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Countering Violent Extremism: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

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Abstract

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M.Phil., Walden University, 2020

MA, University of Utah, 2011

BA, University of Oklahoma, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

For over two decades, preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) has proven

a daunting challenge for foreign assistance policy makers and implementers. The

challenges are rooted in its rapid emergence, continuous and uneven development, and

lingering skepticism about its future and effectiveness. The purpose of this study is to

provide policy makers and practitioners with a deeper understanding of how certain

factors have driven the development of P/CVE policy. The research questions focused on

the nature of policy alignment at all policy levels and the identification and nature of the

factors that have driven rapid P/CVE policy change. The theoretical framework included

the use of punctuated equilibrium theory, policy feedback theory, and path dependence.

A qualitative case study and document analysis design was used. The study completed 7

semi-structured interviews with P/CVE specialists and a document analysis of 37 policy

documents. Data from the interviews and documents were coded and categorized for

thematic analysis and comparison. Results indicated a robust policy alignment across

policy levels but also reflected a very uneven policy evolution due to numerous

intervening factors. Participants also expressed a significant degree of skepticism about

P/CVE effectiveness and its distinctiveness from other development tools. The

implications for social change include informing practitioners and policy makers of the

importance of effective, coordinated, and well-considered P/CVE policy at all levels of

government. Doing so assists policy makers and practitioners to achieve important

foreign assistance objectives and improve the lives of those adversely affected around the

world.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my loving wife, Hannah, and to my wonderful children, Nora, Myrah, Odelle, and Origen. They sacrificed countless hours of my absence during this study. Always remember that you will forever be the center of my world.

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I would like to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Benedict DeDominicis, and to my committee members, Dr. Christopher Jones, and Dr. Victoria Landu-Adams. I appreciate the long hours they spend reviewing and providing excellent feedback. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ryan Bond for his editorial assistance and the many hours we spent discussing this study. He is a true friend and scholar.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is a field that has become increasingly important in international development and conflict intervention. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has taken a leading role in providing thought leadership and practice in this field, developing foreign assistance policy and managing several P/CVE related programs around the world for many years (USAID, 2018). As this study will examine, P/CVE related policies have changed rapidly through modifications of existing policies or the creation of new related policies. As we will explore, P/CVE policies reflect both types of changes over time.

Further, this study will examine the how the nature of P/CVE today has evolved when compared to its earliest originating concepts. Even the term itself has undergone changes, moving away from military-themed terminology to more assistance-oriented terminology. Such significant change in a short period of time has created challenges in understanding the reasons and the drivers of these policy changes. This rapid change has created a lack of clarity regarding the definition and objectives of P/CVE, particularly when numerous organizations contribute to the implementation of P/CVE policy. This study aims to shed light on the factors that have led to this change, as well as whether the implementation can be accomplished in accordance with such rapidly changing concepts and policy evolution.

Given the challenge of trying to understand the feasibility of policy implementation in times of rapid change, it is increasingly important to analyze and better understand the nature of P/CVE changes over time and to examine the factors that have

driven these rapid changes. Understanding these aspects of the policy and practice will in turn help better inform whether P/CVE is having the intended results and if these changes are having the intended effects necessary for the success of America's foreign policy and its foreign assistance goals. This study seeks positive social impact by helping to fill gaps in scholarly research, assisting practitioners with future program design, and giving policy makers a better understanding of the nature of P/CVE policy evolution. As such, this study provides new scholarly analysis on the nature and factors contributing to the evolution of P/CVE policy.

This chapter provides an overview of the study, broken into thirteen sections. The first section explores the problem statement. This section describes the gaps in scholarly knowledge and explains why exploring these issues and offering scholarly analysis and explanations will benefit practitioners, scholars, and policy makers. I discuss the purpose and the aim of the study, highlighting gaps in scholarly research, and frame the problem by building upon previous research. The third section covers the significance of this study. This covers the intent of the study and the research paradigm that was used. This is followed by the research questions, which are guideposts for the information collection and analysis of the entire study. The research questions also help serve as the scope, defining the parameters and delimitations of the study. Next, the theoretical framework of the study is introduced. Following this, the theoretical framework is presented, describing the theories that are used to explain the observed phenomena. In doing so, I detail the context of these theoretical frameworks and the way in which they apply to the observed phenomena relevant to the findings.

Within chapter one I describe the conceptual framework and nature of the study. This chapter provides the topic of investigation. These topics of the study are inherently identified within the research questions. However, this chapter further develops and defines the conceptual topics within a contextual and logical framework. This chapter also addresses the key concepts and phenomenon being investigation, as well as the methodology being employed in the study. Next, necessary definitions for the study are presented to offer clarity. This is followed by assumptions relevant to the phenomena. Next are the scope, delimitations, and the limitations of the study. The scope and delimitations define the parameters of the study, the population selected, and the specific aspects of what the study will address. The limits of the study are meant to transparently communicate to the reader the methodological limits, limits to transferability of the findings, and any identified biases by the author. All this together will comprise the chapter and a broader overview of the study.

Chapter 2 serves as the literature review, examining foundational concepts that have contributed to P/CVE and its predecessor policies. Chapter 2 also reviews the theoretical frameworks that contributes to this study. Chapter 3 is an overview of the methodology of the study. This provides greater detail about the methodological tools and processes that were employed throughout the study. The findings are then addressed in chapter 4 presenting the results of the full study. Chapter 5 is the final chapter where the conclusions of the study are presented. This chapter serves to include the broad analytical conclusions, taking into consideration the interviews and document analysis as well as the way in which the theoretical frameworks apply to the findings. Chapter 5 also

discusses recommendations as well as implications of the study.

Background

This study addresses an identified gap in the scholarly literature by exploring the causative factors of P/CVE policy change and the nature of these changes. To address the gaps, this study examines the drivers of regional and agency foreign assistance policy change as it pertains to P/CVE. As the literature review illustrates, comprehensive scholarly analysis of the factors of P/CVE policy change is a relative rarity, and no literature has been identified that offers an explanatory theoretical framework for these changes. Further, this study explores the unique aspects of USAID P/CVE policy implementation, which is yet another topic rarely addressed in scholarly peer-reviewed studies. Therefore, this study is needed to fill important gaps in the literature. In doing so, this helps inform practitioners tasked with implementing policy through effective design and execution of programs in the field, as well as assist policy makers and government leaders to more fully understand the factors and consequences of rapid P/CVE policy change as it pertains to U.S. foreign development assistance.

The United States has a lengthy history of foreign interventions in countries affected by violent extremism. Such interventions have taken the form the counterinsurgency operations, stabilization operations, humanitarian assistance, and traditional international development assistance (e.g., programs related to health, economics, governance, and education). Likewise, foreign aid intervention has come in many variations, such as stabilization operations, counterinsurgency, economic aid, and military aid. P/CVE is yet another approach, albeit usually a very technical and niche

focus as part of a broader foreign assistance approach. What sets P/CVE apart other than its focused technical approach is that it is also currently experiencing tremendous growth and attention. For example, in early 2015, a summit was held at the White House in which senior leaders from dozens of countries, multilateral bodies, civil society and private sector organizations, all gathered together to develop a plan to fight violent extremism (White House, 2015, para. 9). Thus, there are strong indications that P/CVE will remain a global phenomenon for some time to come. Considering that the U.S. is the largest donor to the U.N. (OECD, 2016, p. 2), this will invariably involve U.S. foreign policy coordination and consideration. Therefore, P/CVE will likely remain an important issue for U.S. foreign policymakers regardless of domestic politics.

Historically speaking, the concept of P/CVE has significantly earlier roots than 9/11. Some scholars, such as Ramakrishna (2014) placed an emphasis on the Cold War as important for fully understanding the history of countering violent extremism policy (para. 5). This is likely accurate due to the writings of foundational strategic theorists such as Beaufre (1967), who advocated non-military interventions as the best approach to effectively counter insurgencies during the Cold War, which remains a dominant theme among P/CVE scholars and practitioners today. It was therefore during the Cold War era in which non-military interventions as a national security tool first took root in Europe and the United States. Also, as Cold War experiences and thinking continue to affect policy today this period requires attention to fully understand this phenomenon. Thus, this study will present some background information as it pertains to violent extremism during the Cold War era.

However, the most significant changes in P/CVE related foreign policy occurred following the Cold War. Terrorism and extremist organizations have become major challenges around the world. While this was a rising concern, the paradigm radically shifted on September 11, 2001 with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. America's Global War on Terror (GWOT) was launched, followed by new wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which gave rise to increasing instability in the region and the rise of new radicalized organizations, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The Global War on Terror eventually morphed into various iterations of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, which ultimately led to the P/CVE foreign assistance policy, including the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) which forms the basis of the case study in this study.

Due to broad definitions, compounded by domestic and international applications across a broad array of approaches and objectives, P/CVE remains complex and poorly understood by academics and practitioners alike. This ambiguity has occurred largely because CVE has both domestic security contexts and international foreign assistance contexts, yet both are labeled CVE (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Naturally, law enforcement organizations, such as Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, have long worked in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism. But foreign policy is the other side of the CVE policy coin, using similar language but working in quite different contexts.

Making this distinction between domestic and foreign policy, the Bush Administration's 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS) highlights USAID's foreign

policy development and democratization role being integral to combating terrorism. The policy identified the 3Ds, which were comprised of defense, diplomacy, and development (Rasmussen, 2015; USAID, 2012). However, this did not fundamentally change the way in which USAID worked overseas, but rather placed additional expectations on the agency and the way in which it coordinates, such as with the Defense of Defense and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Today, in addition to these modern P/CVE approaches, USAID provides support to P/CVE in a broad array of traditional ways. For example, USAID has continued to employ soft power approaches such as youth engagement, reconciliation, economic assistance, social inclusion, local governance, and conflict management projects, among other approaches (USAID, 2017, para. 3). Also, the term preventing violent extremism (PVE) has recently begun to emerge and take policy hold, possibly through the United Nations' term which has influenced foreign aid agencies. In the future, if this distinction becomes more commonplace, which it appears to be, it may have an effect of better separating domestic and military terminology (i.e., CVE) from foreign aid terminology (i.e., PVE).

However, contrasting the changing nature of P/CVE, USAID has operated P/CVE programs since 2006 in West Africa and has over a decade of experience in implementing these programs (USAID, 2016, para.5). Given the amount of time P/CVE approaches have been active, P/CVE can no longer be described as a novel concept, as it has existed for over a decade in its modern form. In addition, P/CVE also incorporates development approaches that have existed for decades. What is new is the terminology encapsulating those approaches (Ghattas, 2015). In a recent publication, scholars summarized this

challenge stating that semantic ambiguity has led to broad policy responses that lack the necessary focus and precision (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle, & Zammit, 2015). As a result, P/CVE has come to represent a broad array of tools, issues, and approaches, yet it is also at times specific to given contexts. This contrast can make coordination, analysis, and policy implementation a challenge. This study, which explores P/CVE policy at various policy levels, will illustrate this complexity.

Further, the policy evolution of P/CVE is not entirely clear. For example, Ambinder (2010) argued that P/CVE is a rebranding of the term the global war on terror, which began two decades years ago. Prior to that, some concepts closely related to P/CVE date back decades, such as Cold War era writings of the strategist Beaufre arguing for non-violent strategies, akin to modern stabilization operations and counterinsurgency, and including good governance and economic reforms to counter revolutionary movements (cited in Ramakrishna, 2014, para. 5).

The modern concept of P/CVE only emerged as formal policy in 2011, with USAID's policy of using development as a response to violent extremism (USAID, 2011). Since 2001 and constantly changing until today, P/CVE policies have formally emerged that have a direct relationship with foreign assistance and diplomatic policy, such as those found in DOS and USAID policy documents. Modern foreign assistance P/CVE policies and strategies are comprised of a complex mixture of hard power approaches (i.e., military-centric), such as counterterrorism, and soft power approaches, such as development and diplomacy (i.e., economic development programs). The current P/CVE conceptualization has often been referred to as whole of government, or whole of

society, blending many aspects of intervention, both hard and soft approaches (Williams, 2016).

Uncertainty remains as to the purpose and effectiveness of P/CVE policy approaches. While hard power and soft power have combined over time into so-called smart power foreign assistance paradigms, it remains unknown how this rapid policy evolution occurred at key points and whether this new paradigm is effective, or at least more effective than previous related models. Because of the lack of knowledge in the body of scholarly literature as to what occurred over time and the effectiveness of these changes, it is difficult to determine which models served best under various conditions. Understanding why policy has evolved over time is important to determine policy effectiveness. This significant shortcoming in the current body of knowledge does a disservice to policy makers and project implementers alike.

To make better P/CVE policy, the puzzle pieces must be assembled more coherently. As Rasmussen (2015) argued, terrorism and extremism remain some of the greatest challenges to security because the current tools to defeat them are failing (p. 75). Without effective policy tools, based on a sound understanding of what is required to counter violent extremism, at best the status quo remains, and at worst the conditions will deteriorate. As such, the longer the struggle against violent extremists continues to grow in scale and intensity, the more damage is done to lives, families, economies, and the social fabric of communities. This said, there is currently a gap in knowledge related to the nature of P/CVE policy interconnectivity at various levels. This gap inherently leads to other unknowns, such as whether policy is being developed in an effective manner to

produce maximal desired results, particularly at the point of implementation.

In sum, this study is required to help close important knowledge gaps regarding P/CVE policy development, alignment, and implementation. As argued, P/CVE is an important policy approach within broader foreign assistance policy which delineates how the United States intervenes in many challenged regions around the world. These approaches have affected the lives of millions and underlie the rationale of billions of dollars in expenditure. It is therefore increasingly important as government budgets have become unsustainable and global engagements in several challenging regions have failed or worsened. Further, there is exceptional complexity to the nature of policy evolution of P/CVE. The policy predecessors that helped give rise to modern P/CVE date back decades and are marked by unique periods of foreign policy. An understanding of these differing foreign policy periods, and how those changes affected the policy evolution of P/CVE, will further shed light on the factors leading to these changes. These are critical questions pertaining to the future of American foreign policy and efforts to counter violent extremism.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

The United States' P/CVE related policies have changed dramatically since 2001 until today. This analysis of modern P/CVE can be broken into two periods, the first being 2001 until 2010, which is the period of policy precedent, setting in place policies that would eventually lead to the formal concept of countering violent extremism. This period is noteworthy for the historical aspects of development. The second period is that of 2010 until today. In 2010, countering violent extremism formalized in terms of its

name, but conceptually continued to undergo multiple changes over the years. For example, the addition of preventing violent extremism came into use during the debate between the role of foreign aid assistance and military intervention. As such, the differentiation between soft power and hard power approaches, creating an emerging distinction between PVE and CVE. further, P/CVE only began being incorporated into formal foreign policy documents in 2011, with USAID's policy guidance which advocated development as a response to violent extremism (USAID, 2017).

Within only a few short years, P/CVE emerged as a pillar of American foreign policy (The White House, 2015, p. 13). However, despite numerous foreign policy interventions with P/CVE objectives, including Iraq and Afghanistan, the very definition of P/CVE remained unsettled and continues to mean different things to different organizations (Challgren et al., 2016). There is no clear understanding of what is driving these rapid policy changes. This has been further burdened by the dearth of rigorous analytical studies related to P/CVE policy and implementation (Nasser-Edine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011, pp. 1-2). Further, the studies that do exist offer no explanatory theoretical frameworks in which to compare its nature of change with other comparable historical policy approaches. This creates further obstacles to learning and understanding the evolution of P/CVE.

Despite P/CVE policy growing in prominence in American foreign aid policy, there are important foundational questions that remain unresolved. This is especially noteworthy as it pertains to P/CVE foreign policy evolution and the identification and understanding of key factors driving this policy evolution over time. The topic of

USAID's unique role in P/CVE implementation remains an important foreign policy

topic currently under debate. Therefore, this study will shed light on the field of P/CVE

by undertaking an analysis of the factors that have driven change in P/CVE as it pertains

to foreign aid policy and the nature of USAID's role in this work. This study will also

seek to illustrate the nature of P/CVE policy alignment between agency policy and that of

policy at the point of implementation, in this case, the P/CVE related policies governing

the TSCTP. This study will attempt to clarify these unresolved questions and how they

impact USAID's unique role by examining these research objectives and applying

explanatory theoretical frameworks for scholarly analysis.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how and why foreign policy,

as it pertains to P/CVE as part of foreign assistance within USAID programs, has

changed in recent years. As such, the study will aim to shed light on the nature and the

drivers of P/CVE policy changes, emphasizing USAID P/CVE related foreign assistance

policy. Secondarily, this study aims to provide an informative higher-level analysis for

policy makers, practitioners, and academic researchers. In this context, the study will

examine high level policy, such as congressional and executive branch mandates to

USAID as well as internal USAID policy itself. This contrasts with implementation level

policy, including the implementation of the TSCTP, which serves as a case study for this

paper. The study seeks to illustrate that both high level policy and implementation level

execution are important. Alignment and coordination between the differing levels are

critical for effective policy execution, as is a clear understanding of the policy direction at

all levels.

To understand policy, and the nature of its emergence as policy, there must be an understanding of the logical interconnectivity from the highest levels of policy development to the point of policy implementation. In this study, this is accomplished by examining the interaction between foreign policy, development assistance policy, agency policy, regional policy, and official development assistance policy pertaining to P/CVE.

To offer additional analytical value, and to frame the study in the case study model, this study will examine a long-standing and ongoing regional program that has evolved from counterterrorism to preventing and countering violent extremism. The program is called the TSCTP, which was implemented in 2005 and covers the program implementation in eleven countries that comprise the partnership (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Senegal).

Further, the intent and purpose of this study is timely and relevant because P/CVE policy is an increasingly important concept in American foreign policy considerations. The United Nations has also expanded its role, asserting that the world is currently entering an era of humanitarian disasters not seen since WWII, which will likely have effects on international stability (BBC, 2017). Further, while P/CVE is frequently discussed in terms of its relative novelty as a formal foreign policy and/or strategy, the reality is that it has a long lineage. This policy lineage tells an important story in how P/CVE has moved from being part of a policy backwater prior to September 11, 2001 to now being among the most discussed foreign policy topics (Nasser-Edine et al., 2011). That historical shift points to factors and catalysts that have influenced and mandated

those changes over time and this study aims to provide an explanation of these factors and catalysts of change.

Research Questions

RQ1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the TSCPT, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

RQ2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

Theoretical Framework

The two levels of examination are: 1) a high-level examination of U.S. P/CVE foreign assistance policy evolution as it pertains primarily to USAID's agency level P/CVE policy. This will examine overarching trends in P/CVE related foreign assistance policy, focusing on USAID's role, such as the development of new strategies or approaches in P/CVE (e.g., published formal government strategies); 2) a closer case-study examination of a major P/CVE policy implementation program, the TSCTP, with a focus on USAID's distinct role in the program. A more contextual case-study analysis of the TSCPT will examine whether this implemented program has addressed some of these factors or whether the purpose changed at the implementation level. The case-study will help explore whether regional P/CVE policy and strategy mirrors and aligns with global P/CVE foreign assistance policy. This will help explore the level of continuity and coordination, and thus the nature of USAID's P/CVE policy and implementation.

The theoretical framework applied throughout this study is three-fold: punctuated equilibrium theory, policy feedback theory, and path dependence theory. Looking first at

punctuated equilibrium theory (PET), Sabatier and Weible (2014) posited that PET was developed in the mid-1990s to examine policy stasis followed by rapid change. They argued that public policy remains stagnate and incremental but is occasionally punctuated by rapid and large-scale change, resulting from the catalyst of crisis. Based on background research, I believe PET serves as a keen option to explore P/CVE foreign assistance policy change. This is because the struggle against radical extremism (e.g., counterterrorism, anti-terrorism, counterinsurgency, and stabilization operations) has grown rapidly since September 11, 2001.

Illustrating the potential importance of PET, the attacks that occurred on 9/11 created a policy paradigm shift on how the U.S. intervened abroad. As I will discuss further later in this study, prior to 9/11, there were several periods of increased attention on combating extremism, particularly during the Cold War era. Some of the more recent changes included the creation of new conflict focused budget funds (e.g., Overseas Contingency Operations / Global War on Terror funding, implemented by Department of Defense, DOS, and USAID (Congressional Research Service (CRS), 2017), but focusing on USAID's effort in this study), and the creation of several new specialized offices that address countering radicalization, stabilization operations, and counterterrorism (e.g., USAID's P/CVE Secretariat and the DOS Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism). The creation of these new offices provides a snapshot into the many P/CVE related changes that have occurred in recent years. In short, the attacks of 9/11 created a dynamic shock to the system with reverberating effects in recent years. As such, these rapid and significant changes lend themselves well to using PET as an analytical

and theoretical framework.

  Policy feedback theory (PFT) will also play a role in my study on P/CVE. PFT seeks to explore the phenomenon in which the enactment of policies allows for the restructuring of political processes (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). This theoretical framework helps to explain the feedback loop that sometimes occurs between policy (e.g., broad global U.S. policy, such as P/CVE foreign assistance policy, as well as geographically focused policy such as the TSCTP) and politics (e.g., political imperatives and mandates by differing administrations and leaders). The theory also helps explore unintended consequences from policy implementation.

  Among the important aspects of PFT is that it shows the complex interrelationship between policy and politics and the need to understand and learn from the unexpected and/or unintended consequences of policies and how such policies can interact with society beyond their intended design. This theory holds value for studying P/CVE in foreign assistance policy because P/CVE is an issue that is both shaped by policy and shapes policy. It is both a cause and an effect, at times both changed by external policies while simultaneously effecting external policies. Therefore, this theoretical framework is valuable for this study in that it facilitates and explanation of what foreign assistance P/CVE policy aspects have changed over time, why have they changed, and what effects those changes made.

  Finally, this study will look to the theory of path dependence to understand the nature of change of P/CVE policy evolution. Path dependence emerged out of the field of economics but has been applied to public policy in fields such as criminal justice

(Schneider, 2006) and nation-building (Allen, 2010). Path dependence offers an important theoretical perspective by examining institutional and historical constraints of policy change over time. Torfing (2009) defines path dependence as the condition in which present policy choices are shaped by previously created institutional paths. As such, path dependence serves as an explanatory model addressing causes that are in part associated with the proverbial butterfly effect, whereby a small change has the capacity to create larger cascading effects (Allen, 2010). Therefore, the path dependence theory will serve as a valuable framework in examining the way in which institutional pressures and established interests affect policy change over time.

Collectively, these theoretical frameworks provide explanatory frameworks for public policy issues and will prove useful in my examination of foreign assistance P/CVE policy. Each of these frameworks offers a unique theoretical approach, explaining various complexities and phenomena pertaining to P/CVE related foreign assistance policy change. PET offers insight into the nature of rapid change; path dependence offers insight on institutional and historical constraints to change; and PFT examines the nature of how existing policies affect the ongoing policymaking process. Bringing these three theoretical frameworks together offers an opportunity to observe and report the way in which P/CVE foreign assistance policy has evolved, using a variety of complementary theoretical lenses. Each of the theoretical lenses provide distinct explanatory aspects to different aspects which is further explored in Chapters 2 and 3. In sum, PD assumes significant alignment between the TSCTP and USAID's P/CVE policies. If there is non-alignment, then PFT becomes a valuable analytical tool. If a rapid policy or

implementation rupture is found to have occurred or is underway, then this occurrence shall be explored through PET.

Nature of the Study

This study is qualitative in nature. This approach will facilitate a rich contextual study to fully explore the rapidly changing nature of P/CVE policy. The approach is a case study of the TSCTP, which will contrast higher level USAID foreign aid policy against implementation level policy, which is that of the TSCTP program, and a program in which USAID significantly contributed to over many years. The TSCTP is a regional policy program and not specifically designed to target a single country independent of the regional context. Evidence of this regional strategic context can also be found in USAID's East Africa Regional Development Cooperative Strategy (RDCS), which explicitly links the regional strategy with the 2015 East Africa Counter Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (EA CT/CVE) Strategy (USAID/Kenya and East Africa, 2016). Specific country level engagement is left to USAID Country Development Cooperative Strategies (CDCS), though country level activities may link with wider TSCTP activities, such as that of USAID/Mali's CDCS (USAID/Mali, 2015, p. 8). In this sense, the TSCTP is an independent program and not driven specifically by individual country strategies targeted for TSCTP activities. Further, because there are eleven individual African countries that comprise the regional focus of TSCTP, an analysis of each country's bi-lateral work with USAID, such as program plans found in country strategies, is not feasible or within the scope of the study. However, those countries with an active USAID CDCS in place were examined to determine if they tie in with the wider

TSCTP. Additionally, these regional policies were contrasted with agency level P/CVE policies, primarily including the USAID policy document titled *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency* (2011).

The research methodology is governed by the research questions, problem statement, and purpose. Based on the theory of punctuated equilibrium, PFT, and path dependence theory, there was an expectation that this study would show that there were significant catalysts driving policy shifts such as the increasing scale and intensity of global conflict and terrorist attacks involving the US. In part, this assumption held most true, but it was learned that lesser known events also contributed significantly as well, to include policy changes. Just as a lab catalyst is evaluated with results, so too did this study examine how certain catalytic events correlate with P/CVE policy change. Some of the results included the magnitude of P/CVE policy implementations, shifts in strategic P/CVE approaches, and notable changes in P/CVE policies.

Prior to data collection and analysis, I suspected that such catalysts have indeed driven policy change over the past several years. Based on the literature review, the expected factors affecting P/CVE policy are listed below. It was expected that analysis will identify and highlight others, which it did, and those are explored in Chapter 4. Some of the factors initially considered for analysis included:

1) Number of global conflicts driven by violent extremism which involve the United States. For example, regions or countries designated as being within the United States strategic interest, such as allied countries.

2) Number of terrorist attacks targeting U.S. interests abroad. This can indicate a

strategic effort by militants to destabilize strategic regions with the intent to

stretch U.S. resources in the fight against violent extremism. For example,

some Africa experts, such as de Montclos (2014), have stated that Boko

Haram seeks a more global footprint. In turn, this would likely require the

U.S. to expand its efforts to counter Boko Haram in the group's expanding

areas of operation. As such, a rise and fall of violence targeting U.S. interests

abroad would likely have a palpable effect on U.S. foreign policy as it pertains

to P/CVE. Several violent extremist organizations are regional and/or

international, compounding the importance of this consideration.

3) Extremist violence in strategic regions. Focusing in this study on countries

relevant to the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership—Algeria, Burkina

Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia,

and Senegal. Given that the TSCTP exists, this region is known to be of

strategic interest to the U.S.

This study focused on the nature of P/CVE policy evolution over time. This was

examined through a series of methodological steps to acquire and analyze the data.

These steps are as follows:

Step 1: Establish an understanding of P/CVE strategic policy. As such, determine

if P/CVE related policies have shifted based on the degree of relevant global conflict and

terrorist attacks involving the United States. Based on a historical understanding of

P/CVE policy, and given the theory of punctuated equilibrium, the number and intensity

of attacks by radical organizations against U.S. interests likely contribute to P/CVE

policy shifts (i.e., as relevant violence increases then so too does P/CVE related policy change). If not, then determine if there are other factors affecting P/CVE policy change that are not being considered. Determine what role and effect do other agencies have on USAID's P/CVE work regarding the TSCTP.

Step 2: Examine the case study, the TSCTP program. This involves an examination and explanation of why this program began (e.g., due to increases in conflict and terrorism in the region) and the objectives of the program (e.g., mitigate an increase in radical violence in the region). This step examines how the policy and its implementation has evolved over the past 13 years (i.e., the beginning of the TSCTP) and then determine if those changes are reflective of broader policy change (top down approach), driven by implementation lessons-learned informing wider policy (bottom-up approach), or neither. Because this region is also of importance to EU and NATO efforts, this step will examine international coordination on P/CVE, and that analysis will help inform the wider U.S. P/CVE foreign assistance policy in the region.

As a case study, TSCTP presents one of the best opportunities to examine the evolution of P/CVE activities at a regional level. Given the importance of TSCTP to P/CVE implementation as part of USAID's foreign assistance policy, the activities of this program were examined and categorized into the nature of their approach and the objectives sought. These categories will help examine the nature of change over time.

Step 3: Explain how this study contributes to social change. This study seeks to help explain the nature of P/CVE policy evolution. Violent extremism adversely affects tens of millions of people around the world every day. P/CVE seeks to mitigate some of

the worst perceived causes and effects of violent extremism, as well as achieve U.S. foreign policy interests. This study aims to contribute to understanding the nature of P/CVE policy evolution, the factors of that change, and whether P/CVE policy implementation as part of the TSCPT has been effectively coordinated. In part, the aim of this study is to help policy makers produce better informed P/CVE foreign assistance policy.

Further, by examining the case study of the TSCPT, the results of this study will assist practitioners with their program implementation by providing additional analysis on "best practices" of P/CVE policy implementation and how to more fully explore and understand the objectives of a policy, studying it from a top-down and bottom-up approach. This study will touch upon some of the most pressing policy debates regarding P/CVE, such as the balance of hard and soft power, and to a limited extent the efficacy of foreign aid as a P/CVE approach.

Step 4: Determine applicability of the theories of punctuated equilibrium, policy feedback, and path dependence. In part, this study will help shed light on if P/CVE policy changes have been prompted by such factors as the scale and intensity of relevant conflicts and terrorist attacks. If so, this finding would merit additional analysis focusing on the potential explanatory value of these theoretical frameworks for a more complete understanding of the nature of P/CVE interventions. This finding would also bring into question what other policy theories should be considered to gain a more exhaustive analysis regarding the factors related to P/CVE related policy and its evolution over time. However, if there is no discernable linkage between these theoretical frameworks, or if

there is no clear theoretical explanation, then either the theories lack explanatory value for P/CVE, or P/CVE policy has unique attributes that require additional research.

Step 5: Data gathering methodology. I have chosen document analysis and purposive interviewing as my two primary research methods for the case study and to better understand the nature of the policy interaction between varying levels of the government. My approach to interviewing was purposive, thus selecting key individuals that have practical knowledge and experience of P/CVE and/or its predecessor policies and project implementation. The population for planned interviews was drawn from the foreign assistance community, including non-governmental organizations, international conflict-oriented think tank experts, relevant academics, and former USAID, DOS, and DOD P/CVE specialists and practitioners.

Definitions

There are key definitions and concepts that require explanation. These include the definition of government policy, foreign policy, foreign aid policy, official development assistance, and preventing and countering violent extremism. For the purposes of this study, these concepts are related and move from general and broader terms to more specific and technical. Definitions of the broad concepts mask the complexities that lie behind them, but the complexities are well understood by those who study the concepts of foreign policy and development assistance. As such, the more precise the concept becomes, the complexities become more apparent if for no other reason than that specific definitions are required to further specify concepts such as policy and foreign policy to arrive at official development assistance. It is for this reason that careful wording is

necessary to ensure the scope and purpose of the study remains clear.

To begin with the most general term, policy has been defined as a principle or course of action by organizations (Oxford University Press, 2018). Going one step further down, foreign policy has been defined as those policies governing interaction between sovereign states (Merriam-Wester, 2018). What is evident from these definitions is that the concept of policy does not mandate one format or another, but at the core it is that which provides guidance for those individuals, organizations, and agencies that work in the respective policy arena, and in this case, it refers to guidance to entities that work in foreign policy. This may involve making more specific policy or implementing the respective policies.

Moving from the broad concepts of policy and foreign policy, it becomes increasingly evident that specific policy making is required as specialization becomes more granular, moving from the high-level policies of the highest offices to the specialized policies of agencies and other entities. An example of this is shifting from foreign policy to foreign aid policy. Foreign aid has been defined as the transfer of capital, goods, and services for the benefit of the recipient country, including economic, military, or humanitarian purposes (Britannica, 2018). As such, policy that guides foreign aid is foreign aid policy. However, for the purposes of this study, foreign aid policy is still too broad as it encompasses all forms of foreign aid, including military assistance. As such, a more specific subset of foreign aid is known as Official Development Assistance (ODA). ODA has been defined by the World Bank as government aid designed to promote economic development and humanitarian welfare but explicitly excluding aid for

the purposes of military assistance (OECD, 2018).

Yet, this is still too broad as it encompasses all forms of development assistance, which is wide ranging, including governance and democracy assistance, economic aid, health, education, humanitarian assistance, and others. To offer the requisite level of specificity, the study will focus on P/CVE through the lens of development assistance. Many agencies work in the field of P/CVE, but only P/CVE policy and implementation that is defined as ODA is addressed as part of this study, namely the work by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which then in part takes guidance from, and in coordination with, the DOS. And although P/CVE has moved through several definitional iterations, the closest definition of P/CVE was written in USAID's policy document, The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency, which states that USAID uses development mechanisms to prevent and counter such extremist violence (USAID, 2011). This document states USAID policy to use development mechanisms to counter extremist-based violence, defining such violence as: "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives" (USAID, 2011, p. 2). Thus, this is the key policy definition most applicable to understanding the parameters of this study.

Assumptions

There were key assumptions at the outset of this study, and which held throughout the study. The first assumption was that P/CVE was designed intentionally as an essential component to foreign assistance policy. It was also assumed that policy changes, both at the agency level and at the regional level, are made deliberately. As such, intentionality

and deliberate policy design are fundamental assumptions in this study. The analysis

revealed that this assumption was seemingly accurate as no policy was found to have

been made without intentionality. Yet, multiple theoretical lenses were used to ensure

explanatory value remained if these assumptions did not hold to be true. Multiple

theoretical lenses facilitated more perspectives and potential explanations, a trend

Sabatier and Weible (2014) stated is becoming more recognized among scholars. The

recognition that one framework offers more precise or elaborate explanatory value for a

specific phenomenon is not necessarily problematic. Previous studies using multiple

theoretical frameworks have shown that some theories may prove more explanatory than

others, or they may provide useful differing perspectives for the same phenomenon or

case (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

The assumption of intentionality and deliberate design in policy change was

expected to be insightful as it pertains to the discussion of path dependence and how it

relates to P/CVE policy evolution. Path dependence rests on the understanding that past

processes can be self-reinforcing, such as when actors progress so far down one course of

action that they can no longer reverse or change course. (Pierson, 2004). Given this

aspect of path dependence, it reflects a self-reinforcing dynamic over policy rather than a

deliberate or independent design of policy. As such, past designs and interests often

continue to hold sway over current and future policy decisions. With this framework, in

many ways, what is past is prologue. Therefore, it was expected that if the fieldwork

reveals that P/CVE is not characterized as being heavily affected by previous policies or

vested interests, then path dependence may not provide limited explanatory value for

P/CVE policy evolution. Further, it was expected that if P/CVE has been affected by PD, then fieldwork should shed light on whether the assumption of intentionality and deliberate policy design mattered much once path dependence took hold, or whether inertia dominated. These assumptions and the associated findings are further explored in Chapter 4.

The assumption of intentionality and deliberate design also affects the explanatory power of PET. PET is the theoretical framework that best explains what occurs when a policy or a process suddenly breaks from incremental change and/or stasis, a concept that is well articulated in path dependence. But in the case of PET, it is due to some sort of systemic shock that catalyzes a large-scale departure from the past (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). As such, this framework helps examine both policy dynamics, stasis, and change. This is important in understanding the nature of stasis and the causative aspects of policy paradigm shifts when they occur. Given this versatility of theoretical lenses employed in this study, the explanatory value should remain regardless of whether P/CVE has been changed through a deliberate or non-deliberate process. However, if it comes to light during fieldwork and concluding analysis that P/CVE did not undergo a major systemic change, then PET would be of limited value and will thus rely on other lenses.

Finally, PFT has some logical linkage to path dependence in that both seek to understand the way in which extant policies or processes continue to have effects on current and future dynamics. As such, both have causal and temporal aspects. In the case of PFT, the theory seeks to explain how past policies, once implemented, affect future political dynamics (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). For PFT, the distinction from PD is the

focus on political dynamics versus more tangible issues such as infrastructure development, for example, why certain train track gauges continue even when better alternatives exist (Puffert, 2002). In this example, PFT facilitates an explanation of the political dynamics and outcomes that exist as a result of regulating train track gauges, while PD helps explain the material constraints and vested interests that reinforce the status quo of enduring train track gauges.

PFT helps us understand how specific policies restructure political processes, thereby potentially creating second and third order effects, potentially even unintended consequences (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Both frameworks require the need to identify "feedback effects" of prior policies upon rapidly or slowly changing dynamics to identify factors catalyzing or inhibiting change, whatever the case may be. In this study, it was expected that PFT would help identify how past P/CVE related policies have affected the way in which political agendas and policy problems have developed in relation to P/CVE policy evolution (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). As such, it was expected to provide a potentially useful explanatory lens in understanding how USAID's P/CVE policy shapes the way in which the agency redefines the concept of P/CVE, or perhaps even modifies its policy agenda on this topic.

A second assumption was that P/CVE policy is deemed relevant by the foreign policy community, particularly policy makers. If in fact P/CVE was largely considered irrelevant by agency policy makers, then there would have been a potential that policy development has not been given enough consideration to extract comprehensive explanatory analysis with these three theoretic lenses. Even so, such an issue could in part

still be explained by PFT and PD. Regarding PFT, policy disinterest could have

suggested that the politics of other existing policies precluded P/CVE from developing

into a prominent policy. It was expected that PD may also help explain such a

phenomenon. PD could have shed light on conditions where past policies continue to

facilitate inertia and the creation of vested interests, perhaps due to the prior application

of resources. It is possible that PD helps explain how P/CVE may fade away or fail to

become fully institutionalized to make room for other entrenched interests. Finally,

policy inattention may come as a result of other more banal issues that may not be fully

explained by these theoretical lenses, such as P/CVE concepts never fully convincing

policy makers due to weak data and poor messaging. If this was the case, it would have

reflected poor implementation, performance, and messaging, which is not fully within the

explanatory realm of these three frameworks, but nevertheless an important finding. Yet,

such an analysis was considered beyond the scope of this study and thus no such

conclusion was made.

Scope and Delimitations

This study examines P/CVE policy evolution over a select period. While some

foundational analysis examines the period from September 11, 2001 until today, the

emphasis was placed on the time span beginning in 2005, the year in which the TSCTP

began, until the current period. 2001 was the pivotal year in which U.S. policy oriented

toward counterterrorism due to the September 11th attacks. This factor which led to

policy shifts should be acknowledged and analyzed as a critical period for foreign

assistance policy. These changes in turn led to programs that morphed into what

developed into the TSCTP, which was originally known as the Pan-Sahel Initiative
(AFRICOM, 2010). This marks one of the earliest events relevant to the study of P/CVE
policy evolution.

This study's transferability is expected to be limited. P/CVE is a specialized and
nuanced policy which has undergone rapid change in a chaotic period of American
history which has been rife with conflict. However, analysis and results may be
transferable to retroactive analyses of periods of conflict as well as future conflicts
involving nuanced policies directly resulting from conflicts, particularly those involving
unconventional conflict, such as counterinsurgencies. Further, as this study examines
how P/CVE policy changed over time, I will also examine how P/CVE changes over time
impacted USAID's role in P/CVE. Some of these effects could include elevating funding
for combating violent extremism, the role USAID has played in foreign policy, and the
potentially the increasing securitization of U.S. development assistance. Additional
effects may include significant changes in the foreign assistance roles by the Department
of Defense and the DOS and the effect that has had on USAID's role in P/CVE policy
and implementation.

For the geographic scope of the study, I selected the oldest ongoing P/CVE
program, the TSCTP, which spans eleven countries. Because the TSCTP is the oldest
such P/CVE program in USAID's portfolio, this will provide insight into how policy
evolution has occurred over time and the unique role USAID has played in P/CVE. This
case study will include the program's activities in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon,
Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Senegal. While this study

examines a program that spans numerous countries, the scope of this study does not

include examining the internal P/CVE related policies of these countries. Rather, this

study will address only U.S. foreign assistance policy as it pertains to the TSCTP

program. Therefore, when any other country's P/CVE policies are discussed within this

study, it is included to support the analysis of U.S. foreign assistance pertaining to P/CVE

policy and implementation.

