post-9/11 to sixteen, and firearms caused them all.²² The next significant change in domestic terrorism for the United States was in 2013 when two men were able to successfully detonate, not one, but two homemade bombs raising the death toll to nineteen. The two attacks in 2009 were instrumental to the shift in what was known as lone wolf terrorism in the United States, but both actors communicated directly either by email or face-to-face with members of al-Qaeda or affiliates making their relationship different than the case studies chosen for my research.

1.1 Methodology

This thesis consists of a comparative case study of terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States between 2013 and 2016. For the attacks that were carried out before 2016 I use the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which is an “open-source database consisting of information on terrorist events gathered by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism starting in 1970 and continuing through 2015” to gather the information on the logistics

²¹ Ibid.,190.

²² John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart. *Chasing Ghosts: The Policing of Terrorism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 92.

of the attack.²³ The logistics consist of the location, date of the attack, number of perpetrator(s), type of weapons used, description of the victims, and the target audience. Since this database does not update for the year of 2016 until the summer of 2017, I use 'Part 4: 2016-present from Johnston's Archive: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Unconventional Warfare' to collect the logistical information for the attack in Orlando, Florida in June 2016.²⁴ The Johnston Archive only provides the date, location, number of injuries and fatalities, and the type of terrorism²⁵ so I use information from media outlets and articles in scholarly journals, and existing literature to verify and add the missing details.

In Chapter 1, the comparative case study acts as an analysis in order to identify the threat that exists in the United States today. Each case study is presented in the text and then broken down into six categories or what I argue are the indicators in Table 1, which identify the type of terrorism. Table 1 consists of the four case studies being analyzed for this thesis. The rows are the six indicators, and the columns are the city and year of the terrorist attack. The first and most significant indicator is the objective. In order for an attack to be identified as terrorism, the objective must be to influence, intimidate, or coerce the behavior or actions of a state and/or government.²⁶ The second indicator is the number of actors that are involved in the attack. Any individual who provides assistance in any way, but is not involved in the act of violence then he or she is not considered an actor. Affiliation with a terrorist network is the third indicator. Affiliation can be described as none, indirect, or direct. The communication with members of a terrorist organization, an affiliated group, or cell that leads to the act of violence is direct affiliation. Watching videos, reading propaganda (formal or informal), and pledging allegiance to a terrorist organization, leaders

²³ For more information: <http://www.start.umd.edu/>

²⁴ For more information: <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/index.html>

²⁵ Dr. William Robert Johnston's table uses several abbreviations: *isl* is used for Islamist, *left* for left-wing, *right* for right-wing, *natl* for nationalist, etc. For the event to be in the table it includes a terrorist event that caused fatalities, incidents involving unconventional weapons, politically-motivated murders, and other incidents of political or methodological significance.

²⁶ Brigitte L. Nacos. *Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), 24-25.

of a terrorist network, movement, or network is an indirect affiliation. If the communication is one-sided, meaning the perpetrator(s) contacted a member of an organization, affiliated group, or cell, but there was no response then he or she has no affiliation. This is also true for perpetrators who had direct affiliation at one point, but left or ended communication within one year of the attack.

The fourth indicator, actions/tactics, describes the way each attack was carried out and the type of weapons or objects used. Tactics do not necessarily need to be a firearm, knife, or explosive device. For example, if a vehicle or aircraft is used to drive or fly into a crowd of people or infrastructure causing injuries or fatalities this would be considered a tactic. Two pieces of information are used for the fifth indicator, nationality of the actor(s)/location of the attack. In the cases where there is more than one actor, the nationality of the individual with citizenship is chosen to represent both actors as long as the other is a legal permanent resident of the same country. The last indicator, impacted/intended target provides deeper insight into the objective. The impacted targets can be combatants, non-combatants, or both. A combatant is a “soldier of a regular army or member of an irregular force taking part in battle, under the terms of the international laws of war,”²⁷ therefore any individual who is not a member of the military would be considered non-combatant. I chose to use these terms instead of specifying civilians or law enforcement agents for two reasons. The first reason is that until 2009, it had been seventy years since a member of the U.S. armed forces had been attacked by a lone wolf terrorist.²⁸ While I argue that the individuals carrying out these attacks are not lone wolves or members of a terrorist network, Carlos Bledsoe’s attack in 2009 is the vanguard event to this new type of terrorism so it is important to recognize this dramatic change in the status of the targets. The second reason is because of the rise in targeting of law enforcement officers in the United States that is occurring during the same period of my research. The Black Lives Matter movement began in 2012 after a police officer that shot and killed Trayvon

²⁷ Schmid, *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*, 616.

²⁸ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 190.

Martin was acquitted.²⁹ Many cases just like Martin's continued to occur, which has led to an increase in attacks on police officers as well.

The analysis of the case studies in the previous chapter demonstrate the overlapping of indicators for both lone wolf terrorism and terrorist network. In chapter 2, I discuss the definitions of domestic and international terrorism, lone wolf terrorism, and terrorist network, which I then suggest a new type of terrorism that provides a more accurate explanation of the threats presented in the analysis. Chapter 2 demonstrates how to understand the threat, and Table 2 illustrates this by comparing the definitions of lone wolf terrorism, terrorist network, and what I coin as bandwagon terrorism. All of the indicators are used in Table 2 similar to Table 1, however two of the six had to be labeled differently since this analysis does not involve attacks that have already happened. The changes were made to the fourth and fifth indicator so that the threats analyzed in Table 2 can be understood instead of identified.

Instead of actions/tactics for the fourth indicator of Table 2, I chose autonomy, because the actions or tactics are used to identify the threat, while the level of autonomy is significant for understanding the threat, which is done in Chapter 2. For indicator five, the nationality of actor(s)/location of attack was changed to jurisdiction. The nationality of actor(s) and the location of the attack are necessary to identify the threat, which means that this information cannot be specified in this table since it is an analysis of concepts. However, the jurisdiction indicator in Table 2 is determined from the two pieces of information used in the fifth indicator of Table 1. Since the types of terrorism being analyzed are for conceptual understanding, and not identification the nationality of the actor(s) and the location of the attack are assumed to be the same for this table.