The interview population was P/CVE specialists, researchers, and practitioners. A

valid source was assessed based on the quality of the source's published material, such as

those having published peer reviewed journal articles, reputable academic books (e.g.,

widely cited and published by a reputable publishing house), or widely referenced

research papers. Specialists were selected to represent two policy levels, the national

policy level, such as those that contribute and specialize at the agency strategic level

(e.g., higher levels that affect entire agencies or government-wide policies, versus direct

implementation of activities).

Limitations

There are both scope limitations related to the agency of focus as well as

definitional limitations to this study. Looking first at definitional limitations, this study

focuses on international foreign assistance as it pertains to P/CVE. P/CVE is a distinct

concept, and therefore is addressed as a distinct concept within this study. As such, the

study incorporates related concepts such as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and

stabilization, where there is directly overlap or influence upon P/CVE policy and

implementation. TSCTP was selected as the case study despite it touching on other

related concepts. Therefore, this study focuses on officially designated P/CVE definitions

and programs, such as defined by USAID. Where this study touches on these other

related concepts is that I seek to explain the relationship between those distinct fields and

their influence on the evolution and implementation of P/CVE.

Another limitation is that this study focuses on U.S. policies related as part of

USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy. USAID is the primary agency for this study

because according to a 2018 Joint Strategic Plan between the DOS and USAID, it serves

as the primary U.S. agency for humanitarian assistance and international development.

However, while USAID's policies are of primary importance to the study, other policies

are addressed when they directly affect USAID policy on P/CVE. This will occur in

portions of the analysis because USAID routinely works alongside numerous other

agencies in P/CVE programs, including the DOS and the U.S. Department of Defense,

particularly in work pertaining to the TSCTP. Further, while USAID is the lead

development agency, according to the same 2018 Joint Strategic Plan, the DOS is the

primary U.S. foreign affairs agency and the main institution to conduct American

diplomacy.

There are also methodological limitations. For the purposes of data triangulation,

I will use document analysis and interviews as my primary analytical approach. These

documents were drawn from formal government policy documents, reviews, and

analyses. Other documents were drawn from NGOs, independent policy analysis

institutions or centers (think tanks), and relevant published papers. Further, government

policy documents are original primary source material, making them methodologically

important. In some way, policy documents are akin to "interviewing" a government agency as it reflects the agency's perspectives, positions, and interests. Document analysis helped provide a focused foundation by analyzing and thematically grouping these documents, and thus help make logical sense of a large body of published public information. Because of the sensitive nature of P/CVE related government policy, only publicly available documents were analyzed. Further, publicly available documentation was more readily available than current government employees, whom I did not interview due to ethical considerations. Ethical considerations also prohibited me from asking for sensitive information that is not publicly available. Further, because significant numbers of published government documents remain available to the public, both current and historical, document analysis captured the formal position of the U.S. government over the years as it relates to P/CVE foreign assistance policy.

However, document analysis has limitations. Government documents and organizational white papers are finished products. These documents present a complete product but do not speak to the historical and ongoing debates regarding the development of these documents. Because of the emergent nature of P/CVE foreign assistance policy, these debates are important to understand because of their ongoing nature and the rapidity of shifting policy thinking on this topic. To capture this information, and thus fill those informational gaps, purposive interviews with think tank experts, non-government organization practitioners, former government employees, and policy scholars provided important background and contextual information that is not available in final government documents. There are also limitations to interview methodology, which

include limited memory, selective memory, and a potential lack of transparency by the interviewee. To mitigate these limitations, triangulation of these methods helped provide a strong foundation for valid research findings and effectively helped answering the research objectives.

Significance

P/CVE has grown and changed substantially over recent years. Historically, while interventions against extremists have primarily used military means, important changes have occurred since 2010. Between 2010 and 2016, formal P/CVE strategies and policies were developed by the DOS and USAID (USAID, 2017; U.S. Department of State, 2017). These policies have increased the attention on P/CVE as a foreign policy tool. Despite these emergent policies, there has been a great deal of speculation as to the causes of such rapid P/CVE policy change, but few analytically robust analyses have been undertaken to explain this phenomenon more precisely (Nasser-Edine et al., 2011).

In terms of practical value to policy makers, analysts, and practitioners, this study fills a critical gap in the literature by exploring the causative factors of P/CVE policy change. It helps clarify the effects of such change upon regions with historical and ongoing P/CVE implementation, while focusing on the Trans-Sahara as a case study. This study will also address some of the most important aspects of USAID P/CVE policy implementation, which is yet another topic rarely addressed in scholarly sources. In terms of theoretical value and addressing the knowledge gap, this study lends itself well to applying three important public policy theories: punctuated equilibrium theory, path dependence theory, and PFT.

As part of my approach, I examine TSCTP, a long-standing multifaceted foreign assistance P/CVE program (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). Based on background research, a case study approach examining the TSCTP illustrates a significant program shift which highlights a period of punctuated equilibrium as it pertains to foreign assistance P/CVE policy change. Because P/CVE is a global policy affecting many regions, additional examples were incorporated as needed to highlight other trends and punctuated changes in P/CVE policy, likely found in other programs in various regions, to include Iraq and Afghanistan for example.

Another important purpose of this research is to better understand P/CVE foreign policy through the lens of established theoretical policy frameworks. Often, P/CVE is examined through the lens of current events but fails to examine P/CVE through the lenses of policy theories, in this case, punctuated equilibrium theory (PET), PFT, and path dependence theory (PD). During background research, I found no such examination that provides a theoretical and analytical explanation of the factors leading to the rapid rate of P/CVE foreign policy evolution. This leaves an important explanatory gap in the existing body of scholarly literature.

Finally, another key purpose for this study is to help shape the formulation of better policy by understanding all the drivers of change. The current dearth of scholarly literature provides limited information to policy makers and implementers in the field of P/CVE. This has an adverse impact in the pursuit of sound policy development, especially in trying to under the broader history of P/CVE and how it led to today's policy circumstances. This lack of material prevents the policy making community from

understanding why and how P/CVE policy has changed, if those changes have been for the better, and how to better steer the policy into the future.

Summary

P/CVE policy within USAID has rapidly shifted over the past seven years, and broadly across the entire U.S. government since September 11, 2001. To understand these changes, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how and why foreign policy, as it pertains to P/CVE within USAID, has changed in recent years. This study sheds light on the nature and the drivers of P/CVE policy changes, with an emphasis on foreign assistance policy provided by USAID. Secondarily, this study aims to provide useful analysis for a range of policy makers and practitioners by providing high level agency P/CVE policy analysis and a case study of the TSCTP. To accomplish this, two research questions address the effective alignment of P/CVE regional and agency level policy, the factors causing the changes in P/CVE regional and agency foreign policy, and the distinct role that USAID serve in P/CVE foreign policy and implementation. It is expected that this study will be useful and transferable to the P/CVE policy making and implementation community.

While this chapter served as a broad overview for the study, providing a glimpse into what to expect from this study, Chapter 2 will more fully explore the existing scholarly literature related to P/CVE policies and related predecessor policies. Chapter 2 delves into such issues as the literature of the three theoretical frameworks used in this study, looking at scholarly literature that attempts to bridge P/CVE literature with PET, PFT, and PD. Chapter 2 also discusses the key thematic areas most often associated with

P/CVE scholarly literature and provides an analysis of these broad thematic concepts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how and why foreign

assistance policy, as it pertains to P/CVE, has evolved in recent years. In the study, I seek

to describe the nature and the drivers of P/CVE policy changes, with an emphasis on

USAID foreign assistance policy. Secondarily, this study aims to provide a strategic level

analysis for policy makers, practitioners, and academic researchers as a case study of

secondary and tertiary effects of a rapidly changing foreign policy. As a case study, the

study examines a long-standing regional program that has evolved from traditional

counterterrorism (i.e., defined by military doctrine as, "actions and activities to neutralize

terrorists, their organizations, and networks" (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. 4)) to now

incorporating non-combat approaches. The program is called the TSCTP and was

inaugurated in 2005. In discussing the TSCTP, the study covers the program's

implementation in the eleven countries that comprise the TSCTP. These include Algeria,

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia, and

Senegal. The TSCTP is a collective program and was examined as an overarching

program rather than disaggregated for each country. As there are eleven individual

African countries that comprise the TSCTP, an analysis of each country's work is not

feasible within the scope of this study, but those countries with an active USAID CDCS

in place were examined to determine if they tie in with the wider TSCTP.

P/CVE is a rapidly emerging field. The concept as we know today emerged on the

development policy scene as recently as 2010 and has grown rapidly in popularity since.

It is now discussed among policy elites including heads of state, policy analysts, and researchers around the world. Besides its growth in popularity, it also marks a significant change in foreign aid policy, in some ways more rooted in counterinsurgency and stabilization operations doctrine than traditional development aid. This is evinced in USAID's policy for preventing and countering violent extremism, which addressed both violent extremism and insurgency together in a single policy paper (USAID, 2011). However, the traditional definition of development assistance, as provided by the OECD, focused on economic growth rather than conflict and violent extremism. Official development assistance has generally been categorized into several categories: loans and grants, emergency, debt forgiveness, bilateral or multilateral, and technical co-operation (Keeley, 2012). Yet, none of these categories demonstrate that development assistance is designed to counter violent extremism, which is part of the definitional problem of P/CVE because P/CVE approaches may involve several of these categories depending on the nature of the drivers of instability. A question emerges as to whether P/CVE is something that should be addressed through development aid or military aid; or, is it something unique all together? This challenge is not lost on USAID and was openly acknowledged in its P/CVE policy document, stating:

> Clarifying USAID's role in the context of violent extremism and insurgency does not come without controversy. Some hold strong views on whether development agencies generally—and USAID in particular—should engage on these issues. Programming resources to respond to violent extremism and insurgency requires the Agency to assume greater institutional and operational risk (USAID, 2011, p.

ii)

This literature review informs these challenges and questions. P/CVE is not a settled policy issue, making the ongoing discussion even more important. Researchers know from past literature reviews that P/CVE books and articles have focused on a wide range of issues to address P/CVE challenges, such as economics, education, gender, and many other categories. P/CVE is broad and ranging, and the varied literature is rapidly expanding, and as such is a *wicked problem* that "has innumerable causes, is tough to describe, and doesn't have a right answer…They're the opposite of hard but ordinary problems, which people can solve in a finite time by applying standard techniques" (Camillus, 2008, para. 3). Given the wide-open concept of P/CVE, it is important to broadly explore its nature and consider an array of different voices contributing to the discussion. This is particularly relevant in these early years as researchers and policy makers seek to understand what works and what does not. What is important to understand in this literature review is that researchers, organizations, and policy makers are still trying to understand how to prevent and counter violent extremism. As described, this is a policy question that has created considerable struggle for years and that shows no sign of abatement.

This literature review was divided into two distinct sections. The first section deals with three theoretical frameworks considered relevant to this study of P/CVE policy and practice. This section, which reviews the key theoretic frameworks of PFT, PET, and PD, is shorter due to the dearth of literature applying these theories to P/CVE. The second section will deal with literature that pertains directly to P/CVE, such as strategic

concepts, case studies, various approaches, weaknesses and knowledge gaps, lessons

learned and challenges, the efficacy of P/CVE, and the evolution of P/CVE.

Literature Search Strategy

For this study, I primarily used two types of data platforms as part of this

literature review. Academic material, including the peer-reviewed journal articles, were

sourced from Walden University's electronic library database using key-word search

term protocols as described in detail within this chapter and Chapter 3. Walden

University's search engine is Thoreau, which links the researcher to EBSCO Discovery

Service. However, other search engines are also available within Walden University, such

as ProQuest Central. Thoreau was used predominantly for exploratory research while

ProQuest was used primarily to locate and download peer-reviewed journal articles.

The second primary data platform was USAID's open source online search

engine, known as the Development Exchange Clearinghouse (DEC) system. The DEC is

the agency's public record knowledge management repository. The DEC is akin to

traditional online research databases, and therefore the search terms were also applied

there. However, because the DEC is specific to USAID, the search protocol focuses on

the TSCTP and related P/CVE project implementation reports rather than strictly peer

reviewed journal articles. The DEC and EBSCO search terms used include *preventing*

and countering violent extremism, *countering violent extremism*, *P/CVE*, *preventing*

violent extremism, *PVE*, and *Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*. Further, policy

analysis documents were searched to provide background context to the study, such as

reports on changes to development policy, which may reinforce interviewees'

perspectives on the nature of changing P/CVE foreign assistance policy. In addition, Walden's dissertation search engine was used to identify graduate level research on P/CVE. This was done to provide additional scholarly material due to the lack of peer-reviewed journal articles exploring P/CVE and policy change over time. Walden's search engine for theses and dissertations is ScholarWorks. The same terms used to search USAID's DEC and Walden's EBSCO search engines were used in ScholarWorks to maintain consistency.

Theoretical Foundation

Theories of development assistance and how it fits into foreign policy date back over a century, with different policy making leaders having different goals regarding the use of development assistance as a policy tool (Phillips, 2003). Development assistance is relatively new to American statecraft but is now established sufficiently in the U.S. government that it is discussed in theoretical terms as part of the broader framework of foreign policy and foreign aid. Yet, theoretical discussions often trend toward the technical offerings of official foreign assistance, such as health and education improvements, or even broader discussions on economic or international development theory. Further, such discussions and studies are frequently framed in very broad and abstract ideological theories such as Marxism, neocolonialism, neo-imperialism, and capitalism (Pankaj, 2005).

That said, there are useful public policy theories that speak to the nature of P/CVE policy growth and evolution. Three such frameworks are PET, PFT, and PD. To date, I have found no literature using PET, PFT, or PD to analyze P/CVE. However, each of

these frameworks offer distinct explanatory lenses that should be useful in the examination of P/CVE. As such, it is important to explain how each framework provides explanatory value to this study.

First, I reference PET to provide a theoretical framework to help explain the rapid change in a specific aspect of policy, such as the perceived rapid emergence of P/CVE as part of foreign assistance policy. In this sense, it helps explain the temporal aspects of policy change as well as causative factors that led to rapid change. Second, PFT offers a theoretical framework on how policies can affect political decisions, such as agenda setting and how policy problems are defined (Sabatier & Wieble, 2014). Because P/CVE is an emergent policy, agenda setting may be an important issue for this study as P/CVE competes for attention and resources with other existing policy approaches. Third, PD may offer an explanation on why policies often continue in relative stasis, evolving incrementally due to institutional and historical constraints, even when superior alternatives might be identified and available (Pierson, 2004). Because P/CVE has evolved in certain ways, PD may prove valuable in explaining why it has evolved in the way in which it has. As such, it may help with the relationship between vested interests and P/CVE policy evolution. Through a multi-theoretical lens, an examination of P/CVE though PET, PFT, and PD has the potential of furthering the body of knowledge of this policy approach as part of the broader foreign assistance policy.

The lack of theoretical application using PFT, PET, and PD for P/CVE analysis is possibly the result of P/CVE having only recently emerged onto the foreign policy scene. This in and of itself gives credence to the PET framework, which emphasizes the

occurrence of rapid change brought on by some sort of shock or rupture to the system.

PET was selected because it addresses the nature of rapid change, and sudden emergence of new policies, such as what is now being observed in P/CVE policy evolution. For example, following September 11, 2001, there was a rapid growth in several policy concepts that eventually led to what is now referred to as P/CVE (Selim, 2016), but what is now called P/CVE has only been in existence for a few years. Over these recent years, policies and papers on P/CVE have burgeoned, yet it remains to be seen if it persists, as many also have expressed significant doubts about its value given the difficulty in implementation at the international level (Kopitzke, 2017).

PFT was selected because it speaks to how policies and politics change and affect one another over time, thus leading to changes to the respective policy. In that sense, it explains how policies beget policies. This is an important theory regarding P/CVE because it is a growing policy field, and the politics surrounding P/CVE appear to be having a major effect on the policies. As such, it is an impressionable policy field due to its rapid evolution and growing chorus of voices lending new perspectives and analysis.

PD was selected as a theoretical framework because it has the potential to offer explanations regarding the nature of P/CVE policy change. If during the study evidence comes to light that better alternative approaches to P/CVE exist, then this framework may help highlight that P/CVE is being affected by PD. In other words, it is arguable that P/CVE is controlled by inertia even if the proscribed approaches of P/CVE do not address the root causes driving violent extremism in a respective context. This framework should help inform whether P/CVE policy has developed at various levels based on historical

policy decisions or whether deliberate change has occurred independent of policy inertia. The PD theoretical framework helps shed light on the way in which higher level policies set by USAID Headquarters and that at the level of implementation (e.g., TSCTP) have aligned and reached equilibrium after changes at either level. If incongruence was to be found, then there would have been potential that this framework could offer relevant insight into the lack of coordination between policy levels.

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

The punctuated equilibrium theory serves as a potentially informative policy framework for policy fields that are experiencing rapid change. PET has been frequently used to examine a wide range of complex policy phenomena, such as changes related to various domestic policies and international conflicts, yet it has not been identified during this study as a theoretical framework used to explore public policy issues related to violent extremism.

Baumgartner, Jones, and Mortensen (2014) explained that PET seeks to examine why certain political processes rapidly depart from historical stasis and policy stability. Baumgartner and Jones (1991, 1993) observed that over time policymaking comprised of rapid change and then stasis and that American political institutions tended to exacerbate this phenomenon (as cited in Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen, 2014). Further, Cerna (2013) performed a review of numerous policy theory frameworks and included PET in the review. She described PET as a competition of ideas in which eventually one erupts out from the others. She wrote, "Many ideas are competing for attention but then something happens at some point. The process comes about from external events that

disrupt the political system, particularly the ones that are big enough to disrupt or punctuate its equilibrium" (p. 9). However, regarding P/CVE, the literature review did not uncover the PET framework within peer reviewed journals to explain the rapid onset and change in P/CVE policies relating to official development aid.

Among the most important explanations that PET brings to the table is the explanation why incrementalism is not a sufficiently complete characterization of all policy lifespans, including P/CVE. With traditional incrementalism or gradualism models such as PD, there is consistent uninterrupted growth over time as a respective policy slowly changes. But there is little to explain policies that burst onto the scene and then fade, some of which leave lasting change and even morph to become the new status quo. In contrast, the PET model shows that policies can emerge onto the scene, grab the attention of policymakers, show rapid growth, and then rapidly decline again (Goertz, 2003, p. 136). It remains a question how P/CVE fits into the PET theoretical model, but based on the literature review, it demonstrates some promise in explaining the phenomenon of rapid emergence and change.

As such, the PET policy framework helps shed light on the temporal aspects of P/CVE, which is rapid emergence and evolution over a short period of time. It is time and rapidity as the operative concepts in this theoretical framework. Further, this phenomenon cannot be fully explained by incrementalism or gradualism, as it emerged rapidly onto the field of public policy, potentially catalyzed by the long wars resulting from post-September 11th invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. As noted, P/CVE erupted onto the policy scene over a few short years ago and is experiencing rapid change by

agencies that have embraced it, including USAID, as highlighted above. Even when

considering the likelihood that P/CVE derived from the Global War on Terror, starting in

2001, in the grand scheme of American foreign policy and official development aid, it is

still a recent policy phenomenon, and this fact further reinforces the evidence of rapid

change. However, where PET does not apply is explaining what political policy factors

are driving the change. Such an explanation requires yet another policy framework for a

more complete explanation, one which addresses the topical and specific causative

factors rather than just the temporal nature of policy change.

Policy Feedback Theory

PFT is also an important policy theory framework for consideration in this study.

According to Beland (2010), PFT derives from historical institutionalism, emerging out

of the mid-1960s. He argues that scholarship at that time began examining the

phenomena of feedback from existing policies having effects upon political decision-

making. He then states that the theory began to develop significantly over the past 20

years and is quite prominent in political science and policy analysis. According to Beland

(2010) over the course of its existence, it has been used to explore many public policy

fields related to institutional change and political decision making.

PFT has potential value in examining P/CVE because it examines the nature of

how policies affect political decision. In other words, it posits a sort of information loop

in which existing policies inform or influence current and future political decisions. This

is an important theoretical perspective, because while PET discusses the potentiality of

policies rapidly shifting over time, it does not in enough detail focus on change from a

political interest aspect. For example, PET does not sufficiently focus on what specific

politically related interests caused the policy to emerge, change, or fade away. The PFT

framework, on the other hand, places a strong emphasis on the phenomenon of how

policies shape political dynamics, or how past policies influence other policies (Mettler &

Sorelle). PFT is also distinct from PD in that PD helps underscore how past processes

often tend toward self-reinforcement, and how once an entity begins down a path, it

becomes increasingly difficult to change paths (Pierson, 2004, p.10). That said, PD

effects may or may not lead to new political dynamics, which PFT helps explain. The

intrinsic value in PFT is that it provides theoretical explanations for change as it relates to

the broad concepts of policies effecting politics, thus offering a broader theoretical

aperture than PET and PD. In turn, this can lend theoretical veracity for undertaking root-

cause analysis in determining the nature and cause of policy feedback effects, particularly

as it relates to political decision making.

It may not be enough to conclude that one policy has affected other policies, but

rather, it may also be equally important to understand more specifically why and how

policy changes have shaped policymakers' decisions, or even how they led to expected or

unforeseen secondary policy feedback effects. As such, the feedback effects should be

fully explored, and this framework assists in that undertaking. However, to date, there

have been no identified peer-reviewed papers that examine PFT as it pertains to P/CVE.

The decision to use this framework is based on the notion that the evolution of

P/CVE policy fits into the theoretical framework and helps explain the changes in P/CVE

policy. It is expected that this study will contribute to the PFT literature by adding a new

field of application and perspective, which is that of P/CVE and official development

assistance.

Path Dependence Theory

Yet another theoretical framework with the potential to help explore the evolution

of USAID's P/CVE policy is that of path dependence theory (PD). PD offers an

important theoretical perspective on the way in which policies lead to other types of

policies which can in part be attributed to institutional and historical interests that grow

and solidify around existing policies. It derives from the historical institutionalist

approach and argues a relatively straight forward concept that historical precedent affects

future decisions, and thus future events. Torfing (2009) summarized path dependence as a

"situation where the present policy choice is constrained or shaped by institutional paths

that result from choices made in the past" (p. 71). David (2007), a leading scholar on path

dependence theory, argued that path dependence is an important theoretical framework

for social science, particularly given its broad application and scope while still offering

explanatory power. He stated that path dependence "is very general in its scope, referring

equally to developmental sequences (whether in evolutionary biology or physics) and

social dynamics (involving social interactions among economic or political agents) that

are characterized by positive feedbacks and self-reinforcing dynamics" (p. 92). Given this

broad spectrum of applicability, PD is expected to provide some degree of explanatory

facilitation for an examination of USAID's P/CVE policy evolution.

As such, path dependence is not merely rooted in the simplistic approach of

historical determinism, but rather offers a lens to explore the more complex causal

relationships where inertia and relationships play a critical role in the path individuals and institutions take, or opt not to take (Allen, 2010). PD is an important explanatory framework for USAID's P/CVE related policies because it facilitates insight into the way in which previous policy decisions continue to affect current and future policy decisions. This is particularly relevant today as P/CVE and its recent predecessor policies have undergone definitional and policy changes.

While path dependence theory offers an important theoretical approach to public policy, no articles were located that examined USAID P/CVE policy and path dependence. However, one article was discovered that used path dependence theory to examine and explain the nature of violent extremism and individual choice. Because violent extremism has a conceptual relationship with P/CVE, it offers some insight into the potential that PD offers in exploring P/CVE policy evolution. Jaskowski, Wilson, and Lazareno (2017) used path dependence theory to examine the nature and causes of individuals and organizations turning toward or away from violence. Their analysis of violent extremism using a path dependence framework suggests that there is a critical juncture in which individuals choose to embrace a life of violence, often a long-term and even permanent decision due to increasingly entrenched personal and economic interests.

Of additional interest, Jaskowski, Wilson, and Lazareno went on to argue other important points regarding violent extremism and path dependence. They argued that existing research on path dependence and violence suggests that the choice to embrace or eschew violent extremism is similar to a career choice whereby the organization an individual chooses to join plays a significant role in the path an individual chooses,

particularly in their formative years. As such, these arguments presented by Jaskowski, Wilson, and Lazareno provided significant evidence that path dependence offers important explanatory power in the field of P/CVE and how P/CVE policies have the potential, if designed properly, to identify and address some root causes of violent extremism. Such findings suggest that PD offers value in that it has the potential to help demonstrate the method that past decisions affect current and future policy decisions. A sophisticated understanding of the nature of how USAID's P/CVE policies have evolved based on historical decisions has the potential to assist agency policy makers develop effective P/CVE policies.

Conceptual Framework

The scope of this literature review is limited by the focus of the research questions and the overall objective of the study. The first limitation is that this study focuses only on P/CVE and will not look deeply at counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, stabilization, or other related foreign policy issues. However, this-chapter will briefly discuss the relationship those distinct fields have with P/CVE. Another limitation is that this study will focus on U.S. policies related for P/CVE foreign assistance policy. USAID is the primary agency for this study, and therefore USAID's policies are of primary importance to the study, but other policies were addressed when they directly affect USAID policy on P/CVE. Of note, the study will also not address domestic P/CVE policy, such as that dealing with U.S. local or federal law enforcement, nor will it examine domestic policies of foreign countries, such as P/CVE policies by TSCTP countries. The reasons for these limitations are because the study serves as analysis on the topic of P/CVE as part of the

broader portfolio of official development assistance (ODA) and not domestic U.S. policy

which is an entirely different set of strategies focused on U.S. law enforcement entities on

the home front.

Domestic strategies, such as national and local strategies, are primarily a function

of the U.S. homeland security apparatus, such as national law enforcement, community

policing, security development, or national and international intelligence. With limited

exception, these are not typically within the realm of foreign aid organizations, including

USAID, and thus generally have little to do with foreign assistance development aid. In

fact, GAO reported that USAID provides less than 3% of police assistance in foreign

countries, while the DoD and the DoS account for approximately 97% of such aid (GAO,

2012, p. 8). This is further reinforced by the definition of official development assistance,

as provided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016), which provided a clear

definition of what is and is not included as part of official development aid. It stated,

> Official development assistance (ODA) is defined as government aid designed to
>
> promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans
>
> and credits for military purposes are excluded. Aid may be provided bilaterally,
>
> from donor to recipient, or channeled through a multilateral development agency
>
> such as the United Nations or the World Bank (para. 2)

Thus, the distinction between official development assistance and U.S. foreign aid

is distinct. By legal definition, U.S. foreign aid encompasses all forms of aid given to a

foreign country. U.S. law specifies this stating that foreign aid includes:

any tangible or intangible item provided by the United States Government

[including "by means of gift, loan, sale, credit, or guaranty"] to a foreign country

or international organization under this or any other Act, including but not limited

to any training, service, or technical advice, any item of real, personal, or mixed

property, any agricultural commodity, United States dollars, and any currencies of

any foreign country which are owned by the United States Government.... (As

cited in Tarnoff & Lawson, 2016, p. 1)

This definition illustrates that U.S. foreign aid is far broader in terms of project scope and

strategic objectives than U.S. official development assistance. The two should not be

conflated for the purposes of this study. Therefore, the parameters of this study were

guided by the definition of U.S. official development assistance and not the far broader

concept of U.S. foreign aid.

The second limitation to this literature review is a focus on traditional

international development concepts, such as those implemented by USAID, rather than

including studies related to policing and security forces. The reason for this omission is

because policing and security force capacity building (e.g., enhancement of

counterterrorism capabilities) are often sovereign nation functions, or in partnership with

other countries' security forces, and thus a distinct body of P/CVE literature has emerged

over time, but which has very little in common with traditional international

development. This subgroup of literature is beyond the scope of this study and therefore

will not be analyzed. As previously mentioned, this is due in part to the definitional

limitations of official foreign assistance, as provided by the OECD, which states that

official development assistance focuses on economic development rather than security

aid. Further, while some concepts may be similar, such as discussions on the need for

stable government, security aid is a distinct specialization that focused heavily on

military and police tactics to defeat terrorists or militant insurgents.

Likewise, official development assistance as it relates to P/CVE is also a distinct

specialization, offering expertise in the complex stabilization and development field that

security force organizations traditionally are not designed to deal with, nor have the

mission statement to do so. When security assistance is provided as foreign aid, such

activities are usually done through military and security forces. As discussed, such

security assistance does not fall within the auspices of official development assistance,

even if it does help assist the recipient country develop and become more stable. That

effect is often sought in various forms of foreign aid, whether it is security aid or

development aid, yet that result does not by definition conflate the various types of aid, as

the means used to provide foreign aid are frequently independent of the results of that aid.

In other words, security aid may lead to development, but that result does not classify it

as official development assistance. Likewise, development assistance may lead to

enhanced national security for a recipient country, but that does not make that foreign aid

formal security assistance.

However, aid types can be combined when authorized, such as whole of

government approaches, "emphasizing the urgent need for cooperation between actors

from different policy domains—foreign affairs, security, diplomacy, development

cooperation, etc." (Olsen, 2013, p. 1829). In fact, P/CVE implementation is often through

whole of government approaches, such as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

program which USAID, DOS, and the DOD jointly participate in. Finally, in addition to

definitional limitations, there are also statutory limitations on USAID's involvement in

security sector reform in foreign countries (McFate, 2008, p. 6). Therefore, because of the

complexity of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, it is important to define the

nature of the aid that comprises this study, which is official development assistance

administered by USAID.

The third constraint is that of timeframe limitations. Traditional standards of

academic literature reviews are constrained to five years, thus much of the material in this

study will fall within this five-year window. Yet, P/CVE is a rapidly evolving field, and

only recently emerged in the field of public and foreign policy, emerging in its earliest

incarnation around the period of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In rapid

succession, this has given rise to the (Global) War on Terror, represented by

predominantly military led operations, including, Operation Enduring Freedom

(Afghanistan, Africa, Philippines); Operation Iraqi Freedom; Operation New Dawn

(Iraq); Operation Inherent Resolve (Iraq, Syria); and myriad smaller engagements around

the globe. Eventually, it became evident that military-centric solutions could not produce

victory alone in those wars, as then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral

Michael Mullen, famously stated, "We cannot kill our way to victory" (CNN, 2008, para.

5). As such, non-military centric thinking began to take greater hold in the interagency

community, allowing agencies such as USAID and the DOS to play a broader role in

P/CVE related engagements around the world. This had the added effect of new and

expanded policy documents coming to fruition. Many of these key policy documents are

central to this study. However, some of these documents emerged prior to the traditional

five-year academic norm for inclusion but will nevertheless require analysis due to its

significance and the need to understand the evolution of these respective policies.

In late 2006, the DoD released a new counterinsurgency manual, reflecting a new

way of military thinking, and which served as an early seed of P/CVE, as it emphasized

the need to work with communities rather than see the population as a problem or

adversary. As such, it formalized soft power concepts in counterinsurgency environments

(Department of the Army, 2006). In turn, this brought to bear softer approaches in

conflict environments (e.g., projects seeking better governance, education, health, job

skills and employment, to name a few), all in support of the effort to defeat violent

extremism. Only a few short years later, amid wars, USAID produced its first policy

document on mitigating violent extremism, an explanation on how USAID can contribute

to this national security driven effort (USAID, 2011). Given this history and the rapid yet

recent evolution, case study fieldwork for this study looks back as far as 2005, the time in

which the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Initiative (TSCTP) was launched

by the U.S. government with USAID's participation. Since then, USAID has sought to

offer its development and stabilization tools and perspectives to the wider effort. Given

this, particularly relevant literature review material will date prior to the traditional five-

year window. This is necessary to providing scholarly analysis and context when

describing that critical period when the TSCTP was launched.

Key P/CVE Concepts Review

A Need for Better Studies

To begin, it is noteworthy that many scholars have concluded that there are two systemic limitations that currently undermine the current body of knowledge that cover the field of preventing and countering violent extremism. Those two challenges are definition ambiguity and a lack of empirical studies. The first challenge, and perhaps the most challenging, is that there is no universally agreed upon definition of preventing and countering violent extremism, which in turn may affect varying levels of strategy, although it is commonly referred to as a distinct foreign policy approach. This is problematic for several reasons. First, it hinders the ability to develop a grounded body of literature. Secondly, it undermines precision of data collection and analysis, sometimes producing ambiguous results. Third, it creates serious challenges in informing policy questions. One study summarized the problem stating that it is not surprising that there is so much definitional ambiguity as it has devolved into a catch-all category that lacks the necessary precision and focus (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle, & Zammit, 2016). Therefore, it is important to capture these challenges and limitations within current P/CVE policies both at the agency and regional levels. As noted, practitioners and academics have clearly identified the shortcomings, but it remains to be seen if the policy community can or will address this systemic level challenge.

As of June 2018, two noteworthy systematic literature reviews of existing P/CVE literature have been conducted. Both reviews resulted in findings that suggest significant gaps in the literature, as well as methodological shortcomings. It is also a noteworthy

observation that both critiques cite an overall lack of empirical research and studies using quantitative methodology, although in the second article Zurcher (2017) placed much greater emphasis on quantitative approaches and focus his critique on only quantitative studies with experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

A widely cited review, undertaken by Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, and Caluya (2011), pointed out several of the most salient shortcomings frequently mentioned throughout the literature on the topic. The authors noted the lack of primary source material, a shortage of experienced researchers in the field, insufficient fieldwork by the authors, a reliance on limited analytical and research methodologies, and insufficient number of critiques of existing P/CVE literature. Similarly, Zurcher (2017) cited several information gaps and flaws within the P/CVE related body of literature including a very small evidence base, a limited understanding of causality, and the inability to answer basic questions relating to aid effectiveness such as the effectiveness of stabilization funding and other forms of development assistance. After analyzing 19 quantitative studies taken from 7669 screened abstracts, they concluded that aid in conflict zones increases conflict and that when aid is effective it is conditional, requiring a relatively stable local area.

Overall, these two systematic reviews of existing literature support the notion that there have been too few academic studies on P/CVE. The lack of high quality, methodological, and academically rigorous analyses creates problems for policy makers and program implementers in the field. The basic calculus is that poor policy creates poor interventions, and poor interventions create poor results. Perhaps former congressman

Lee H. Hamilton stated it best when he argued, "Foreign aid is neither a failure nor a panacea. It is, instead, an important tool of American policy that can serve the interests of the United States and the world if wisely administered" (as cited in Hicks, 2011, p. 238). While this is his opinion on the value of foreign aid, he mentions two important concepts regarding foreign aid policy: it is a tool, and it must be wisely administered. At its root, sound policy guides development assistance as an effective tool and is necessary for its effective administration.

Does P/CVE Work?

Related to the issue of a lack of empirical and methodological studies for the field of P/CVE, the question of P/CVE effectiveness is also of interest to scholars and practitioners. There are two scholarly studies of note that approach this question, one published in 2014 and the other in 2015. The 2015 approaches the question from a broader comprehensive perspective and the study from 2014 uses a case study method to explore the practical aspects of P/CVE. Taken together, these studies combine to provide the strategic and the tactical perspective, and thus a more complete picture of P/CVE effectiveness.

Looking first at the more comprehensive study by Romaniuk (2015), the author sought to accomplish several tasks, and discussed the limitations and its rapid growth as a distinct field. He began by acknowledging the oft cited problem of P/CVE lacking a clear unified definition. To highlight the problem, he referred to a well-known U.S. Institute of Peace article that clarified the magnitude of the definitional problem, arguing that it has evolved into little more than a catchall category that lacks the necessary focus and

precision to make it usefully distinct from other related fields in international

development (cited in Heydemann, 2014, p. 1). In attempt to remedy this problem, he

provided a type of definitional analysis of P/CVE, arguing the necessity to regularize a

common understanding of P/CVE to improve programmatic outcomes and better

understand best practices for these interventions (Romaniuk, 2015, p. 3). Doing this, he

described common themes that have been helpful in better understand a workable

definition of P/CVE, such as non-coercive measures, persuasion, de-radicalization, soft

power, and the like.

      Equally important, Romaniuk discussed the broad policy aspects of P/CVE,

seizing on Neuman's (2011) argument that P/CVE related approaches are more thematic

rather than being stand-alone policies given they are potentially unlimited to meet a broad

range of challenges (p. 7). Romaniuk (2015) argued that P/CVE policy interventions

comprise four major policy components, which serve as a sort of policy cycle. These

components include assessments (understanding the problem), policy development

(strategy of intervention), implementation (the actual work), and evaluation

(understanding what did and did not work; p. 11). These scholars pointed out the many

challenges that have led to a lack of a clear definition of P/CVE policies. They pointed

out that P/CVE is too broad to allow the flexibility to address causative factors while also

needing to be coordinated with other policy components in a broader policy cycle. Such

factors create complexity in attempting to distinctly define P/CVE as it inherently needs

to be linked to other discrete technical approaches and other broader development

policies.

Next, looking at the case study authored by Aldrich (2014), several important themes emerged. Aldrich approached P/CVE through an examination of the U.S.'s multi-agency program, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). More specifically, the author focused most of his analysis on USAID's contribution to the TSCTP, the Peace Through Development program. To undertake this study, he focused on Mali and used a quasi-experimental paired-comparison approach based on the responses of 200 respondents from two different towns, one of which was a recipient community for USAID's intervention efforts. The results illuminated that the soft-power approach had some positive effects of deradicalization and concluded that there was strong evidence that a town sponsored by five years of programs had different behavior and cognitive outcomes than their neighbor that had received no support (Aldrich, 2014, 541). As such, Aldrich was able to show empirically that U.S. P/CVE related interventions had a measurable impact on the target population of the programs.

Taken together, these two articles shed light on important themes as it pertains to the current understanding of P/CVE. First, they show that P/CVE is very much a policy theme more than just an intervention. In a sense, there is a full policy and program cycle to P/CVE interventions. P/CVE interventions are strategic and tactical, meaning they are conceptually high level as well as implemented on the ground, and therefore the strategy and the implementation should be logically linked. Secondly, these articles also show that P/CVE interventions, when intelligently designed, can achieve positive effects.

Development Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool

One of the most frequently discussed topics on development aid is its specific role

in foreign policy. While the topic of this paper is P/CVE, it is understood that the

policies, purposes, and desired effects of development aid reach well beyond the limited

topic of P/CVE. In short, the topic of development aid as foreign policy is a vast and

ever-growing field of study. As the literature demonstrates, development aid and its role

in P/CVE and conflict environments, is an increasingly relevant field of study. Many

recent P/CVE related articles, particularly post-9/11 literature, tend to focus on the

efficacy of development aid in countering terrorism and insurgency. However, the topic

has been addressed for decades. Some of the material speaks to the topic in the abstract,

while others are more specific to development aid policy as it pertains to P/CVE related

issues.

When it comes to development aid policy, academic articles tend to fall into two

major themes of 1) donor interests, and 2) recipient needs (McKinlay & Little, 1977, p.

1). As is discussed in this section, much of the literature for P/CVE falls within the

former category, which is to say, P/CVE related assistance often ties to the donor state

interests, such as fighting terrorism abroad before it spreads to the donor country, or the

instability increases strategic risks to an allied country. Bermeo (2016) referred to this

policy approach as targeted development used to decrease the risk of spillover and that

the recipient country's shortcomings are used as a guide for the development of the aid

package (p.1). Articles that exist before and after September 11th demonstrated that these

categories largely remain the same. For example, Alesina and Dollar (2000) concluded

that the way in which aid is decided is determined equally by political and strategic

considerations, as well as the financial and performance aspects of the recipients. What

these three studies do reveal is that P/CVE related development aid does not seem to differ in purpose from other forms of development aid. However, as is discussed below, the context of the aid can be unique and far more urgent than other forms of development aid. This is an important point for policy makers and practitioners because it partially explains why defining P/CVE has been challenging. The broad policy purpose of P/CVE (e.g., to achieve the interests of the donor country), and the tools to implement and achieve desired policy outcomes (e.g., programs for education, governance, gender issues, etc.), are often not unique, yet the context and urgency may be.