In Chapter 3, I argue that the concept of bandwagon terrorism shares characteristics of both lone wolf terrorism and terrorist network, which has prevented intelligence agencies, law

²⁹ More information at: <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

enforcement, and the United States' government from being able to accurately assess the threat. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the role that the War on Terror plays in rise of this new threat. The next section outlines the domestic counterterrorism strategies that I argue are the most problematic. Lastly, I provide an assessment of the current counterterrorism strategies that can be effective for the threat of bandwagon terrorism in the United States.

1.2 Case Studies

When choosing each of the cases for research, I use the Federal Bureau of Investigation's definition of terrorism: "unlawful use of force or violence against person and property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objects."³⁰ The FBI is one of the leading agencies in charge of preventing, deterring, and investigating terrorism on American soil. This is not my definition of terrorism as I will explain in Chapter 2, but it includes the political objective that I argue is the most significant attribute of a terrorist attack, and since it is their counterterrorism strategies primarily discussed in Chapter 3 it prevents any confusion that could occur.

The first requirement for each of these cases is to confirm the FBI considered it a terrorist attack. The second requirement is that the attack must have resulted in injuries and/or fatalities of people other than the actor or actors themselves. Due to the timing of this research and topic being present day, the attack has to be documented either in the Global Terrorism Database or Johnston's Archive, the investigation of the attack should be closed, or if open evidence of political objective must be known, and have supplemental literature from scholarly articles or books. Looking at all the attacks after 2009 in the United States, the four cases analyzed in this chapter were the only ones that met the requirements and could be analyzed to determine the type of terrorism with these six

³⁰ Nacos, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 24.

indicators: (1) aim/objective; (2) number of actors; (3) affiliation; (4) actions/tactics; (5) nationality of actor(s)/location of attack; and (6) intended/impacted target.

1.2.1. Boston 2013

On Monday, April 15, 2013 the world famous Boston Marathon took place in Boston, Massachusetts just like it has every year on the third Monday of April since 1987.³¹ This particular year however is one that is remembered, not by those who won or completed the race, but by the two brothers who detonated the first homemade bombs by Islamic terrorists in the United States killing three and injuring an estimated 260 people running or watching the annual celebration.³² An event that is held at the same place and time every year that attracts thousands of people is of course a prime target for anyone wanting to hurt large amounts of people, but the message of an attack like that is extremely hard to interpret. This annual marathon however is held on the third Monday of April in Massachusetts for a very specific reason... Patriot's Day. This day is a State holiday celebrating the anniversary of the first battles fought during the American Revolution. This fact in itself does not make the violence political, however it provides a better understanding of the target and how it plays into the brothers' objective.

The actors of this attack are Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26 and Dzhokhar also known as 'Jahar', 23. The brothers both watched videos of the Yemeni-American, Anawar al-Alwaki and read *Inspire*, al-Qaeda's 'how to' book before the attack. Jahar was very active on Twitter. A tweet in 2012 illustrates early signs of frustration with the U.S. government: "Jahar@J_sar 2 Sep 2012 Idk why its hard for many of you to accept that 9/11 was an inside job, I mean I guess fuck the fact ya'll are some real #patriots #gethip."³³ Less than a year later, and about a month before the attack he created a second profile and tweeted, "Ghuraba@Al_firdausiA 13 Mar 2013 It's our responsibility my brothers &

³¹ Information about the Boston Marathon and the Association can be found at <http://www.baa.org/races/boston-marathon.aspx>

³² Mueller and Stewart, *Chasing Ghosts*, 92.

³³ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 229.

sisters to ask Allah to ease the hardships of the oppressed and give us victory over *kufr* [the infidels].”³⁴ There are no direct links between either of the brothers to any member of a terrorist network or any type of funding or support that they would have provided. Tamerlan died by exchanged gunfire between law enforcement, and after suffering injuries and hiding for a few days Jahar was captured and arrested. It was later confirmed by Jahar that he and his brother had no assistance from or affiliation with an organization, they carried out the attack by themselves due to their anger with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.³⁵ The Tsarnaev brothers’ selection of the Boston Marathon was not simply because of accessibility or the possible magnitude of an attack. The Boston Marathon represents a day of celebration of ‘patriots,’ the same ones that represent the country that were engaged in the wars that the Tsarnaev brothers were not happy with. So an attack on that day, was an act of political violence to send a message to the United States government about the wars were engaged in.

1.2.2. Chattanooga 2015

On July 16, 2015 Americans in Chattanooga, Tennessee received news that most people would believe to be an impossible nightmare, U.S. soldiers dying on American soil. Twenty-six year old, Muhammad Youssef Abulazeez drove to a Marine Corps Reserve Center firing shots from his vehicle, and then drove off only to continue this horrific act at a Naval Operational Support Center where he wrecked his car and got out to pursue the second scene by foot. Abulazeez was wearing a armor vest, and used “an assault rifle that killed four unarmed Marines and a naval officer, and injured a Marine recruiter and a patrolman.”³⁶ A FBI investigation uncovered previous trips abroad, but no evidence of communication with terrorist organizations. A further look into Abulazeez’s online activity also revealed his posts in extremist chat rooms, reading of *Inspire*, and history of

³⁴ Ibid., 231.

³⁵ Ibid., 232.

³⁶ Mueller and Stewart, *Chasing Ghosts*, 189-190.

viewed videos by Anwar al-Alwaki.³⁷ The investigation is ongoing however the violence against the state or combatants, which is in fact political violence.

1.2.3. San Bernardino 2015

On December 2, 2015 San Bernardino, California became the location for “the most lethal terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11.”³⁸ The people responsible for the attack are twenty-nine year old Tashfeen Malik, and her twenty-eight year old husband Syed Rizwan Farook. The married couple opened gunfire on Farook’s coworkers’ Christmas party at the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. Malik had only recently become a permanent residence after spending majority of her life between Pakistan, where she was born, and Saudi Arabia where she lived as child, until 2014 when she married Farook and moved with him to the United States since he was an American born citizen.

Text messages between Malik and Farook revealed how the death of her childhood friend due to an airstrike led by the U.S. added ‘fuel to the fire,’ which existed from listening to her father’s radical rants her entire life about the wrong doings of the West.³⁹ Malik and Farook watched videos by Anwar al-Alwaki and read *Inspire*. Before Malik pledged allegiance to ISIS on Facebook, her and her husband killed fourteen, and injured around twenty-six government employees with semi-automatic firearms, attempted, but failed to detonate a pipe bomb, and then were killed in a shootout with law enforcement when trying to flee. The decision to attack the employees of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health can be seen as a personal vendetta since Farook was an employee there, however it seems more likely that the target was selected because it was the one government building he was familiar with and comfortable enough to carry out an attack that he or at least his wife could possibly make it out of alive. The pledging of allegiance to ISIS, viewing of

³⁷ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 152 and 189-190.

³⁸ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 198.

³⁹ Ryan Loveeachother. *American Terrorist: A Screenshot Surveillance of the San Bernardino Shooter* (Independently Published, 2017), 44.

al-Alwaki's videos, and reading of *Inspire* are enough to explain how they chose to turn to violence, but the attack on the government building along with the hatred of U.S. led airstrikes is the answer to who the intended target was, which makes their attack terrorism.

1.2.4. Orlando 2016

Six months and ten days after the mass shooting terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, and just a week into Ramadan, Omar Mateen carried out an attack that took the label of being the worst terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11 from Malik and Farook, and even earned a few of his own. Mateen passed through security of a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016 with a semi-automatic rifle and a handgun around two in the morning, but it wasn't until three hours later that the police entered the building and stopped the tragedy he had started.⁴⁰ Mateen pledged allegiance to ISIS on Facebook prior to the attack, but while he was inside the nightclub he called 911 to say he did it, and that he was a "soldier of the Islamic State," and while speaking to a negotiator numerous times he pledged his allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.⁴¹ Investigations on Mateen have come up short of finding any links to terrorist organizations. His choice of target was for a more dramatic and/or personal reason, but the political objective to his attack was made very clear when he called 911 to admit to the attack, eventually release his name, and then tell the police officer he wanted him to tell the U.S. government to stop the airstrikes in Syria and Iraq because they are killing too many innocent women and children.

⁴⁰ Bill Stonehem. *Orlando: Nightclub Shooting: The Worst Mass Shooting in United States History* (South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016)

⁴¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 280.

The phone calls with the police and the negotiator can be found here: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3891560/Chilling-audio-Pulse-nightclub-gunman-s-911-calls-hostage-negotiations-released-calmly-tells-dispatchers-m-Orlando-did-shooting.html>

1.3 Table 1- Case Studies

	Boston 2013 ⁴²	Chattanooga 2015 ⁴³	San Bernardino 2015 ⁴⁴	Orlando 2016 ⁴⁵
Objective	Influence U.S. government to end wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ⁴⁶	Influence U.S. Foreign Policy and/or Military actions	Influence U.S. Foreign Policy and/or Military actions	Coerce U.S. government to stop airstrikes in Syria ⁴⁷
Number of Actors	Two actors: Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev	Single actor: Muhammad Youssef Abdulazez	Two actors: Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik	Single actor: Omar Mateen
Affiliation with a Terrorist Network	Informal: Read Inspire; watched Anwar al-Alwaki videos	Informal: Read Inspire; watched Anwar al-Alwaki videos ⁴⁸	Informal: Malik pledged allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State on Facebook; Farook and Malik watched Anwar al-Alwaki videos and read Inspire	Informal: Mateen pledged allegiance to ISIS on Facebook prior to the attack, and then to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during 911 phone call; watched Anwar al-Alwaki videos
Actions/Tactics	Detonated two homemade pressure cooker bombs at the Boston Marathon	Opened gunfire on a military recruitment center, and then on a Naval Reserve training center	Opened gunfire on a Christmas party for public health department employees; explosive devices found at the scene, but not detonated	Opened gunfire on a gay nightclub and continued the mass shooting for three hours
Nationality of Actor(s)/Location of Attack	U.S. Citizens/ United States	U.S. Citizen/ United States	U.S. Citizen(s)/ United States	U.S. Citizen/ United States
Impacted/Intended Audience	Non-Combatants/U.S. Government	Combatants/U.S. Government	Non-Combatants/U.S. Government	Non-Combatants/U.S. Government

⁴² Nacos, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 437.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "San Bernardino Shooting: What we know so far," BBC News, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34993344>.

⁴⁵ Bergen. *United States of Jihad*, 280.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 232.

⁴⁷ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 189.

1.4 Only in America

In 2010, Anwar al-Alwaki, a key member of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and in the al-Qaeda magazine *Inspire* gloated about the effect his messages were having on Muslims in the West, especially in the United States: “Eight years after 9/11 and the declaration of war against terrorism, Jihad is still reaching the shores of Europe and America. Not from the outside, but from within...The Jihad movement has not only survived but is expanding. Isn't it ironic that the two capitals of the war against Islam, Washington D.C. and London have also become among the centers of Western Jihad?”⁴⁹ The increase in attacks in the West can easily be seen, especially with those who are not keeping their subscription to *Inspire* a secret or tuning in to any video released by al-Alwaki and then tweeting about it. The inspiration or at least the ideas put out by Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, Anwar al-Alawaki, ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, or whoever may be reaching the same amount of Europeans as it is Americans, but what the citizens of each country do with it once they receive it is very different.

Scholars have offered many explanations for the ways Islamic terrorist networks are causing different reactions throughout the West. The most common explanation is the lack of ‘EU Dream, or French Dream’ in comparison to the American Dream. This is the idea that American Muslims are more assimilated than those in Europe. In France for example, Muslims make up seven percent of the population, but consist of seventy percent of the prison population and forty-five percent of the youth unemployment.⁵⁰ France does not represent Europe, however based on recent attacks the French have taken one of the biggest hits in both Paris and Nice. A second example, the United Kingdom, more specifically London has also suffered greatly from the increase in Islamic terrorism. London is known for being the “main center for Jihad in Europe and known as ‘Londonistan’

⁴⁹ Ken Milestone, “Anwar al-Alwaki Hails Rise of ‘Western Jihad,’” *CBS News*, March 22, 2010, Accessed April 20, 2017. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/anwar-al-awlaki-hails-rise-of-western-jihad/>

⁵⁰ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 13-14.

because of it being the center for world media, and of the tolerant laws, which at one point provided sanctuary for the *mujahedin*.”⁵¹ The argument here is that American Muslims are more satisfied with their lives in the United States than Muslims in living in European countries therefore making it less likely for groups or cells of international terrorist groups in the U.S.