Much of the post-September 11th literature reiterates the notion that development aid has multiple purposes. Yet, terrorism emerges as a specific topic in numerous articles, several of which are reviewed in this chapter. Further, the literature also shifts heavily to discussing development aid in terms of pursuing foreign policy goals rather than the primary objective to meet the humanitarian needs of the recipient country. The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics (Apodaca, 2017) even defined foreign aid by reinforcing the focus on pursuing foreign policy goals,

> Although foreign aid serves several purposes and not least among them the wish to increase human welfare, the primary reason for aid allocations or aid restrictions is to pursue foreign policy goals. Strategic and commercial interests of donor countries are the driving force behind many aid programs. (p. 1)

However, many of these policy discussions focus on the broader question of why to undertake development aid, but in the context of countering violent extremism, such as terrorism, few studies concretely identify exactly how to best implement the policy of

P/CVE development aid. This is largely because the contexts involving P/CVE initiatives are heterogeneous, making it difficult to draw generalities from the varied contexts involving P/CVE. As Kisangani and Pickering (2015) wrote in their article,

> We find that ODA [official development aid] flows from traditional donors are complex, most likely because of substantial donor heterogeneity. Such heterogeneity has produced contradictory or at least inconsistent findings on many of the central variables used to understand aid allocation in the literature…Consistent with much of the aid literature, a good deal of nuance rests behind these findings. (pp. 225-226)

Thus, the existing literature suggests much more work is required before a more complete understanding of P/CVE related development aid is achieved. This emerging knowledge directly affects policy making and policy implementation. The vast array of opinions suggests that many factors and contexts should be considered if informed policy decisions are to be made. Many of these opinions and conclusions are reviewed in this chapter.

Understanding the Causative Factors of Violent Extremism

Important studies within the existing body of P/CVE literature seeks to provide analysis on the causative factors of violent extremism. However, like P/CVE itself, those explanatory causes are broad, ranging widely on issues like gender, youth, economics, psychology, religion, politics, and culture. Like the topic above exploring the efficacy of P/CVE approaches, this section is also well illustrated by two studies, one in which approaches this broad set of root causes from a comprehensive perspective, while another

explores the problem using a narrower case study approach.

Looking first at the comprehensive report by Neumann (2005), this study sought to explore a broad range of potential root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. The report summarizes the perspectives of several well-regarded scholars that have contributed to the field but specialize in specific sub-categories that contribute to extremism, including psychology, political explanations, economic factors, religion, and culture (p. 4). In addition to providing a summary overview of each category, this report also addressed the policy implications and offers policy suggestions. This helps the reader understand the core issues for each component and helps policy makers and implementers produce informed policy and interventions. Further, the report provides a list of contributors to each section, all of whom are respected scholars and practitioners in their fields, and this in turn helps connect others for future and ongoing work.

As the report above demonstrated, there are many root causes of violent extremism and terrorism. And each factor that facilitates violent extremism must be understood through thorough scholarly study. While there are myriad studies that address terrorism and various causative factors, very few speak specifically to P/CVE. However, the study by Finn, Momani, Opatowski, and Opondo (2016) explored the issue of youth and countering violent extremism. This study aims to address what the authors found to be a gap in the current body of literature regarding Kenyan youth leaders and their perception of P/CVE policies (p. 164). Indeed, during the research for this literature review, there was no article identified that addressed this issue, and thus this serves as an important P/CVE case study helping to bring to light issues pertaining to youth and

P/CVE policies in Africa. This report found that Kenyan youth saw value in soft-power approaches such as community-based approaches and did not favor systematic profiling of individuals based on religious preference (p. 219).

In sum, these two articles help shed light on the many of the factors and root causes of violent extremism. There are comprehensive studies that seek to amalgamate these many factors into single studies and reports. Such reports help to provoke thought among the policymaking and practitioner communities, broadly illustrating the wide-range of issues regarding P/CVE and help explore policy tools and approaches when seeking to prevent, respond to, or counter violent extremism. In addition, there are equally important specialized studies that seek to explore more deeply specific factors that contribute to violent extremism, such as in the above case study, the perception of P/CVE policies as it pertains to youth leaders in Kenya. Of course, many more studies are necessary to understand the multitude of other root causes more fully and how these many factors intertwine to produce or mitigate violent extremism in complex societies. In short, there are numerous gaps in the current body of literature regarding violent extremism and the efforts to counter such extremism. Indeed, the field is nascent and rapidly growing.

U.S. Strategy and the Need for Change

There are numerous articles available on this topic, yet only a few scholarly studies have been published in recent years that at least loosely consider P/CVE as part of that strategy. Within the existing P/CVE body of literature, there have been several critical pieces focused on the American strategy and approach to countering extremism.

Many of these critical analyses approached the issue from a soft versus hard power

perspective. In that sense, many expressed uneasiness about America's overreliance upon

militaristic responses, and the lack of soft power responses, such as diplomacy and non-

military foreign assistance, such as economic aid. The three scholarly articles that

comprise this section present a broad perspective often reflected among prominent

scholars and practitioners in the field of P/CVE. These articles include the studies by

Aldrich (2012), Aysha (2005), and Cordesman (2006).

Aysha (2005) discussed the issue of American strategy from the perspective of the

lack of American soft power, such as diplomacy and foreign aid, in relation to its over

reliance upon hard power, such as military might. She argued that there is a deep

imbalance in global power, which has created hostility to America, which it has failed to

effectively address, or even seeming desires to try to address. She stated, "The declining

status of the public diplomacy budget by itself seems to indicate that the United States'

leaders have resigned themselves to the belief that military power alone can guard them

against the long-term consequences of anti-Americanism" (p. 207). She believed that this

approach is effectively ushering in what former U.S. diplomat, John Brown, described in

his resignation letter as "a century of anti-Americanism" (as cited in Aysha, 2005, p.

207).

To illustrate the complex interplay of many issues when it comes to global power

and influence, and America's strategy, she described the world as a three-dimensional

chess board; with one layer being military power, another economic power, and the last

being information, all of which must be played simultaneously and affecting one another

(p. 200). She went on to state that all of this affects what she described as America's counterproductive approach to fighting terrorism. She explained that the imbalance of power, particularly military hegemony, has led to American hubris in international affairs, forgoing soft power in favor of unilateralism and military aggression (p. 204). In turn, this builds further resentment and negative public perception, which aids terrorist organizations in their cause (p. 205).

Contrasting Aysha's (2005) point that extremism flourishes because of America's excessive focus on hard-power approaches, and the global imbalance of power creating resentment, Cordesman (2006) had a much narrower notion of what creates violent extremism. Like Aysha (2005) he faulted the American policy of excessive reliance on military might to mitigate violent extremism, and he explained that in doing so, it creates a worsening situation (p. 102). However, his perspective deviated from Aysha's (2005) argument in that he saw the only way to victory in countering violent extremism is for indigenous elites (e.g., religious, and social leaders) to lead reforms. On this issue he stated,

> The real "war on terrorism" can only be won if the religious, political and intellectual leaders of Islamic countries and communities actively confront and fight neo-Salafi Sunni Islamist extremism at the religious and ideological level. It will be lost if such leaders stand aside, take half measures, or compromise with enemies that seek to destroy them and what they believe in (p. 106).

As such, Cordesman's (2006) focus was squarely on the need for local religious elites to take control of their own problems, and thus avoid the need for American direct

intervention. As he argued, direct U.S. intervention should be a last resort, stating "The West must join in this struggle, but its role should be to help Islamic nations develop the military and security capabilities they really need and intervene only as allies when absolutely necessary" (p. 108). In sum, he argued that aid to countries should be oriented toward the robust role of internal actors.

In part, this approach was implemented approximately one year after the article was written, with America's agreement in 2007 to withdraw from Iraq by 2011. It is therefore a useful study in comparing the policy proposal and its implementation so close together, something not frequently observed in the field of preventing and countering violent extremism, which is characterized by wide ranging and strategic observations and recommendations that are not easily implemented. The somewhat tactical nature of Cordesman's (2006) approach makes actionability more feasible for policy makers and practitioners working on regional policy. However, its narrow focus on Salafism being the root cause of violent extremism, makes its regional applicability narrow rather than global, because as previously discussed, scholars now widely agree that there are numerous causes for violent extremism, religion being only one such cause or merely a sub-factor tied to other more salient conditions. Neumann (2011) addressed this issue directly stating, "Most experts agree that there isn't a simple formula or template that would explain how people radicalize. Each case is different, and each individual's pathway needs to be examined on its own merits" (p. 15). Therefore, a more comprehensive framework by Cordesman would be necessary if seeking broader solutions that are more applicable beyond mere religious factors.

Aldrich (2012) moved the discussion into the more modern framework of P/CVE thinking. By 2012, P/CVE had become a more sophisticated field in and of itself, moving beyond simply being soft approaches to terrorism responses, or other extraneous concepts tied to military or development theories. Aldrich (2012) was among the earlier scholars to distill these new P/CVE concepts and thus help P/CVE stand on its own with its own ideas on appropriate responses to violent extremism. For example, the concept of "push and pull factors" took shape, a result of USAID's work with various scholars and practitioners (p. 48). Aldrich (2012) argued that empirical analysis should drive interventions, stating that "Social science-based CVE policy creates stability and security by building [community] resilience to VEO [violent extremist organizations] recruitment and narratives in populations around the world" (p. 49). In this sense, Aldrich (2012) encouraged the policy community to put away pre-conceived notions about what works in mitigation of violent extremism, and instead move toward systematic understanding of these complex environments before creating policy approaches and designing intervention programs. As such, it was a learning approach toward P/CVE, and thus in-line with modern USAID programmatic approaches.

The Whole of Government Approach

Like the concept of P/CVE, the "whole of government" approach to fragile and unstable countries has been a growing theme over the past decade. Due to the significance of the whole of government concept upon P/CVE, including its intellectual underpinnings of this concept upon P/CVE, it is necessary to describe what it is prior to reviewing the existing literature as it pertains to P/CVE. The whole of government

thinking appears to have served in part as a sort of conceptual foundation for modern

counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and P/CVE, illustrated by integrated agency policy

approaches that are discussed below. Of course, whole of government approach is not

new, having existed in Vietnam as part of the interagency counterinsurgency programs

(e.g., CORDS). Yet, since September 11, 2001, the whole of government approach to

fragile states has grown significantly in policy importance (OECD, 2006).

The growing interconnection between government agencies and preventing and

countering violent extremism, terrorism, and insurgencies rose to the formal policy

forefront in 2009 with the joint Defense, DOS, and USAID signed publication of the U.S.

Government Counterinsurgency Guide (U.S. Department of State, 2009). This document

was an attempt to align efforts of these agencies to achieve better effects in

counterinsurgency environments, then including Iraq and Afghanistan. As Cohen (2009)

stated, this interagency approach to counterinsurgency was "the first of its kind in almost

half a century" (as cited in U.S. Department of State, p. 4), and thus forged a new policy

approach in the direction of whole of government approaches.

This interagency policy, and the 2006 U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Manual (FM

3-24), which was adopted and referenced across the interagency (e.g., USAID and the

DOS in the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR)), was

important in providing policy definitions and guidance regarding violent extremism and

eschewing sole reliance upon the military force solution (i.e., hard power policy

solutions). These policies also mandated coordination with other government

stakeholders, including USAID. FM 3-24 states, "Commanders' situational awareness

includes being familiar with other U.S. Government organizations participating in the COIN [counterinsurgency] effort and aware of their capabilities" (p. 2-6). This manual thus cemented the whole-of-government interagency approach to dealing with complex violent extremism, beginning first with counterinsurgency. The 2009 DOS Counterinsurgency Guide reiterated many of these concepts but moved the discussion more toward civilian agency approaches and capabilities. Two years later, USAID issued its own policy document, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency" (2011), moving USAID from focusing on insurgencies to also formally addressing the agency's role in addressing violent extremism.

The Securitization of Development Aid

A frequent topic among scholars and practitioners of P/CVE is the issue of the securitization of aid, particularly in conflict-affected countries. The issue of the securitization of aid has been discussed and analyzed through a historical lens for decades, particularly as it pertains to the Vietnam War, the Pacification programs of that era, and their similarities with recent military operations and foreign aid programs (Nazum, 2010). The topic has reemerged as an important issue due to the post-September 11th era of counterinsurgency and direct military intervention by the United States in various countries and the overlapping use of development aid to contribute to U.S. intervention goals (Spear, 2016). This topic is of importance to the policy evolution of P/CVE, as scholars and senior officials have said that P/CVE often sits at the nexus of security and development (As cited in Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2018, para. 2).

Coronado (2005) examined an earlier period in 2005, which was marked by what has become known as the Bush Doctrine, which he described in part as "US unipolarity based on its irrefutable military ability" (p. 323). This was an important period in American foreign policy in that it has had significant and lasting effect on foreign policy over the past decade. The article was published only four years after the United States' invasion of Afghanistan and two years after its invasion of Iraq, and this period places it during intense insurgency warfare between the United States and various groups in the Middle East and Central Asia. The core focus of the article is an analysis of America's purported emphasis on unilateral "hard power" rather than "soft power," as defined by Joe Nye (p. 333). He argued that the significance of this shift is primarily about changing the rules that have dominated foreign policy over decades, and that this will have worldwide ramifications. Coronado (2005) argued that as the world's most powerful nation, the U.S. changed the rules of foreign policy, departing from international norms established by such multilateral institutions as the League of Nations (1919) and the United Nations (1944), but the Bush Doctrine redefined its policy at odds with these principles. In this, he laid out his argument that U.S. foreign policy was now increasingly oriented toward military force and unilateralism and this would invariably have far reaching effects.

Coronado (2005) then went on to explain how this policy had secondary effects resulting from the War on Terror, including what he deemed coercion of other countries by conditional development and security aid, and by using diplomats as agents of intervention (p.328). In short, he saw America's policy as weaponizing diplomacy and

aid, alongside military interventions, semi-veiled under the auspices of the War on Terror. As a now historical piece, this article offers important analysis in that it illustrates some of the early thinking about America's War on Terror and helps offer a sort of analytical baseline evaluation in its evolution, and as such, helps determine if analysis has also shifted focus along with the P/CVE policies.

Miles (2012) offered a more recent scholarly analysis of the role of development aid in countering terrorism. This article is perhaps among the most directly applicable to the topic at USAID's P/CVE policies and operations in that it discusses several of the agency's early P/CVE documents and explains several of the early papers that laid the foundation of USAID's early P/CVE work, including the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program, USAID's oldest P/CVE program. Some of these documents include the "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism" (Denoeux, 2009), and "Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming" (Denoeux, 2009). Being current and relevant agency P/CVE policy documents, these papers were more fully explored in the field work.

In his article, Miles (2012) argued that at that time there was unprecedented overlap between development and security aid throughout the world (p. 28). Yet, Miles (2012) clarified that this is not unprecedented nor surprising, citing the development scholar Carol Lancaster, who argued that even at its inception development aid did not exist to eradicate poverty, but rather it was created to serve as a diplomatic tool to build alliances (p. 28). He argued that foreign aid was originally developed as a counter-communism device that has undergone severe "mission creep" and was institutionalized

as foreign policy (p. 28). He concluded that U.S. work in Africa, such as that as part of the TSCTP, presents difficult challenges. For example, USAID continued to play a smaller relative role in development aid, during increasing complexity, and then contending with fifteen other U.S. agencies also undertaking aid work. However, Miles also agreed that there is a risk of negative perceptions by locals witnessing soldiers distributing aid during military operations, which could undermine benefits, but that this is a reality until funding priorities change.

Together, these articles reflect what the authors perceived as a new foreign policy reality that results from national strategy prioritizing military approaches, and thus resources being heavily oriented toward military operations even in dealings with soft diplomacy and humanitarian aid.

Conclusion

What can be understood in this literature review is that there are challenges in easily defining the topic from the beginning. As such, this literature review sought to capture the wide number of topics that touch upon P/CVE pertaining to official development assistance. Perhaps the most important point is the explanation of its rapid emergence on the foreign policy scene. Even its predecessor policy, the Global War on Terror, initially burst onto the scene, but with maturation faded away and gave rise to P/CVE. The nearest existing policy body, that of counterinsurgency, has also experienced a remarkable recent resurgence, although far older and more mature than P/CVE policies. One can also argue that P/CVE responses are adaptations of containment-era stabilization and irregular conflict policies during the Cold War era. The point here is that as with

many policies, there is no perfectly defined line demarking one policy practice from the other as it is quite likely that analysis of one policy provides feedback to successor policies. It is important to understand the nature of such feedback and the contributing factors of rapidly evolving policy evolution.

Given these examples explored in the literature, it is unclear how P/CVE will fare over time. While it has experienced remarkable agency level support, there are also critics that question the value of P/CVE, arguing that it is too poorly defined and impractical to properly implement. Regardless, the three theoretical frameworks discussed in this literature review will provide insight into the nature of this change. Looking toward the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, this paper will explore the rapid rise of P/CVE development aid policies. Path dependence will examine the nature of evolution through the lens of historical and institutional constraints and vested interests. It will explore the nature of how historical decisions continue to affect policy change or stasis well into the future. Finally, looking through the lens of Policy Feedback Theory, the study will shed light on the nature of how feedback affects P/CVE policy evolution, illustrating the way in which this policy is both affected and affecting P/CVE related policies.

Looking toward chapter 4, the study will move into the fieldwork. This chapter will describe the findings of the study. Information from interviews were collected from various individuals. Chapter 4 will highlight the results from the interviews of numerous subject matter experts, including technical specialists, policy specialists, and practitioners who undertake this type of work internationally. Data will also be taken from official

agency policy documents pertaining to P/CVE. Comparative analysis will then be

conducted between the policy documents and the interviews, and the resulting findings

will then be presented.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand how and why foreign

assistance policy, as it pertains to P/CVE, has changed since September 11, 2001. The

study seeks to describe the nature and the drivers of P/CVE foreign assistance policy

changes. Secondarily, this study aims to provide a high-level analysis for policy makers,

practitioners, and researchers by using a case study to describe the secondary and tertiary

effects of a rapidly changing foreign policy. This qualitative study examines the

interaction between country, regional, and national policy levels. This study is focused on

U.S. foreign policy as it pertains to P/CVE and the TSCTP intentionally omitting analysis

of domestic U.S. CVE policies, as well as omitting analysis of any foreign or domestic

policies of foreign countries, including CVE policies of partner countries that are part of

the TSCTP program. PET, PFT, and PD are the primary public policy theories used to

approach this study and help provide an analytical framework for the policy material.

This chapter is comprised of five primary sections, including research design and

rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and the

summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the TSCTP, been implemented in

alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

RQ2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy over time as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

To best respond to these questions, a case study is used as part of the broader qualitative tradition. This approach was selected because it best facilitates the comparison of policy effects at the regional and national level and because the complexity and rapidly changing nature of the topic is not amenable to quantitative analysis. As Creswell (2013) stated, qualitative research helps develop theories that are currently inadequate for certain populations or sample sets or when the theories fail to capture the complexity of the problem. Further, case study approaches are reliant upon data collection methods that are best suited for this comparative approach, and subscribe to methodology including interviewing and document analysis, which this topic necessitates. Further, as Yin (2014) pointed out, the case study approach allows for descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory approaches to be used to deeply discuss a wide range of phenomena. The phenomena that this study explores the alignment of P/CVE policy and implementation of TSCTP, as well as the nature of P/CVE policy change over time.

Role of the Researcher

I approach this study as a data collector, analyst, and observer, but not as an active participant as an implementer of foreign assistance in the field of P/CVE. Further, this study has no affiliation with my current work in the field of international development. This study includes interviews with active participants and specialists, such as those that serve in specialized P/CVE roles in select non-governmental organizations and independent policy analysis institutions or centers (think tanks), as well as identified

researchers and academics who have demonstrated expertise in P/CVE. Because of my current role in government, and the desire to avoid any perceived conflict of interest, I did not interview current government officials. While it is useful to speak with government officials, it is possible to acquire the necessary perspectives and feedback in the field of P/CVE through non-governmental specialists, as many non-governmental officials have contributed to policy as well as implementation of P/CVE policies and programs. In terms of knowledge and experience, non-government practitioners have the requisite knowledge and experience as sources for this study.

Regarding biases and relationships, I come to this study as a government official in the field of international development. I acknowledge that my experiences have helped define my perspectives and opinions. I have experience in the field of stabilization and counterinsurgency, but not specifically P/CVE, although the concepts have a common lineage in the sense that they work to reduce violence among target populations (Galula, 1964; Kessels & Nemr, 2016). I have spent several years working in various conflict-affected countries and based on that work I have contributed literature to the field of counterinsurgency and stabilization methodology. Further, I am currently serving in government oversight within USAID and have produced reports that address issues related to foreign aid programs, including community level stabilization and P/CVE related goals. The reports required analysis on program strengths and weaknesses and recommendations to address identified challenges. Therefore, I come to this study as an experienced professional with developed perspectives, albeit within the confines of an analytical and independent framework. Further, as a government oversight official, I have

been trained in analytical methodology, objectivity, and independence, which I will also apply to this study. Finally, to ensure there is no perceived conflict of interest, this study was reviewed by my organization, though they did not contribute or edit in any way.

Methodology

Participation Selection Logic

The population was limited to P/CVE specialists. The population was selected from NGO officials, think-tank specialists, university academics, researchers, and former government officials when appropriate. The selected interviewees did not include current government officials to avoid any ethical issues, such as conflicts of interest or the in advertent disclosure of sensitive information. This was necessary due to my current role as an oversight official in USAID. While government officials may have no objection in speaking with me within certain ground rules, interviewing USAID and other government officials on sensitive topics such as P/CVE may create some confusion as to whether my research is strictly academic or was to be used for a performance audit. While this research was not and will not be used for a USAID performance audit, misunderstandings based on individual perceptions can be problematic for the employee and for me. Further, it is expected that many P/CVE specialists have comparable levels of knowledge in the field as they frequently communicate and coordinate with agency officials on the topic. In fact, many agency officials often turn to outside researchers and implementers for the most up-to-date information.

Given this, ethical considerations are necessary in the population selection. To identify specific individuals within the general population, certain criteria were designed

and adhered to. The criteria for participation selection included consideration of quality participants, defined by the select participants having valid knowledge and experience, their respective level of renown in the field of P/CVE (e.g., having significant published literature in the field or being an often-cited expert), and their depth of experience (e.g., number of years in key roles in P/CVE programs). Specific experience was also a criterion of selection. As such, this was a judgmental selection of individuals who have reasonably sufficient knowledge and experience in the field of P/CVE, both in policy development and policy implementation.

Because this was a case study approach, I also sought to interview P/CVE specialists who have worked on the TSCTP program, with a focus on the non-military foreign assistance components of the program, managed by USAID. While current government employees were avoided for interviews due to ethical considerations, when appropriate I sought input from former government officials. This is important due to the P/CVE policy centrality, longevity, and the policy and programmatic changes that the program has experienced over time.

There is no specific number of interviewees that is recommended over another, and the recommended numbers vary depending on the type of study. This is according to a comprehensive academic study examining the appropriate number of interviews for qualitative research (Mason, 2010). However, Bertaux (as cited in Mason, 2010) stated that for all types of qualitative research, which includes phenomenology, ethnography, ethnoscience, and grounded theory, there should be no less than fifteen interviews. As such, while there is no set standard number for case study analysis, achieving fifteen

interviews was the goal for this study. The final number of participants was dictated primarily by meeting these topical objectives and achieving data saturation, that is, when enough data has been collected so that clear conceptual patterns emerge, and new data becomes redundant. Therefore, from the onset of the study, it was understood that even if fewer than fifteen interviews were achieved, the goal of data saturation remained the primary objective in the collection of interview data.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for this qualitative study was the researcher. Because this study uses interviews and document analysis, the interview guide was also important. The guide is provided in the appendix. The primary goal of the guide is that it is meant to logically link the research objectives with the interview questions. In addition, the interview guide was designed to effectively elicit testimonial evidence that helps answer the research objectives. However, testimonial evidence alone was not enough, as it is the weakest form of evidence (Kennedy, 2006). As noted in this chapter, information gleaned from interviews was analyzed against documentary evidence, including U.S. Government policy documents, which facilitates data triangulation and leads to more credible conclusions and findings (Kennedy, 2006).

A cursory review was conducted to identify participants. As part of the literature review, several participants were identified, including journal and book authors, former and current government non-governmental program managers and implementers, and academics and researchers. Bibliographies of peer reviewed journal articles, scholarly reports, and books also helped identify additional sources. Further analysis was

conducted through internet searches for P/CVE specialists, including think-tank staff and academic researchers. This included specialists who were knowledgeable on P/CVE but considered themselves experts in other related fields tied to P/CVE, such as failed states, stabilization, counterinsurgency, terrorism, and other closely related concepts in which many P/CVE specialists also work. The reason for this is that as P/CVE is a new policy field, many experts still identify publicly as specialists in more widely known and established policy fields. Nevertheless, there remains a logical and often direct connection between their work and P/CVE.

Once a base group of specialists was identified, they were contacted via email and an interview date, time, and location were agreed upon. Because of my current location overseas, interviews were conducted via phone. Interviewees also offered recommendations on others that should be interviewed. A spreadsheet of potential interviewees was maintained for tracking purposes and a record of each conducted interview was maintained. Sufficiency of sources was assessed as to whether data saturation was attained. Once a pattern of opinions and feedback was established and data saturation achieved, no further interviews were sought or conducted.

The population targeted for interviews were P/CVE specialists, researchers, and practitioners. A valid source was assessed based on the quality of the source's published material, such as those having published peer reviewed journal articles, reputable academic books, or widely referenced research papers. Specialists were selected to represent two policy levels: the national policy level, such as those that contribute and specialize at the agency strategic level (e.g., higher levels that affect entire agencies or

government-wide policies, versus direct implementation of activities) and at the level closer to implementation of programs, such as regional or country level implementers.

Many of these organizations, and the specialists working for those organization, were in headquarters buildings, such as those located in Washington, D.C., New York, and other major cities. In addition, academic researchers were identified, such as those located in universities. Emphasis was given to academics and researchers who have contributed to agency level P/CVE policies or programs, such as those provided with agency grants or contracts to develop policy papers or project designs. In addition, multilateral organizations, such as UN, World Bank, and the OECD, which have relevant insight into the United States' P/CVE policy approaches and project implementation, were also considered for interviews.

The second type of specialists identified and interviewed were technical specialists who implement foreign assistance projects. These specialists are often referred to as "implementing partners" by USAID, as they are the direct foreign assistance implementers and do so in partnership with USAID management and oversight. The focus at this level is on the case study, and on implementing partners with implementation or research level familiarity with the TSCTP program. The objective of interviews at this level was to understand how U.S. P/CVE policy is being implemented on the ground and how these policies have changed over time. As such, this helps demonstrate the reality of policy once implemented and whether the assumptions and hypothesis of the policy are accurate when designed, and if not, how has the policy or the programs adjusted to reality. This approach also helped track which factors affected

P/CVE policy change over time.

The second research approach is document analysis. The primary means in which documents were collected was via USAID's publicly accessible website research portal, the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), which is used to archive program reports submitted by implementing partners and others. Documents selected for review must have meet specific criteria, such as being peer reviewed reports published by a major independent policy analysis institutions or centers (also known as think-tanks) or sponsored or written by a government agency responsible for P/CVE as part of their wider foreign aid portfolio. As noted, the focus was on USAID, but other agencies do contribute to USAID and broader foreign assistance policy, primarily including the DOS, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Institute of Peace. Additionally, non-U.S. organizations also publish important documents used by U.S. agencies and non-governmental organizations in the development of their own policy. As noted in the literature review, a few of these documents that contribute to U.S. foreign assistance policy, including P/CVE policy, were developed by agencies in Australia, England, France, UAE, and others. As such, when documents are identified as playing an important role in shaping USAID's P/CVE policy, then it was included in the document analysis as appropriate. The criteria of importance in determining if a policy document is relevant was judged by the frequency it was cited in other policy documents and key interviews, or whether it was cited in key policy documents. As with the interviews, data sufficiency in the document reviews was determined when pattern redundancy was reached, thus indicating data saturation. Data saturation remained the primary objective

of document analysis from the onset of the study.

Predominantly, only current and recent documents dated September 11, 2001 until February 2019 was used as part of the document analysis. The only exception to this document scope was when analyzing the National Security Strategies to illustrate how P/CVE related concepts shifted over a longer period. The seventeen-year span from 2001-2019 was expected to be adequate to comprehensively include the necessary documents reflecting the emergence and policy evolution of the P/CVE policy phenomenon. More historical documents were referred to when additional background or context is needed. For example, although using different terms, historically important subject matter was published on P/CVE years before September 11th occurred, such as those during the Cold War. Many of these key publications continue to be referenced today within the scholarly and the P/CVE practitioner communities. For example, such work includes publications by Andrew Natsios (1995), a former USAID Administrator and published scholar who in part focused on conflict intervention and violent extremism many years before September 11, 2001.

There were two published data platforms used as part of the fieldwork. As discussed, for academic material, such as peer reviewed journal articles, these were sourced from Walden University's electronic database and using the described search term protocols. The second instrument was the use of USAID's online Development Exchange Clearinghouse (DEC) system, the agency's public record knowledge management repository. The DEC is like traditional online research databases, and therefore the search terms were also be applied there. However, because the DEC is

specific to USAID, the search protocol will focus on the TSCTP and related P/CVE

project implementation reports. The DEC search terms were "preventing and countering

violent extremism," "countering violent extremism," "P/CVE," "preventing violent

extremism," "PVE," and "Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership." Further, some

policy analysis documents were searched to provide background context to the study,

such as reports on changes to development policy, which reinforced interviewees'

perspectives on the nature of changing P/CVE foreign assistance policy. The DEC was

also used to search for implementing partners' quarterly, annual, and evaluative project

reports to USAID.

Historical and legal documentation was used as appropriate to provide additional

context and background. As previously discussed in the study, P/CVE is not a wholly

new phenomenon, but rather a repackaging of approaches into a newly defined purpose.

Yet, when combined, these older and varied approaches formed an entirely new approach

in form, function, purpose, and definition. When these previous approaches came

together, in some ways it fostered policy momentum based on the perception of having

an important new tool, and this perceived new approach reverberated across the foreign

assistance community. This derived from the sense that previous approaches including

counterinsurgency, stabilization operations, democratization, and health and education

programs could be harnessed effectively as a P/CVE related program, which bears out in

the policy documents.

As such, historical and current policy documents shed light on how the previously

applied foreign assistance and intervention tools have now evolved into P/CVE related

tools. For example, documents related to the Cold War and America's so-called small

wars (e.g., counterinsurgency and other irregular wars, not to include major state versus

state wars, such as world wars) are insightful when discussing the more military-centric

approaches that today partly comprise P/CVE approaches. To illustrate, some historical

approaches during the Cold War (i.e., proxy wars and insurgency operations) involved

training local police officials, coaching local politicians in governance work, or

countering militant propaganda, to name just a few tools. Today, many of those same

approaches are used in P/CVE. What has changed is the purpose, shifting from

countering the Soviet Union and its influence to countering or preventing extremist

organizations from gaining additional influence among local populations. Thus, the

means can be similar, but the objectives have changed over time due to evolving

circumstances. The reflection of feedback from changing circumstances reflect policy

feedback theory while the rapid rate of change based on factors such as a rapidly

changing context illustrate aspects of the punctuated equilibrium theory. As such, the

nature and rate of change to P/CVE policy reflect PFT and PET theoretical dynamics,

such as the processes and forces by which policy change occurs. Path dependence helped

examine policy change and/or stasis from a different yet complementary lens. PD

examines the way in which policy can become locked-in based on previous historical

decisions. This is distinct from PFT in that it looks more specifically at the factors that

lead to an entity opting to stay the course rather than switching to alternative options,

even when superior options may exist. In this sense, it examines the self-reinforcing

dynamics, such as the perception of increasing returns or when prohibitive forfeitures are

thought to exist (Pierson, 2000, p. 253). On the other hand, PFT explores the nature of how policies shape politics, which may or may not be characterized by PD. In sum, PFT places its focus on the causal interaction of policy and political factors, whereas PD does not place its focus strictly on this interaction, but rather uses a broader aperture of causal factors.

Path dependence is also distinct from PET in that it does not necessarily explain why an entity breaks from an established course, particularly when a policy alters rapidly and significantly, or is rapidly overtaken by another policy due to some sort of systemic shock. On the other hand, PET offers an explanatory lens when policies rapidly emerge, sometimes facilitating a rapid break from prior policy approaches. Therefore, the use of PD lens provides explanatory value if PET is not supported by the fieldwork analysis. Overall, it is expected that this multiple theoretical lens approach will be more explanatory than using only one theoretical lens. These theoretical concepts will be discussed more in depth in later chapters.

Similarly, legal documents were important to consider as many laws and agency communications are legal in nature. These documents, such as policy documents, executive orders, and statutes, serve as legal requirements and criteria of performance for agencies to follow. USAID is no different in this regard, and USAID's policy documents, as well as guidance they receive from Congress and the President, are often legally binding documents. Such documents that were considered were USAID's P/CVE policy, Executive Orders relating to violent extremism, and Congressional guidance on P/CVE. Because this study examined the evolution of P/CVE policy over a span of time, studying

the changes to statutes and policies relating to U.S. P/CVE helps illustrate the factors and rate of change, and are thus critical to this study.

Interview Protocol

Each interview had a purpose for being conducted. The primary purpose for each respective interview was to answer the study's research questions. As such, interview questions will be focused on the two research objectives. The questions linked to each respective are as follows:

Objective 1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

1. Which policies do you consider the most important related to USAID work on P/CVE? Please explain.

2. Which policies do you consider the most important related to USAID work on the TSCTP? Please explain.

3. Do you think there is alignment between agency P/CVE policy and the TSCTP? How so?

4. Does the TSCTP policy and USAID P/CVE policy intersect? Are they mutually reinforcing?

5. In your opinion, has the TSCTP policy been implemented to achieve P/CVE? How so?

6. If you think there were policy changes to P/CVE or TSCTP policies, has it been agency wide, regional, or specific to certain countries? Please explain.

7. Have certain TSCTP countries had more success with P/CVE? Please explain.

Objective 2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

8. Has USAID's P/CVE foreign policy changed over time? How so? Why / why not?

9. Has USAID's TSCTP policy evolved over time? How so? Why? / Why not?

10. What events in the past do you think have had an effect on regional or agency P/CVE policy? Explain.

11. If so, what factors do you think have been the most important in defining USAID's role in P/CVE?

12. Have there been any particular circumstances that have led to changes in regional or agency level P/CVE policy? And for the TSCTP policy?

13. What information or factors do you rely on when trying to understand how the P/CVE policies have, or have not, changed over time?

14. Have there been any previous regional or agency policies, regulations, or political decisions related to P/CVE that you think have had an effect on current P/CVE policy? Please explain.

15. What current policies, regulations, or political decisions do you think have influence on the way in which agency or regional P/CVE policy is developed and implemented?

16. Do you think that P/CVE is seen as an important policy approach in the agency or at the regional TSCTP level? Please explain.

17. Do you think that P/CVE policy has a viable future in the agency or at the regional
    TSCTP level? Please explain.

Interviews followed a strictly defined process. Once recruitment and agreements were completed for each interviewee, questions were developed and were semi-structured. Thus, specific questions based on the stated objective of each interviewee were developed. There was also an allowance for follow-up questions as needed, making it conversational in manner rather than rigid questioning. Because this is a qualitative interview, it was important to gain a rich understanding of the topic through deeper topical exploration through conversation and follow-up. While at the same time each interview pursues a specific purpose to keep the interview focused and flowing in a logical and efficient manner. As such, this falls into the category of semi-structured interviews. An interview template was developed, which includes the name, location, time, participants, purpose, and transcript notes for each interview. These were maintained in the study's folder for review, categorization, and analysis.

During the interview review process, salient and reoccurring themes were highlighted, and further analyzed to determine if the pattern is illustrative of an important pattern that requires a deeper analysis and follow-up with select subject matter experts knowledgeable on the respective issue. In addition to this pattern analysis, the study also sought to clearly highlight milestones in the evolution of the P/CVE, such has when new policies were issued, and how those policies affected implementation in the field.

An Excel spreadsheet was created to track each interview and distill the most salient points from the interview transcripts. Following this, the interviews were also

loaded into ATLAS.ti for analysis. The interview transcripts were then coded and grouped into code groups, using the same format as the document analysis coding, which helped to gain a deeper understanding of the frequency of themes as well as a common lens across the document analysis and the interview analysis. This process helped identify the most important themes from each interview as well as help aggregate and analyze patterns across numerous interviews. As such, this process helped distill responses that most clearly respond to the stated research questions and set aside those parts of the discussion that are not relevant to the study. It was planned that if documents were provided by interviewees, during or after the interview, those documents would have been annotated on the interview transcript and the spreadsheet to help ensure organization and knowledge of the document source. If relevant to the document analysis, then those documents would have been included in the study. However, this approach was not necessary as no documents were provided by the interviewees.

Document Analysis Protocol
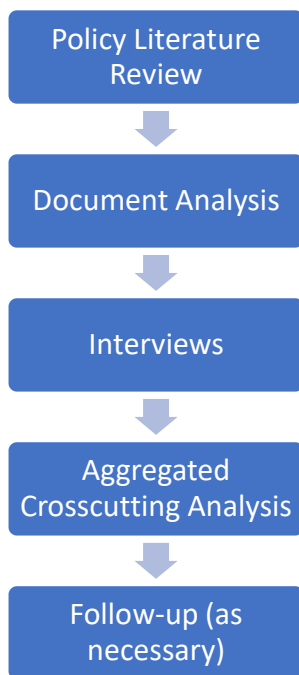
Figure 1. Basic methodological process

   Like the interview protocol, documents were selected based on the primary

purpose of the research questions. Also, a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet was

created to track and summarize all analyzed documents. The process began with

analytical notes made to each document during the initial and subsequent reviews. Once

these reviews are completed and notes made, then the respective document was added to

the spreadsheet for organization, aggregation, and analysis. In the spreadsheet, the

documents were categorized into its respective category, such as statute, agency policy,

office policy, NGO analysis, academic analysis, and other categories as appropriate.

Once the document was catalogued into the spreadsheet, the notes on the document were

transcribed into the spreadsheet to help provide a synopsis of the most important themes

of that document. Further, each document was analyzed within the spreadsheet to identify the objective of the document, the nature of the guidance or information provided by the document, and the nature of its authority. Once the analysis was completed for these documents, then an aggregated analysis was completed for each category, which helped shed light on the broader analytical observations of the documents, such as for example: key policy milestones, changing objectives of the policy guidance, changes in the nature of the guidance within the documents, and other significant observations as needed to answer the research questions.

In addition, coding and code grouping was completed for each document category to gain a deeper understanding of the common themes through the analysis. To ensure that the focus remained on the research questions, codes and code groups were in alignment with the interview analysis, helping to maintain a common lens across interviews and document analysis. As such, common coding and code grouping helped ensure that comparative analysis between these two methodological approaches were consistent enough to identify crosscutting themes.

Finally, once an aggregated analysis of the interviews and the document analysis was completed, then a secondary analysis contrasting the interviews and document analyses was completed to see where crosscutting interview and document patterns existed. For example, if a recurring theme exists in both the document analysis and the interviews, then that theme was further explored and assessed for inclusion in the study as an important factor in policy change over time. However, it was expected that there would have themes not identified in the document review but were frequently highlighted

by respondents in interviews. In fact, one such pattern was identified, which required additional research if the theme merited inclusion in the observations. Ultimately, it was determined that the theme merited discussion due to the theme's consistency and emphasis by interviewees as well as its frequent recurrence in the literature review.

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

All data was collected by the researcher, including the collection of all documents and interviews. The documents were collected from a variety of sources, including public websites of relevant NGOs and think tanks; government agency websites for USAID and the DOS, to include the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) database; research databases such as Walden University's library; and, documents provided by interviewees, when relevant and appropriate. Document collection occurred as the first phase of dissertation fieldwork because it built upon the literature review and served as an informative and useful segue into interviews. Interviews were conducted following the document collection and analysis and concluded once all select individuals were interviewed. Both documents and interviews were recorded verbatim. Documents were recorded on a spreadsheet with the name of the document, the date, author(s), and noteworthy points of the document. Interviews will also be documented. A transcript was maintained as well as a spreadsheet to aggregate all interviews for analysis. An additional spreadsheet was also maintained to analyze the material across documents and interviews to determine if there are recurring points. It was then determined if additional follow-up was needed, such as to fill any identified information gaps that arose after analysis. As necessary, this was completed with targeted follow-up questions via email to address

specific information gaps. As a formal exit to the study, and if requested by the

interviewee, interviewees were provided a link to the final study, indicating the

completion of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

There are two research questions that required distinct analytical steps to fully

answer. The first question followed the data collection and analytical steps as such:

Research Question 1: How has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara

Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE

foreign policy?

1) Collect and review the national and regional Trans-Sahara P/CVE policies.

   Research USAID's and the DOS websites for P/CVE policy documents pertaining

   to foreign assistance.

2) Disaggregate worldwide P/CVE foreign assistance policies from regional P/CVE

   policies.

3) Perform a comparative analysis of worldwide P/CVE policies with those of

   regional P/CVE policies.

4) Based on the policy literature review, develop conclusions as to the comparability

   of the policies and determine if an alignment (e.g., documented evidence that

   clear linkage exists, such as citing other related policies as guidance or for

   coordination purposes) exists between regional and worldwide P/CVE policies.

5) Using the policy literature review as reference, prepare the interviews. Develop

   interview question that target the question of whether policies align, how they've

aligned, or why there is misalignment.

6) Compare literature with interview results. Determine whether there is agreement between literature and interview results. Determine if links between the two policy levels exist. If differences exist, use follow-up questions with interviewees to understand why there is a lack of agreement between the policy literature and interview feedback.

7) Make final conclusions following the crosscutting policy literature review and interview analysis, stating the nature of alignment between worldwide P/CVE policies and regional Trans-Sahara P/CVE policies.

Research Question 2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy over time as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

1) Undertake a literature review of the history of P/CVE related policies in foreign assistance policy, including predecessor policies that led to P/CVE. The scope of this review will be from September 11, 2001 until current. The primary references will be documented policies found on USAID and DOS websites. The goal of this literature review is to compare policy documents over time and to determine when notable changes occurred and what perceived factors led to these changes.

2) Once notable changes have been identified, determine if causative factors or any noted objectives of the policy changes were identified in the policy documents. If no causative factors or stated purposes for the policy changes were provided, then add questions to the interview template that address the identified information gap.

Throughout the collection and analysis procedure steps, key themes were captured. As each document is reviewed, repeating themes were identified and recorded in a spreadsheet linked to the respective document. Once all documents were analyzed for key themes, they were reviewed for interview follow-up to collect additional context and background on the respective theme.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility and dependability of sources, there was a selection methodology in place of documents collected and analyzed. Documents came from four primary sources:

- Agency websites, primarily those of USAID, the DOS, U.S. Congress, the White House, and government archives.

- Peer reviewed articles, such as those focusing on policy analysis and P/CVE policy evolution.

- Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), such as those that address P/CVE. Additional background explanation will be given when an NGO is referenced, including any political agendas the organization may have.

- Documents provided by interviewees to support a point they discussed during the interview or to provide additional context.

Likewise, interviewees were methodically selected. As mentioned, interviewees were not selected for interview if they are current government employees to avoid a conflict of interest or misperceptions of the purpose of this research. Former government employees were considered if they attested that they would not disclose sensitive information.

Interviewees were primarily selected from the following groups of individuals:

- Current employees of NGOs and corporations that implement P/CVE programs (e.g., Chemonics, IRD, RTI). However, due to ethical considerations and other sensitivities, these employees were not working on current USAID programs.

- Academics (e.g., university professors/lecturers)

- Published authors and specialists (e.g., journalists or documentary film makers who specialize in P/CVE)

- Think Tank specialists (e.g., Brookings Institution and International Crisis Group)

- Independent practitioners (e.g., individuals who take contracts and grants to undertake specialized work such as P/CVE).

Once the documentary and testimonial data was collected via document research and interview completion, the information then underwent analysis for repeating themes. Triangulation was then used to determine the nature of the repeating themes. For example, it was determined if repeating themes were coming from one or varying sources. If repeating themes were derived from a variety of sources, then those themes were often discussed in the analysis if they helped respond to the research questions. If a salient issue is not repeated in varying sources, but deemed potentially important, then follow-up questions were sent to interviewees and additional document collection was undertaken to confirm if the potentially important theme is accurate and can be triangulated.

Due to the subject matter, this study is minimally transferable. This is due to the specific nature of the study and because it is a study on complex and changing policies.

However, lessons can be drawn from this study to help address related topics, such as counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. It can be argued that these older fields of study, which significantly precede P/CVE, helped give rise to it as this independent discipline. However, the fact that P/CVE is an independent and unique concept that stands distinct from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism also demonstrates that there are important differences. Nevertheless, there are common strains between the fields, such as population-centric aspects, including "soft" (i.e., non-military) approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism that arises among disenfranchised populations or those with significant unaddressed grievances. As such, there can be lessons gleaned from this study that permit limited transferability to related topics.

Dependability was attained using an audit trail approach. As mentioned, the methodology inherently lent itself to this approach. As material was collected, analyzed, and presented, documentation was produced, such as analytical spreadsheets and decision matrices developed for each research question. The decision matrix refers to the spreadsheet that aggregates analysis to aid in the decision of whether to include or exclude themes in the observations. To expound, codes and identified themes were maintained in a spreadsheet and then broadly presented in this study. A modified decision matrix was used to select repeated themes that have enough support for further development. For example, the decision matrix highlighted the number of times a theme was discussed in document reviews and interviews, the level of importance the theme was to the overall discussion or policy document, and the level of confidence the interviewee had on the theme discussed.

Confirmability was also be considered throughout the study. If an identified theme was determined to have strong support based on triangulation of data, then the theme was likely to be included in the findings. If moderate support existed, then follow-up was conducted to determine the veracity of the identified theme. If there was little or no support, other than a single individual or document, then the theme was deselected for any additional follow up and was thus excluded from the findings.

Ethical Procedures

There were no required ethics-based agreements necessary for this study. Further, there were no necessary IRB approval documents for the treatment of human subjects. However, there was one ethical concern that was considered during the design of this study. This concern led to the decision to omit the recruitment of government employees for interviews and specific contractors or grantees under an active P/CVE related contract or grant from USAID. This decision was made due to the concern that the specific nature of the interview questions on a topic that may be sensitive in nature could place pressure on interviewees to inadvertently discuss information not approved for public consumption. Therefore, the study omitted current government and active USAID contracted employees. This omission was also clearly stated in the recruitment letter so any individual that falls within this limitation was able to readily exclude themselves. Former government employees were interviewed, but it was communicated at the beginning of the interview not to discuss any subject matter that is sensitive in nature.

Regarding document collection and analysis, it is unethical and illegal to use any classified information. There are strict government rules for the marking of classified

documentation. Each document was examined to ensure that no classification markings exist. This was not expected to be a problem considering that the policy documents were taken from public government websites which are reviewed by their public relations officials. However, on rare occasion, classified information is inadvertently, and sometimes intentionally, put into articles and news releases. If any classified information was contained in any source used for this study, then that source would have been immediately removed from the data pool, and all traces of the material would have been immediately removed from the paper. However, this issue never arose during the study and therefore was not problematic.

Interviewees were advised that notes were being taken based on the interview question responses. To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were given to each interviewee, such as "Interviewee A," "Interviewee B," and so on. As such, the interviewee remains anonymous to the reader and this study does not share the identity of participants. Information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. Data was kept secure by password protection, data encryption, and pseudonyms. If any confidential material was recorded as a result of the interviews it would have been deleted, however this did not occur during the study. Interview transcripts and documents will be retained according to university IRB standards. This information was provided to the interviewees to ensure that the participants fully understand how their interview feedback and data was handled. This approach helps ensure replicability and transparency of the study while remaining ethical in its approach.

As an employee of USAID, conflicts of interest were an important point of

concern. To mitigate any conflicts of interest, I advised our office's legal counsel that this

study as being implemented and requested approval to conduct the work. I received a

response that there was no apparent conflict of interest based on the information

provided. Further, several controls were put in place to avoid any real or perceived

conflicts of interest, such as opting not to interview government employees or those

actively working on a USAID P/CVE related contracts or grants. It was determined that

while it would have been helpful to include those sources, they ultimately were not

needed considering the wealth of information that exists outside of those circles, such as

those found in academia, think tanks, NGOs, and particularly in finalized policy

documents. Finally, to avoid any conflict of interest, only publicly available information

was used for this study. As such, no "internal use only" or "for official use only," or

"sensitive but unclassified," or any other such related documents under protection were

collected and/or referenced as part of this study.

Summary

In summary, there was a precise methodology that this study will attempt to

replicate. Rather, the process began with a general policy literature review. This provided

a baseline level of knowledge of the various foreign assistance policy documents

pertaining to P/CVE that existed in USAID over a scoped period. Second, USAID's DEC

archives were searched, and selected documents were collected that provide a sample of

P/CVE programming. Reporting was collected and analyzed for thematic patterns,

evidence of policy evolution, regional policies pertaining to the TSCTP, and significant

areas of concern. Those reports, likewise, helped target the interview questions with

select individuals who met specific criteria. The report reviews also helped confirm

which types of P/CVE subject matter experts were the most beneficial to interview,

making it a purposive interview selection approach. Third, interviews were prepared and

conducted. The interviews were then analyzed for thematic patterns using ATLAS.ti,

which aided in the organization of documentation and the coding spreadsheet presented

in this study. Once the interviews were complete, a comparative analysis was then

conducted between the interviews and the document review in order to determine if there

were any thematic issues that are common across the documentation and the interview

responses. Once this analysis was completed, then a draft of the findings was completed

for chapter 4 of this study and then further examined through theoretical lenses found in

chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results

Background

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how and why foreign assistance policy, as it pertains to P/CVE, has evolved since September 11, 2001. The study seeks to describe the nature and the drivers of P/CVE foreign assistance policy changes, as well as explore the nature of the policy coordination at various levels of government. Secondarily, this study aims to provide a high-level analysis for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers by presenting a case study describing the secondary and tertiary effects of a rapidly changing foreign policy. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

RQ2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

This qualitative study examined the interaction between policies at the country, regional, and national levels. This study of U.S. policy focused on foreign aid as it pertains to P/CVE and the TSCTP. This study omitted analysis of domestic U.S. CVE policies as well as analysis of any foreign or domestic policies of foreign countries. This omission included CVE policies of partner countries that are part of the TSCTP program as well as policies of international organizations, such as the United Nations.

This chapter is comprised of eight sections: background, setting, demographics,

data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary. The

background will give an overview of the issue. The demographics section defines the

participant demographics and characteristics relevant to the study. The setting describes

conditions that influenced participants or their experience during the study that may

affect the interpretation of the results. The third and fourth sections involve data

collection and the nature of the data analysis. These sections focus on issues such as the

number and type of participants, data variation, coding, categories, themes, data

limitations, and other important points of consideration. The fifth section involves

evidence of trustworthiness. Important points in this section include credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study's strategy. This section will

also include areas in the study which required adjustment in order to make the findings

more methodologically sound. The sixth section includes the results for both research

questions, presenting data to support each finding, and discusses any discrepancies or

limitations. The final section is the conclusion, where answers to the research questions

are summarized before transitioning to Chapter 5.

Setting

A reading of National Security Strategies since 2001 reflects a significant period

of evolution for P/CVE, culminating in the height of support under the Obama

Administration. However, the current administration does not appear to share the same

level of enthusiasm for P/CVE, or perhaps foreign aid in general, and this was discernible

in the policy documents and in the interviews. This is not to pass any form of judgment

that the administration is correct or not, or that current practitioners and researchers see

P/CVE disappearing, or that there is grave concern about P/CVE. It is just a realization

that the policy focus has shifted, as it sometimes does from administration to

administration. Further, those interviewed were more concerned with sound policy and

implementation than high-level politics and shifting priorities from one administration to

another. For this reason, the shift in the current administration's priorities was not a

driving concern by interviewees or within the policy documents themselves. Rather,

overall effectiveness of P/CVE related programs and a desire to learn from past lessons

and experiences were the dominant themes throughout the research.

Not only does this study examine the evolution of P/CVE, but it also overlaps

with a period of rapid change of P/CVE policy. As I will explore in this chapter, this

rapid change created definitional and even conceptual challenges. The information

collected from policy documents and interviewees at times reflected different lenses that

P/CVE was being viewed through which was often significantly shaped by personal

experiences. This was particularly the case depending on the era in which the individual

worked on P/CVE programs. Therefore, some interviewees were completely unaware of

many important modern P/CVE policy documents, but instead had a strong understanding

of the early roots of the field, such as when it was just beginning to detach from such

feels as counterterrorism and insurgency. For example, practitioners who were in active

government service in the early 2000s during the Global War on Terror experience CVE

in different ways than those that worked in P/CVE programs in the last few years

following more precise P/CVE policy guidance. Further, the way in which P/CVE is

discussed among policy makers and practitioners has changed, reflecting a more nuanced

and matured conceptualization and terminology of P/CVE than when it first emerged or was conjoined with other fields such as counterterrorism. Going into this study, I expected these changes over time as it is relatively well understood in the international development community that P/CVE has rapidly changed over the years, and thus I was previously familiar with some of these iterative changes in my own career. Further, the purpose of this study was to understand the causes of this change and the way in which the policies have or have not been standardized, coordinated, and socialized across USAID and the interagency as these changes occurred.

The study occurred in two different environments: interviews and document research. The interviews were conducted via voice only Skype. Skype facilitates secure encrypted voice conversations. These calls were conducted in an office space and there were no notable distractions. The interviewees participated from a setting of their choice, mostly in homes and personal offices, and at a time of their choosing. The interviews and document analyses were conducted at a time of significant policy uncertainty regarding the future of P/CVE in USAID as well as the broader development and even defense communities. It was also conducted during a time where the concept of preventing violent extremism was beginning to be used more frequently. It was a period of significant ongoing change, one of policy, budgetary, and even conceptual evolutions. Further, the interviews reflect more recent reflections than most of the policy related documents themselves, some of which were written several years prior to the interviews. Thus, the interviews offered a perspective of some degree of reflection on the nature and efficacy of the P/CVE policies and their implementation.

This issue of evolution is at the heart of the study, and thus presents unique challenges as well as timely opportunities. Yet, it is akin to studying a moving target when policies are rapidly shifting and a common understanding across the field of practitioners and academics is not yet uniform or well established. The challenges of studying this rapidly evolving field were minimized by establishing a clear scope and adhering to those limits. Yet, further future analysis will need to consider how the emergence and growth of these concepts will affect P/CVE policy and implementation in the future. Thus, this study serves as a snapshot in the lifecycle of P/CVE, and it will almost undoubtedly continue to evolve well into the future.

Finally, participants in the study have experienced a transition in the political setting, and the documents reflect this transition. Various administrations have supported P/CVE in different ways and at different levels of intensity. In recent years, P/CVE was supported and emphasized by the Obama administration, which oversaw it as it progressed into what it is known as today, which is often a dual focus on preventing and countering violent extremism by using tools of international development and stabilization. Yet, the current level of support for this approach to P/CVE is less certain, an important theme that will be addressed in this chapter.

Demographics

Interviews were conducted to gain additional context regarding how policies are developed and implemented at the federal, regional, and local level. Further, interviews were conducted with academics and non-governmental employees. The interview questions adhered strictly to the purpose of answering the study's objectives, which are

focused on policy coordination and evolution. Given this, the criteria for interviewee selection was determined strictly on experience and knowledge in the field of USAID's P/CVE work at the federal, regional, or country level. Interviewees were recruited from the following groups of individuals:

- Current employees of NGOs and organizations that implement P/CVE programs

- Academics

- Published authors and research specialists

- Think Tank intellectuals

- Independent practitioners

Of note, there was a limited pool of non-government employees with relevant experience in USAID's P/CVE policies and programs. While 18 interview candidates were identified and recruitment attempts were made, 7 interviewees responded in the affirmative and agreed to be interviewed. Of those that declined, most cited lack of time to conduct the interview. Others, such as the researchers and academics, stated that they already committed to published papers on all they know on the subject and had nothing further to add to this body of knowledge. However, others simply did not respond to the interview request. Nevertheless, 7 interviews still adhered to the necessary threshold for qualitative analysis. Further, this study was designed from the onset to rely heavily on formal finalized policy documentation to augment the interviews.

Table 1

Interviewee Profiles

Interviewee Code	Ethnicity	Gender	Education	Background
A	Caucasian	Male	Master's	Current NGO leader specializing in irregular conflict, counterinsurgency, stabilization operations, and CVE. Has over 20 years of direct experience in CVE and related field.
B	Caucasian	Male	Doctorate	Retired senior diplomat. Has several decades of direct and indirect government experience on CVE and related policy development and implementation.
C	Caucasian	Male	Master's	Experience as an NGO director and published academic who specializes in foreign aid program evaluations. Has 20 years of experience in the U.S. government and NGO sectors. Has several years of experience in evaluating foreign aid programs, including CVE and related programs.
D	Caucasian	Male	Doctorate	NGO researcher and published academic who specializes in CVE in the foreign aid in the Africa context. Over a decade of NGO experience on CVE and related programs.
E	Caucasian	Male	Doctorate	Academic and former international organization analyst who specializes in violent extremism, terrorism, and national security. Has led and contributed to numerous scholarly papers and op-eds on CVE related topics. Has over 20 years of research experience in CVE and related topics.
F	African American	Male	Doctorate	Academic, NGO leader, and former government analyst specializing in extremism and CVE. Has over a decade of experience in the fields of national security research and program management in fields related to violent extremism.
G	Caucasian	Male	Doctorate	Academic and published author in the field of national security. Written numerous academic papers on CVE and foreign aid programs, as well as consulted to NGOs and government agencies on CVE policies and programs. Has approximately 20 years of experience on CVE and related topics.

As Table 1 shows, approximately 70% of the interviewees held a doctorate level degree. All the interviewees were male, and the majority were Caucasian. While women were asked for interviews, none responded to the invitation. One interviewee is African

American. Other interviewees of varying ethnicities were invited for an interview, but also did not respond. In addition, the interviewees' ages ranged widely from late 30s to early 80s. All interviewees had over ten years of experience in international development and/or foreign affairs, and all were experienced in P/CVE or similarly related work, such as using foreign aid tools for the purposes of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stabilization. Further, all respondents had also served in some type of academic research in the field of P/CVE, ranging from actively teaching in the field to researching and evaluating P/CVE programs, such as consultants and evaluation leads for formal P/CVE program evaluations.

Data Collection

The document research was conducted entirely online. Thirty-seven core policy documents were collected for analysis. Policy documents were the primary focus for document analysis and were collected because they represent original source material directly from U.S. Government agencies and are easily obtained as public documents. As documents were discovered and collected, they were categorized into document categories. The document categories include the following:

- National policies and strategies (e.g., those polices and strategies above agency level guidance)
- USAID P/CVE related policies
- USAID P/CVE program assessments and evaluations
- USAID policy support documents (e.g., policy addendums)
- Peer-reviewed academic papers were also identified and reviewed for

background information. However, the academic papers were not used for the purposes of analysis.

The primary locations that were used to locate the papers included Walden University's digital library, USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) online database, and organizational websites, primarily USAID, DOS, and the White House websites, all of which are cited in the references section. Some historical documents that are no longer official policy were taken from organizations dedicated to archiving historical documents for historical analysis, such as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the National Security Strategy (NSS) Archive. The NSS Archive was the only website that was not government operated as it is a product of The Taylor Group, a national security consulting firm (National Security Strategy Archive, 2019, para. 2). Further, USAID's DEC also maintains extensive historical documentation for research purposes. The bulk of USAID's historical policy, strategy, and evaluative documents were retrieved from the DEC. All current official policies were taken directly from current agency websites, including their official policy landing pages, to ensure that the most up-to-date policies and strategies were evaluated. To ensure that the most current policy documents were analyzed, I cross-checked the update times on the pages with those of the current and past policy documents. USAID also consistently updates their policy pages and the policy documents themselves to reflect what sections were changed and when those policy updates were made.

The documents were easily located and downloaded for review and analysis. Agency policies and strategies were generally provided on agency landing pages or

archives, thereby also helping ensure authenticity and credibility. Further, many of the

documents referenced other agency policies and strategy, either directly within the text

narrative of the document or in the reference lists. This facilitated a clearer understanding

of how these documents were interrelated in terms of hierarchical levels of government

guidance and to what degree they were consistent across various organizational levels. Of

note, the importance of these documents referencing other supporting policy

documentation cannot be overstated as it proved to be among the most important

evidential aspects that supported the conclusion of robust P/CVE policy interconnectivity

and coordination.

For the purposes of organization as the data was collected, documents were

classified into categories for later analytical purposes. The categories were defined by the

purpose or policy role of those documents. These document categories include the

following:

- National policy and strategy (e.g., national security strategies)
- Assessments conducted by the agency or contracted specialists (e.g., PDEV II Impact Evaluation)
- DOS and USAID strategies (e.g., 2010 QDDR)
- Agency policy support (e.g., material found on USAID's CVE website)
- P/CVE Policies (e.g., USAID's Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism)

The intent of the document classification was to categorize according to the

themes and policy focus of those documents to help maintain organization of hierarchical

levels and organization of policy themes and focus. In other words, national strategies

categorized together, agency level strategies together, regional strategies together, supplemental policy implementation guidance together, and so on. This was a pre-analytical process to understand the purpose and contributions of each policy document, which would then help to develop a better understanding of how each of these documents may help answer the research questions. In short, to determine whether each policy level, or policy theme, offered something unique to each of the study's research questions. Once categorization was done, it was a manageable analytical process to distill the codes and policy focuses into broader themes and observations, which in turn were used to answer the research questions.

To further expound upon these identified themes, the first category included the national policy and strategy, which examined the highest-level policy guidance, often at the White House level, such as National Security Strategies. These often included such documents as National Security Strategies or other high-level strategy guidance, some of which delved into detailed issues such as countering extremism, making it directly applicable to the study. The second, agency assessments and evaluations, are formal assessments on programs, such as commissioned impact evaluations by scholars and/or analytical groups, such as the frequent USAID monitoring and evaluations partner, Management System International (MSI).

The third, DOS and USAID strategies, included joint strategy and policy between USAID and the State Department. This category was necessary to be separated from agency policy, a distinct category for the purposes of this study, as DOS retains foreign policy agenda-setting authority, which therefore provides specific and conceptual

guidance to USAID. As such, the DOS has considerable authority over the nature of USAID's work as it pertains to P/CVE programs. Further, the DOS has high level budget authority over much of USAID's program budget, and thus policy guidance from the department holds sway over foreign aid. This is of importance as P/CVE programs being a source of funding. Further, some of the most relevant policy and strategy documents were joint strategy documents, including such landmark policies as the 2010 and 2015 QDDR, which placed a strong emphasis on P/CVE work by DOS and USAID.

The fourth, agency policy support, included documents that provided implementation level guidance on how to take broad agency policy and implement it in the field, or served to expound upon the policy guidance for clarity. The fifth, agency policies, were the core policy documents by USAID on the topic of P/CVE and/or the TSCTP. These documents not only included the foundational policy documents, but in some cases were core addendums to the policy, some of which sometimes predated the policy themselves. For example, this category includes a key USAID P/CVE guidance document, the Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism (USAID, 2009), which predates by over two years USAID's primary CVE policy, The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency (USAID, 2011). As such, in many ways, it was this pre-policy guidance document that served as a sort of acting policy as the P/CVE policy process was being established and evolving. There were also other documents that served similar purposes, such as updating or bridging policy, which were also included in this category.

Interviews were also conducted as part of data collection in addition to document

collection and analysis. Eight interviews were conducted based on the previous selection criteria. The primary purpose was twofold. First, interviews serve as primary data and provide perception data that cannot be found in the document analysis. As such, the interviews were an additional analytical component to the study that contributed to the final observations and answers to the research questions. Secondly, the interviews also contributed context to the formal policy documents which informed more broadly the way in which implementation occurred. In short, interviews helped provided the type of contextual awareness that is generally not included in final policy documents, which are finished formal products that serve as guides for the agency and its sub-units. Further, interviewees often understand the history of why those policies were designed in the way they were, highlighting critical factors that led to policy evolution, policy stasis, policy alignment and interconnection at different levels. This process is further discussed in the data analysis section later in this chapter.

Interview recruitment was conducted via email. Each prospective interviewee was sent a pre-approved Walden University Consent Form. The Consent Form contained detailed interview information, such as the purpose of the study and why the interviewee was being recruited for an interview. The Consent Form also provided example questions so that the interviewee understood the nature of the conversation as well as the ground rules of the interview. If the prospective interviewee agreed to an interview, then they responded in the affirmative and consented to an interview.

The interviews were recorded verbatim. There was a total of 17 questions asked to each interviewee. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours. The responses

were documented into a computer-generated Microsoft Word document. The Word

document was then compiled into a spreadsheet with all interviews. The spreadsheet

assisted in initial analysis to determine the broad cross-cutting concepts that were

discussed. As will be discussed further, all interviews and documents were compiled into

spreadsheets to determine broad themes and repeating topical patterns. Thus, compiling

the interviews into a spreadsheet was the first step in this cross-cutting analysis.

There were no limiting circumstances that were not already identified prior to the

beginning of the study. Those known limiting factors included: 1) that there are relatively

few specialists outside a few key employees within USAID that are fully aware of the

nature of U.S. P/CVE policy evolution; 2) There are relatively few specialists outside of

USAID that are knowledgeable about the linkage between national and agency level

P/CVE policy/strategy and that of the TSCTP and the PDEV (I and II) and related

program policies and implementation. This study was designed to offer new perspectives

on P/CVE, considering that this area has limited empirical research conducted on it, and

therefore very few specialists exists with this specific knowledge. As such, the limited

number of interview candidates was not especially limiting given that this was a known

issue and therefore the study was designed to rest on documentation analysis with

contextual interviews for support and additional leads. Further, data saturation was

obtained rather quickly seeing that the interviewees largely repeated the same themes.

Given these conditions, the limited number of interviewees was not seen as a crucial

limitation for the study, but rather is noteworthy because it is a reflection of how little the

field has been studied at a policy level and how nascent the concept of P/CVE remains

despite the high level of attention it's enjoyed in recent years.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three primary stages: interview analysis, document analysis, and data triangulation. This methodology offered a sound approach to ensure that data saturation was reached and that patterns were identified and mutually reinforcing across the source material, in this case, within both policy documents and interviews. The overall process was undertaken as illustrated by *Figure 2* below.
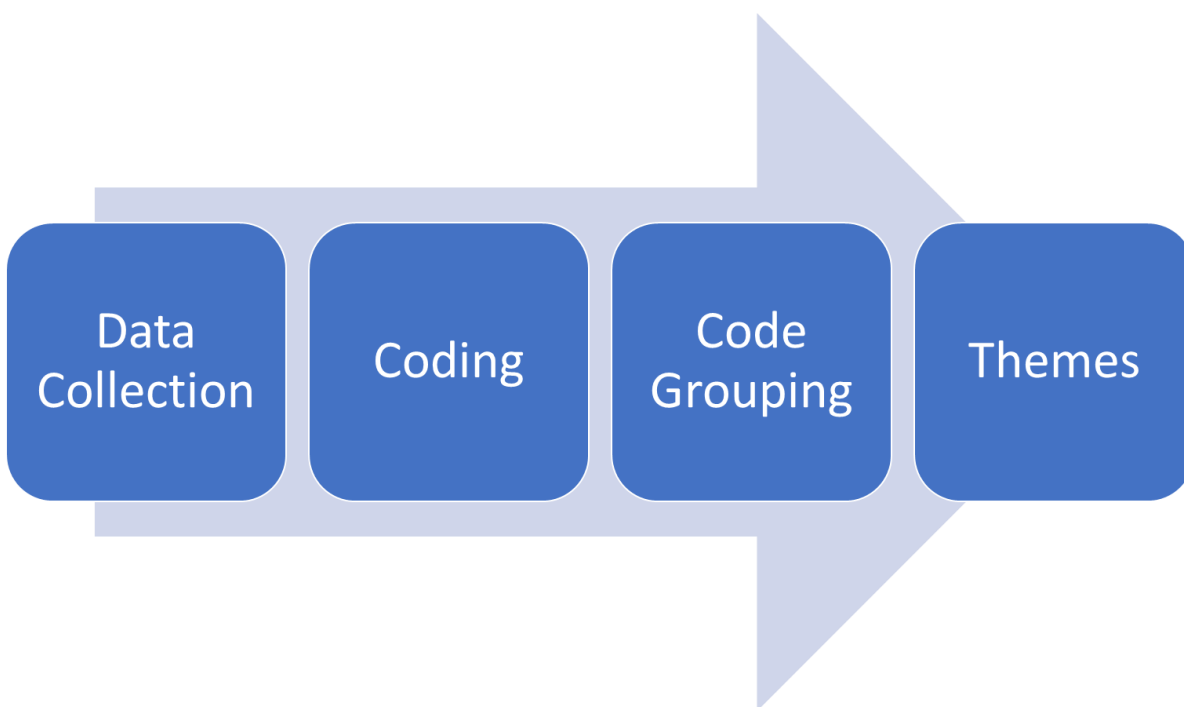

Figure 2. The Analytical Process.

As an overview, *Figure 2* illustrates that the initial phase was data collection, which was necessary to organize the large volume of collected document data in a manner which efficiently responded to the research questions. Following this, for both interviews and documents, coding was completed, then followed by code grouping. Data

triangulation of both data sets was then done to establish a broad understanding of the themes related to the objectives of the study. Triangulation allowed for the comparison of code groups between the interviews and documents, which then helped identify themes. Following this, each theme was then assessed as to whether it addressed one of the research questions. If a theme was deemed sufficient to help address a research question, it was then developed into a research observation. Each of these respective steps are addressed in additional detail below.

Interview Analysis

After document categorization and interview transcription was completed, interview analysis was undertaken. As an overview of the interview data organization, the documentation for each interview included: 1) A verbatim transcript of each interview; 2) the name of the interviewee; 3) data and time of the interview; 4) interviewer notes; 5) analysis of themes; and 6) applicability of respective theoretical lenses. The analysis was included in 5 and 6 and these two elements were used for aggregated analysis to distill themes across all interviews. For the process of aggregated analysis, I evaluated the most salient and recurring themes, for example, those issues that were discussed in several, if not all, of the interviews. I then analyzed whether any of the identified theoretical lenses were supported in the content or context of the interview.

Each interview transcript was inputted into ATLAS.ti for coding and analysis. The interview text was logged into the program and coded using either open codes (i.e., code terms) or coded in vivo (i.e., using the phrase as the code). This coding process resulted in 179 different codes being created that were derived from 276 coded words or phrases.

These 179 codes were then classified thematically into code groups. These code groups included the following eight code groups:

- An overreliance on military solutions was not achieving success

- Changing policies have helped drive P/CVE evolution

- Confusion and uncertainty on P/CVE remain a challenge

- Ongoing conflicts have led to P/CVE rapidly evolving

- P/CVE policy has evolved due to a combination of major and minor events

- Policy coordination generally occurs at all levels

- P/CVE has evolved in phases

- USAID takes policy guidance from internal and external sources

The list of codes was then further analyzed into code groups, which reflected the broad themes and repeating patterns for further development into observations. These themes and patterns were then assessed as to the way in which they help answer the research questions. If the themes and patterns were deemed appropriate in responding to one of the respective research questions, then the theme(s) were developed into observations related to a respective research question. The code groups that helped identify themes are listed below in *Table 2*.

Table 2

Interview Code Group Frequencies

Code Groups	Interviewee Code							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Totals
An overreliance on military solutions was not achieving success	5	2	3	2	2	1	1	16
Changing policies have helped drive P/CVE evolution	6	3	4	7	4	3	8	35
Confusion and uncertainty on P/CVE remain a challenge	10	11	16	15	12	21	17	102
Ongoing conflicts led to P/CVE rapidly evolving	7	4	9	7	5	2	4	38
P/CVE policy has evolved due to a combination of major and minor events	6	0	4	0	7	5	2	24
Policy coordination generally occurs at all levels	0	1	1	1	3	9	0	15
P/CVE has evolved in phases	4	3	8	8	2	3	4	32
USAID Takes policy guidance from internal and external sources	0	1	3	3	4	3	0	14
Totals	38	25	48	43	39	47	36	276

As the table reflects, discussion involving the challenge of P/CVE confusion and uncertainty was frequently discussed in terms of the evolution of the policy as well as the factors that have driven the P/CVE policy evolution. Of note, the interview themes were like those captured in the document analysis, which will be discussed later in this chapter. This was not entirely unexpected as the interview questions were designed to respond to the research questions. However, the interviews uncovered one distinct observation. This

observation was undergirded by consistent references to confusion about P/CVE polices. Naturally, formalized policy documents would not reflect a perceived lack of clarity and certainty regarding the issue the policy it is addressing, and thus triangulation with policy documents was limited.

Document Analysis

The document analysis process began by aggregating the collected data on a spreadsheet, organized according to categorization. The document analysis spreadsheet collected the following: 1) title of the article or policy document; 2) author; 3) publication date; 4) source; 5) objective; 6) summary; 7) how it relates to the study's objectives; and, 8) the theoretical lens the article/document may fit within. The final two items reflect the primary analysis and item 7 is where coded patterns and themes were identified for aggregated analysis of all documents.

Once the documents were coded and subsequently documented within each spreadsheet, then the article was assessed to determine if it fit within one of the specified theoretical lenses, which includes punctuated equilibrium theory, path dependency, or policy feedback theory. Each paper was then summarized for aggregated analysis of all documentation.

The aggregated analysis phase consisted of looking across all identified themes, and then repeating that process for all identified theoretical lenses to determine the most salient themes and whether there was sufficient support for the theoretical lenses, and if so, what were the conditions (e.g., nature of the topic, nature of the analysis, and year(s) of analysis) for each theoretical lenses. Collectively, this information helped shed light on

whether the theoretical lenses were appropriate. It also helped distill the most salient and

recurring themes relating to the research objectives.

Table 3

Document Code Group Frequencies

Code Groups	National Policy and Strategy	Agency or Specialist Assessments	DOS and USAID Strategy	Agency Policy Support	P/CVE Policies	Totals
An overreliance on military solutions was not achieving success	2,384	36	322	11	2,169	4,922
Changing policies have helped drive P/CVE evolution	919	577	2,279	52	919	4,746
Ongoing conflicts of led to P/CVE rapidly evolving	874	539	388	225	874	2,900
P/CVE policy has evolved due to a combination of major and minor events	1,793	116	2,667	297	1,793	7,666
Policy coordination generally occurs at all levels	1,692	589	2,403	73	2,315	7,072
P/CVE has evolved in phases	3,088	613	2,601	83	3,088	9,473
USAID Takes policy guidance from internal and external sources	1,692	589	2,403	73	2,315	7,072
Totals	12,442	4,059	13,063	814	13,473	43,851

Table 3 illustrates the coding frequencies that assisted in the development of the

code groups and themes. The coding lens applied to the document analysis focused on the

development of coding groups that helped effectively answer the two respective research

questions. Like the interview analysis, codes were made throughout the documents which

focused on the nature of P/CVE policy evolution and agency coordination. The coding

was done in conjunction with contextual analysis as coding captures frequency of phrases

and key terms but does always capture the overall context of the policy document. The primary codes used were "defense," "military," "diplomacy," "development," "terrorism," and "extremism." The rationale behind those codes were that they all directly informed various aspects of the research questions. For example, when defense and military concepts are discussed in government P/CVE related policy, it was frequently discussing the nature of interagency civilian and military coordination, more commonly known as civ-mil coordination. Those terms were also often part of guidance touching on the nature of implementation, such as defense or military dominant approaches. The terms diplomacy and development similarly dealt with passages that provided policy guidance on civilian interagency coordination and the specific roles and responsibilities between USAID and DOS as they pertain to P/CVE policy development and implementation. Finally, because USAID and frequently defense P/CVE policies and strategies address development tools pertaining to countering violent extremism, and at times countering terrorism, the terms extremism and terrorism helped to aggregate and capture the focus on those concepts for each respective policy and strategy document.

These codes and the frequency were then developed into code groups as illustrated in *Figure 3*. The most frequently referenced themes reflected the way in which policy evolved in phases. Second, the documents also frequently referenced coordination and guidance provided from external (e.g., DOD and DOS) and internal USAID sources. Further, it should be noted that some document groups contributed more to the code aggregates due to the lengths of certain documents, as well as the nature and focus on the document. For example, some documents cover a broad set of issues while other policy

and guidance documents were dedicated solely to P/CVE and related topics. Naturally, the longer the document, the more frequently the document may reference coded phrases. In addition, some documents were keenly focused on P/CVE issues, and therefore referenced salient points that were coded and weighed heavily in the analysis. Therefore, while some document groups show fewer coded passages, it does not reflect the degree of importance over other document groups. For example, while the agency policy support section shows fewer codes, it is no less important than the other categories. That said, some of the key documents during this study tended to be derived from two key sections, including the national policy and strategy documents and the DOS and USAID strategies documents. These two sections often contained the core national and agency policy documents which were of major importance to the study.

To offer additional context in the way in which these documents interacted and were analyzed, there are senior level policy documents that provide overarching guidance throughout the government. The archetype of that level of policy is the National Security Strategy, which is produced by the White House. Those high-level policies are for the most part, meant to filter down to the respective agencies charged with implementing specific aspects of the NSS guidance. For example, foreign policy guidance would be further refined and implemented by such agencies as the DOS. DOS would then send some policy guidance to USAID as well as USAID developing its own policies on specific issues it is tasked with leading. These policies would then be further refined into agency level policy and regional level policy. These hierarchical levels are captured in the document grouping, ranging from the highest levels, such as the National Security

Strategy, to the mid-level, such as the DOS and USAID strategies, and then very focused

lower level policies, such as P/CVE policies, and then finally to aspects of country and

regional strategies. The way in which this process can be tracked is by identifying

whether policies reference other policies, for example, country strategies citing USAID's

violent extremism policies and strategies.

In short, policies interact and filter down through and to lower levels of

government. However, greater specificity and policy precision is achieved as polices

filter through the agencies to develop finer points to address specific issues. For example,

for the purposes of this study, the highest level policy are the NSS documents, and those

documents serve to set the overall policy tone for the entire U.S. Government in a variety

of disciplines, ranging from foreign policy to domestic homeland security, and many

other issues. Thus, a large part of the NSS is not relevant to this study, but nevertheless in

part required analysis. This is due to their overall strategic importance of the NSS

documents and because those documents set the tone on issues such as P/CVE. That

focus and tone is important to identify because some NSS documents place a strong focus

on P/CVE while others make no mention of it whatsoever or instead focus on related

policies such as counterterrorism. Understanding the focus is important to understanding

whether a specific presidential administration will concern itself with P/CVE, and

especially so if the administration seeks to make changes to that policy, which is again

the focus of this study.

Looking one level down in government policy there are USAID and DOS

policies, which take guidance from the NSS. At the interagency and agency levels, there

is more focus on topics relevant to this study, such as a broad strategic focus on

countering violent extremism. Yet, at this level the issues are still addressed broadly and

rarely give specifics and cover a broad range of other issues not relevant to this study.