The more logical explanation deals with geographic location and is two-fold. ISIS is not the first terrorist network, movement, or conflict to call for foreign fighters, but it is the first to mobilize as many as it has particularly from Europe. Due to location and the Schengen Area, Europeans are able to travel to or from Syria without ever having to step foot on a plane or being detected by the government or intelligence agencies. That is not the case for Americans, which makes it much more difficult to plan a trip and become a foreign fighter from the United States without being stopped by intelligence agencies. Europeans are able to travel more under the radar while traveling to and from ISIS-held territories in the Middle East, which is why foreign Fighters pose a much greater risk to Europe, than the United States. The attacks are planned, carried out by, and even financed at times by terrorist networks or affiliates making the attacks much larger and even more deadly.

The last and most controversial of the explanations is the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, the right to bare arms. The difference between Americans and Europeans is not exactly the amendment, but rather the more lax restrictions on gun control. Propaganda put out by terrorist networks has used the U.S. Constitution as a call for the use of guns: “America is absolutely awash with easily obtainable firearms. You can go down to a gun show at the local convention center and come away with a fully automatic assault rifle, without a background check, and most likely without having to show identification, so what are you waiting for?”⁵² The statement was made in 2013 by an al-Qaeda member and since then two of the most deadly terrorist attacks have been

⁵¹ Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad*, 144-145.

⁵² “Al Qaeda Video Resurfaces Claiming How Easy It Is to Buy Guns in U.S.,” CNN, April 12, 2013. Quoted in Hamm and Ramón Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 153.

carried out. Guns are still accessible outside of the United States, but it is more difficult and less likely for standard European citizen to purchase a gun compared to Americans who can either buy a gun online or in stores, or even more discretely at a gun show. Gun violence in the United States has been an issue long before terrorist networks started encouraging Americans to take advantage of the situation, however this argument is only for demonstrating the difference in the way Islamic terrorism has impacted the United States and Europe, and justifying why this research is particular to the United States.

CHAPTER 2- UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT

In 2014, the shift of power in the international terrorist network went from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. ISIS has proven to be an even greater threat in both the Middle East and the West. The self-proclaimed caliph of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has surpassed both the current leader of al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. “Its shrewd recruitment strategies and policy of directing attacks in Europe and inspiring them in the States blended the leader-led jihad of Bruce Hoffman with elements of the leaderless jihad of Marc Sageman—a virtual mutation of Bidladdenism that made al-Qaeda seem almost quaint.”⁵³ I demonstrated in the last chapter there is not a concept that accurately identifies the terrorist attacks in the United States. In this chapter I compare the results from the analysis in Table 1 with the existing definitions of lone wolf terrorism and terrorist network. As a result, Table 2 is created to define the new concept of bandwagon terrorism and illustrate how it is a better description of the threats show in Table 1.

2.1 Domestic and International Terrorism

Indicating whether an attack is domestic or international should be the easiest to identify, but just as any type of terrorism nothing is as simple as it may seem. In order for an attack to be investigated the jurisdiction needs to be established, which is decided on three pieces of information: (1) location of the attack; (2) nationality of actor(s); and (3) nationality of victim(s). Simply put, if 1, 2, and 3 are the same then the attack is domestic, if 1 and 3 are the same, but 2 is different then the attack is international. Where things tend to get complicated is if the situation is not what was just described, especially with the definitions of domestic and international terrorism provided by the FBI differing as dramatically as they do. In order for terrorism to be considered domestic by the FBI the act of terrorism must be “an individual or group based and operating entirely in the United

⁵³ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 220.

States, without any foreign direction.”⁵⁴The definition for international terrorism however differs greatly. “International terrorism involves violent acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or any state; are intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of the government, or affect the conduct of a government. These acts transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the person they are intended to intimidate, or the locale in which perpetrators operate.”⁵⁵The definition of domestic terrorism is as broad as it gets, but yet the definition provided for international terrorism is extremely specific. The distinction of whether terrorism is domestic or international is essential to shaping policy, assessing the threat level on the home front, and determining who and how the threat is handled.

2.2 Lone Wolf Terrorism and Terrorist Networks

The current definitions that are used in academics, government policy, and the media for lone wolf terrorism have ‘cherry-picked’ certain words of the definition of lone wolf terrorism in an attempt to more accurately describe an autonomous or lone actor terrorist. An autonomous terrorist is not a catchy phrase, but it is a more fitting label for the definitions provided for lone wolf terrorism. Replacing actor for wolf would improve the concept, but that improvement is only because it makes it broad and can describe any individual who carries out a terrorist attack. The term lone wolf dates back to 1909, which explains the lack of usage during the first wave. Even by taking a different approach in explaining how this term can work for religious terrorists by doing research on the habits of wolves and why lone wolves exist, it still does not support the reason for the current definitions. Wolves are born, and spend their entire lives in a pack, which is the source of other well-known phrases like ‘wolf pack.’ The only reason a wolf leaves or disperses from a pack is to mate with a wolf from another pack. While this is a great risk, mating within a pack and

⁵⁴ Nacos, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 25

⁵⁵ Ibid.

reproduction is very unlikely so to wolves, “it is better to risk death for some chance of finding a mate and a territory, than to live safely, but have virtually no chance of reproduction.”⁵⁶ When I use the mating and habitual studies of wolves the meaning still does not make sense, because even if an individual leaves an existing organization, ideology, or religion he or she does it to more or less make or join a new organization, not join a new one. This view also means that a lone wolf would have previously been a member or part of a network in order to leave, regardless of reasons.

The concern with concepts terrorist organization or terror network is not defining it, but rather how to identify an actor is in one. With the advancement in transportation and communication relationships no longer need to be in person in order to establish an organization or network. A network acts as the updated version of an organization, because it is a “fully interconnected network requires a capacity for constant, dense information and information flows, more so than other forms of organization like hierarchies.”⁵⁷ Al- Qaeda Central is a terrorist organization. When a separate terrorist organization decides to be affiliated with AQC, they become an affiliated terror group. This means they may keep the name of their previous organization or more ‘local’ objectives for which they were established, but once they are affiliated with an organization they are a dependent of AQC. When existing members of the terrorist organization relocate and find at least two other individuals who take command and assistance from the organization, this is a terrorist cell. Once these connections start to form the way in which one group or cell communicate to one another can vary greatly, therefore the best term to use would be network.