Looking yet another step down, there are USAID P/CVE related policy documents,

which are some of the most specific P/CVE documents relevant to this study. However,

all three of those levels are still strictly policy and strategy documents. Two other

categories were determined to be relevant to shed light on the policy context, which were

supporting documentation found in agency websites and evaluation documents, which

provides some of the most detailed information on the way in which policies ultimately

are implemented. Therefore, these two categories provide important contextual

information that provided additional background and candid analysis that cannot be

found in final formal policies.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation served as the final analytical stage. This stage involved the

comparative analysis between the document analysis and the interview analysis. Like the

document and interview analysis, I conducted an aggregated analysis in a separate

spreadsheet that described each salient and recurring theme found in both the interviews

and the documents. This process was designed to address recurring themes across both

mediums. Recurring themes were identified as relevant to the study, but other themes

identified solely in the document analysis were also identified as being relevant to the

objective of the study. This is because the document analysis was far more robust and

detailed than the interviews, primarily a result of a significantly larger data pool to draw

from than there was for the interviews, which were inherently limited due to the dearth of non-agency specialists knowledgeable about P/CVE policy evolution and USAID's contribution to the TSCTP. In short, a large majority of the useful data was found during document analysis, which was expected at the outset of the study.

After coded data sets were documented, they were then aggregated into informal general themes, which were then developed into specific formalized themes if deemed relevant to responding to the research questions. The process of developing these specific themes was done by analyzing and amalgamating numerous data points into a more clearly articulatable observations that were linked to a respective research question. This approach to coding into observation groups provided an evidence based and methodological approach to answer the study objectives. This also facilitated the audit trail approach of research, which allows future researchers to clearly see how the research was conducted for replication, further research, or critical examination.

Looking at the first research question, higher level policy can take many forms, such as agency level policy (i.e., USAID strategies, policies, or concept papers), or national level policies, including White House policies such as National Security Strategies (NSS) and Presidential Policy Directives (PPD), and Congressional mandates. The policy authority levels for the purposes of this study derive first from the White House, then to the DOS, then USAID, then agency buraus and offices, and then the field missions. Each document documented category was assessed as to whether it supported a respective observation. These results highlight two phenomena in policy. First, that different levels of government often provide distinct form of policy guidance. Higher

level policy is often broad and conceptual, while lower level government policy often delves more into the minutiae of policy details. Generally, the closer the policy is to the point of implementation, the more specific and detailed the guidance for implementation purposes. This is particularly the case as it pertains to a niche field such as P/CVE, which at the point of implementation can be specific enough to name specific program and projects, such as those found in USAID's regional and country strategies, more commonly known as the RDCS and CDCS respectively.

To further expound on how the P/CVE policies interact with one another, they tend to filter down from the highest levels of government to the point of implementation, often beginning as vague and conceptual and then become increasingly specific as they approach the point of implementation. Nevertheless, as the observations reflect in this chapter, the tone of the policy is important, and it is discernable at the operational levels of government. In a general sense, there is a form of trickle-down policy making, starting from the highest levels of government, and working its way down to the point of implementation.

In addition to tone, verbiage and definitions are also important. As has been alluded to several times throughout this study, definitions have been problematic for the field of P/CVE. This was illustrated in the literature review as scholars have come to the same conclusion. However, in studying this field it is important to discern the relationships between similar or predecessor disciplines, such as the differences and similarities between preventing violent extremism, countering violent extremism, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, stabilization, conflict resolution, governance, and

other fields and sub-disciplines. Suffice it to say that analysis becomes increasingly

unclear when those fields are not clearly defined. This is a challenge for researchers of

P/CVE as often interviewees and implementers can be unclear themselves and provide

their experiences without realizing their talking about different disciplines. Further,

interviewees and practitioners do not always recognize terminological shifts. For

example, if a practitioner worked in the mid-90s on CVE, they may have undertaken

programs that would be defined as CVE today but were termed counterterrorism at the

time. To mitigate this, it is important is to understand the objectives and general

conceptual framework of the program. Otherwise, it is easy to in inadvertently compares

apples to oranges. It was for this reason I sought to understand a little about the programs

the interviewee discussed as examples. This helped ensure that their work was related to

the modern definition of P/CVE, even though an interviewee may describe it in different

terms.

Further, it is equally important to know which parts of government tend to focus

on those respective fields of practice, whether it be USAID, DOD, or DOS. This

awareness is important for agency policy makers because the highest-level policies and

strategies, such as the NSS, do not always specify taskings by agency. This is important

to understand the nature of how P/CVE is changing, as well as how it will be coordinated

within the government. For example, if an Administration's NSS focus support P/CVE,

then this places a mandate upon one or more agencies to develop the capabilities to

undertake that line of work. This phenomenon is reflected in the Obama-era NSS policies

which provided a policy mandate, and therefore a window of opportunity for P/CVE

policies to be developed and institutionalized. Three of those key resulting policies include the 2010 and 2015 QDDRs and USAID's 2011 The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency.

Of note, one document group was found to be unique enough to be explored beyond the scope of the study to provide a broader understanding of the evolution of P/CVE. This additional analysis also helps placed the issue of policy evolution into additional context for further research in the future and to help demonstrate to the reader the breadth of policy evolution. This document group was the National Security Strategies and these documents were deemed most important to understand the highest level of policy emphasis for foreign policy and foreign aid, those were assessed separately to highlight key areas of emphasis in order to conduct a trend analysis of themes that put P/CVE into comparative context with other themes. To do this, each NSS from the first in 1987 to the latest in 2017 was assessed for specific code terms, including: defense, military, diplomacy, development, extremism, and terrorism.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As described in Chapter 3, credibility and trustworthiness were ensured by setting strict criteria for data collection, including for both document collection and interviewee candidate selection. The criteria for document/article selection was as follows:

- Agency websites, primarily those of USAID, DOS, U.S. Congress, the White House, and government archives.

- Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), such as those that address P/CVE. Additional background explanation will be given when an NGO is referenced,

including any political agendas the organization may have.

- Documents provided by interviewees to support a point they discussed during the interview or to provide additional context.

Likewise, interview candidates were selected methodologically. As described previously in this study, no current USAID staff were selected for interviews. Former government employees were considered, and selected, if they were no longer undertaking work of USAID's P/CVE contributions. This selection and omission based on established criteria helped maintain the proper boundaries of the research and thus enhance the transparency of the study. However, it does place some limitations of the research which can be elaborated upon in future research, particularly in research conducted by USAID or by organizations with an established mandated to interview employees within the agency.

Interviewees were selected with a focus on substantial P/CVE related experience as well as deep knowledge in the discipline. To provide a glimpse into the depth of experience and knowledge of the interviewees, those selected for interviews fell into these categories:

- Former U.S. ambassadors

- Scholars and professors who have conducted specialized in-depth research on or for USAID's P/CVE work

- NGO founders and leaders who have directly led and worked on P/CVE programs independently and/or under contract to USAID

- Former chiefs of party who have led P/CVE programs in the field.

The transferability of the study's results is limited in some regards. For example, as the case study, the study included the TSCTP which are in West Africa and in an extraordinarily volatile area that in many areas lacks governance and resources. As such, the circumstances in other environments around the world stands in stark contrast to many of the countries included within the TSCTP, particularly PDEV/PDEV II areas of implementation. Further, CVE and PVE interventions and programs are often specific to local sources of instability. For example, as part of the TSCTP the design of a PDEV program in Mali may be quite different than a USAID CVE/PVE program in Eastern Europe, or anywhere else for that matter. In these cases, local context and other factors plays an especially important role in the nature of the program design and implementation.

However, there are some aspects of transferability of the results of the study that may work well. For example, this study examines the nature of CVE and PVE policy evolution at a broader agency level. As such, the study relied upon higher level agency and federal policy and strategy documents to understand how CVE and PVE has changed over time. This is valuable insight for those understanding what occurred in the past and what is occurring today as it relates to this field of work. For example, if a policy maker is developing policy based solely on what was implemented during the period known as the War on Terror, which followed September 11, 2001, then the observations would be based on approaches that in many ways does not closely resemble work USAID is implementing in many parts of the world today. Rather, this study aims to highlight the fact that there have been major policy and strategy shifts over the past two decades,

which has created distinctly different implementation approaches to CVE and PVE. The lessons learned from understanding the differences in how CVE and PVE programs were affected, and were or were not successful, through a process of policy evolution are transferable to another related research.

As discussed, dependability was attained through the audit trail approach. The overall methodology facilitated this approach. The interview and documentary material were collected, analyzed, and then analytical notes were included in the spreadsheets. The spreadsheet then allowed for an analysis of multiple sources within a single spreadsheet facilitating pattern recognition. Patterns were assessed as to which research question they applied to, if any, which ensured that each observation fit within the scope of the study. The process helped identify repeating themes that were relevant to the objectives of the study and that had enough support for further development.

Confirmability was also considered. Triangulation was the primary method used for confirmability, which was not a deviation from the original plan. The strength of the observed pattern and/or theme was determined via triangulation of the data to include the documentation analysis, interview analysis, and relevance of the observed pattern and/or theme in answering the objectives of the study. If there were clear patterns detected across the documentation, interviews, and prior scholarly papers, then that was considered enough for strong confirmability. If there was inconsistent patterning detected across these sources but was clearly evidence in some of the source material, then it was deemed that moderate support exists. Modern support required further analysis, such as weighing the credibility of the source and the how strong the pattern existed within one

or two of the sources, such as within documentation, interviews, or prior scholarly research. If there was no clear pattern recognition, such as a sole interviewee, sole document, or sole scholarly paper, then the respective issue was deemed to have too little support for inclusion. This is not to say that unique issues with no pattern support are not important, but deeper research would have been required for confirmability, and some of those issues were deemed outside the scope of this study and therefore excluded from the observations. As such, it was primarily patterns and relevance to the study objectives that were weighed heaviest for inclusion in the findings.

Results

This study explored two research questions. The first question examined the nature of regional policy being implemented in alignment, such as via coordination or with communicated guidance, with higher level P/CVE foreign assistance policy. The second research question examined what factors, if any, have led to changes or evolution in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy, as well as to the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy.

RQ 1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

This first research question explores the issue of whether regional policy, as reflected in the TSCTP, has been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy. This research question appears straight forward, however, government agencies are complex entities with numerous forces affecting policy

development and the nature of implementation. Such forces include the shifting political winds of policy making, political ideologies of senior political leaders, past experiences of senior agency leaders, competing interests with international and foreign organizations, international partners' preferences, and host nation culture and politics, to name a few. While on the face this question might be answered with a simple yes or no, in practice the nuances of implementing policy do not allow for simple answers. This question exposes countless opportunities for further research which will be discussed in chapter 5. However, the simple answer to this question is that there is indeed substantial evidence that regional TSCTP policy is being implemented in alignment with broader foreign assistance P/CVE policy. In the following pages, I will illustrate this policy alignment from the central government and agency level down to the point of implementation.

For this study, I chose to look at the TSCTP P/CVE program due to its longevity and the fact that it presents clear evidence of policy, conceptual, and ideological evolution over the past two decades. And while there are numerous other regions and P/CVE programs that can and should also be explored, for this study it was determined that the TSCTP program presents the most plentiful and accessible evidence that can be obtained to understand evolution and coordination of P/CVE policy. As such, in the following paragraphs, I will present the most consistent observations across interviews, agency and third-party analysis and published papers, as well as policy documentation.

To begin, I reiterate the answer to the first objective, whether P/CVE related policy is coordinated between the agency level and the implementation level, using the

case study of the TSCTP. The answer is yes, there is significant documentary and testimonial evidence that regional policy has been coordinated with higher policy and strategy. Over the course of several years, there have been numerous policy documents, policy guides, and various coordination efforts to establish an alignment within USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy, from the agency level to the implementation of USAID's contribution to the interagency TSCTP. This documentation also provided a relatively robust audit trail to gain insight into how that coordination evolved over years as the policy and the programs changed.

Theme 1: In terms of P/CVE policy and strategy, USAID takes significant guidance from external and internal processes, and these processes ensure policy coordination within the agency down to the point of implementation.

Interviewees offered varying perspectives on the nature of USAID and DOS coordination. Overall, coordination between these two agencies was rarely pointed out as being problematic or lacking in recent years, although evolution of that coordination was evident. Interviewees pointed out that the most important policy guidance that gave policy traction to P/CVE was that of a joint DOS-USAID policy document, the 2010 QDDR (Interviewee C, March 2019; Interviewee G, April 2019). One interviewee, a well-published P/CVE scholar, pointed out that the important of the 2010 QDDR cannot be overemphasized in terms of its early importance for joint coordination and guidance for USAID's P/CVE efforts stating, "Those two internal documents, the QDDR and the USAID VEI strategy, are the most important. Without those two there is nothing to begin with. Beyond those two documents, there has not been much else. (Interviewee G, April

2019). Another interviewee, an experience P/CVE implementer, supported that conclusion stating, "I would say at that time, the QDDR was important. It entrenched the idea of whole of national security" (Interviewee C, March 2019). These two interviewees discuss the important point that there are key policies that mandate P/CVE related interagency coordination, but in doing so also reveal that this coordination is relatively emergent in that it has been formally supported in USAID and DOS policy for approximately a decade.

In addition, several other interviewees pointed out that policy coordination at the higher levels was occurring. In fact, no interviewees identified this aspect of P/CVE as problematic. Rather, they clearly felt that DOS and USAID were clearly coordinated at the policy level. Yet most were not familiar enough with the policies to recall them by name. Rather, there was broader conceptual references to policy coordination.

Some argued that while coordination at the high level was occurring, the challenges existed elsewhere in the process, such as a weak understanding of root causes of violence, a lack of interest in data, risk aversion, and a lack of political will. As one interviewee stated, "I think there is alignment in the stated policy goals for CVE policy efforts in the region. I think we had all the right ingredients but not the right political will to implement" (Interviewee A, April 2019). Yet another interviewee undertook an examination of this precise phenomenon and concluded that coordination was occurring. He stated, "I think there was alignment. Especially when I was doing the evaluative study of the TSCTP. I went in to talk to seven different embassies and there was good alignment between those. There were varying degrees of understanding, but it was

generally aligned" (Interviewee C, April 2019). Thus, while interviewees concluded that coordination was occurring, at least at the higher agency levels, they frequently discussed other challenges beyond the high-level policy coordination between USAID and DOS, such as the quality and capability in implementation.

However, equally important to the interviewees' perspectives on present P/CVE coordination on policies shared between USAID and DOS, was the discussion of the lack of coordination prior to such policies as the QDDR and other joint strategies. The notion that policy was not being coordinated until recent years reflected a need to better understand the nature of policy coordination between DOS and USAID. According to one interviewee, the longest serving official amongst the interviewees, such coordination that exists today did not exist as recently as the mid-2000s. Further, there was much more siloed thinking within the key agencies that undertake P/CVE work overseas. The interviewee provided his reflections as a diplomat and scholar working on the TSCTP region during that period, stating:

> My impression was that there was not much coordination then. Everyone was doing their own thing. With AFRICOM, there was better amalgamation, but DOD had all the money and the civilians did not have much in terms of CVE. Not sure that has changed. The military had the money and so much of this was being done by the military, but there were pseudo development projects that DOD was not suited for. But USAID had better expertise and follow up ability to ensure sustainability. So, implementation was problematic. DOD was kinetic too and was not focused on the development aspects. (Interviewee B, April 2019)

In examining this statement, it shows that prior to the emergence of joint strategies and coordinated policy, agencies tended to do their own things with less regard to interagency coordination and sustainability. Thus, the implementation of the QDDR and joint strategies was a distinct break from those past practices of siloed thinking and non-coordinated policy. This reflects an important aspect of policy evolution moving significantly toward favoring interagency approaches.

However, while the interviews demonstrated that there was clear break from prior approaches that lacked coordination, the interviewees' explanations and recollections lacked a comprehensive and detailed explanation of how and why that occurred. That is largely because few diplomats, development officials, and defense professionals examine P/CVE purely from a policy and strategy perspective, from the agency levels down to the point of implementation. Also, this evolution occurred over a span of many years, and without a specific study on the manner in which these policies evolved, it would be nearly impossible for an individual to be able to capture the necessary level of detail to understand and explain exactly how this evolution occurred. Therefore, to capture the necessary information for robust analysis requires going to the original source material, the policies, and strategies themselves.

USAID is an independent executive agency, but it is not a Cabinet-level agency like the DOS. This is particularly important in the case of USAID, as foreign aid is a subset of foreign policy, which is guided by DOS. USAID is led by an administrator, not a cabinet secretary as in the case of the DOS, and the administrator's authorities are delegated by the U.S. Secretary of State (USAID, ADS 101, p. 5). As such, the Secretary

of State, and thus the DOS, maintains considerable influence over USAID programs,

through such mechanisms as funding oversight and policy agenda setting, as stated in the

delegation of authorities from the Secretary of State to the Administrator (NARA, 2007,

p.1). This is also particularly relevant in the case of P/CVE, as both USAID and DOS

have considerable P/CVE roles. The DOS maintains a Bureau of Counterterrorism and

Countering Violent Extremism, which has been reformed several times since 1972 (DOS,

2019), including the CVE component as recently as 2016 (Foreign Policy, 2016). Given

this, it is a policy agenda item that has been at the forefront of both USAID and DOS, and

thus requiring extensive coordination for implementation and continuing reforms.

Further, all executive agencies take overall direction from the President of the

United States, from such documents and processes as the National Security Strategy

(NSS), which presents and emphasizes the most important national security topics

according to the administration. These NSS policy issues are important for the agencies

to understand as those are likely to be the areas that will be, or have already been,

focused on and resourced, and will continue to be so in the immediate future. Further, it

is often the case that agency leadership has been advocating within the interagency and to

the president for those topics to be included in the NSS, and therefore work is often

already ongoing in those policy areas. (CSIS, 2017, p. 11). For example, both QDDR

documents in 2010 and 2015 respectively, were heavily focused on P/CVE related topics

and a result of DOS-USAID coordination, and were thus critical documents submitted to

the National Security Council (NSC) for NSS coordination (CSIS, 2017, p. 167). Of

additional note, this is a relevant example in the way in which policy feedback has had

affects within the P/CVE policy coordination and evolution, a topic that will be further explored in the next chapter.

The NSS provides guidance on both foreign and domestic policy. It is among the most important foreign policy guidance documents within the U.S. government and thus provides important direct foreign policy guidance to the lead foreign affairs agency for the U.S., the DOS. Because the department is the lead foreign affairs agency, much of USAID's foreign aid policy focus is coordinated with and even guided by the DOS. This coordination is reflected within USAID's policy framework, explaining the leadership lines of authority as, "Taking its direction from the United States' National Security Strategy (NSS) and the DOS and USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), the Policy Framework translates the goals outlined in the NSS and JSP specifically for USAID" (USAID, 2019, p. 6). As such, there is a built-in system of policy control and coordination at the agency level between the DOS and USAID and originating with the White House's NSS.

Given the overall importance of the NSS, understanding the level of attention that is placed on P/CVE helps shed light on the nature of policy emphasis the White House and the NSC place on an issue. The NSS documents were the first set of policies analyzed, ranging from the first being Ronald Reagan's 1987 NSS to the most recent being Donald Trump's 2017 NSS. And while the pre-9/11 NSS documents were outside the core scope of this study, it was important to gain a broad understanding of how P/CVE and its predecessor concepts evolved. As will be discussed further in this study, the NSS documents generally focused on similar foreign policy related concepts over

time but shifted focus at times according to global challenges and policy trends, P/CVE policy being one of those trends.

Each NSS offered somewhat differing guidance and emphasis from previous NSS documents. However, not every NSS was always materially dissimilar. Some administrations tended to build upon themselves from prior years, particularly absent punctuating events, just as some administrations opted to not issue many NSSs until they felt the need for an update. But every administration issued them, without exception, and thus made it possible to understand how each administration perceived how countering extremism, and its related policy concepts, fit within the broader policy framework. It also reflected how each administration understood those issues and, in some cases, ignored them. Quantifying these concepts helped provide insight to better understand how the topic of countering extremism compared to other dominant topics such as the military, defense, diplomacy, and terrorism. Thus, it reflects that while P/CVE is a relevant policy topic today, it remains relatively small and emergent.

For the purposes of this study, and particularly in relation to the first two themes, the NSS offered important data relevant to understanding the nature of policy coordination. After all, the NSS is the senior most foreign policy document in the United States, and all other agencies' strategies and policies should take guidance from the current NSS. In this sense, government policy is intrinsically hierarchical.

The NSS documents highlighted punctuated periods of extreme policy change, often leading to wholistic policy reorientation, such as the fall of the Soviet Union and the attacks on September 11, 2001. It also reflects policy topics that have remained

dominant over the past 30 years. In this respect, it highlights periods of path dependency when viewed through that theoretical lens. The NSS documents reflected periods of policy uncertainty and radical redirection to attempt to deal with periods of domestic and international shock and change. And in this case, it helps offer explanations when viewed through the lens of punctuated equilibrium. As we will explore, P/CVE policies were equally affected by these punctuated changes and burst onto the scene in 2010 and 2015 and remain a relevant albeit less dominant policy topic today.

In addition to the NSS, there have been other important White House generated policies that affected USAID's focus on P/CVE. Even more central to P/CVE was the Obama administration's direct focus on CVE, President Obama spoke about CVE in several international forums, including in a UN General Assembly speech in 2014, where he called for greater focus to identify and mitigate the underlying grievances that feed into violent extremism and advocated for specific tools such as religious leader engagement, improving civil society in troubled regions, and youth engagement (The White House, 2015). He also directly contributed to CVE related objectives, with the June 2009 speech in Cairo titled, "A New Beginning," which advocated for interfaith dialogue, democracy and improved governance, and other P/CVE related themes often attributed to grievances that lead to radical extremism (The White House, 2009). To illustrate how such policy and direct White House engagement leads to USAID P/CVE policy and implementation, the agency implemented programs in concert with this speech, organizing a "Regional Conference on The Role of Religious Leaders in Advancing Development in Asia," which brought together over 70 religious leaders

around the region to discuss interfaith understanding (The White House, 2009).

Prior to these P/CVE related policy speeches in Cairo and the UNGA, some of the earliest modern P/CVE related thinking was defined by President Obama in the Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-6. This document gave explicit importance to the role of development in contributing to national security objectives. Thus, PPD-6 served to mobilize and link development resources with national security. PPD-6 also demonstrates policy coordination by referencing the NSS, stating:

Through an aggressive and affirmative development agenda and commensurate resources, we can strengthen the regional partners we need to help us stop conflicts and counter global criminal networks; build a stable, inclusive global economy with new sources of prosperity; advance democracy and human rights; and ultimately position ourselves to better address key global challenges by growing the ranks of prosperous, capable, and democratic states that can be our partners in the decades ahead (White House, 2010, p. 4).

While PPD-6 never explicitly provided guidance on P/CVE, it spoke frequently on issues directly attributed to root causes of violent extremism, such as working to help countries emerge from poor governance and instability, as well as to disrupt global criminal networks and emerge from post-conflict challenges (White House, 2010, p. 4). Further, the PPD-6 was used as another key referenced policy document for DOS-USAID policy coordination, such as in the 2010 QDDR, which will be discussed below.

Also taking guidance from the NSS are other key policy documents within the DOS and jointly with USAID. Among the two most important documents include the

2010 and 2015 QDDR and the DOS-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). Looking first at the 2010 and 2015 QDDR documents, we see some of the first and most significant elements of policy coordination taking place as it pertains to P/CVE, and DOS-USAID strategy in general. The 2010 QDDR lays out policy coordination requirements between USAID and DOS, which also mentions and fulfills congressionally mandated federal compliance within the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, which requires federal goals to be aligned with the agencies' Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan (U.S. Department of State, 2011, para. 1). In serving this coordination function, it serves not only as the first QDDR, which is a broad strategic DOS-USAID review, but also simultaneously functions as the first DOS-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (U.S. Department of State, 2011, para. 4). These documents serve as some of the most important P/CVE related policy coordination, but also look well beyond P/CVE specifically.

P/CVE issues only get explicitly mentioned in the 2010 QDDR 13 times. However, it is not as much about how often it is mentioned, but rather the philosophical shift in thinking that the 2010 QDDR represents. This shift in thinking is the result of long growing interest in orienting non-military responsibilities in unstable regions, including in counterinsurgency and stabilization operations, away from an abundant reliance on the armed forces and toward USAID and DOS personnel and tools. This approach is emphasized in the 2010 QDDR stating,

> Civilian power is the combined force of civilian personnel across all federal
> agencies advancing America's core interests in the world. Leading through
> civilian power is required by the nature of the problems we face in the 21st

century. Even the world's finest military cannot defeat a virus, stop climate

change, prevent the spread of violent extremism, or make peace in the Middle

East. (U.S. Department of State, 2010, pg. 1)

The 2010 QDDR also does three other important things as it pertains to PCVE.

First, the QDDR begins by making a key point of focus on P/CVE issues, discussing it

first in its list of most urgent threats requiring diplomatic and development attention,

stating the Department and USAID will focus on "…violent extremism, nuclear

proliferation, climate change, and economic shocks that could set back global prosperity"

(U.S. Department of State, 2010, p. iii). Doing so places P/CVE right at the center of the

discussion for USAID's and DOS's strategies, and thus reinforces the need for resource

support for those endeavors. Secondly, it brings into existence a new P/CVE policy

coordinating entity at DOS and discusses another at USAID, both of which focus on CVE

and counterterrorism, which is Department's Bureau for Counterterrorism (which was

later changed to counterterrorism and countering violent extremism), and USAID's work

under the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA),

including the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), and the Office of Conflict,

Management, and Mitigation. (CMM) (DOS, 2010, p. 132). Finally, making clear the

intent to use strategic communications as a significant tool in CVE, the document

introduces the interagency focused, Center for Strategic Counterterrorism

Communications, meant to "coordinate, orient, and inform whole-of-government

communications activities targeted against violent extremism to audiences abroad" (DOS,

2010, p. 62). Given these changes, the 2010 introduced important coordination

mechanisms, as well as advanced P/CVE into policy and strategy. In addition, some of these organizations, tools, and concepts were developed further in the 2015 QDDR and the current DOS-USAID JSP, which will be further expounded upon below.

The 2015 QDDR served the same overall function of the 2010 QDDR but advanced the effort of broadening the conceptual understanding of issues and practices relevant to modern P/CVE in the interagency. By 2015, USAID had its own CVE policies and guides in place, which evolved from the policy frontier-pushing 2009 Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism (USAID, 2009) and the 2009 Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: Guide to Programming (USAID, 2009). While these 2009 documents introduced important concepts and methodologies, they were developed to initiate the broader conversation to advance what is known about CVE (USAID, 2009, p. iii) and to offer methodological approaches to understand the environmental context and how to use existing development tools to design CVE programs (USAID, 2009, p. i). These guides appear to have succeeded in generating greater interest in USAID's role in countering extremism, as it was soon followed by other higher-level policies that advanced DOS's and USAID's role and focus on P/CVE related tasks, including the DOS's QDDR, The White House's PPD-6, and USAID's The Development Response to the Drivers of Violent Extremism and Insurgency (USAID, 2011). Thus, this strongly suggests USAID's leading efforts in interagency P/CVE policy and strategy coordination.

The nature of how these policies influence other subsequent policies at differing levels lends additional value for using policy feedback theory for explanatory purposes to understand how P/CVE policy linkage and coordination has occurred. USAID's

Development Response to the Drivers of Violent Extremism and Insurgency not only

solidified USAID's role with the issuance of a formal P/CVE policy, but it also moved

forward the understanding of how development tools can be harnessed to counter violent

extremism. Up to that point, the use of non-lethal development tools to counter violent

extremism had long been theorized within the academic community, and relatively well

understood within the broader development community, but was rarely explicitly found

in formal development policy.

The documented policy was also an important step forward for coordination

purposes. As reflected in the literature review, USAID, and its predecessor agencies, have

long used various development tools to counter extremism in its various forms and as

such the concept is nothing new. Yet, little of that work was consolidated into a formal

policy to develop a common understanding within the agency and that could be shared

with other government agencies tasked with working in and on CVE challenges. Such

policies, even during the nascent years of USAID's P/CVE policy development, helped

create a shared understanding of USAID's capabilities, and thereby seemingly generated

increased enthusiasm in non-military P/CVE approaches, as evidenced by President

Obama's foreign policy agenda and subsequent DOS-USAID joint policies.

The DOS-USAID JSP takes its lead from the National Security Strategy and

serves as the "guiding document for the development of all bureau and mission strategic

plans for FY 2018-2022" (Dept. of State & USAID, 2018, p. 16). As such, this document

simultaneously takes direction from higher level strategies, such as the NSS, while also

guiding lower level strategies, such as the DOS's Integrated Country Strategy (ICS),

USAID's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) at regional missions,

USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) for individual bi-lateral

countries in which USAID works, and bureau level strategies in DOS and USAID (U.S.

Department of State, 2019, para. 2). The JSP's primary objective, which is to ensure

coordinated policy and strategy through the JSP process, is highlighted in the Foreign

Affairs Manual, stating that "Robust, coordinated strategic planning processes are

essential to make informed decisions; develop innovative ways to cope with tight

budgets; prioritize resources; ensure alignment with key policies and improve the way we

do business" (DOS, 2019, para. 1). The 2010 QDDR, which laid out these policy

coordination requirements also served as the first JSP, simultaneously creating, while

also implementing this policy of strategy coordination within DOS and USAID, ensuring

policy coordination and compliance (DOS, 2019). The 2015 QDDR, served as the next

iteration of the JSP and further progressed P/CVE concepts while also solidifying this

policy coordination approach.

The 2015 QDDR was followed by the 2018-2020 JSP. However, the 2015 QDDR

is particularly noteworthy in that its focus on P/CVE helped facilitate the first DOS-

USAID joint strategy on CVE, which emerged in 2016, titled the DOS & USAID Joint

Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016).

This joint strategy placed a direct focus on P/CVE policy coordination between the

primary foreign affairs agency, the DOS, and the primary foreign aid agency, USAID.

Reflecting the extensive policy coordination between DOS and USAID in the

field of P/CVE, the DOS & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism is a

product of multiple policy documents that are referenced throughout the document. The policy and strategy documents in which this P/CVE strategy derives from includes an array of documents. These include USAID's 2010 The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency, The White House's 2011 U.S. National Strategy on Counterterrorism, President Obama's 2014 UN General Assembly CVE speech, the White House's 2015 National Security Strategy, the 2015 White House Summit on Violent Extremism, several more focused regional CVE summits, and the 2015 QDDR (U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). By referencing so many P/CVE policies and strategies over a range of years, it helped coalesce, summarize, and bring up to date previous documentation.

This attempt at summarizing such an array of key policy documents is ambitious in that it used twelve pages to discuss a very wide range of issues covered in several robust policy and strategy documents, topics ranging from defining CVE, shared governance and stabilization end-states, the five strategic objectives, the approaches and methods to achieving these objectives, prioritization criteria, the need to measure results and effects, and finally the importance of sound implementation. Further, while less materially substantive, it sought to do this in as few of pages as possible, breaking from the often lengthy hundred-plus page policy documents, thus helping ensure readability in understaffed and overworked agencies. While it provided nothing materially new, this consolidation of focus makes this document important to a coordinated approach. However, as we will explore, this is the last substantive document that follows this integrated DOS-USAID P/CVE approach, as the new Trump administration brought in a

different posture and ideology toward the use of P/CVE as a foreign policy tool.

Despite the strong emphasis since roughly 2009 on foreign aid as a tool for P/CVE, the future trajectory of P/CVE and level of interagency coordination is less certain due to recent broader policy shifts that in part affect P/CVE policy and resource levels. The latest iteration of the NSS has in some ways reoriented foreign policy toward a stronger reliance upon the hard power defense tools and resources and a greater focus on disengaging with regions that are experiencing violent extremism. To expound, the "America First" policy is frequently referenced as the foreign policy approach in the 2017 NSS, and focuses on defense buildups, cybersecurity capability, American prosperity, "peace through strength," and relatively vague references to American influence (White House, 2017, p. 4). As such, with the new administration beginning in early 2017, there has been a notable shift in the P/CVE policy approach, reflecting a decreased interest in using foreign aid for P/CVE. Yet, this is not to say the new administration's policy is entirely devoid of P/CVE interests, as the 2017 NSS reinforces general approaches that could be used toward solving specific P/CVE challenges, such as anticorruption interventions in poorly governed regions and private-sector-led engagement in poverty affected regions (White House, 2017). However, due to the lack of publicly available documents as to what that means for P/CVE policy changes and resource levels, it is unclear beyond those statements the specific nature of how that policy will be implemented in USAID.

What can be understood from the 2017 NSS is that the focus is a more limited set of intervention options. Private sector led development may prove uniquely challenging

to implement. As acknowledged by the World Bank, private-sector-led engagement is uniquely challenging as a P/CVE tool as adversely affected regions introduce higher than average risks for private sector led implementation and sustainability due to such challenges as capital and human resource flight, often referred to as brain drain (World Bank, 2011). Nevertheless, anticorruption interventions are among the most widely referenced tools for P/CVE, albeit not as a panacea due to the differing push or pull factors contributing to violent extremism in a respective region. In short, while both approaches have acknowledged merit in certain circumstances relative to the drivers of violent extremism, neither are a panacea. Also, while the 2017 places far less emphasis on foreign aid, it does not mandate the cessation of P/CVE tools and programs. This may come down to funding and therefore if Congress provides the funding. As has long been the case with development program funds around the world, should P/CVE related earmarks on program funds continue, then P/CVE may continue steadily as it has over the past decade or so. While the White House's interest in P/CVE, and the Congress's interest in funding it, has little bearing on the immediate quality of policy development and intervention, as those are tasks at the DOS and USAID level, it will affect the policy viability of P/CVE in the future.

The White House's 2018 Counterterrorism Strategy derives from the 2017 NSS and reinforces many of the same points, such as the "America First" doctrine. It aims to go into greater detail regarding how the administration wishes to employ development and diplomacy to prevent and counter violent extremism. Like previous policies, it promotes the use of strategic communications, bilateral and multilateral diplomatic

engagement, burden sharing, information sharing, private-sector-led development, and a

focus on developing local solutions to identify and mitigate grievances that extremists

exploit (White House, 2018). While all those tools are advocated by many P/CVE

experts, albeit not universally, the historic existence of those concepts are reflected in the

literature review of this study. Further, those approaches have long been employed in

P/CVE interventions in some regions by DOS and USAID and thus are not novel

approaches to the field of P/CVE. However, as noted in the interviews, those approaches

are not always suitable to all environments, especially private sector led approaches in

deeply unstable regions. Given this, in contrast to the NSS, it demonstrates an interest in

maintaining soft power tools to fight counterterrorism. This is yet further reflected in the

NSS chart analysis in that extremism and development are still topics of relative

importance. As we have seen, the differences with previous administrations may come

down to terminological differences as much as ideological policy differences. In short,

there is no clear evidence that P/CVE will dissipate due to recent changes in

administration.

  While the documentation reflects a well-coordinated approach over many years to

P/CVE policy making, foreign aid is not implemented in Washington, and thus an

analysis must be made between as to how the level of coordination between Washington

policy making and the implementation in the field. For the purposes of this study, the

case study for analysis is the TSCTP, which USAID has primarily contributed to via the

Peace Through Development (PDEV) program iterations (i.e., PDEV and PDEV II). It is

noteworthy that the documentation reflects that policy interlinkages from Washington

(White House, DOS, and USAID policies) to the field is done through a similar

relationship with various levels of collaboration between DOS, USAID, DOD, and

several USAID missions throughout the West Africa region. Many of these USAID

missions also have their own P/CVE programs independent of the regional mission, as

does the Office of Transition Initiatives, an independent office (USAID, 2016). These

independent P/CVE programs operate in TSCTP countries to include Niger, Mauritania,

and Mali, which in some cases are shared development spaces with the USAID/West

Africa regional mission programs (USAID, 2016). To coordinate these many efforts,

USAID holds frequent coordination meetings under the guidance of a specialized CVE

office, which is appropriately named The CVE Unit (USAID, 2016). The CVE Unit is

located in USAID/West Africa's Regional Peace and Governance Office in Accra,

Ghana, and is comprised of six USAID technical officials, one U.S. Special Forces

officer, an OTI Senior Regional Specialist, and a USAID technical specialist located in

Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and even including a non-TSCTP country,

Cameroon (USAID, 2016). The CVE Unit has the mandate to "think regionally; promote

interagency, intra-USAID collaboration; and be a focal point for coordination, learning,

planning and management of USAID CVE programming in West Africa" (USAID, 2016,

p. 6). In short, regional P/CVE coordination and communication is the CVE unit's

primary objective.

The regional responsibility of USAID's contribution to TSCTP falls to the

USAID/West Africa regional mission. While recently concluded, USAID's primary

regional TSCTP related programs was its Peace Through Development, launched in 2009

to better coordinate USAID's CVE related programs and to address cross-border challenges through a regional platform (USAID, 2016). When PDEV launched in 2009, it focused on only two countries, Chad and Niger, for the initial three-year program (USAID, 2016). However, seeing PDEV as a success, it then expanded to include Burkina Faso in 2011 with the launch of PDEV II, another five-year program, and thereafter also included Cameroon (USAID, 2016). The program concluded in 2016, having spent approximately $61 million over its five-year life (IRD, 2016). However, PDEV II has since been replaced by numerous other programs currently underway, including such multi-country regional programs as Partnerships for Peace (P4P), Peace Through Evaluation Learning and Adapting (PELA), Conflict Early Warning and Response, Mitigating Election Violence Through National Early Warning Systems (NEWS), Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data (REWARD) (USAID, 2019). Due to those programs recently launching, and their sensitivities, little public documentation is available, and thus no further analysis on those programs can be offered.

Yet, USAID/West Africa has a dedicated group committed to P/CVE coordination and that serves as an extraordinary feature that goes beyond ordinary practices, but such practices should ostensibly help the mission to fully meet USAID policy requirements for coordination. To expound, the Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) and the Regional Development Cooperation Strategies (RDCS) are mandated by USAID, which can be found in ADS Chapter 201, Program Cycle Operations Policy. It states" A CDCS defines a Mission's goal and objectives for

an agreed-upon period of time, based on a given level of resources, and supports DOS-USAID Joint Regional Strategies, Integrated Country Strategies (ICSs) and the DOS-USAID Joint Strategic Plan" (USAID, 2019, p. 13). Being that USAID's West Africa mission is regional, it uses the RDCS framework for the 21 countries it works within (USAID, Regional Development Cooperation Strategy, p. 2), Thus, it can be surmised that The CVE Unit contributes to P/CVE regional policy coordination as well as regional P/CVE programming, just as OTI contributes to the USAID/Mali CDCS on P/CVE related issues (USAID, 2015).

Looking beyond country and regional strategies, and close to the point of implementation, it becomes a study of bureaucratic contracting management and oversight processes, most of which is beyond the scope of this study due to the required level of detail and unrelated technical contracting processes outside of the technical aspects of P/CVE programs. In short, it becomes more about procurement, program design, oversight and management, all of which are governed by unique technical policy manuals rather than by P/CVE policy. The actual programs are also typically implemented by an "implementing partner" (e.g., a non-governmental organization) who follows the guidance written in the grant or contract. Such implementation is broadly overseen by a Contracting Officer (CO) or Agreement Officer (AO), but more intimately managed in the field by their designated Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).

For the purposes of this study, it is enough to summarize the responsibilities of the COR/AOR as technical liaison between the CO/AO and the implementer, and of

paramount importance, to ensure the implementer is achieving the grant's or contract's intended purpose (USAID, 2019). Such management processes are set forth in policy found int ADS Chapter 300 Functional Series, to ensure the awards and the appropriate guiding policies are being implemented as designed (USAID, 2019). Thus, the implementing partners implement programs that should at that point be clearly linked to policy. The previous paragraphs established that the policy flows from the highest levels down to the country and regional missions. From the missions, implementation is carried out and therefore it can be reasonably concluded that the P/CVE awards are coordinated with higher level policy and strategy.