Authors, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt offer a solution to the existing gap in identifying terrorists who have been carrying out attacks in the United States post 9/11, but more successfully since 2009 by developing a term known as netwar. Netwar “refers to an emerging mode of conflict

⁵⁶ John Vucetich, "All About Wolves," All About Wolves | The Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.isleroyalewolf.org/overview/overview/wolves.html>.

⁵⁷ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt. *Networks and Netwar: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (California: Rand Corporation, 2000), 22.

(and crime) at societal levels, short of traditional military warfare, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrines, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age.”⁵⁸ Their book was published before the existence of two of the largest social media networks that exist today: Twitter and Facebook. The idea behind the term was to emphasize the significance of the information revolution and the rise of “network forms of organization, doctrine, and strategy.”⁵⁹ Which so far has proven to be extremely accurate of how ISIS has been able to construct attacks on American soil carried out by citizens residing there. ISIS’s greatest strengths have been to not only wage a more military and revolutionary war on the ‘near enemy’ in the Middle East, but also conduct netwar terror thousands of miles away on the ‘far enemy.’ Their ability to take advantage of the increasing dependency on information and communications during times of conflicts has given them access to emphasize their side of the story, which revolves around ‘knowledge and soft power.’⁶⁰ This term was coined almost sixteen years ago, but fits perfectly for how the threat was established even though ISIS only emerged three years ago in 2014.

The explanation as to why this term, netwar is so fitting is because ISIS was an affiliate group for al-Qaeda in Iraq before making the split, because of concerns with differences in goals and tactics, however a more realistic explanation points to the success the terror group has had at gaining land in order to make one true Islamic State in which the leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has self-proclaimed himself the caliph of.⁶¹ This does not answer what the role of the United States, Europe, or any other foreign nations play in this, however the without foreign occupancy in Muslim nations the ‘holy war,’ which justifies acts of *jihad* and *martyrdom* in the name of Allah to protect and defend the *umma* then al-Baghdadi cannot fulfill the prophecy and restore the caliphate. Therefore, unlike al-Qaeda who’s only concern was the ‘near enemy,’ ISIS focuses on both in order to restore the Islamic

⁵⁸ Ibid.,18.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁶¹ Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger. *ISIS: The State of Terror* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2015), 41-45.

State. This is why the West is still a target, but the interesting aspect of this is just how differently the use of netwar terror has effected all Western states, especially in Europe in having affiliated cells or groups carry out attacks abroad, and recruit thousands of foreign fighters to go assist with the military tactics against the ‘near enemy.’ In the United States, even though several hundreds have tried, only 100 Americans have successfully traveled to ISIS occupied areas, and there has not been one foreign citizen who has carried out an attack in the U.S. in the name of Islam, Allah, or any leaders of al-Qaeda or ISIS. Each of the Islamic related terrorist attacks since 9/11 that have occurred on American soil have been by it’s own citizens.

2.2.1. Table 2- Types of Terrorism

	Lone Wolf Terrorism	Bandwagon Terrorism	Terrorist Network
Objective	Influence or coerce actions of a State or government, which directly impacts the actor	Influence or coerce actions of State(s) or government(s), which usually has no impact on the actor(s)	Influence or coerce actions of State(s) or government(s) that can directly or indirectly impact the actor(s)
Number of Actors	One	No more than two	Three or more
Affiliation with a Terrorist Network	None	Informal	Formal
Autonomy	Full	Limited	None⁶²
Jurisdiction	Domestic	Domestic and International	Domestic and International
Status of Target(s)	Non-Combatants	Combatants and/or Non-Combatants	Combatants and/or Non-Combatants

⁶² The autonomy of an actor in a terrorist organization depends on status in the organization or network, so while most will have no autonomy, if he or she is a leader they could have full autonomy.

2.3 Filling in the Gap

David Rapoport's fourth religious wave is accurate, but the complexity of the concept religious terrorism has made identifying the type of threat more challenging especially with the role the advancement of technology has played in creating new ways of forming networks. Arquilla and Ronfeldt's concept of netwar terror provides a more thorough explanation of how netwar actors are able to create multiple networks in order to achieve a goal. The network in the United States is very difficult to identify, because of the lack of the connection between each of the actors. They are all connected by al-Alwaki's *Inspire* magazine and videos, and their desire to be a part of a larger terrorist network or movement. This is what Arquilla and Ronfeldt refer to as the spider's web network or "a set of interconnected center/periphery networks...also a pattern where one or more key hubs, around which are arrayed a large number of actors linked to the hubs but less to each other, yet with all-channel information-sharing across all actors."⁶³ As seen in Table 1 each of the actor or actors in the cases watched Anwar al-Alwaki's videos, three of the four read *Inspire*, and two of the four pledge allegiance to ISIS or the self-proclaimed caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The nationality and location of the attack match in all of the cases, which usually would make the attack domestic, however the objectives of the attacks were international. In Table 2, I present a concept of bandwagon terrorism, which is premeditated violence carried out by either one or two individuals acting cohesively, on both combatants and/or non-combatants in order to publically display their allegiance or inspiration to a terrorist network, and influence or coerce a state or government's actions usually specific to what the perpetrator(s) believe to be an injustice during their attack.

Using the term bandwagon explains why the attacks are occurring, and the spider web network illustrates how the perpetrators have been able to overcome the tradeoff of having to decide

⁶³ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwar*, 320.

between acting in a group or own their own in challenging environments.⁶⁴ There are five levels of analysis for networks: organizational, narrative, doctrinal, technological, and social. “The strongest networks will be those in which organizational design is sustained by a winning story and a well-defined doctrine, and in which all this is layered atop advanced communication systems and rests on strong personal and social ties at the base.”⁶⁵ The organizational level in the United States is a spider’s web network, the story or narrative level is how the West has engaged in the ‘Holy War’ with the War on Terrorism, and the doctrinal level where the organization and strategies exist are ISIS’s *Dabiq*, al-Qaeda’s *Inspire*, and videos of martyrdom created by Anwar al-Alwaki. The technological level consists of the Internet, or more specifically sites like YouTube where videos can be watched, social media networks like Twitter or Facebook, and media outlets. The social level is extremely important in this network, because this is where the significance of religion lies for those carrying out the attacks in the United States. “Twitter is also used to drive traffic to other social media platforms. Supporters back home follow the fighters who post original content and retweet content from organizational accounts.”⁶⁶ The social level is extremely important in this network, because this is where the significance of religion lies for those carrying out the attacks in the United States. The personal tie that assures loyalty, trust, or allegiance in this network is the Muslim Community or *umma*.

On November 4, 1979, the United State Embassy in Tehran was invaded by Iranians filled with anger and Anti-Americanism fueled by Aytaullah Ruhollah Khomeini and led to the capture of seventy Americans who were held hostage for four hundred and forty-four days. Khomeini held the United States responsible for “threatening the *umma* with materialism and cultural temptations, so he

⁶⁴ Brian J. Phillips, “Deadlier in the U.S.? On Lone Wolves, Terrorist Groups, and Attack Lethality,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2015): 7, accessed March 2, 2017, doi:10.1080/09546553.2015.1054927.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 321.

⁶⁶ Jytte Klausen, “Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38:1 (2015): 18, accessed on May 3, 2017, doi:10.1080/1056710X.2014.974948.

called for a holy war against ‘the Great Satan.’”⁶⁷ This is the same message or narrative that is being used today by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, or that is repeated in writings or videos from Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Alwaki. ISIS has taken advantage of the Syrian Conflict by having a significant amount of control over what the outside world sees. “The right story line can also help create bridges across different networks. The right story can also generate a perception that a movement has a winning momentum, that time is on their side.”⁶⁸ Every media outlet in the world shows videos of a bombing or an airstrike that took the lives of many innocent civilians, so ISIS members in charge of propaganda only have to place blame or tell their side of the story to influence Muslims around the world that Islam is under attack.

Abu Bakr al- Baghdadi has crossed many milestones even bin Laden was not able too especially in capturing and maintaining territory in Iraq and Syria, and until recently the Islamic State was growing at a very fast pace. Muslims around the world have been exposed to the type of narrative that ISIS uses since 1979, but with an established Islamic State and the amount of terror that is being spread not just in the Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries, but throughout the world al-Baghdadi successfully created a winning story that even skeptical Muslims might want to get behind. This is why I chose the term bandwagon to describe the terrorism in the United States. When a person is referred to as being bandwagon that means this person is behaving or acting in order to follow a trend, message, or movement solely rested on the fact that it is considered to be at the top or the best at the time. Bandwagon describes a person or people who act to join something, whereas a lone wolf is a person who already was in a group, organization, cell, or network and then left. A copycat is someone who imitates actions or behavior of another, rather than a person who acts or behaves in order to be a part of something that is successful at the time.

⁶⁷ Vartan Gregorian. *Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 66.

⁶⁸ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwar*, 324-325.

Those who describe the actor or actors in the four case studies in Table 1 as copycat lone wolf are successfully identifying the pattern, but overlooking where the pattern originates and what exactly that means. The pattern can be seen in the type of weapons used, the choice of target, and the type of language used, if any to explain why the attack is occurring. This pattern is not originating with an individual per se, but rather in the doctrine level of the network. The magazines, *Inspire* and *Dabiq* provide instructions on how to access or make firearms and explosives, suggest multiple other ways to cause mass casualties if a person cannot access or make the weapons, provide details on what kind of attacks to carry out, and how to choose a target. The magazines, and the martyrdom videos made by Anwar al-Alwaki are not just inspiring these attacks, they are enabling them. When *Networks and Netwar* was published in 2001, the authors predicted a network maximizing the advancements in technology by saying, “they will transmit information on how to build such weapons via CD-ROMs or email, use chat rooms to coordinate their activities, and use the web sites to publicize and justify their strikes to a global audience.”⁶⁹ What exists today is actually several steps ahead of this. The magazines and videos are accessible to anyone with the Internet, the information provides a sufficient amount of details so that communication amongst other people is not necessary since the attack is more about spreading fear than the number of people injured or killed, and by pledging allegiance or following the details in the doctrine before or during the attack the message that ISIS wants to be spread will be done by the media outlets who report on it.

⁶⁹ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwar*, 55.

CHAPTER 3- ASSESSING THE THREAT

The morning of September 11, 2001 was so shocking and traumatic that many people are able to remember exactly where they were, whom they were with, and what they were doing when news broke that the first tower was hit. Every year since 9/11, the world brings up healing wounds to honor those who lost their lives on the day that we shall ‘never forget.’ Nine days after the United States witnessed the worst terrorist attack on American soil in history, September 20, 2001 is the day that many do not recognize or honor, but is one that has had more impact on every person inside and especially outside of U.S. borders. On this day the 43rd President of the United States of America addressed the nation on live television explaining the authorization he had been granted by Congress two days prior. President George W. Bush was given the power to “use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future attacks of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons.”⁷⁰ This is what we now refer to as the War on Terror.

3.1 U.S. Counter Terrorism

How could a non-state actor be responsible for such a large-scale attack on American soil? What could the United States government do to prevent anything like this from happening again? Could an attack as damaging happen in the U.S., or any other country again? These are just a few of the questions that crossed the minds of all those who saw what happened that morning. The question I think about is how different it could have been if a Democrat like President Bill Clinton was still in office. The conclusion I have come to is that if the situation was the exact same, regardless of the

⁷⁰ Authorization for Use of Military Force, September 18, 2001, Public Law 107-40 SJ Res. 23, 107th Congress. <http://news.findlaw.com/wp/docs/terrorism/sjres23.es.html>, accessed September 30, 2008. Quoted in Nacos, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 238.

political party identification of the sitting president that day, the only thing that might be different are the names of the Acts or operations that would follow. President Bush had two options that day: sit back and do nothing, or do anything and everything you possibly can, because no matter how he reacted that day, that was the decision that would define his presidency and be written in history books to be remembered by many years even when he dies.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, forcing the relocation of any Americans of Japanese ancestry to be taken from their homes and held in camps. Fast forward sixty years to 2001, and the ‘day that will forever live infamy’ is now the day that we shall ‘never forget.’ President Bush utilizes the success of WWII and the idea that if the United States is not fighting enemies abroad they will attack on American soil again:

On September 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars—but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war—but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks—but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day—and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.⁷¹

This idea that the actions of 9/11 were an attack on not just the safety and security of the American people, but the way of life, democracy, and most importantly freedom was what enabled President Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066 that lasted for three years, allowed President Bush and now both presidents who have been in the Oval Office since to continue the War on Terror.