In summary, there are multiple levels of policy coordination and interlinkages from the White House down to the point of implementation. There are the highest-level policies and strategies, including the NSS, which are issued every few years, to joint DOS-USAID policy and strategy, to USAID agency level strategy, to regional and country level strategy and policy. At the point of implementation, a relationship based in management and oversight between USAID and the implementer is established through extensive policy and regulation. Given this extensive documentation trail that reflects a significant focus on policy and strategy coordination, it can be concluded that P/CVE policy coordination occurs at throughout all levels. Yet, it is important to point out that this is not a conclusion that P/CVE policy is being developed and implemented appropriately or even effectively, as that is beyond the scope of this study, but only to conclude that P/CVE policy and strategy is reasonably well coordinated from the highest levels of government, down to the point where it is implemented in the target region.

Theme 2: Shifting policies have reflected coordinated periods of policy change, from high-level national P/CVE policies and strategies to the regional P/CVE strategies. As such, the policy documents reflect distinct P/CVE policy phases.

In this theme, I discuss P/CVE policy coordination and some of the ways in which the policies connect, as well as some of the characteristics of these connections. To begin, there has long been an interest in the importance of policy coordination. As Hudson, Hunter, and Peckham argued, poor policy coordination can undermine the best of intentions if such coordination fails to be inclusive, and if enough common ground is not sufficiently established (2010). P/CVE is no exception and the policy coordination processes suggest that awareness of this principle is necessary.

The interviews, literature, and policy documentation reflected considerable policy coordination over time. And while the fact that the coordination is occurring is important, this study does not yield an opinion regarding the quality of that coordination as it is beyond the scope of the study. However, this theme reflects the notion that coordination has occurred, and that the nature of the coordination can be discernible through a clear recollection by interviewees as well as a robust policy documentation trail. Further, these changes can be classified into various phases over time, which help reveal the level of importance each administration placed on P/CVE policy in relation to other competing policy agenda issues.

During the interview phase, it became clear that distinct P/CVE policy and strategy phases were being identified by interviewees. When the interviewees were discussing P/CVE at the higher levels of governmental policy making, they often

referenced specific administrations and how they maintained specific interests, and how they perceived those interests shifting from one administration to another. This was particularly salient in discussing the way in which the current administration viewed P/CVE in contrast to those of previous administrations. However, in other cases, interviewees discussed similarities between administrations, including administrations from decades prior to current policy and practice.

As will be discussed in specific detail, these P/CVE phases are quite clearly defined in the National Security Strategy documents. Yet, NSS policies, and how those specific strategies evolved were not discussed by interviewees. Rather, interviewees spoke of the administration that directly affected their work at a specific point in time and which was most relevant to them, such as the P/CVE related policies of the administration in office during their time undertaking this work. For example, when an interviewee was asked about what events they thought influenced regional or agency P/CVE policy, he stated,

> The election of Trump for one. I think those people have seen the lack of progress in CT [counterterrorism] work. The higher-level task forces have seen no real progress. The Togo Togo [Mali] ambush was the single biggest foreign policy disaster of the Trump administration. Then they responded badly. Today, USAID is poorly set up to respond to CVE. (Interviewee A, April 2019)

Further, the tendency to examine and reflect on P/CVE through political administrations' respective policy interests extended to other interviewees as well, particularly those interviewees with a breadth of experience acquired over many years, as

well as with those who have conducted scholarly analysis of P/CVE. For example, one academic specializing in violent extremism, discussed how various administrations shifted the policies of P/CVE over time, each adding to the other. The interviewee stated,

> CVE was politically appealing as a smart use of soft power. Obama continued the CVE angle. For many years, the State Department had criminal justice training institutes for ROL [Rule of Law] work and civil society capacity. Those networks and institutions were in place. They seem to be continuing that work, but it was in place since President Clinton began focusing on law enforcement and justice departments as foreign policy to stop crime. So, CVE brings together a bunch of stuff. It can be distinctive but also is adaptations of preexisting things. It is the most significant thing since 9/11 as a policy. (Interviewee E, May 2019)

This tendency to discuss specific administrations was not limited to only these interviewees. Rather, every interviewee discussed in some way how specific policy periods existed and which affected their own work. Given that trend, it was important to examine how each administration focused, or opted not to focus, on P/CVE and related policies. To that end, the most effective and efficient method was to examine the National Security Strategies.

In addition, interviewees also identified specific events that they felt shifted the ways in which the U.S. P/CVE policy evolved. Several interviewees identified specific events that they felt affected not only broad P/CVE policy, but also regional policy in the TSCTP region. The policies identified were drawn from their own understanding and experiences as few individuals have analyzed from the perspective of how each event

affected broad P/CVE policy. For this reason, it was necessary to triangulate these perspectives with policy documents to determine which events were cited and examined within P/CVE policies, as well as to understand how those events were used for learning and policy development.

In examining the most cited events, all interviewees discussed that September 11, 2001 was the most pivotal point affecting P/CVE policy. This was expected considering the magnitude of the event and that it led to ongoing conflicts that affects foreign policy even today. Yet, several other interviewees also focused on less well-known events that they considered centrally important to how P/CVE policy has shifted. The events discussed varied, from major news events, to more arcane events that likely only regional policy specialists may follow. The interviewees' cited events included the following:

- 2017 ambush in Togo Togo, Mali (Interviewee A, April 2019; Interviewee C, April 2019)

- Embassy bombings of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya (Interviewee B, April 2019; Interviewee D, May 2019)

- Fall of Muammar Gaddafi (Interviewee B, April 2019)

- Rise of violent extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda, ISIS, Boko Haram, and al-Shabab militant groups (Interviewee C, April 2019; Interviewee D, May 2019; Interviewee F, May 2019)

- Bombing of the USS Cole in 2000 (Interviewee D, May 2019)

- Death of Osama bin Laden (Interviewee F, May 2019)

- 2012 coup d'état in Mali (Interviewee G, July 2019)

Each of these events in some way altered or affected American foreign policy, and

especially so in those regions most directly affected by these events. But each event

occurred within its own specific circumstances and led to specific changes. The

underlying message conveyed by interviewees was that P/CVE policies evolved due to

continuously evolving circumstances, and as an effect, policy adjustments were made

over time and by various administrations. Yet, the broad nature of these referenced events

reflected the need to analyze more specifically how those events may have shaped P/CVE

policy priorities by USAID and DOS over time, and particularly how they affected

presidential priorities found in the NSS. To successfully undertake such a task with

enough documentary evidence to support any such conclusion, a thorough examination of

the policy documents was necessary.

The literature suggests that P/CVE policy change has occurred predominantly for

the key reason that ongoing conflicts have necessitated ongoing P/CVE policy and

strategy examination and improvement. That is not a new understanding, as it is well

known, and critically discussed in the scholarly community and throughout the news

media, that the U.S. has been in significant perpetual conflict for almost two decades.

This naturally has brought on countless foreign policy changes across a broad spectrum

of interventions. But that has consequences, and for the purposes of this study, one of

those consequences involves the rise and growth of P/CVE policies and implementation.

This has led to increased resources for P/CVE and it is therefore not surprising that policy

makers, leaders, and practitioners, have become increasingly involved in P/CVE policy.

Through the National Security Strategy, the highest U.S. national security policy

document, the importance was heavily driven by the U.S. President Barrack Obama and was subsequently supported by senior government leaders, including the Secretaries of State, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, and several USAID administrators. The many conferences, policy papers, academic papers, evaluations, and other documents support this notion of heightened interest of many parties.

Yet, while numerous entities have contributed to P/CVE over the years, and continue to do so, P/CVE evolution has been relatively well organized in terms of policy coordination and lineage. This is especially the case post-2010 following the release of some of the earliest and still relevant P/CVE policies within USAID and the DOS. There is also a discernible trail of intellectual breadcrumbs that can be identified prior to 2010, during the time in which there was a growing interest in finding ways in which civilian entities could support in the effort against violent extremism. This study developed an audit trail approach to tracing P/CVE foreign aid related policy documents and public policy statements from the highest levels (e.g., the NSS) to the region and country level strategies (e.g., USAID's West Africa RDCS). This provides observable periods of change as well as interlinkages throughout the years.

The study, inclusive of policy documentation and interviewee feedback, demonstrates that policy interlinkage and coordination is an important factor for policy evolution over time. Further, in a field defined by so many definitional variations, these policy interlinkages served to strengthen the guidance for a richer understanding of P/CVE concepts and goals. These policies, and the supporting documentation of the policies, serve as memorialized evidence of leadership efforts toward providing guidance.

Yet, within USAID, this clear policy interlinkage was largely absent until the publication of the 2010 NSS, which helped solidify P/CVE within the agency. This policy guidance has served important functions.

Perhaps most importantly, the 2010 NSS assisted in obtaining resource allocation, which in turn has further facilitated the implementation of P/CVE policies. Certainly, without resources, the ability to implement the respective policy is compromised, and without effective implementation the policy has little to no value. The implementation of policies, which invariably requires resources, is thus arguably the most important litmus tests of the perceived value of a policy in the eyes of government leadership. The level of resources and attention placed upon P/CVE in recent years points to the fact that it has been an important policy. This was reinforced by several interviewees concluding that P/CVE was often seen more as a funding mechanism. As one interviewee stated, "I think it's a way of disbursing funds. I have been told by officials that there is no violent extremism in the region but then they're using that platform to fund projects labeled CVE" (Interviewee D, March 2019). Therefore, in examining the multi-faceted growth in P/CVE through the eyes of interviewees, particularly since 2010, P/CVE has proven to be important at all levels of government. This is further reinforced when examining the increase in resource levels, and the way in which funding has been specifically allocated for P/CVE interventions. Thus, this reflects the notion that P/CVE has been a significant foreign policy focus in recent years, and further reinforces the notion that P/CVE has rapidly evolved.

Turning to the examination of the policy documents, policy coordination has

proven important in understanding policy evolution. Numerus changes have been incorporated into policy documents through such long-standing programs as the TSCTP. This then feeds into additional policy updates over time, reflecting what amounts to stark differences between P/CVE policy between predecessor policies during the GWOT phase versus current policies that comprise a more distinct focus on the nuances of preventing violent extremism. In this sense, it is a type of policy feedback loop that suggests learning and modification have continued to occur over time.

Clear internal guidance and policy enables P/CVE practitioners to understand how policy makers define the often complex and amorphous nature of P/CVE foreign aid interventions. This guidance is important in that it enables practitioners to better design programs to meet the expectations of policy makers and senior leaders and provide more useful feedback on lessons learned over time. The importance of this was reinforced by interviewees who expressed the value of joint USAID-DOS QDDR documents, USAID's VEI policy, and DOS's counterterrorism guidance. As one interviewee stated, "When it comes to the recent stuff, I look at the CVE [VEI] strategy from USAID" (Interviewee C, March 2019) Yet another interviewee emphasized the importance of the QDDR and USAID's VEI strategy, as well as a need to move beyond a reliance upon military led approaches, stating:

> Those two internal documents, the QDDR and the USAID VEI strategy, are the
> most important. Without those two there is nothing to begin with. Beyond those
> two documents, there have not been much else. The policy makers say kinetic
> actions on the ground and DOD work was often reinforcing the grievances.

Interviewee G, April 2019)

Given the distinct P/CVE phases of evolution over time, the documentary evidence, in support of interviewee assertions, provided an informational audit trail of documentation and testimony, suggesting that this feedback loop has indeed been operating in the intended manner to enable coordination as well as to provide guidance from the agency level down to the point of implementation.

However, while this policy feedback loop appears to have been functional over the years, that is not to say that it is perfect, or even if those policies are leading to effective interventions, just that the communication and coordination is occurring today, and that the documentation analysis and interviewee testimonies suggest this is a relatively new phenomenon due to recent key policy guidance, to include joint strategies. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, the evidence suggests that the ongoing changes in P/CVE policy thinking are also a factor in why P/CVE continuously takes new forms and evolves.

Change generates change, and each new adjustment renews attention on the topic and invites scrutiny and reform, leading to ongoing changes over time. This phenomenon is also not surprising in that policy makers and senior leaders are constantly in flux, and each new individual brings with them their own set of interests, ideologies, and experiences. In turn, these leadership differences affect the way in which policy is drafted, interpreted, and implemented. One interviewee, a well published CVE scholar, summed up the important relationship between policy leadership and policy change:

The future is tied to politics. CVE must have sustainable policy space and have

legitimate policy objectives. We need to move beyond the glitzy new policy idea

of CVE to tried and true policies. This means we need to better understand what

works. It burst on to the scene back in the day because it had strong political

support, but that could go away. (Interviewee E, May 2019)

In sum, while there is clear evidence that P/CVE policy has been of some importance in

modern politics, the erratic nature of the policies also exposes a potential vulnerability to

its long-term sustainability and viability. As suggested by the interviewee, policy

normalization is key to P/CVE policy and conceptual sustainability. Given this, it is

imperative to understand what formal policies and strategies exist, and the way in which

they have come into existence and changed over time. Thus, it is important to understand

how P/CVE policy and strategy are viewed by current policy leaders throughout the

government, which in turn gives clues to its long-term viability. To fulfill this goal, a

document analysis is necessary.

Given this, it is important to identify the most consistent and authoritative

documents within the U.S. Government. This in turn provides a clear picture of the

national and agency level priorities, such as the level of policy importance provided to

P/CVE foreign aid policy and programs. Authoritative policies lay bare whether P/CVE

will receive policy attention and resources and are thus relevant to the broader policy

agenda. Examination of the U.S. Presidents' NSSs proved to be among the most telling

ways in which this study determined the nature of U.S. P/CVE policy evolution. Within

these documents are explanations in the way in which politics is tied to P/CVE and its

predecessor policies, such as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stabilization.

The central importance of the NSSs, and the ways in which those policies shifted focus between administrations directly affected foreign aid P/CVE policy as we know it today, as it did for a vast array of other policy issues. These shifts told a distinct story of policy change over time. Yet, the NSSs also reflect the rapidly changing nature of these policies over the decades, with only military led counterterrorism consistently well supported. However, military led counterterrorism approaches are quite different from modern P/CVE policies. As the interviewee stated above, to survive, today's concepts of P/CVE must have policy space and identified objectives. P/CVE must be normalized and move beyond being the shiny new object which may attract short-term attention but perhaps not long-term policy support.

To capture the way in which the P/CVE and predecessor policies have shifted over time, they were categorized into various P/CVE policy phases. These phases were characterized by specific events, priorities, and contexts that defined different eras of foreign policy and foreign aid, as well as P/CVE policy and the nature of its implementation. Further, while some interviewees described specific events and periods of political leadership, only the NSS documents offered the necessary specificity that was directly correlated to each Presidential administration over time. In that sense, it offered an exceedingly rare policy constant for examination. Therefore, the phases are best defined by those strategy and policy priorities described in each respective NSS. In this sense, the NSS triangulate interviewees' testimonies regarding various Presidential policy objectives over the years. Yet, the NSS documents are definitive and intractable, thus they offer far stronger support in understanding and defining these policy phases. For the

purposes of this study, not only did I developed this classification system of P/CVE

policy phases, but I also provided a rough estimate of the dates to delineate the way in

which P/CVE has evolved. These phases are as follows:

Phase 1—1980s until the Fall of the Soviet Union: State terrorism concerns

during Soviet era was characterized by worries over nuclear war,

conventional conflicts, and state-sponsored terrorism, such as from Iran

and Libya. No clear role for development in this context. P/CVE not yet

developed, but counterterrorism is a major issue. Counterinsurgency, an

early contributing field to P/CVE, has faded from mainstream policy

consciousness and is not referenced in the NSSs.

Phase 2—Fall of the Soviet Union until Sept. 11, 2001 attacks: Chaotic period of

radicalization and de-centralized terrorism. No clear development

assistance strategy in place. P/CVE not fully developed but thinking is

clearly evolving and reflects a more open and exploratory nature.

Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency are significant issues.

Phase 3—Sept. 11, 2001 attacks until approximately 2010: Largely the period

throughout the Global War on Terror. Military-centric strategy in place.

Little implementation of development as a major tool, but the discussion is

emerging on the need for new approaches rather than strict use of military

approaches. Discussion being driven by key senior government leaders,

including military leaders.

Phase 4—Approximately 2010 until 2017: This period marks the modern P/CVE

era. P/CVE thinking is beginning to take strong policy root and thinking is developing and evolving rapidly. In many ways, this reflects the beginning of a post-9/11 era, shunning the War on Terror's military heavy concepts and instead looking for new tools to confront violent extremism. This provides policy space for foreign aid to be seriously explored as a tool for P/CVE interventions. USAID is now at the national security table, literally and figuratively.

Phase 5—2017 until current period: Return to a more military-centric and defensive posture. While this phase does not mark the end of P/CVE, it places a palpable focus on military buildups, "America First" notions with less discussion of diplomacy and development, and less focus on civilian funding and capacity. Simultaneously, it places a strong focus on withdrawal from American's previous foreign policy commitments and interventions. This combination suggests a notable shift away from previous conceptualization of P/CVE under the Obama administration. However, P/CVE is not gone.

As can be surmised from these policy phases, P/CVE has derived from a long lineage of politics and policies. There has been no clear predetermined path as to how exactly P/CVE has arrived to where it is today. It has traveled a circuitous and unsure path and the future may prove to be a relatively similar trajectory.

There have also been many forms of irregular conflict interventions, and these many variants have existed for many years, many of them contributed to by civilian

organizations and agencies. Such interventions have included humanitarian aid,

stabilization operations, post-war reconstruction, counterinsurgency, and

counterterrorism, all of which have a lineage and relationship to P/CVE interventions,

albeit each with their own distinct purposes. There is no shortage of such examples of

those various forms of interventions, many of which date back many decades. However,

when it comes to the P/CVE, only since 2010 has the U.S. Government had in place fully

developed and distinct policies designed to guide foreign aid P/CVE programs. As such,

dating back over the past nine years, there is ample evidence of policy alignment at all

levels, from the White House to the DOS and to USAID. This theme will explore the

period from 2010 until today, as 2010 marks the beginning of what can best be described

as the first phase of modern P/CVE.

At the highest level, the 2010 National Security Strategy charted the course for

P/CVE, and most importantly, used the modern terminology of countering violent

extremism. Certainly, names have power and meaning in policy, primarily for the

purposes of acquiring resources and providing defined purposes of the tool, which in

turns supports policy viability. This is not to suggest that prior National Security

Strategies (NSS) did not recognize violent extremism as important. However, this study

revealed those concerns were frequently viewed through a defense policy lens, such as

that found in the NSS, and in broad and less nuanced terms, often invoking

counterterrorism. To illustrate this evolution, President George W. Bush's 2006 NSS

discussed the need for democratization to fight violent extremism and other forms of

conflict, arguing that "Because democracies are the most responsible members of the

international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability; reducing regional conflicts; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism; and extending peace and prosperity" (The White House, 2006, National Security Strategy, p. 3). While not entirely out of step with today's thinking, since the modern aperture of P/CVE interventions has broadened, and P/CVE objectives, tools, and approaches have become more defined as a distinct field. For example, similar concepts were expressed in President Barrack Obama's 2010 NSS, but the policy dealt with P/CVE approaches and counterterrorism as distinct tools. For example, the 2010 NSS states in clear P/CVE terms, "we will place renewed emphasis on deterrence and prevention by mobilizing diplomatic action, and use development and security sector assistance to build the capacity of at-risk nations and reduce the appeal of violent extremism" (White House, 2010, p. 48). This demonstrates the way in which countering violent extremism policies have evolved from more abstract conceptualizations of terrorism and extremism to a more modern and nuanced policy that embraces P/CVE policy. In this sense, President Obama's approach placed a finer and more defined point on the approach, assigning specific policy tools and resources that are to be applied, rather than vague theories and concepts. This is one such example of the way in which P/CVE policy thinking has become sharper and better defined over time, even at the highest levels of U.S. government. This is not a criticism of President Bush, as many of the Bush-era GWOT policies moved toward modern P/CVE, but it reflects the distinct challenge in shifting policies in such turbulent times.

The 2015 NSS goes even further in this shift toward soft power approaches. It

makes no attempt to hide this policy shift by stating in clear terms in the opening pages of the document, "Indeed, in the long-term, our efforts to work with other countries to counter the ideology and root causes of violent extremism will be more important than our capacity to remove terrorists from the battlefield" (White House, 2015, p. 3). The 2015 NSS provides highly detailed P/CVE approaches, many of which are foreign aid interventions, such as seeking to address underlying conditions by focusing on the mitigation of extreme poverty, inequality, and "supporting alternatives to extremist messaging and greater economic opportunities for women and disaffected youth" (White House, 2010, p. 9).

While the NSS does not seek to remove the option of military force when needed, it aims at opening the policy aperture to a new way of thinking. For example, it advocates the use of non-lethal approaches aimed more at assisting societies overcome extremism through alternatives rather than strictly through force and violence (White House, 2015). Therefore, it is not surprising that it was in this policy phase that P/CVE grew into a major foreign aid approach. It was in this period that we saw extraordinary policy coordination from the NSS documents to DOS and USAID policies.

Despite this extraordinary change over the past two decades, the future is uncertain as it pertains to P/CVE policy. This is largely because the current NSS is like NSSs found in the 1980s, where NSSs focused more on defense capabilities during the Cold War. Today this is also joined with an interest to withdraw or reduce overseas engagements and aid programs. This is not to suggest that P/CVE is ending, as it certainly is not and this work continues in many parts of the world today, including the

TSCTP, which shows no signs of ending.

Many of these programs continue today, including USAID's contributions through P/CVE related programs in West Africa. Yet, what is undeniable is that with smaller DOS and USAID budgets and resources, it is unclear how robust P/CVE policy development and implementation will remain. In short, P/CVE is now entering a new period of uncertainty which has yet to be fully written. As one interviewee, who served decades in government stated, "I've been around long enough in government to know that names change constantly. It doesn't mean the problem is any different. Changing names is about getting more attention to it. I don't really care about it as a name. But the general concept of extremism will be around for a long time to come, but it will morph over time (Interviewee B, April 2019). Given this, P/CVE policy will likely continue to evolve and change, which in part will be addressed by the next research question.

Theme 3: Some P/CVE practitioners have uncertainty about the way in which P/CVE is implemented, how it is defined, and whether it has a viable future.

This theme is unique in that it is based predominantly on interviewee feedback. As such, this is the perceptions identified as important by each of the interviewees. There are no supporting policies and strategies that can be analyzed to directly confirm these perceptions. This is in large part because policies and strategies are meant to provide guidance rather than report sentiments and perceptions. Yet, likely reflecting these oft-cited challenges involving a lack of definitional and conceptual clarity of P/CVE, particularly so soon after the development of formal policies, former USAID Administrator, Dr. Rajiv Shah, spoke of the need to clarify agency policy on the topic in

the 2011 VEI policy stating, "Clarifying USAID's role in the context of violent

extremism and insurgency does not come without controversy. Some hold strong views

on whether development agencies generally—and USAID in particular—should engage

on these issues" (USAID, 2011, p. ii). Further, as found in Appendix C, the existence of

25 policy and strategy documents issued since September 11, 2001, providing some

manner of guidance on P/CVE and predecessor policies and strategies, suggest that

policy makers have also concluded the need to continuously update and clarify guidance

Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising given these continuous changes and updates

that interviewees state some uncertainty about what exactly P/CVE aims to achieve and

how it is defined. Such frequent changes may even suggest that the policy makers

themselves continue to struggle with the right direction for P/CVE policy and strategy.

But identifying this theme of uncertainty about P/CVE policy and strategy from those

tasked with implementing these activities reflects an important point as part of this study,

which is that there are critical policy and strategy issues that still must be resolved if

P/CVE is to be truly effective and viable in the future. This in turn relates to past and

future policy evolution. These sentiments are a result of continuous and at times

bewildering levels of change, as well as an amorphous conceptual nature, bringing

together a vast array of development approaches, albeit aiming to achieve a discrete and

often highly nuanced objective guided by specific conditions and problem sets in the

field.

The interviewees generally reinforced that they believed the P/CVE policies were

in alignment, and in general agreement, with other related policy documents across the

hierarchical levels of government. Further, all the interviewees demonstrated some degree of awareness of policy related to P/CVE, respective of the time, place, and the roles and responsibilities for which they served. Yet, that is certainly not to suggest that they agreed with those policies or thought they were effective. At times, some interviewees explicitly stated they did not agree with some of the policy guidance they have received over the years and during the periods in which they performed this work, or they felt what existed is not relevant. One interviewee with several years of P/CVE related intervention experience stated:

> I do not dwell too much about policy documents. I'm interested in where the funding is appearing. To me, it doesn't matter much what people are saying if it turns out that funding isn't there. So, I am interested in connections and funding. It [P/CVE policy] is subjective, scattershot, and inconsistent. Also, some groups just use their standard approaches and try to make it fit CVE projects. (Interviewee D, May 2019)

Similarly, another interviewee with years of academic research on P/CVE, argued a similar sentiment of how P/CVE combines perhaps too many fields, and simultaneously has a perceived bias in its approaches. He stated, "We always thought that CVE was a whore covering everything. USAID funding youth, clubs, etcetera, but those who work on CVE often come from a CT perspective (Interviewee E, May 2019). Therefore, many of the perceptions of the erratic evolution of these policies, and the intellectual disagreements with some of the policy approaches that continue to exist, appears to have contributed to some doubt in these policies. These strongly worded statements also

suggest the possibility that P/CVE was never fully embraced due to these concerns, long recognized by subject matter experts and experienced implementers

Outside of any policy disagreements that may exist, there were varying levels of awareness of P/CVE policies. Those who served more recently in the field of P/CVE were generally more aware of a larger body of P/CVE policies. And while only two interviewees demonstrated a well refined knowledge of P/CVE policies, having spent years studying them, all the interviewees were at least familiar with at least one key policy they found important for P/CVE related work, particularly the policy guidance documents that helped inform field work. Each interviewee demonstrated this knowledge during the interview by citing key P/CVE related policy documents. Specifically, the interviewees discussed the below listed policy and policy analysis related documents. The documents cited spanned a broad spectrum, from multi-national policies, specific regional policies, and policy analysis. These included the following:

- USAID West African Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

- AFRICOM regional policies

- 2010 and 2015 QDDR

- UNDP Journey to Extremism

- TSCTP USAID regional evaluations

- USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) P/CVE publications

- USAID's Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism

- USAID's The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency

- The White House's National Strategy for Counterterrorism

The breadth of policies that were identified is noteworthy. Each of these identified policy guidance documents were products derived from USAID, DOS, the White House, and the United Nations, and thus most were within the scope of this study, the exception being the UN document. The breadth of these identified policies reflects a broad span of time, from before September 11, 2001 to as recently as 2018, and are indicative of the period in which the interviewee worked in the field of P/CVE. Yet, the interviewees drew predominantly from their direct experience on the topic, with the exception of two scholars who study P/CVE, this lack of broader awareness is likely a commentary on the complexity of evolving policies and the confusion in which rapidly changing policies imbues in those charged with implementing the work. That complexity pertains primarily to the difficulty in defining it, due to its nebulous and its evolving nature.

The end result of the challenges and difficulties in defining P/CVE, at least through the eyes of the practitioners, is that there is a lack of clarity not only on what P/CVE is supposed to be, or how it is distinct from other international aid tools that often resemble it, but also how it should best be implemented. As the literature review reflected, this has caused many P/CVE practitioners, policy makers, and organizational leaders, to focus on specific technical fields under the auspices of P/CVE, not dissimilar to other foreign assistance tools such as communications, health programs, youth interventions, gender work, and other such fields. This was also a finding within a broad literature review conducted by Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Culaya (2011), which argued that P/CVE literature was generally "event-driven, reactionary, and

technically oriented" (p. 4). Yet, few studies exist at the time of this study that effectively synthesize P/CVE data and interdisciplinary case studies.

Interviewees acknowledged this lack of clarity in P/CVE and at times argued that P/CVE was more of useful as a funding mechanism than a distinct approach. One highly experienced P/CVE practitioner and scholar summarized this well stating,

> I don't closely track the policy. I'm a bit cynical. I'm not sure how influential that voice is, and I feel that it is auto evolving…I'm interested in where the funding is appearing. To me, it does not matter much what people are saying if it turns out that funding is not there. (Interviewee D, May 2019)

This may reflect a clear distinction between the priorities of the P/CVE practitioners and those of policy makers. While policy makers may seek to define and harmonize policy across the hierarchical levels of government, practitioners and implementers appear more focused on whether the funds exist to operationalize the policies. This is a seemingly logical approach in distilling whether a policy is well enough established to be funded and operationalized. Therefore, it is likely that the interviewees, even those expressing policy cynicism, have at least some awareness of P/CVE policies because the resourcing of P/CVE programs have in some ways legitimized the policy.

However, this limited awareness does not necessarily reflect how deeply P/CVE is understood conceptually, or whether practitioners feel it important enough to review and incorporate the policies and guidance beyond the limited scope of their work. While this may seem like a trivial detail, it is important to note that the individual decision to not invest the time and energy in being aware of these policies, and reviewing to ensure

the guidance is fully incorporated into current programs, may reflect the lack of accountability to the policies, the lack of intellectual rigor going into the programs, and the perception that these policies and strategies are not well enough defined to be useful. All of these may point to broader issues and challenges as P/CVE continues to evolve. And while these issues more closely pertain to the quality of the policy and the way in which it is being implemented, which is beyond the scope of this study, those questions are important for future analysis, and will be particularly important for agency and organizational leadership.

While there was general awareness of P/CVE policies among interviewees, the fact that cynicism was expressed by all interviewees, and that approximately half of the interviewees stated that they felt P/CVE had no future as it currently exists, was notable. However, this is not to suggest that those interviewed believed that P/CVE would disappear, but that it would continue to evolve. Many expressed that the evolution is critical to policy survival. As one highly experienced, former senior foreign policy official stated in the interview,

> I do not really care about its name. But the general concept of extremism will be around for a long time to come, but it will morph over time. For example, Somali piracy is part of extremism, and that has ended for now, but it could come back. Another example, al-Qaeda took a back seat to ISIS and that again is changing. So, this is always changing on the margins and nothing remains the same. The future is that the basic problem will remain, and it will morph. (Interviewee B, April 2019)

In reflecting on a long career in government, this official summarized the importance of evolution and potentially touched on why some cynicism exists in these early stages of P/CVE policy evolution, whether it be cynicism rooted in P/CVE being a trendy topic or whether it's seen as just another iteration in a constantly changing policy name, the fact is that it is fundamentally a very old policy issue and one that is very likely to continue for a long time to come.

To summarize, these three themes contribute to answering the first research question as well as contribute important context toward a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of policy alignment and coordination. The first observation most directly responds to the first research question. It discusses the fact that USAID takes significant guidance from external and internal processes, and these processes ensure policy coordination within the agency down to the point of implementation. This is of central importance in that jointly developing policy and strategy, and then the co-adoption of that policy guidance, can serve as a major component and catalyst of P/CVE coordination, just as it likely can for many other policy topics. In this sense, it creates a common set of playbooks for agencies tasked with developing and overseeing the implementation of P/CVE policy. When looking across the interviews, this common policy development has clearly helped codify which documents are centrally important to P/CVE policy and strategy. This is the case even though cynicism is well rooted across the spectrum of those interviewed, from senior policy makers to experienced implementers. Similarly, when looking across the policy and strategy documents, the frequency of referencing other related policy documents demonstrated a relatively robust level of policy

coordination in at least the development of the policies themselves. Yet, it must also be acknowledged that the lack of clarity of how P/CVE is clearly distinct from other development approaches, as well as its efficacy and future, calls into question the level of success between the policy makers and those tasked with implementing P/CVE in the field.

The second theme speaks to the way in which this coordination has evolved. It also addresses some of the ways in which changing policy both affect and are affected by interagency policy coordination. National and agency level policy is not stagnant, it changes and evolves based on national priorities. This often changes from administration to administration, and those priorities are frequently captured in the NSS documents. Like all Executive branch government agencies, USAID takes significant guidance from this document, either directly or through additional guidance provided by the DOS. This top-down policy development has enabled USAID to be aligned with higher-level policy and strategy. Thus, as shifts occur at higher levels, USAID likewise adjusts to changing focus in P/CVE and related predecessor policies, such as stabilization and counterinsurgency.

Clearly, what one administration may deem important to P/CVE may not be what is considered important by subsequent administrations over the years, and these shifts can be broken down into P/CVE related foreign policy phases. These changing focuses are well reflected in such documents as the QDDR, DOS-USAID joint strategies, counterinsurgency, and CVE policies. Therefore, the delineation of these eras demonstrates and provides additional clarity on the nature of P/CVE policy evolution and coordination.

Theme 3 is unique in that it was derived from interviews alone. The observation

focuses on frequently expressed uncertainty by practitioners regarding the way in which

P/CVE is being implemented, how it is defined as a distinct approach, and whether it has

a viable foreign policy future. In some ways, this provides context regarding coordination

and the symptoms of the way in which it has been undertaken rather than coordination

itself. It reflects the need for not only policies to be clearly coordinated among the key

stakeholders, but also that the concepts that undergird the policy must be clearly defined

and communicated at all levels of government and to the non-governmental

implementers. Also, this demonstrates that all levels involved in P/CVE, from agency

leadership to the field implementers, must be held accountable to understanding and

incorporating policy guidance for implementation. Otherwise, the policy is vacuous,

chipping at away at its future viability, and thus causing it to lose credibility over time, as

such practices have done on occasion, as discussed in the recollections of some

interviewees.

It also demonstrates that coordination alone is insufficient if those tasked with

implementation are not clear how that policy specifically applies to their efforts. Or

perhaps even more troubling, if the implementers do not believe the agency understands

what it wants or how to go about achieving those ends. Further, it may reflect that those

outside of government may not be sufficiently clear on the respective policies as some

inside the government. This may indicate a communication, management, and

accountability breakdown that requires greater agency attention. Thus, when partnerships

occur on P/CVE efforts, USAID may want to explore ways to more effectively ensure

that there is a common understanding of the policy guidance and the related concepts that underscore the program goal. Otherwise, even the best coordinated policy and strategy efforts within the agency may not be properly utilized upon first contact with those outside the agency.

Conversely, a lack of clarity at the implementation level may highlight some weaknesses in P/CVE policy and strategy communication from a bottom-up perspective. For example, this may be an indicator that more bottom-up coordination and communication is necessary to address the conceptual and policy gaps that exist. This may also help legitimize the policy, with practitioners more confident with the knowledge that the implementation level is being more significantly considered. As some of the interviewees often recalled, they felt as though higher-level policy and strategy often failed to consider the most appropriate data from the field. As such, this observation reinforces the need for a duel-track approach to policy communication, with a tandem top-down and bottom-up approach to ensure common understanding and a healthy mutual partnership.

RQ 2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

In this research question, I will explain the facts that have in some manner led or driven changes to regional P/CVE policy as well as that of broader agency-level policy. There is a strong policy linkage between the higher-level P/CVE policies to all subordinate regional and country specific policies. This is shown through an existing hierarchy of policies, evidenced through subordinate policies referencing within them

more senior level policies, moving from the presidential level down to the point of

implementation. Despite this, there are distinct contextual differences to each region and

country that must be accounted for when it comes to implementation. In other words,

there is no one-size-fits-all approach to foreign aid, including P/CVE. This is an

important consideration as broad policy cannot always address unique challenges.

Therefore, some countries in which P/CVE programs occur require adapted policy and

implementation approaches based on these unique factors. This question discusses the

factors that have led to P/CVE changes at the varying levels of policy making and policy

implementation.

As I touched upon in the response to the first research question, key policy

milestones have guided much of the ongoing P/CVE change. P/CVE is not new and has

existed in various forms over decades, and since September 11, 2001, P/CVE has gone

through tremendous conceptual and policy changes. Each of these policy phases are

delineated by distinct phases or shifts in policy thinking. In the analysis of question 1, I

explained that in 2010 there was a particularly salient shift in foreign aid policy under the

auspices of USAID, shifting away from a significant reliance upon military doctrines and

manuals toward USAID and DOS guidance. Analysis of the factors which influenced

these shifts are explored in the following pages.

Theme 4: P/CVE policy evolution is characterized not only by documented policy

change but has also been influenced by key events and conceptual shifts in thinking.

In this theme, I describe the nature of how P/CVE policies have evolved and been

catalyzed by certain events as well as by changes over time in P/CVE thinking by key

policy makers and events. What I aim to demonstrate is that major events play a significant role in the way in which P/CVE has evolved, as does the way in which those events are interpreted and conceptualized by policy makers. Those events range from political leaders coming into power and setting new policy agendas to major attacks that change the operational environment and focus for P/CVE program implementation. In a sense, these events shift the paradigm around P/CVE, changing not just P/CVE but often larger foreign policy and foreign aid approaches and priorities. Changes that fit into this category are in a sense push factors that create change through forceful and often violent events. Such examples include the attacks of September 11, 2001 which spawned the Global War on Terror, one of the earliest iterations of modern P/CVE approaches. While this is the most extreme and well-known example, other more subtle yet forceful events has occurred that have pushed P/CVE policy to evolve, such as the 2012 Mali coup, a TSCTP country, which led to significant setbacks for CVE related programs, and which led to significant American policy and foreign aid adjustments (Vandiver, 2012, para. 4). In such cases, changes in P/CVE policy making and implementation is symptomatic of major events or changes rather than driving the change itself. Later in this study, I will explore how smaller events often play major catalytic roles as well.

During the interview phase, interviewees offered a broad set of factors that they perceived as factors leading to changes in P/CVE regional and agency level policy. These factors were identified as key events, political leadership, and the implementation of key policies. While few of the interviewees have systematically examined this issue on their own, they offered important perspectives and reflections on the factors that proved

important during theirs specific and differing experiences pertaining to P/CVE related work. This also resulted in their identified events spanning across large timeframes, from the 1990s to the current period. The key events that were identified as catalyzing P/CVE policy change were described in some detail in theme 2, which included major events such as September 11, 2001, and also much lesser known events, such as the Togo Togo ambush of American forces in Mali.

Yet, in addition to key events identified by each interviewee, they also discussed shifts in P/CVE thinking as being found within and outside formal policy and strategy. Many of these identified policies and strategies are discussed as part of theme 3, as those policies also served to encourage inter and intra agency policy and strategy coordination. As mentioned, those internal policies include such documents as the 2010 and 2015 QDDR, USAID VEI policy, and the DOS-USAID joint strategies. However, five of the interviewees also identified other internal guidance that came in the form of internal reports and analysis from specialized internal USAID organizations and specialized external organization. The internal USAID offices identified included OTI and CMM, both offices having worked intimately on P/CVE, and which have written and reported extensively on P/CVE over the years. As one interviewee, a current P/CVE senior implementer, stated, "I've seen an evolution of understanding of P/CVE. There have been evolving definitions, partly informed by OTI field reports" (Interviewee A, April 2019. Another interviewee, a long-serving senior official and academic, stated,

> In USAID, it changed probably more than State [DOS]. I have the impression that
> in USAID they were trying to give a different focus on how to counter these

issues. CMM did try this and were instrumental in taking a broader look at how to

grapple with this problem. They felt that a military centric way of thinking was

not working. So, I give credit to USAID for having that broader thinking and did

use the term extremism. But in terms of implementing it, I do not think they were

there yet. They were trying to figure out USAID's roles at that point. (Interviewee

B, April 2019).

As such, given these perspectives, key conceptual changes have been pushed from

internal sources within USAID, namely the specialized offices of OTI and CMM.

In addition to internal organization, external academics and organizations have

also played a key role in helping shape and evolve P/CVE policy. One interviewee, a well

published CVE academic, credited two key intellectuals as having contributed to P/CVE

conceptual evolution. He stated:

Martha Crenshaw published an article on 9/11 on studies in conflict. It was called,

Counterterrorism Policy and the Political Process. This book was like a lightbulb

going off because there are many variables that help explain the results. It is very

insightful. Paul Pillar has important insights from prior to the events of 9/11

[September 11, 2001]. He lays out many instruments prior to CVE existing, such

as law enforcement and the military. He offers a good discussion on the

challenges of policy of CT. (Interviewee E, May 2019)

Another interviewee, an academic and experienced evaluator of P/CVE programs,

identified reports coming from the U.S. Institute of Peace as being an important

contributor to P/CVE conceptual evolution. He stated:

USIP just unveiled something new on CVE. They said that terrorism since 2001

has increased 5-fold worldwide. We have protected the homeland, but terrorism

worldwide has gone up markedly. There has been an understanding that when we

saw the rise of ISIS and the attack in Sri Lanka, there was also a rise in the use of

military action, such as Mali and the AQIM, ISIS in Syria. From Somalia, the al-

Shabab attack on Westgate Mall. On those, there have been involvement of the

Kenyan military and U.S. military. There is recognition that there must be a

military component to all of this, but it is growing well beyond the other options.

(Interviewee C, April 2019)

These interviewees point to important contributors for P/CVE conceptual evolution. Yet,

those reflections are perceptions. Given this, it was necessary to analyze the existing

policy documents to determine the accuracy and supportability of these statements. And

while there was substantial evidence that conceptual evolution existed due to scholarly

analysis by internal and external academics and theoreticians, formal policies and

strategies generally also suggested the major importance of other internal documents, as

well as key events over time that required P/CVE adjustments. Thus, while perceptions

by interviewees on the events are important and noteworthy, a document analysis also

reveals the way in which policy contributes to itself over time.

The policy and strategy document analysis reveals that both large and small

events can have significant roles in changing policy, and P/CVE policy is no exception.

What is perhaps even more important than the events themselves, is how events are

interpreted and conceptualized by policy makers and implementers. In other cases,

P/CVE can affect policy decisions, particularly in cases where P/CVE is deemed effective or serves as a distinct area of interest for key agency stakeholders or policy makers, such as the U.S. President or the Secretary of State. Examples of this high-level interest driving P/CVE policy can be found in President Obama's NSS documents, which led to the 2010 and 2015 QDDR documents. These high-level policies in-turn led to greater resources for P/CVE programs, reflected in the annual budget plans that increasingly funded P/CVE programs during the Obama administration. Further, the way in which P/CVE has moved from one policy phase to another, as described earlier, can in part be attributed to the interrelationship between policy and politics. Collectively, these two phenomena, the push and pull effects, also touch upon the theoretical aspects of how P/CVE policy has evolved. As will be discussed later in the next chapter, it reflects not only that PET is important to understanding the evolutionary process of a P/CVE policy, but also the way in which PFT plays a role in this changing process.

While the theoretical foundations of PFT and PET help explain some of the ways in which P/CVE policy has evolved through a type of push and pull effect, path dependence theory is also important to help pinpoint and categorize various P/CVE evolutionary phases. The analysis demonstrated that it is possible to pinpoint policy phases as it related to P/CVE as there were marked shifts that occurred following specific events. PET helps mark these shifts by events, often directly discussed in the NSS documents, while PFT helps explain the development of government policy frequently driven by different political actors. PD on the other hand, helps show that some policies, at least in part, can become entrenched and remain relatively constant. From the

perspective of these three theoretical lenses, the analysis of National Security Strategies

revealed the points at which P/CVE policy shifts between phases, how it remains constant

for a time and then shifts again, and the relationship between the policies and the politics

of that policy phase. This will again be discussed from a theoretical perspective in the
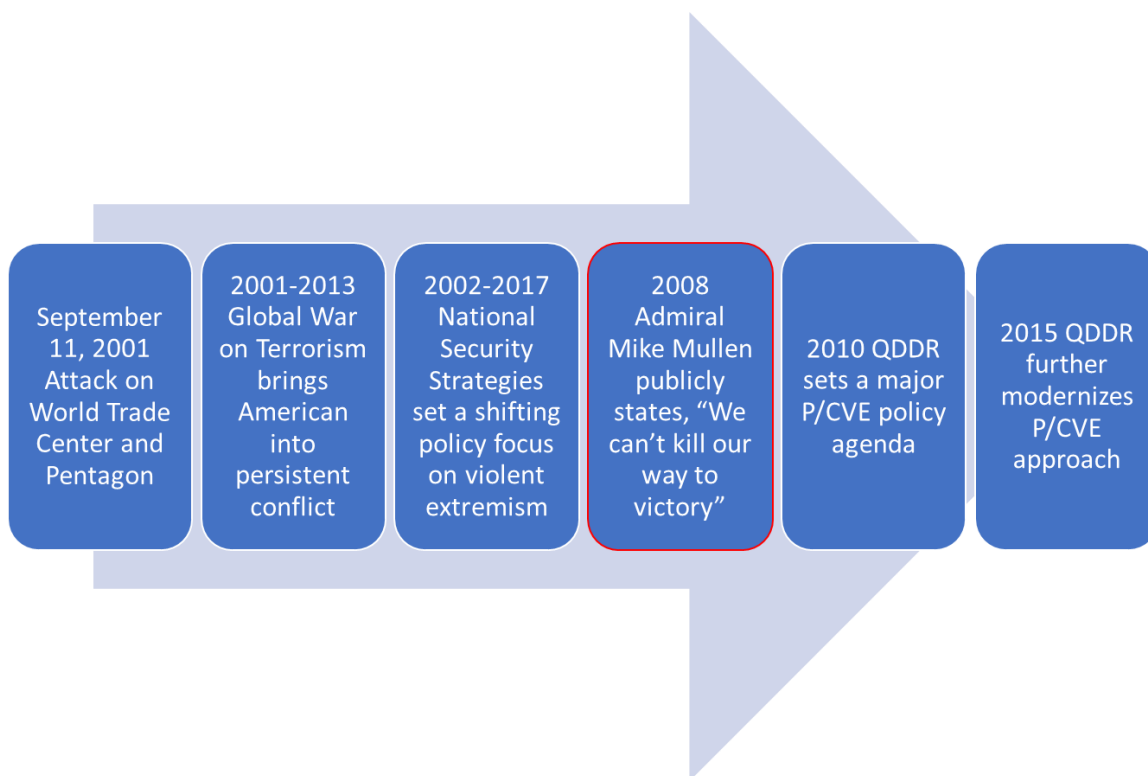
following chapter.

Figure 3: Events Contributing to P/CVE Evolution

Theme 5: Due to ongoing conflicts, P/CVE policy has rapidly evolved due to both

significant punctuating events, as well as events that play outsized roles.

The literature review tended to overwhelmingly discuss major punctuated events

that have contributed to the development of P/CVE policy. Academic papers and policy

papers tended to dwell heavily on such events as the attacks on September 11, 2001 and

the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These are without question important to the

development and ongoing changes to P/CVE policy. In many ways, P/CVE as it is known

today would likely not exist without those events. Thus, those are truly punctuating

events in the context of this study as well as to American foreign policy in general. Thus,

it is not surprising that those are of core interest to academics and policy makers.

However, it was striking to hear the interviewees so frequently focus on lesser known

events, rather than the commonly held overriding interest and focus on the major

punctuating events, such as the attacks of September 11, 2001. As someone who has

worked in the field in stabilization and counterinsurgency, and following an exhaustive

literature review that tended to focus heavily on major events and technical development

approaches, I did not expect to hear so many individual references to lesser known

events.

In the TSCTP region, Mali was a major point of discussion. One senior

implementer argued that he felt that America regional policy was badly shaken and

became largely dysfunctional following a violent attack on U.S. forces. He argued that at

least in part the attack was a catalyst of a misguided strategic change. He stated:

> After the Togo Togo ambush, our work was shut down. This was the result of us
>
> [the U.S.] not implementing policies properly. But we doubled down by halting
>
> all work. We divested. We then changed our entire approach to a process that
>
> does not work. We went to private investment policy which does not make sense
>
> out there. There is nothing there to invest in due to instability. We would have to
>
> subsidize like China because there is nothing out there. (Interviewee A, April

2019)

In further examining this statement, the interviewee reflects that a specific attack in Mali in part led to new P/CVE policy, a private investment policy approach. He further argues that this policy was not well conceived as it did not match the root causes and the current operational environment. While this touches on a host of policy issues that require further examination, it also supports the idea that certain events at specific times can have a major effect on policy development and implementation, and even strategic reorientation.

Also reinforcing the way in which several events converged to create significant foreign policy effects, a retired U.S. senior official recounted that it was the confluence of numerous events within a short period of time, including both major and lesser known events, that facilitated the emergence and evolution of P/CVE and other related interventions. He stated:

During my time, the bombings of Dar es Salaam [U.S. Embassy in Tanzania] caused a major focus on counterterrorism. It was about intel and killing them though. It also came out of a policy decision around 2001, somebody went to the Saudis and told them to clean up their act and stop pushing extremism and terrorism out there. To an extent, that worked and had an impact by 2004 to 2006. Obviously, 9/11 had an effect. Also, the money from gulf states was having negative effects. There were also so many radical groups and we did not even know their names. Somalia was a driver too. But overall, we needed more intel and we were making bad decisions without good information. Khaddaffi's overthrow also had huge negative implications. You can make the argument for

the overthrow and death of Saddam also being a major driver that led to violent

extremism. (Interviewee B, April 2019)

Examining this quote, the interviewee felt strongly that it was necessary to discuss a wide

range of issues to understand the way in which P/CVE policy has evolved. At times, he

identified largely non-public diplomatic oeuvres as being as important as major events

found in news headlines. He also points out the way in which information, or intel as he

phrased it, is pivotal to policy decision making. In doing so, he reveals the significance of

understanding the operational environment, which contributes to policy decision and

implementation. In other words, it is not just about major events that should be the focus,

but rather the daily contributions to policy decision and the way in which policy

implementation occurs and in the environment in which it is implemented. With this, he

further reinforces the earlier notion of the major importance of field level changes and

conditions, and to find effective ways to incorporate that information in policy decisions.

Without that timely awareness, decision making can and will likely be flawed, which in

turn undermines effective implementation of policy. Therefore, understanding P/CVE

policy evolution requires an understanding of policy operations, implementation, and the

way in which P/CVE policy, environment, and events interact.

Other interviewees also reinforced similar concepts that the confluence of events,

both major and minor events, led in large part to the continuous evolution of P/CVE

policy and strategy. Given this, it became increasingly evident during the study that an

analysis was necessary to understand the way in which these issues combined to affect

policy. As the interviewees discussed, many lesser known events seemed to play outsized

roles as it pertains to P/CVE policy evolution, and particularly so when compounded with other major events. A document analysis was conducted to further understand and confirm this potentiality.

From September 11, 2001 until today, the United States has been in conflict. The strain on foreign aid systems and resources resulting from these conflicts has long been considered and studied by academics and practitioners (Woods, 2005). These conflicts have required extraordinary resources. It is estimated that DOS and USAID have spent approximately $131 billion in conflicts since 9/11 and about $6.4 trillion has been spent in total by the U.S. Government in conflicts since the attacks on September 11, 2001 (Crawford, 2019). In examining the rate of foreign aid and military spending before and after the 9/11 attacks, Brookings concluded that from 2000 to 2004, foreign aid expanded by one eighth and military spending expanded 125% (Brainard, 2005). This evidence strongly reinforces the observation that the attacks on 9/11 led to major increases in foreign aid for conflicts. This in turn, has led to increased funding for USAID's P/CVE programming, of which over $100 million has been spent supporting the TSCTP alone (USAID, 2016).

War and conflict interventions require not only extraordinary financial and human resources, they also demand near constant reevaluation and modification of policies, strategies, and processes. Demonstrating the nature of how governments often are forced to adjust during periods of conflict, one study concluded that war and conflict leads to a significantly expanded scope of government and policy change (O'Reilly, C. & Powell, B., 2015). As discussed in the previous observation, there is a growing body of P/CVE

related foreign aid policies and strategies that continue to evolve, even though the certainty of support is less clear than it was in years past. As explored throughout this paper, this phenomenon corresponds with the foundational concept of PET which states that shocks to the system (i.e., punctuated events) create significant and rapid changes to the status quo, introducing rapid change following major catalyzing events. In terms of P/CVE, the documentation suggests that the attacks of 9/11 and the U.S. responses served as a substantial shock to the U.S. government and to society, which in turn affected the way in which policy evolved.

Yet, beyond just the major shocks of the attacks on September 11, 2001, less significant global events have also played outsized roles in shaping policy and implementation. This is because policy consequences have secondary and tertiary effects on other policies and the way in which implementation can and will be conducted. In a way, this is not dissimilar to falling dominos, one striking the other, thus creating a chain reaction of events. For example, the attacks on September 11th led to major military interventions, strategies and policies were developed to support these interventions, major resources were dedicated to that approach, mounting casualties and costs without tangible success became onerous, numerous ongoing attacks in other parts of the world led to additional unforeseen interventions driving up casualties and costs yet higher, which then led to the realization that new approaches were needed, which then led to new policies and strategies. In short, the policy has gone from overwhelmingly hard power focused, to the attempt to implement soft power approaches, and now seemingly returning to hard power yet again. Given these dynamics and the multitude of factors at play, events, even

minor ones, have had significant effects, even those that are not widely seen as critical factors to specialists and non-specialists alike.

This effect can be observed through a few key milestones. For example, President George W. Bush announced only nine days after the attacks of 9/11 that, "Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated" (White House, 2001, para. 23). Thus, following the attacks on 9/11, the Global War on Terrorism was launched with a broadly defined scope, which paved the way for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) against the Taliban in Afghanistan, The Iraq War, conflicts in North-West Pakistan, Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) against ISIL in Syria, and various other military, humanitarian, and stabilization interventions throughout the world, including in the Horn of Africa, Philippines, Trans-Sahara Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. And to be clear, this list identifies merely a portion of the related interventions in which USAID has supported (Moss, Roodman, & Standley, 2005, p. 6; Shahzad, Sarwar, Farooq, & Qin, 2019). Each of these events was supported by enormous resources and policy guidance. This effect of constant policy change is further exacerbated when current policies and strategies do not work according to plan, and many of these major events did not work to plan. This then required yet more reevaluation and modification, culminating in a dizzying array of new policy and procedural guidance, capable of sowing confusion in even the most ardent student of P/CVE policy.

However, while the onset of major conflict is certainly a significant punctuated event that has generated policy change, more minor secondary events have also catalyzed

important policy changes. Numerous interviewees with years of experience in foreign aid

P/CVE programs identified specific events that had major effects on P/CVE policy. One

interviewee stated that while Mali's Togo Togo region is relatively little known to the

public, the attacks there against the U.S. Army had a dramatic effect in hindering the

implementation of regional policy, and led to the subsequent shift to a less effective

regional policy approach (Interviewee A, April 2019). Another interviewee argued that

while the attacks on 9/11 has clearly had the largest effects on P/CVE evolution, P/CVE

as it is known actually originates with the attacks on the USS Cole in 2000, as that was

the point in which policy awareness became palpable (Interviewee D, May 2019).

Another interviewee suggested that it was not only military attacks, but combined

political and military events that contributed to major P/CVE change, identifying U.S.

President Obama's CVE focused speech in Egypt's al-Azhar University, the death of

Osama bin Laden in 2011, and the fall of Raqqa in Syria in 2013, all being key catalyzing

moments for P/CVE policy evolution (Interviewee F, May 2019). In sum, while some

events may not rise to the major shocks of the attacks on September 11, 2001, many have

had significant roles in policy evolution. Over time, some seemingly less significant

events have become touchstones to understanding the way in which P/CVE policy

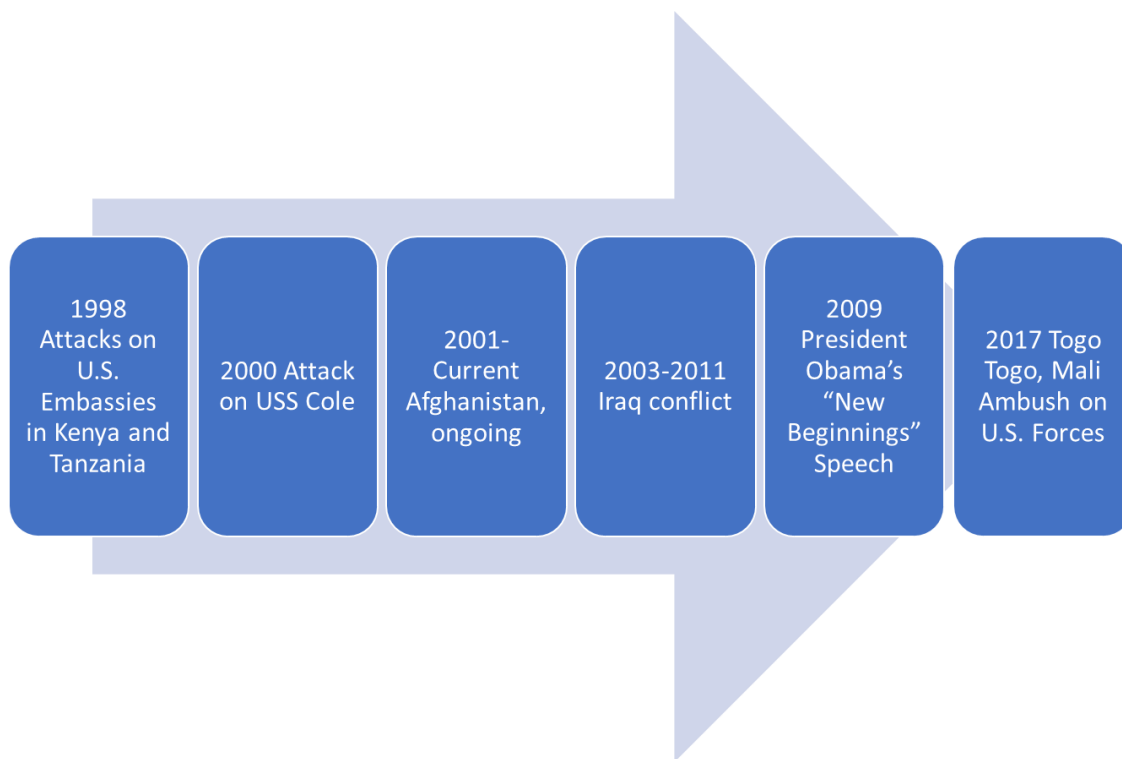evolution has occurred and when such changes began.

Figure 4: Events Leading to P/CVE Policy Evolution

Looking at such events through the theoretical prism of PET, it is apparent that while the larger events often have substantial effects, the less robust events also have policy significance. While research overwhelmingly and consistently identifies the attacks on September 11, 2001 as the single most important event that led to P/CVE evolution (e.g., the rise in P/CVE predecessors such as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, stabilization operations, etc., which in turn led to the development of P/CVE), this study reveals that less significant interventions and events have also had significance in P/CVE evolution. In the case of the TSCTP, the oldest ongoing P/CVE intervention by the U.S. Government, which has been significantly supported by USAID, it has facilitated evolution of the field as well as evolved due to lessons taken from other

interventions. Much of this evolution is attributable to the TSCTP because it was the first P/CVE related program of its kind, has been examined by numerous scholars and practitioners, and is frequently referenced in various DOS and USAID P/CVE related policies. Further reflecting these changes, broader USAID P/CVE work has evolved substantially over the years, shifting from ad hoc assistance in conflict interventions to more policy driven programs from 2010 onwards, due in large part to the release of agency P/CVE related policies and guidance. As such, it is both major events and more discrete events that are important, some of which have served in surprisingly outsized roles regarding P/CVE policy evolution.

Theme 6: Leaders and policy makers realized that an overreliance on military solutions was not achieving success. This led to civilian agencies entering the policy equation, interagency coordination developing, and P/CVE related policies rapidly evolving.

Among the most frequent points of discussion during the interviews was the perception that there has been an overreliance on military solutions as part of P/CVE efforts. This point was voiced by every interviewee in one way or another, and based on this feedback, ranged a broad span of time, from the 1990s until today. The arguments ranged broadly, including:

- A lack of P/CVE policy focus by DOS
- Perceived USAID and DOS risk aversion
- A lack of civilian presence in the field

- The ease of employing military tools quickly to the field

- More timely results following military actions

- A tendency to focus on robustly funding the military at the expense of civilian agencies and interventions.

Discussing the lack of policy focus, a senior implementer argued that USAID was often risk averse. He argued that USAID was not ready to integrate with the population and military forces in the most violence affected regions, to include remote regions in Mali. He stated:

> To me, there was not a genuine effort to address radicalization in the communities. I worked with SOF [Special Operations Forces] because they were the only ones out there. Risk aversion was a problem. OTI was doing some stuff far off, but not at the heart of what was problematic. There was a disconnect with SOF and OTI. SOF wanted USAID's support but it was not happening. The USAID implementer would not touch working with the military. (Interviewee A, April 2019)

This sentiment was further reinforced by a senior evaluator, who stated "There is a recognition that there must be a military component to all of this, but it's growing, and all throughout Africa" (Interviewee C, April 2019). And the notion that military solutions are generally easier, faster to implement, and show more timely results was argued by well-published academic stating, "It [P/CVE] was an experimental area and outside mainstream policy. For funding, mainstream kinetic CT work was getting a lot more money… It was easy to spend money on weapons. (Interviewee G, July 2019). Taken

together, these three references reflect the notion that military solutions are generally perceived by policy makers as easier to employ, fund, and show more effective results. Conversely, some see USAID as risk averse and not willing to do the work that is necessary to address the root causes of violent extremism in highly volatile areas.

However, interviewees also discussed another key perception. Interviewees at times spoke on the adverse effects that can come with military interventions and how they felt policy makers were beginning to come to terms with those limitations. Others also addressed that they felt that the DOD has a growing desire to see more P/CVE related work from USAID and DOS, which would allow them to step out of the type of work that DOD is not designed to undertake. One retired senior official recalled USAID's and DOS's lack of interest in P/CVE, stating:

> I am not too sure how seriously CVE is taken at State [DOS]. There are individual actors that support it, but I suspect he gives it priority. But in terms of upper levels, I am not sure I see that much focus on it. In terms of policy actions and statements I do not see it. Probably not a priority with the current administration either. I have spoken with AFRICOM, they understand it, but they say they are not the people to do it. They are out catching and killing bad guys. I think DOD wants to see State [DOS] and USAID do more. They are trying to fund it themselves. Killing is not getting them far. (Interviewee B, April 2019)

Therefore, the interviewees described the irony of the current situation. While the DOD has long wanted to step away from leading P/CVE work, they are far better resourced and funded to do the work, and simultaneously less risk averse to undertake CVE in areas that

are negatively affected by violent extremism. However, P/CVE is not the DOD's core strength, in part due to the necessary development tools and approaches not part of the primary mission of any American military forces. As such, DOD has long wanted civilian agencies to step into the leading role in P/CVE. Yet, scarce funding to civilian agencies have ensured DOD would remain the primary P/CVE lead in regions affected by violent extremism.

Over the past decade, several senior military and diplomatic leaders have expressed important revelations regarding working in regions dealing with violent extremism, including such areas of counterinsurgencies, political instability, and counterterrorism. The traditional paradigms of military thinking such as the seemingly logical conclusion that the use of greater force and technology leads to a better chance of victory has evolved significantly over America's two decades of continuous conflict. A touchstone policy document that provides substantially new thinking within the military is found in FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency (U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, 2006). And while the document does not exhaustively explore the role of civilian agencies, it does stress the need to work together in complex modern conflicts that are characterized by P/CVE related environments. For example, it emphasizes the need for strong interagency coordination and awareness of other organizations in the operational space, and how each contributes to the objective. FM-3-24, while innovative in the modern era, was still focused on emphasizing the need for military operations to better understand that success in complex counterinsurgency environments "requires Soldiers and Marines to employ a mix of both familiar combat tasks and skills more often associated with nonmilitary

agencies, with the balance between them varying depending on the local situation" (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps, 2006, p. 2). As such, it was still military oriented, yet making the significant step toward more enhanced interagency coordination.

In 2009, this military counterinsurgency manual was followed by the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, drafted by a panel of agency representatives and led by the DOS, which argued very much the same principles of the need to balance military and civilian resources and specializations (U.S. Department of State, 2009). However, what is noteworthy is that these policy and guidance documents were focused on major ongoing counterinsurgency operations, which at the time were going poorly. In short, the focus at the time was to turn around military-centric endeavors that were largely failing. These documents laid the path to a deeper understanding of the need to reform the military-centric approach, but it was not yet representative of fully developed P/CVE thinking. Further, this new way of thinking was not widely embraced at the time, as the interviewees alluded to in past quotes, and was still largely the role of the conflict intervention specialist and those assigned those regions. For the wider population to begin to see the need for change, it would take access to the public, outside the specialized world of policy and doctrine. And to sway holdouts who disagreed with larger civilian roles, it would take years of policy emphasis and greater accountability. As noted by interviewees, that is perceived as still an ongoing challenge that has not yet fully come to fruition.

U.S. Navy Admiral, and then the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mike Mullen, made an extraordinary statement in 2008. To some it may have been surprising

that the senior-most military leader was effectively conceding that in these conflict

environments, "we can't kill our way to victory" (Nordland, 2017, para. 4). This major

revelatory policy statement still reverberates and shapes thinking today. It was nothing

less than saying in clear terms that the way in which the United States was intervening in

irregular complex conflict environments around the world was not working, and thus new

approaches were immediately required. It was a windfall moment for many in the policy

community and government agency leadership levels alike. It highlighted the need for

alternative solutions outside of traditional military-centric approaches. In its place,

whole-of-government solutions arose, calling for the need for additional soft power

approaches to achieve better success in these complex P/CVE environments. "Boots on

the ground," even with the best of intentions, was simply not enough, and in some cases,

outright counter to achieving the desired results.

In recent years, this statement is frequently referenced in a wide variety of outlets,

from policy papers to media articles, and as such it appears to be among the most

important events that has led P/CVE related evolution. Further, the policy and media

record, supported by the personal reflections of interviewees, demonstrates that one of the

most important factors that led to change was a growing realization that there was an

unbalanced and unsustainable reliance on military intervention, which was clearly not

effective for many environments. Admiral Mullen's statement merely stated aloud what

others were realizing, or what some had long known, but which now had the policy

gravitas and support of the senior-most U.S. military officer. Naturally, when the senior-

most military officer makes such a major policy related statement, leaders below take

notice and seek to offer new solutions and approaches in support of that approach. That is

after all, what is expected as part of being a good soldier. Such is the nature of the

military chain-of-command and government hierarchical system. Yet, even more

importantly, not long after Adm. Mike Mullen's statement, there was also a significant

policy shift in the NSS mandating a whole-of-government approach. The whole-of-

government, discussed previously, is an approach which advocates using the full range of

defense, diplomacy, and development resources in concert with one another, and in this

case, in support of the effort to counter violent extremism (White House, 2010). This was

a particularly important issue to policy makers and practitioners alike during that period

and continues to be sought by the Congress, the military, and civilian agencies (Houck,

2017). Thus, this simple yet important statement by Adm. Mike Mullen has had

enormous influence on P/CVE related policy evolution.

　　　While Adm. Mike Mullen may have given an early prominent voice to the idea

that the government needs to look beyond just military interventions for viable solutions

to P/CVE challenges, he did not set it into formal policy. That level of policy making

responsibility lies with senior elected officials, namely the U.S. President. Thus, the

policy of involving foreign aid in P/CVE efforts was solidified into high-level policy in

the 2010 NSS, in which President Barrack Obama states, "we will place renewed

emphasis on deterrence and prevention by mobilizing diplomatic action, and use

development and security sector assistance to build the capacity of at-risk nations and

reduce the appeal of violent extremism." (White House, 2010, p. 48). That same year, the

first QDDR was released in 2010, which set policy and strategic thinking for DOS and

USAID on matters pertaining to civilian resources aimed at P/CVE interventions. The 2010 QDDR addresses the importance of civilian contributions to combatting extremism alongside the military. In many ways, the QDDR set out to redress the imbalance of influence and capacity between the U.S. military, DOS, and USAID. Reflecting this objective, its introduction states, "to realize the full potential of civilian power, to give the U.S. military the partner it needs and deserves, and to advance U.S. national interests around the world, U.S. foreign policy structures and processes must adapt to the 21st century. The President's commitment to 'whole-of-government' must be more than a mantra" (U.S. Department of State, 2010, p. 4).

Following the lead of the DOS's QDDR and other policies, USAID focused on contributing to using civilian resources and expertise to implement the whole-of-government vision. In USAID's policy, it focused more specifically on the development tools and approaches that serve P/CVE objectives. It states:

> Development is one of several tools of U.S. national power. As the 2011 National Strategy for Counterterrorism states, 'We are engaged in a broad, sustained and integrated campaign that harnesses every tool of American power- military, civilian, and the power of our values, together with the concerted efforts of allies, partners and multilateral institutions. These efforts must also be complemented by broader capabilities, such as diplomacy, development, strategic communications, and the power of the private sector.' Implementing this policy should also serve to strengthen USAID's interagency voice on development's contribution to addressing these critical national security issues. (USAID, 2011, p. 1)

To that aim, USAID offers numerous unique tools, including sector expertise in fields such as health, education, democratic governance, and agriculture, as well as specific tools that have since been jointly used within the military, such as the District Stabilization Framework, which offers "systematic ways of analyzing issues related to violent extremism and insurgency as well as crafting development responses based on local conditions" (USAID, 2011, p. 1). What the study has distilled from the many U.S. military, DOS, USAID, and interagency documents is the intense focus that has been placed on whole-of-government approaches.

The earliest concepts were strongly advocated by the military out of necessity in trying to succeed in irregular conflict environments when traditional approaches were not working, but these ideas have grown steadily with strong policy contributions and support coming from a range of civilian agencies. In the case of USAID, it has been among the leading agencies exhibiting strong support in this effort, reflected in its own established P/CVE related policy, including some of the earliest civilian developed P/CVE related policies.

In summary, the second research question examined the factors that have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy. Three themes were developed to respond to that question. Looking at the first theme, I discussed how P/CVE policy evolution is characterized not only by policy but also marked by major and lesser known events. Thus, this theme explores several ways in which events, both large and small, have contributed to the evolution of P/CVE policy. Many alive today are aware of the events of September 11, 2001, and it is

widely known that it set into motion events that led to major conflicts that are still ongoing today.

These current and ongoing conflicts that originated with September 11, 2001 will affect generations to come, and are thus significant enough to be declared punctuating event as viewed through the prism of PET. Like falling dominos, just as September 11th set the stage for global conflicts, those conflicts in turn set the stage for other major events that were incredibly significant in scale and global impact. Such events included mounting war casualties, regional political and economic challenges, increases in violent extremism, global defense and foreign policy shifts, aggressive homeland security laws, major war expenditures, and diplomatic fissures, to name but a few.

Not all impactful events were so high-profile, and as expressed by some interviewees, many important events that shaped policy have remained relatively unknown. As this study points out, some important events were relatively small in contrast to such events as September 11th, and yet were still significant within the lens of P/CVE. It could be argued that these events were symptomatic of the larger scale events, or viewed differently, secondary events in response. Some of these events that are important to this study include attacks against key U.S. interests, popular demonstrations, the growth and mobilization of extremism, P/CVE policy issuance and implementation, and many others discussed throughout the study.

Not only are influential events defined by being physical events, such as terrorist attacks, but can also be characterized by significant policy change. Such events can change the current paradigm in some fashion, often having follow-on effects as one

action often begets another set of actions. Thus, when examined as a collective whole, a wide range of factors can have the ability to affect significant change, as it has in P/CVE policy. As such, analysts and policy makers should look holistically at the arc of history to understand more fully the way in which policy evolves. Ultimately, P/CVE is no aberration in the ways in which policy can evolve, but rather what makes it unusual is the speed of that change brought upon by the intensity of those factors.

The second theme is related to the first theme in some ways. However, the second theme is an attempt to delve more deeply into the issue of policy evolution. This theme addresses more exhaustively the characteristics of the factors that prompted P/CVE policy evolution. In this theme, I demonstrated that because of ongoing conflicts, P/CVE policy has rapidly evolved due to both significant punctuating events, as well as events that play outsized roles. The more well-understood punctuating events are covered in the first observation, yet the smaller and more discrete factors were not explored. In the second theme, I attempt to lay out the argument that more minor events were markedly impactful on P/CVE policy.

While perhaps it is not immediately clear to many why small-scale events play such important policy and strategy reorientation roles, to those who study the history of irregular conflict, it is well understood. That is because history is replete with examples of how seemingly small things can compound upon themselves to create major effects. That is in many ways the core characteristic of irregular conflict, which is the way in which violent extremists have organized in recent years. In fact, most serious scholars of irregular conflict would express the fallacy of not taking irregular conflict seriously as a

viable military approach to winning over much stronger powers, and thereby achieving military and social aims. The copious number of books and articles dedicated to the topic reflect the importance of such conflicts and the need to better understand them. This is largely because irregular conflict approaches give power to the disenfranchised and seemingly powerless, and that makes it a powerful tool, just as we see it strengthening violent extremists in many regions around the world. This point was widely acknowledged by several interviewees.

To expound upon this concept, and to bring to light how small-scale events compound to create major change, Mao Tse-Tung once stated that militants wear down their opponent not with overwhelming force, but rather like gnats who are constantly biting and exhausting the victim over time (U.S. Marine Corps, 1989). In many ways, that is the fate of great powers struggling against large-scale violent extremism. This is reflected in the way in which America's recent conflicts have played out in its numerous conflict regions, such as the TSCTP region of West Africa. Despite the large investment of financial resources, violence continues to thrive, which at times has resulted in devastating losses to the civilian population, as well as military losses to foreign and domestic forces. Over time, these events compound upon themselves and can eventually tip the scale that triggers a sudden change. Some of these rapid changes may even be strategic in nature, such as military withdraw, or a complete reorientation of the approaches being used. This has been the case in the TSCTP region as the civilian approaches have become increasingly important. Therefore, this theme illustrated that P/CVE policy has been characterized by changes due to the numerous ongoing smaller-

scale events. In this sense, I demonstrate that it would be a mistake to solely rely on only large well-known events to understand P/CVE evolution. Rather, a more comprehensive examination is required as many lessons can be drawn from those lesser known events, as is the way they combine to facilitate change. This was reflected not only in the policy documentation in which smaller events were frequently referenced, but also in the reflections of P/CVE practitioners who often identified both large and small scale events as having substantial importance in the way in which P/CVE has evolved over the years.

The third observation examines how leaders and policy makers have increasingly realized that an overreliance on military solutions was not as successful as may have been hoped. This realization has enabled civilian agencies to become more important in P/CVE policy and implementation. In many ways, this observation addresses the most impactful factors driving P/CVE policy evolution. The U.S. military has long undertaken all forms of countering extremism, from fighting terrorist organizations to performing civil-military functions to assist allied foreign countries. The U.S. military's robust capabilities and resources have also meant they have often been the first to be called upon to undertake such work. However, the U.S. military is primarily designed to fight and win wars. Its personnel and infrastructure are oriented toward achieving that primary function. Yet, countering extremist sentiments, and undermining those factors that drive extremism sentiment and support, should not be assessed as the equivalent to fighting a war. Therefore, the same approaches as fighting a war should not be used. If it is, then it is likely to inflame the tensions and drive it to outright violence. Rather, it involves nuanced contextual and social understanding of the distinct causes of instability in a

respective region, and then designing interventions that will reduce support for violent extremism. While violence is a frequent characteristic of countering violent extremism, be it violence by the extremists or the opposing forces, several interviewees stressed that military solutions should not be the primary way in which to counter or prevent violent extremism. If it were, then civilian agencies play little to no role, yet the conflicts over the past two decades reveal the fallacy of such an approach of omitting or minimizing non-violent and non-military approaches.

This point of not relying on militaristic approaches is even more important to understand when discussing interventions by foreign governments. To prevent violence from growing and escalating in a region, often a non-violent approach is called for, such as addressing the root causes that are driving grievances and popular support for violent extremists. The military has limited capabilities in these functions, such as Civil-Affairs units, but those functions are not the foundation of the U.S. military. The U.S. military's foundation and primacy of focus is combat arms. As such, those non-militaristic civilian-focused skills are expected to exist in the civilian agencies, such as USAID, America's premier foreign aid agency.

Instead, USAID has long been oriented toward traditional long-term development, and conflict interventions such as counterinsurgency and stabilization has been a niche part of USAID. The era in which USAID had a robust cohort of resources and specialists for such operations has long disappeared and much of its capacity in this discipline has atrophied due to limited resources. As such, by the time there was a realization that the military cannot be solely relied upon for P/CVE interventions, USAID had only limited

resources available, such as those found in rather niche USAID offices, such as OTI and CMM. Naturally, those resources are substantially dwarfed by the U.S. military, and thus largely unable to fill the void in massive conflict regions around the world. Quick changes were needed, such as influxes of personnel and financial resources, as well as a major examination of P/CVE related policy, to include counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, stabilization policies, strategies, and practices. Further, by the time this realization took hold in 2010, the surge of policy change, personnel, and resources into USAID and DOS was overwhelming and shocking to the system, arguably creating a reactionary approach that some have argued was sub-optimal, and in some perspectives, not effective or properly implemented. In short, it was too little, too late. What is certain is that this realization was among the most important contributors to significant P/CVE policy evolution. The question of whether it was fully realized is yet another question for future study.

Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has explored various aspects of two research questions involving the coordination of P/CVE policy as well as factors that have contributed to the evolution of P/CVE policy within America's primary international development agency, USAID. Regarding coordination, the two observations reflected that there is substantial coordination from the highest levels of government policy making, the White House, down to the point of implementation. For the purposes of this study, the point of implementation being USAID's contributions to the TSCTP in West Africa. This coordination has taken place because of the hierarchy of policy making that is well-

defined in American government, with subordinate organizations taking guidance from

higher-level policies, and then referencing that guidance. In the case of P/CVE related

policies, National Security Strategies provided guidance to the DOS's strategies, which

often jointly provided guidance to USAID in the form of QDDRs and other related

documents, which then provided guidance for regional offices around the world, often in

the form of CDCS and RDCS documents. There have also been several specialized

documents written by DOS and USAID that provide more in-depth guidance to

practitioners, which helps progress policy making, as well as assist managers and

implementers of foreign aid programs, such as USAID program managers and NGO

implementers executing P/CVE programs in the field. However, this is not to argue that

the policies are effective, only to show that coordination is taking place and reflect policy

alignment. Further, the data does not demonstrate whether implementation is taking place

effectively. This study only aims to show that guidance is provided and linked at various

levels for consistency of policy guidance. Additional studies would be required to

examine the effectiveness of these policies and the quality of implementation.

  In the second research question, the data reflected that there were a few key

events and policies that relatively rapidly pushed P/CVE to evolve. Naturally, the shock

of the attacks on September 11, 2001 against some of the most iconic American

structures and institutions prompted a rapid reevaluation of American foreign policy.

Perhaps by design by those violent extremists who orchestrated the attack, the

circumstances practically ensured this foreign policy reevaluation was done in the fog of

crisis, pain, and rage. In short, it practically guaranteed large-scale retaliatory approaches,

most suited to military dominated solutions. This in fact, was indeed how the modern era of American conflicts have ensued.