What exactly is the War on Terror? The answer is two-fold. The first is the United States’ government using this war as a way to legitimize the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, drone strikes in countries like Yemen and Pakistan, the involvement in regimes changes in places like Libya, the U.S. led airstrike coalition used in Syria, and of course all the above. The second answer is that this is no answer to this question, because the actual explanation changes quite frequently. What is more

⁷¹ President George Bush, September 20, 2001, speech on live television, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010920-8.html, accessed May 5, 2017.

problematic is thinking that the only way to win or end this war is to end terrorism. The United States is fighting a war against a concept that has over two hundred working definitions, unlike any of the world wars there are no military uniforms to identify the enemies from the innocent, there is no single leading theory, idea, leader, strategy, location, religion, or really anything that defines what the U.S. is up against. It does not make sense that the same country that has been losing the War on Drugs for years would continue yet another war on a concept. At least with drugs, the so-called enemy can be identified, but after seeing the discrimination and increase in violence caused by a War on Drugs why would anyone assume that waging a global war against terror would be any different?

After ten years into the War on Terror, invasions of two countries, the search for Osama bin Laden ended in 2011 when he was killed. Almost six years later al-Qaeda not only still exists, but has expanded, a former affiliate that is now the leading threat in international terrorism, there have been numerous attacks in the United States and many other countries in the world, so the war continues. Despite having suffered the greatest onslaught directed against a terrorist organization in history, AQC and ISIS have accomplished the impossible by not only acquiring relevance and power, but also growing and expanding in fighters, territory, status, and stature.⁷² The ‘use of force’ has been used in every way possible, but what has been accomplished? There has not been an attack as large as the one on 9/11, however the U.S. and the rest of the world has been suffering from a war for almost sixteen years to prevent one large attack, and are now experiencing a significant amount of small, but deadly attacks. If the War on Terror, is to improve security from any threat, it is safe to say this strategy is doing the exact opposite. Rather the “Global War on Terror has morphed into terror’s war on the world.”⁷³

⁷² Bruce Hoffman, “A First Draft of the History of America’s Ongoing Wars on Terrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38:1 (2014): 78, accessed on April 27, 2017, doi:10.1080/1057610X.2014.974405

⁷³ John Arquilla. “Three Ghosts Who Haunt Modern Strategy.” *Small Wars Journal* (2016): 2.

The second major aspect of the War on Terror is the fight on the home front, which involved an extensive expansion of the intelligence agencies. The first decision seen as a direct result of 9/11 was in 2002, when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created in order to “streamline anti and counterterrorist efforts at home.”⁷⁴ Ideally, DHS would promote a better flow of communication and intelligence gathering since it combined twenty-two pre-existing entities from other agencies or departments together. This obviously was not as successful as hoped for, which is why the second expansion was made two years later with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. President Bush was then able to fill a position as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), who would “head up and coordinate the various intelligence agencies.”⁷⁵ Establishing the Department of Homeland Security only contributed to the issue of information sharing between agencies, especially since the directors of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency were expected to share, but not forced to report to the Secretary of Homeland Security. Now the directors of those three agencies, seven more Department of Defense agencies, Department of Energy, Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Homeland Security, and the Drug Enforcement Administration all report to the Director of National Intelligence. The creation of the DNI, led to the establishment of National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), where “analysts from every agency plan intelligence missions, and coordinate and analyze information on terrorism threats and responses.”⁷⁶ Despite the amount of intelligence agencies that gather and analyze information domestically and abroad, and the strength of the military and law enforcement domestic terrorist attacks are still happening.

⁷⁴ Nacos, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 328.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 340.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 341.

3.2 Giving the Terrorists What They Want

In 2016, the FBI stated that they were conducting around one thousand investigations of suspected Islamist militants, but many of the cases were found to have “no cause for alarm.”⁷⁷ Of those one thousand cases was Omar Mateen, the man currently still responsible for the worst terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11. In fact, Carlos Bledsoe Nidal Hasan, and Mateen were all at one point under investigation by the FBI and still able to “legally purchase semi-automatic weapons not long before their attacks.”⁷⁸ The concern about gun control in the United States is a discussion that cannot and should not go away, however the pressing issue here is not whether or not to put more restrictions on firearms. It has been seven years since the FBI failed to prevent Bledsoe and Hasan from their attacks in 2009, and instead of learning from the mistakes made twice they allowed history to repeat itself on that night in Orlando, Florida.

In 2009 under the Obama Administration, the FBI began ‘sting’ operations by creating the National Security Branch, which allowed agents to gather information on individuals who were thought to be potential terrorist threats. The Domestic Investigations Operation Guide advised the authorized agents “not to profile these people of interest based ‘solely’ on their race, ethnicity, or religion, but they were allowed to collect information on the ‘ethnic behaviors,’ even when there was no criminal history.”⁷⁹ Even though the average lone wolf profile in the United States is a Caucasian male, as a result of this program Muslim communities were infiltrated with “an unprecedented number of informants recruited by the FBI.”⁸⁰ The FBI stings consisted of around fifteen thousand informants⁸¹ who were given money to either act as a deterrent to terrorism or collect information to help build cases on potential cases in the future. The informants can earn one hundred thousand

⁷⁷ Bergen, *United States of Jihad*, 247.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 280.

⁷⁹ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 210.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 209.

⁸¹ As of 2013. Ibid., 210.

dollars per case, which can act as a pretty motivating incentive to get whatever done the FBI is asking of you.

Mark Hamm and Ramón Spaaij conducted an analysis of fifteen sting operations from 2009 and 2013. Despite the profile of an authentic Lone Wolf being an unemployed white male with a criminal record, average age of thirty-one, thirteen of the fifteen in the analysis were younger, employed Muslim men from minority backgrounds with no criminal history.⁸² They recorded four major differences in the results. The first difference recorded was the age of the targets of the sting operation compared to the authentic lone wolves. The average age of the stings was twenty-six, which is several years younger than post-9/11 average age of the authentic lone wolf of thirty-one. The second difference noted was in the race of the sting operation targets. The average lone wolf is known to be an “American-born, Caucasian, but the sting targets came from more diverse backgrounds, including North African, Kosovar, Bengali, Lebanese, Dominican, Asian, Arab American, and African American.”⁸³ The third difference was in the employment of the target. Almost all of the minority sting targets were employed, but most of the authentic lone wolf terrorists were unemployed. The final difference was discovered in the criminal background of the targets. “Sixty percent of the authentic lone wolves had prior criminal histories, only thirteen percent of the sting targets had a criminal background.”⁸⁴ If FBI sting operations are the solution to cases like Carols Bledsoe and Nidal Hasan then it is very clear why Omar Mateen was able to ‘slip through the cracks,’ just as they did seven years before him.

3.3 Jump on the Bandwagon

The number of the people on the no-fly list in 2016 was forty-eight thousand, compared to the sixteen that were on it on September 11, 2001. An increase from “thirty-two in 2001 to over one

⁸² Ibid., 215.

⁸³ Ibid., 212.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

hundred Joint Terrorism Task Force ‘fusion centers’ in 2016, scattered throughout the United States working together to chase down leads and build cases, is just one of the few routine policing and intelligence initiatives that have played a major role in reducing the threat posed by terrorists.”⁸⁵ The reasons a new threat like bandwagon terrorism has been able to stay under the radar is not because of a lack of effort from the intelligence community, but rather a misidentification that has led to an inaccurate assessment.

The most promising agency capable of countering bandwagon terrorism is the National Counterterrorism Center. The NCTC recognizes that this threat will not be understood by analyzing the perpetrators’ individual process of radicalization. With the hysteria surrounding social media networks like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, it is very common for people to isolate themselves from the ‘real world,’ in order to become more engrossed in their online identity. “For the NCTC the goal of counterterrorism is to ‘actively and aggressively counter the range of ideologies violent extremists employ to radicalize and recruit individuals by challenging justifications for violence and by actively promoting the unifying and inclusive vision of our American ideals.”⁸⁶ It is essential that those dealing with the threat of bandwagon terrorism understand that the doctrinal and narrative level of the spider’s web network in the United States serves as a much greater purpose than radicalizing American citizens to resort to such a large scale act of violence. An additional suggestion to the strategies of the NCTC is to provide more support for local law enforcement agencies, since routine policing has played a significant role in successfully identify terrorists.⁸⁷ Ending the War on Terror may not end this new phenomena now that it has begun, but countering the messages of the terrorist networks, movements, or the leaders will discredit the doctrine and undermine the narrative, which will make the idea of terrorism for a no longer winning cause a lot less appealing.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁸⁶ Hamm and Spaaij, *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism*, 116.

⁸⁷ Christopher Hewitt, “Law Enforcement Tactics and Their Effectiveness in Dealing with American Terrorism: Organizations, Autonomous Cells, and Lone Wolves,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26 (2014): 65.

CONCLUSION

Identifying an individual that carried out a terrorist attack as a lone wolf enables scholars, governments, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement to rely solely on an analysis of each individual's process of radicalization that leads to the development of a profile of what they believe the potential terrorist might be. The concept of bandwagon terrorism eliminates this problem by taking the focus off of radicalization and highlighting the worth of understanding narrative and doctrinal level of the network that causes the act of violence. The attacks in the United States have been fueled by the same propaganda responsible for the ones in Europe, the recruitment of foreign fighters from around the world, but yet the effect on Americans is unlike to one on citizens of any other country in the West.

Americans who want to join ISIS as a foreign fighter will have to book a flight, which will cause the attention of the intelligence community. For citizens of the European Union (EU) that want to travel to Syria or Iraq to join ISIS without alerting the government or intelligence agencies have several options additional to taking a plane like driving or buying a ticket for a bus or train. The problem for European governments or intelligence agencies is two-fold: the Schengen Area allows citizens of a member state to travel freely without causing alarm, and several countries like the United Kingdom used to act as a sanctuary area for foreign fighters during the conflict in Afghanistan, and in the Balkans. The attacks in the United States are no more lethal, common, or alarming than those happening in other countries in the West, but as the four cases in this thesis have shown the type of terrorism is specific to the spider's web network ISIS has established there.

Bandwagon terrorism represents a new threat that combines characteristics of both lone wolf terrorism and a terrorist network, which is why it has been difficult to identify. The Americans carrying out attacks either alone or in couples have been exposed to the doctrine and narrative of ISIS online. They view actions resulting from the ongoing War on Terror as proof that the narrative

is right, and then use the doctrine to plan the attack. Of the four cases, the two most recent perpetrators in San Bernardino and Orlando pledged allegiance to ISIS and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The attacks in Boston and Chattanooga were exposed to the same doctrine and narrative, and their actions match the ones described in the al-Qaeda magazine *Inspire*, so these attacks are considered inspired. All of the perpetrators have similar objectives, level of affiliation, actions, tactics, and jurisdiction. The United States government, the intelligence community, and scholars like Peter Neumann, Peter Bergen, Jeffrey Simon, Mark Hamm, Ramón Spaaij, and Brigitte Nacos have labeled the perpetrators lone wolf terrorists, however the results from Table 1 and the analysis in Table 2 show that the number of actors, level of affiliation and autonomy, and the objective do not match the definition of lone wolf terrorism or terrorist network.

Just as there is no single definition of terrorism, there is no single way to counter terrorism. Many of the post-9/11 counterterrorism strategies have proven to be more successful in creating a threat rather than preventing one. The FBI sting operations are the most problematic domestic attempt at keeping Americans safe. The Orlando shooting in 2016 proved that the focus on an individual's radicalization does not prevent terrorist attacks carried out by Americans. In order to truly protect Americans from terrorist attacks the government, intelligence community, law enforcement, and scholars need to recognize the threat is domestic, but the attacks are driven with international terrorist network motives. The current administration is reacting to a misidentified threat, which can result in more Americans going undetected and jumping on the bandwagon.

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