For the first several years after that attack, the responses were overwhelmingly military and defense related, including multi-year military invasions of countries, small-scale special forces operations in various regions, and major homeland defense increases. Over time, the documentation and public statements reveal that there was an increasing realization that military force was not a sustainable or even complete response to countering militant extremism. In fact, violent extremism was growing worldwide, even in those regions receiving substantial attention, and several attacks had outsized effects on the way in which America was responding. Many of these attacks were relatively little known outside the foreign policy community and had only a short life in the news. Yet, these attacks were demonstrating that this was going to be an exceptionally long undertaking, and particularly so if the United States was to try to eradicate terrorism and violent extremism, as was often proposed by senior politicians, including President George W. Bush. Further, to not alter course would have entailed ever growing use of military forces and resources, which is exhausting financially and erodes public support domestically. In short, it was not a sustainable or realistic approach over the long term, particularly when long and costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were ongoing.

The data shows in 2010 there was an explosion of interest in preventing and countering violent extremism using new approaches to include development tools. This was a period of rapid change for the field, producing numerous key documents at all levels of the government, from the White House to the regional strategies. This period

lasted approximately seven years until 2017.

Even today, CVE is a topic of strong interest, and while it is not anywhere near to the level it had enjoyed under the Obama administration, it remains a significant area of focus, and still proportionately higher than any other administration prior to President Obama. While admittedly, it now faces an uncertain future as it remains unclear what that precipitous decline in high-level focus will mean for P/CVE resources into the future. What is also still unknown, as those future chapters have not yet been written, is what will occur when other future administrations encounter P/CVE. As noted by interviewees, it may simply morph in response to new variations of extremism, conceptually remain the same under new titles, or as some suggest, simply fade away and be replaced by something completely new.

In Chapter 5, I explore these six themes through a more theoretical lens. The theories that will be used include punctuated equilibrium theory, path dependency theory, and policy feedback theory. This will be accomplished by discussing how the use of the theories help explain the nature of the themes. Each of these three theories offer unique analytical tools in which to help better understand these findings and help describe what the findings could mean in the future for P/CVE policy. Further, the chapter will discuss the limitations of the study as well as areas that may be useful for further study.

As the reader may surmise, each of these themes has multiple aspects to it which can be further elaborated upon. However, due to scope limitations, some aspects were not delved into. What is clear is that many additional studies can be undertaken by other researchers that would likely yield important insight to further the understanding of the

way in which P/CVE policy has evolved over time. These issues and others will be

discussed in greater detail in the final chapter.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how and why foreign assistance policy, as it pertains to P/CVE, has evolved in recent years. This study is qualitative in nature, exploring the rapidly changing nature of P/CVE policy. This case study examined the interrelationship between USAID's higher-level foreign aid policy and the regional level implementation, exploring the factors that have led to P/CVE policy evolution and the extent to which the USAID's P/CVE policies are in alignment and in coordination with one another.

As an overview of the findings within Chapter 4, there were two research questions. The first question explored the nature of P/CVE policy coordination across the government, from the highest levels of policy making to the point of regional implementation. The three themes identified in the first research question reflected that there is substantial coordination from the highest levels of government policy making down to the point of implementation in the TSCTP countries of West Africa. While P/CVE has evolved very rapidly in recent years, P/CVE has really developed over decades of foreign policy changes due to evolving global events and responses. Yet, the fact that there has been coordination across the government as it pertains to P/CVE policy development and communication does not suggest that the policies are effective, only that coordination is generally occurring and thus reflecting a degree of policy alignment. Rather, the third observation, examining the lack of definitional clarity and general concern about the future of P/CVE, likely reflects that the policies require a deeper

examination. The interviewees often spoke at length about the lack of clarity in what exactly constitutes a P/CVE approach and what makes it truly distinct from other development and stabilization approaches. Or, as also suggested, is it just a catch-all approach meant to be more of a way of distributing funds and checking boxes for earmarked congressional funds than defining a clear approach with unique goals. Further, the interview data suggested that policy alignment and coordination is not necessarily the underlying problem affecting P/CVE policy and implementation, but rather that there are other challenges undermining this definitional clarity.

The second research question was an examination of the factors that have contributed to P/CVE policy evolution. The findings reflect that there have been key events and policies that helped catalyze P/CVE evolution. Most notably, the attacks on September 11, 2001 prompted many military related responses that led to long-term effects across the globe. This was by far the most consistent and dominant theme found in the document and interview analysis. However, while this is a catalyzing moment in P/CVE evolution, it does not tell the entire story of how and why the policy has evolved. In the early days of those responses to September 11th, international development was not a significant component of the Global War on Terror. However, there was an increasing realization over time that military force was not a panacea to mitigating violent extremism and that a more sophisticated approach was required. In fact, over the next two decades, evidence suggested that violent extremism was only growing in scale and intensity. Slowly, development interventions began to gain a more prominent place in programs aimed at countering and preventing violent extremism.

The document analysis demonstrates that in 2010 there was an explosion of interest in preventing and countering violent extremism using new approaches, notably substantially including development tools. This led to a period of rapid change for the field, producing numerous key policy and guidance documents at all levels of the government, from the White House to regional and country level strategies. This period lasted approximately 7 years until 2017. Under the new administration, policy focus has lessened, but not disappeared. In fact, P/CVE remains relatively robust in the field, Thus, despite the lack of significant senior level government focus, its continued existence may reflect that it has entered a normalization period in which it no longer requires such high-level focus for sustainment.

Today, P/CVE remains a topic of strong interest, and while it does not have the level of focus on it as it did under the previous administration, it remains a significant policy field with programs being implemented internationally. The West African region hosting the TSCTP remains ongoing today. The field now faces a more uncertain future as it remains unclear what the decrease in high-level policy focus means for P/CVE resources in the future. The lack of definitional clarity also is troubling to practitioners and policy makers alike. Yet, these questions are opportunities for future studies to explore.

Interpretation of the Findings

There has been little research that discusses in a significant manner the issues relevant to the study's research questions. Thus, little exists that speaks to P/CVE policy alignment in the U.S. government, and few if any significant peer-reviewed papers

directly discuss what factors have led to P/CVE policy evolution. Further, few if any

peer-reviewed papers analyzed P/CVE policies and factors of evolution through the lens

of PET, PD, or PFT. As such, this study serves to extend knowledge in this aspect of

public policy and administration.

A reading of the literature review reflects a strong emphasis on specific technical

fields of development and stabilization, including such programmatic approaches as

using education, governance, youth, and other such development interventions to achieve

the goal of countering or preventing violent extremism. There are also numerous P/CVE

related studies that suggest ways in which policies and/or programs can be made more

effective, or conversely, eliminated. Further, studies and literature reviews have also

discussed the disparate nature of CVE, calling on government policymakers to develop

more clear definitions and guidelines. However, none of this literature specifically looks

at policy alignment in government or the factors that have contributed to P/CVE policy

evolution, making this study novel in many ways. This contributes to the field by looking

at the topic with a new perspective rather than merely seeing it as a technical discipline, a

set of technical approaches combined to achieve some stated objective, or restating

definitional and programmatic limitations that have already been thoroughly explored in

past literature reviews. In short, I sought to examine P/CVE not from a technical,

definitional, or functional aspect, but rather through a deeper understanding of policy

connections and the way in which this set of policies has evolved over time. With this

study, I sought to examine P/CVE policy coordination across the government as well as

reflect how events, both large and small, have affected policy development and evolution,

and then discuss it more fully through specific theoretical lenses.

Given this approach, the study's findings do not directly speak to many of the more technical aspects found in the literature review, or in most existing studies for that matter. For example, this study did not explore whether one technical approach is superior to another, the way in which certain approaches are effective or not, or which development approach works best in countering or preventing violent extremism. Such a study was outside the scope of this research effort as it would require extensive analysis and several additional studies to include extensive impact assessments. Instead, this study explored identified themes through a qualitative P/CVE policy lens, aided by a theoretical framework, and examined the nature of the P/CVE policy coordination and evolution. Nevertheless, the themes within this study at times touched upon the technical aspects found within P/CVE programs, particularly those throughout the TSCTP region, and other geographical regions. This is because high level policy can broadly affect implementation across a broad spectrum of programs.

Certainly, the way in which Washington-level policy changes can affect, and be affected by, regional politics and policy implementation. In part, this is because of an increasingly interconnected world in that events in one region can ripple outward. P/CVE policy and programs are not immune to this phenomenon. P/CVE policy and programs are not wholly separate from other policies and global phenomena, but rather just one small element of a broader global picture. Therefore, the same events that affect and shape TSCTP policy have effects in East Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere. And while detailed research on P/CVE policy and implementation in each distinct

geographical region is necessary due to contextual differences in circumstances and culture, this study can speak to some of the issues in other regions as well. This study contributes to a broader geography and policy arena than merely the western Africa region. Thus, lessons and discussions found within this paper can be extrapolated for broader P/CVE policy analysis and consideration.

The first research question offers three identified themes. This research question asks if regional policy, as reflected in the TSCTP, has been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy. The study noted the following three themes:

- USAID takes significant guidance from external and internal processes, and these processes ensure policy coordination within the agency down to the point of implementation.

- Shifting policies have reflected coordinated periods of policy change, from high-level national P/CVE policies and strategies to the regional P/CVE strategies. As such, the policy documents reflect distinct P/CVE policy phases; and

- Some P/CVE practitioners have uncertainty about the way in which P/CVE is implemented, how it is defined, and whether it has a viable future.

In various ways, all three of these observations touch upon the three theoretical lenses used throughout the study, to include PET, PFT, and PD. Thus, the lenses help provide explanatory power to more deeply understand the factors of evolution and the way in which this policy has been coordinated within the U.S. Government. Yet, it is also

important to note that the objective of using these theoretical lenses was not to make a case as to whether the practices and approaches that USAID has taken relating to P/CVE policy have been effective or ineffective. Rather, the theoretical lenses serve as an important tool to deepen the understanding of how and why the observed P/CVE policy events occurred. Further, these explanations help those in the field of public policy better understand and examine the way in which these policies have evolved over the years.

To begin, it is important to acknowledge how punctuated equilibrium theory broadly touches upon the research questions and observations holistically. This theoretical lens serves as a foundation to understanding why P/CVE exists in its current form. P/CVE and its predecessor policy approaches, such as the Global War on Terrorism, burst onto the scene following September 11, 2001. Since then, the U.S. has been involved in multiple conflicts around the world with the goal of mitigating terrorism and violent extremism at home and abroad. In some ways, that rapid change can be reduced to a single day, and it is reflective of the way in which punctuated equilibrium theory can help explore this phenomenon. PET explores the way in which very rapid change occurs after long periods of stasis or policy stability. It can be argued that few events in American history have created the type of change that September 11, 2001 set in motion, particularly after such a long period of relative foreign policy stability. This is not to suggest that the events of September 11th occurred independent of other global events, such as the end of the Cold War, changing global economics, the perceived oppression of Muslims, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but it does point to a single set of events in a very short period of time that have had enormous ramifications

for the United States and many other countries around the world.

Further, while terrorist events in the 1990s made headlines, such as attacks in Africa against diplomatic missions and a previous attack on the World Trade Center, those paled in comparison to the extraordinarily deadly and effective attacks on September 11th. It exposed domestic security vulnerabilities as well as poorly understood foreign policy challenges and the way in which those challenges have evolved over time. Today, the U.S. is still grappling with the fallout of this period of punctuated change, which in part involves many ongoing conflicts it remains engaged in, or in some way with which it is still affiliated. These conflicts are now multi-generational and many of today's young people have been born into these conflicts. Even more catastrophic is that many have been directly involved in or affected by these conflicts and wars, be it physical injury, psychological trauma, or the loss of a loved one. In short, these conflicts have taken a heavy toll internationally, and especially so to the affected regions.

To further reinforce the punctuated nature of this event, that single day on September 11, 2001 has been the predominant driver of follow-on events that have had incalculable effects that will likely never be fully understood, and perhaps not fully resolved for generations. Thus, while this was a punctuated event, it was a paradigm altering event that scholars and policy makers will long study into the future. Given these realizations, the attacks on September 11th serve as one of the ultimate examples in modern history for which PET can impart insight into the nature of how the P/CVE policy phenomenon so rapidly manifested and then evolve.

The first theme discusses the nature of how USAID takes policy guidance from

internal and external processes. Policy feedback theory focuses heavily on the way in which policies affect politics and thus political decision making. But it must be understood that policies are crafted over time and often among multiple stakeholders providing input and feedback. Policy coordination is one of those mechanisms, and it is a major point of focus between USAID and the DOS due to their often-overlapping mandates and efforts regarding foreign aid and other foreign policy interagency requirements.

P/CVE is inherently political, not just within extremist circles but also within policy making circles of those that seek to mitigate violent extremism. Thus, P/CVE and its predecessor policies and strategies have largely been affected by political interests, which in turn have affected policies. This phenomenon also can circle in the opposite direction as well, and it can well be argued that P/CVE policies have affected political decision making. Failed or successful P/CVE policies can, and have, influenced political decision making. This can be traced back decades to previous conflicts, but also more recently when examining political decision making and focus on less successful P/CVE interventions in West Africa, to include the TSCTP countries. This fact is readily observable in that the TSCTP has been in place since 2005, the January 2019 submission of H.R. 192—Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Act, which states its aim as follows:

> To address critical security, political, economic, and humanitarian challenges in these regions of Africa, a coordinated, interagency approach is needed to appropriately allocate resources, share responsibility, de-conflict programs, and

maximize the effectiveness of United States defense, diplomatic, and

development capabilities. (2019)

What this represents is not only the reality that politics can be inherently tied to violent

conflict, but that political approaches are also required to address this linkage. It therefore

requires that foreign policy agencies to come together to find solutions to violent

extremism. In this sense, not only does it directly argue that politics must be addressed to

counter violent extremism, but also reveals the way in which policies and politics

interact. Thus, there is an inescapable relationship between politics and policy, and

P/CVE policy is no exception.

Further, policy feedback theory can describe P/CVE policy within the

bureaucratic and institutional structures of the U.S. government. Policy coordination is

generally considered an effective practice as it helps ensure partnering agencies are

communicating properly for various purposes, such as for resource allocation and future

operational planning. Further, the DOS is a White House Cabinet level agency in the U.S.

Government as the lead foreign affairs agency, and thus USAID should and must

coordinate on many issues, to include at times coordinating on P/CVE policies and

programs. This has been demonstrated many times with P/CVE policy, such as in the

QDDR, joint strategies, and country level strategies coordinated between the agencies.

This is a significant point where policy feedback theory can offer explanatory assistance

to this study, particularly in that the DOS has a Cabinet level seat and therefore maintains

significant foreign policy agenda setting influence at the highest levels of U.S.

governance.

The United States Cabinet is a critical bureaucratic structure that affords senior political officials the opportunity to come together to consider politics and policies at the highest and most influential point of U.S. governance. This is the manifestation of what Moe (1993) discusses by stating, "bureaucracy arises out of politics, and its design reflects the interests, strategies, and compromises of those who exercise political power" (p. 267). Thus, this is the point at which agenda setting can and often does occur, and where Cabinet level political interests are defined and formulated into policy to be further expounded upon at the respective agency level, including the DOS and USAID. Further, as agencies are governed by policy as well as political leadership in various manifestations, it is where policy interests are communicated and thus affects political decision making at the operational levels, from the highest levels of the agency to the point of implementation, such as country and regional strategies (e.g., the TSCTP). Therefore, not only does the Cabinet structure help demonstrate why USAID must coordinate and take guidance from the DOS, but it also helps explain how politics and policies, including those of P/CVE, affect one another through the interplay of policy coordination throughout all levels of the organizations. In fact, one could argue that the policy infrastructure is specifically designed to encourage and even mandate policy coordination, and particularly so for foreign policy agencies such as the DOS and USAID.

The second theme, focusing on the phases of P/CVE policy evolution, can be examined through the lens of path dependence theory. PD states that policies have a way of reinforcing other policy, often attributed to institutional and historical interests. These

reinforcing policy interests have a way in which policies and practices are entrenched over time. For example, the primary response to the attacks on September 11th was the overwhelming use of military force. Over the nearly 20 years of constant warfare, an overwhelming reliance on the use of military interventions remained relatively constant. This has been ongoing despite civilian and military officials frequently stating that the predominant reliance on the military will not achieve success. In short, the approach became, largely due to systemic level drivers, deeply entrenched and self-reinforcing.

Today, we continue to see an overwhelming reliance on military force to achieve CVE goals while civilian development agencies struggle against constant budget limitations and ongoing attempts at major budget reductions, leading to staffing and planning challenges (Saldinger, 2020). This in effect, reduces their effectiveness regardless of how many influential military and political leaders call for greater contributions from the civilian agencies, such as USAID. This is further reflected in a vast budget disparity when contrasting military and development interventions. USAID has budgeted approximately $68 million in the TSCTP region over six years (USAID, 2019) while the security assistance budget from the DOS alone, not inclusive of the DOD's assistance, has amounted to $323 million since only 2018 (Schmitt, 2020). This trend has continued over the past 20 years even though security and regional stability continues to slip and while military leaders have pleaded for years for greater development and diplomatic assistance. One such example has been Admiral Mike Mullen's consistent statements for more robust civilian assistance, and recently stating, "the more we cut the international affairs budget, the higher the risk for longer and

deadlier military operations." (Mullen, 2020, para. 9). However, while he and other

senior civilian and military official have consistently made these arguments over many

years, little has changed in the budget environment, if not having become even more dire

for USAID and the DOS.

This is a critically important point as it pertains to the entrenched approaches and

tools the government uses to counter extremism. Obviously, the budget and committed

levels of resources most clearly reflects how policy makers choose to approach a

problem. Therefore, significant budget allocations to military approaches at the expense

of development and diplomatic approaches reflects the desire to rely heavily on military

operations to solve foreign policy challenges. The budget numbers are self-evident of this

deep-seated trend of military reliance. Since September 11, 2001, the U.S. Government

has provided $2 trillion for the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget (also

known as the Global War on Terror), which is designed to fund overseas conflicts (CRS,

2019). Notably, this amount is not inclusive of the already expansive and growing U.S.

defense budget (World Bank, 2018), which has been further added to with $1.8 trillion of

the OCO budget, leaving only the remaining $200 billion for several other agencies to

split among themselves (CRS, 2019). The differences in operational capabilities, and the

overwhelming reliance upon defense-focused approaches over development approaches,

can hardly be clearer when contrasting those budgetary numbers.

Therefore, when examining P/CVE policies through the lens of PD, it is important

to understand the broader picture of how government agencies are funded and the

consequences of budgeting. Budgeting is arguably the most tangible aspects of agenda

setting in public administration and policy implementation. Budgets affect government agencies holistically, from staffing to procurement and just about everything related to implementation. If there is no money to implement a policy, and the policy remains only words in a document, then the policy is relatively insignificant when contrasted with a well-resourced policy. Thus, those policies that can be implemented, especially robustly implemented, gain traction through action while those that are not remain largely irrelevant.

Further, policy industries and economic ecosystems form around well-funded agencies tasked with implementing resourced policies. There are few better examples than looking at how and where defense contracts are procured and the way in which jobs are created from those contracts. Those contracts are a direct result of policies being funded and implemented. However, USAID has extremely few contracts that are major job generators on anywhere near the scale that DOD offers in various states and regions. USAID operates overseas and the work can be characterized as far more specialized and niche than the broad range of functions that comprise defense work. That contrast is obvious to most policy makers and politicians. Given this, defense contracts are not only seen as important to the defense of the country, but it is also a significant job-creator across the country, and this is an especially important consideration for politicians and private sector industry leaders. In other words, it can contribute to the welfare of a politician's constituency, and that can be a strong motivator for political decision making. Yet, the question that remains is whether it has become too entrenched for these reasons, and thus affecting policy making at the expense of deciding on the best policy approach.

In short, there is a natural tendency to continue to opt for the most readily available options, and in the case of P/CVE implementation, military options are almost always readily available to policy makers. Yet, availability should not be the sole deciding factor, by policy makers and other stakeholders, as tantamount to appropriateness in how policies are implemented.

The key points on this matter that experts and long-time practitioners and senior leaders like Admiral Mike Mullen consistently make is that the budget is disproportionately focused on military solutions at the expense of development and diplomatic solutions. This argument very much incorporates issues relevant to P/CVE and related policy issues. Thus, when the civilian agencies are far less funded, it can have the effect of inhibiting options and tools that may be more appropriate in the struggle against violent extremism even in the face of data demonstrating that the current efforts are not achieving success. Data also overwhelmingly demonstrates that the military has long been, and will likely remain for the foreseeable future, the dominant foreign policy budget recipient. Thus, the U.S. has entrenched itself in military reliant P/CVE policy approaches, not only in the TSCTP region, but around the world. This is the very essence of what PD points out as it pertains to reinforcing systems that affect policy making even when change would be beneficial to meeting stated national security objectives. Thus, USAID's role in P/CVE policy implementation can in part be explained and further examined through the PD lens.

The third observation, that practitioners have expressed concern about how P/CVE is defined and its future viability, may in part be explored through a theoretical

lens. However, given the limited nature of the three theoretical lenses used in this study, a deeper exploration would likely require additional theoretical lenses outside the scope of this study. Yet, some of the confusion expressed by the interviewees may be directly connected to the way in which P/CVE policies have so rapidly evolved in recent years. The rate of change was mentioned frequently in the interviews. Rapid change is a core element of PET. As discussed, the predecessor policies and concepts have long predated modern concepts of P/CVE, yet the field has undergone extraordinary change in recent years.

Prior to the wave of P/CVE attention, some stasis had existed over the previous past decades as the U.S. focused its policy attention to traditional combat operations, particularly during the Cold War. One could even argue that irregular approaches, such as counterinsurgency operations, had seen a degree of policy stasis during the Cold War. However, since 2010, P/CVE has been on the forefront of changing policy pertaining to conflict intervention, particularly as the focus of counterinsurgency declined with American forces departing Iraq and decreasing its presence in Afghanistan. Thus, P/CVE became the new policy receiving significant attention whereas merely a few short years prior, counterinsurgency was the trending policy approach. This quick shift from one tool to another may have had a hand in creating some cynicism as to what P/CVE is and whether it has a viable future beyond being merely a short-lived policy trend.

Further, the definition of P/CVE has been challenging to distill and precisely clarify the manner in how it differs from traditional development and stabilization approaches. This is only amplified by the fact that P/CVE tools differ little if at all from

traditional development tools, but rather, predominantly, it is the expressed objectives

that differ, often within conflict affected regions. For example, P/CVE aims to achieve

fundamentally political and social objectives, such as addressing the root causes of

violent extremism, and at times the mitigation of violent extremism, to keep it from

developing or continuing in affected foreign countries or regions. However, that is often

the program objective in many foreign policy interventions, including USAID, DOS, and

DOD programs that do not explicitly mention CVE. This lack of clarity may be a

symptom of the way in which politics and policies interact, causing it to develop into a

sort of catchall concept in which nearly all approaches can fit.

   As demonstrated in this study, P/CVE has been heavily affected by political

interests, never so much as during the Obama administration's emphasis on developing

P/CVE policies, and doing so with an attempt at ramping up civilian agency operations to

assist military operations. This period reflects a deeply ambiguous and chaotic

environment during a time of multiple conflicts and a rapidly changing environment. This

is further complicated when examining how the Obama administration reoriented a

previous set of policies put into place by the Bush administration, then popularly phrased

as the War on Terror, which relied heavily on military intervention and implementation.

Further, many of the tools that are considered P/CVE tools are a mix of traditional

development approaches (e.g., economic, health, youth, justice, and governance

assistance), stabilization operations (e.g., assistance to stabilize a country or region

following a crisis), and counterinsurgency approaches (e.g., assistance using a

combination of development and military approaches to defeat insurgents), and often

using similar terminology and stated objectives of those disciplines. Yet, despite the

muddiness of the P/CVE definitions and programs, it has continued to be a policy focus

from the highest levels of government, including the White House and Congress. Further,

the results have been mixed and violence continues to increase in many parts of the

world. These issues have come together to sow confusion in the minds of some

practitioners. It may be that little can be done in the interest of policy clarification due to

the inherent muddiness of the issues P/CVE seeks to influence. However, additional

analysis should be done to more fully understand this phenomenon so that policy makers

can craft clearer, and perhaps more effective, policies for implementers and analysts.

The second research question is a discussion of the factors that have led to

changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign

assistance policy. This question led to the development of three themes:

- P/CVE policy evolution is characterized not only by documented policy change
  but has also been influenced by key events and conceptual shifts in thinking.
- Due to ongoing conflicts, P/CVE policy has rapidly evolved due to both
  significant punctuating events, as well as events that play outsized roles.
- Leaders and policy makers realized that an overreliance on military solutions
  was not achieving success. This led to civilian agencies entering the policy
  equation, interagency coordination developing, and P/CVE related policies
  rapidly evolving.

The first two themes in response to the second research question can best be

understood through the PET lens. Both of those observations touch on the fact that key

events have continued to alter P/CVE policy. The findings incorporated into those themes

demonstrate that P/CVE policy has rapidly evolved due in large part to evolving

circumstances. Predominantly, these violent circumstances were a result of ongoing

violent conflict, whether it be in the West African TSCTP regions or elsewhere.

However, it is important to point out that it isn't just violence in some form that has led to

change, but also that even new policies can affect significant change. This is noteworthy

in that in the field of P/CVE, which touches on violent extremism, it might be easy to

conclude that conflict and violence itself is what alters the course of policies that touch

on this issue. However, shifts in policy and strategy itself can holistically alter the way in

which P/CVE policies and programs operate. This is especially the case as it pertains to

regional and country level policies. For example, if high level policy supports P/CVE

operations, then it is likely that this will substantially affect regional and country P/CVE

programs. Likewise, if senior level policy withdraws support for P/CVE, then it likely

that those programs will be scaled back or eliminated at the point of implementation.

However, PET has its limitations as it pertains to these observations because

P/CVE has experienced extraordinarily little policy stasis yet. It is simply too new in its

current form and has undergone continuous change. However, if I were to expand the

scope of the study to include previous decades in which elements of P/CVE was

identified differently, such as including counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counter

radicalization, stabilization operations, or other similar disciplines, then it could be more

readily argued that it has undergone relative stasis. However, in the interest of looking

specifically at the modern era of P/CVE, this study demonstrates that there has been little

policy stasis to date. The rapid change in P/CVE policy also eliminates PD as rapid change does not reflect entrenched practices. Further, PFT is likely also not an appropriate explanatory theoretical lens for these two observations. That is because rapidly changing policies due to specific key events, and how those factors have affected P/CVE policy, do not necessarily provide insight into the way in which politics are affects by those specific change. To explore that aspect would require an additional study, such as attempting to show how P/CVE policy changes, and the events that have led to those changes, to political decision making. However, from a broader perspective the existence and support of P/CVE policies can influence politics, yet it is much more challenging to isolate specific P/CVE related events onto causative factors of political change.

The third observation is perhaps the best example of how all three theoretical lenses can be informative in more deeply examining this phenomenon. The third observation examines the way in which policy evolved due to a realization that military solutions were not achieving the desired objectives of reducing violent extremism in key parts of the world. Equally important to this observation is that this was widely and unabashedly communicated to the public and policy making community, including from military and civilian elites, including generals, ambassadors, and leading academics. Given this, this study demonstrates three important theoretical aspects to understanding P/CVE policy. First, it involves the initial events that created modern P/CVE approaches and policies, which can be examined through PET. Secondly, it involves the politics of P/CVE and related approaches, and how the discipline became a prominent discussion in

the public, the policy making circles, and the practitioner community. As such, this offers itself to examining P/CVE through the PFT lens. Third, it also incorporates the standardized and long-entrenched approaches that the U.S. government has tended to lean in favor of during times of conflict, which is the reliance on military might at the expense of civilian approaches. Yet, as will be discussed below, there was a rapid change to give greater attention to development tools to counter violent extremism, a fact that affords P/CVE to be more fully understood through PD.

Looking first through the PET lens, as discussed, modern P/CVE came into being due in large part to the attacks on September 11, 2001 and the violent conflicts that unfolded afterwards. While USAID was early in the country after the initial invasion, establishing its presence in 2002, it was asked to do work that it was not structurally prepared to undertake nor part of its traditional approaches (USIP, 2002). Further, USAID was not the lead agency tasked with providing much of the assistance and making the most important strategic decisions on foreign assistance approaches in the country, as that responsibility fell to the far more robust DOD. USAID's approaches had been traditionally more development focused in relatively stable environments conducive to development. And while USAID has had organizations like the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) since 1994, which focuses on laying the early groundwork for long-term development, that work was a much more niche aspect of USAID's toolkit (USAID, 2010, para. 1). In short, the early work required of USAID was an approach that USAID normally would not electively undertake, as they were not scaled for that level of effort in such a challenging environment, and very well may not yet be (USAID, 2017). In sum,

the enormous impact on USAID drove overwhelming change within USAID which is still be felt today. This level of impact based on a single event is the quintessential example of how PET effects public policy.

Moving from how overwhelming events lead to change, we also see how PD played an important role in this realization. The U.S. has long relied on overwhelming military strength, which is well reflected in the level of resources expended on it and political focus placed on it. As such, it is not surprising that policy makers turn to the military to solve many conflict related challenges overseas. As demonstrated in this study in contrasting budgetary levels, the resources spent on the military versus development is vastly dissimilar in favoring defense. In fact, this has been the case for decades. Naturally, vastly different budgetary allocations have palpable effects in the way in which foreign policy is developed and implemented. This played out after September 11th with the military being the leading agency in many conflict environments tasked with combating violent extremism, including in the TSCTP countries and well beyond. This reality reflects how entrenched approaches played into the way in which the United States initially confronted P/CVE related challenges.

This palpable shift to incorporate development alongside defense-based approaches, termed the 3Ds and inclusive of defense, diplomacy, and development, began in earnest with the Secretary of State's 2010 speech at the Center for Global Development. Secretary Clinton stated that, "coordination among the so-called Three Ds has often fallen short, and everyone has borne the consequences…The United States will achieve our best results when we approach our foreign policy as an integrated whole,

rather than just the sum of its parts" (Clinton, 2010, para. 43). This statement was subsequently reflected in the pivotal 2010 QDDR policy, reflecting a major shift in the strategy in which the U.S. government was approaching challenges such as P/CVE. Coupled with critical statements coming from military elites regarding an overreliance on military force in P/CVE related roles, it was clear that America was seeking a new path forward in conflict and CVE environments.

These comments, and the subsequent QDDR documents in 2010 and 2015, demonstrate how major events initially shocked the system and led to major reactions, illustrative of PET, yet interestingly, also reflective of how entrenched approaches also served as a sort of fallback during that chaotic period. The initial seismic changes were clearly that America found itself, almost overnight, from being in peace to being in major conflicts around the world. This forced enormous troop buildups and the preparation to fight in irregular conflict environment, something America had an aversion toward since Vietnam. Yet, what was not changed was the heavy reliance on military might, which was a long-standing approach. Smaller, yet significant changes were to come later, and in this case in 2010, a major policy shift from an excessive reliance upon the military to incorporate development more readily into these many conflict environments, terming the new approach the 3Ds. These changes, coupled with the ongoing critical statements from military elites on the need to incorporate diplomacy and development in conflict zones, reflects how PET and PD have had significant interplay in the modern CVE era.

While likely not necessarily as prominent as PET and PD, PFT also offers some explanatory assistance to the broad realization that military might was not leading to the

intended results in CVE environments. As mentioned, military and political elites were increasingly discussing the need to expand America's tools beyond the overwhelming reliance upon military might. After approximately nine years of ongoing conflict it was clear that the military may not have the tools and expertise necessary to be successful in non-traditional conflict environments, such as fighting extremists and insurgents among civilian populations. This realization alone is extraordinary, considering the U.S. yields the most powerful military that has ever existed, yet finds itself coming up short against very often low-tech combatants. This speaks volumes to the strategic power of irregular conflict, such as those often employed by violent extremists, and why military might alone is not sufficient in such environments.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the nature of the study's substantial reliance upon document analysis as part of the methodology, there were few limitations to trustworthiness of the data. In terms of credibility, the document analysis methodology places strict limitations on which documents can and should be included for analysis. In the case of this study, only finalized and publicly available policy documents detailing P/CVE policies, and very closely related definitional disciplines, or predecessor policies, were included for data collection and analysis. This provided a clear audit trail in determining the credibility of the policy document as all included documents were published on the respective agency's website. This methodology also provided the capability of data triangulation, as related policy documents often cite other policy documents, particularly policies that are senior level policies from higher levels of government. Policy documents are also very

frequently referred to in peer reviewed papers and in published analytical studies. Further, the interviewees often identified specific policies and strategies that they felt were most relevant and played a significant role in their work in the field. Collectively, this affords the analyst the ability to determine the level of credibility for each respective policy document.

The level of credibility of the interviewees was also attainable through their record of published papers. Each interviewee has published papers in some form over the course of their careers. This provided an audit trail of sorts for their respective level of experience. Further, many of these interviewees have published widely known papers and studies over the years, which again provides an audit trail for their knowledge and experience in the P/CVE discipline.

The methodology was designed to follow strict guidelines to only include formal published policy documents, thus helping to ensure the source credibility and trustworthiness. Further, the methodology for interviewees was designed in a way so as to only recruit and include interviewee participants who have specific experience pertaining to programs that were classified as P/CVE or its predecessor policies, to include stabilization operations, counterinsurgency, and non-military counterterrorism interventions prior to the development of modern P/CVE policy. Many of the interviewees had robust experience across the range of programs that fell under the auspices of current P/CVE policies and its predecessor policies. Given these methodological procedures, the integrity and trustworthiness of the collected material, the analysis, and the conclusions was maintained throughout the study.

Recommendations

Each of the recommendations touch on the themes identified during this study. As with any academic study, there are scope limitations that limit how far a study can go in terms of collecting and analyzing documents and interviews. However, studies often uncover and touch upon additional questions and concerns that may warrant further academic research for the future. This study is no exception in that regard. As such, there are reflections and recommendations associated with each of the study's themes. Each theme is restated below along with the associated recommendations for future study.

The first theme in research question 1 argues that USAID takes significant guidance from external and internal processes, and these processes ensure policy coordination within the agency down to the point of implementation. This reflects significant evidence that policy coordination is occurring at all levels of the P/CVE policy making process. However, while the policy documentation, and which was confirmed by interviewees, offered significant evidence at a higher level of coordination, including finalized interagency policy documents, this study did not go into significant details as to the many coordination mechanisms that are ongoing. This was avoided due to the interest of not disclosing sensitive information. Conducting a new study on the specifics of which meetings and how these committees are formed would be important to building an understanding of the intricacies of policy making as it pertains to P/CVE and other fields. Further, because P/CVE is a rapidly evolving discipline, such an exercise would be informative for future policy makers as to the lessons learned in coordinating such a rapidly evolving policy field. Much of this analysis may only be achievable

internally to the respective government agencies but would remain valuable for senior policy makers, agency leadership, and historians. Naturally, releasing an unclassified analysis to the public would offer additional value to the wider academic community of public policy scholars and thus likely inspire broader application. Such an internal study of how P/CVE evolved would also be highly credible and thus of significant interest to a wider community.

The second theme examined how shifting policies have reflected coordinated periods of policy change, from high-level national P/CVE policies and strategies to the regional P/CVE strategies. As such, the policy documents reflect distinct P/CVE policy phases. In this theme, discernible policy themed trends were revealed in key high-level policy documents, such as the White House National Security Strategy. The theme also explored some of the catalysts that led to those emerging policy themes that in part defined specific P/CVE related policy periods. However, while the published policy documents supported this observation, it did not examine exactly how they affect violent extremism in those countries during those periods. For example, it is often discussed in various academic papers the way in which the Cold War led to an increase in insurgencies and the use of terrorist tactics. However, it remains relatively unclear if those circumstances set the stage for today's challenges in countering and preventing violent extremism.

Such a study would likely provide important analysis in linking past actors and events to today's challenges in P/CVE. Naturally, this would often be specific to the circumstances applicable to respective regions and countries, and even specific extremist groups and how responses were made to those groups, but a strong understanding in how

historical actors have set the stage for today's challenges may help scholars and policy makers better understand how to address root causes before they evolve into a broader and potentially deadlier set of challenges. Further, understanding in greater detail specifically how and why P/CVE, and its predecessor policy eras evolved from one stage into another, would be informative for current and future policy makers and P/CVE practitioners.

The third theme discusses how P/CVE practitioners have uncertainty about the way in which P/CVE is implemented, how it is defined, and whether it has a viable future. This theme was a unique observation that was derived from interview analysis rather than policy documents. This theme is an important point of consideration because it touches upon the way in which the field of P/CVE is perceived by those who know it best. While this theme placed a lens on the broad perceptions of P/CVE, particularly in how coordination occurs, it does not go into detail as to the effects of policy implementation resulting from these perceptions.

It is sometimes stated that perception is a form of reality. The way in which a policy is perceived may very well shape the reality in which a respective policy is implemented. As such, a potentially important aspect of this observation was not fully explored in this study, which is the question of whether the nature of perception by P/CVE practitioners have an effect in the way in which it is applied in the field. There is a certain psychological aspect to this, and that question is arguably outside the specific realm of public policy, but an exploration of perception and P/CVE policy implementation may be useful to understand the discipline more fully. As such, another

recommendation would be to examine the relationship more deeply between the way in which policy perception occurs and the nature of the respective policy implementation.

The next three themes that comprise the response to research question 2, referred to here as observations four through six, explore the factors that have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy. The fourth observation examines how P/CVE policy evolution is characterized not only by documented policy change but has also been influenced by key events and conceptual shifts in thinking. This theme brings to the fore the issue that the way in which certain events affect P/CVE has not been well anticipated. Predictive analysis appears to be lacking and therefore much of the change was reactive rather than proactive. The next two themes, five and six, touch on this reactionism approach to P/CVE policy, and therefore I strongly believe more quality analysis would strongly benefit policy development in this field. For example, as I undertook this research and read into the history of countering violent extremism, I was surprised to find that so much of what the world experienced in places such as Vietnam was playing out so similarly in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, and now in places like the TSCTP region of West Africa. Volumes have been written over the past few decades about the need to place a strong emphasis on non-military approaches, and thereby work closer with the population to limit opportunities for violent extremists and other militants to gain favor with the population. However, as the next two observations point out, America was again slow to learn these past lessons and develop solutions that were well documented in detail. As such, I recommend greater attention be placed on historical and comparative analysis

within the foreign policy community, to be better positioned for future and ongoing

conflicts. And further, ensure these lessons are maintained as part of continuous

professional development and training in military and civilian agencies alike. In short,

they should not be learned and then forgotten, just to see the same mistakes repeated.

The fifth theme discusses that due to ongoing conflicts, P/CVE policy has rapidly

evolved due to both significant punctuating events, as well as events that played outsized

roles. Similarly, this points out that major and minor events play major roles in shaping

P/CVE policy. This theme surprised me in that I thought I would find that major events,

such as major attacks against the United States, were more impactful. From my early

perspective, that seemed more logical. However, the documents and interviewees often

pointed out that just as though major events may jolt the system emphatically into major

reforms and changes, the cumulative effect of smaller and seemingly more minor events

also have a major effect on policy. In this sense, considering a phenomenon as the sum of

the whole provides a more important glimpse into evolution than singling out one major

event or another. Further, this approach helps distill how choices and agendas that result

from the major events, are often more important than the initiating event.

Further, although a major event may trigger a response, success is often judged

over time. For example, constant setbacks evidenced by ongoing attacks destroys

momentum and confidence of both the military and the public. These setbacks are in

many ways a result of the choices made by various parties after an initiating punctuating

event, and thus drive the way in which policy evolves. These choices, often laid out

within policy, illustrate this evolutionary policy process and are factors of change

themselves. Thus, I have concluded that a focus should also be placed on the

accumulation of minor events over time rather than an excessive focus on the major

punctuating events that may draw more newspaper headlines. I believe that doing so

would allow for more important analysis on how policy should be adjusted and therefore

place the United States government into a more productive learning posture than what the

last twenty years of war suggest.

The sixth theme also touches on the learning aspects of P/CVE policy change.

This theme discusses how leaders and policy makers eventually realized that an

overreliance on military solutions was not successful. Over time, this eventually led to

civilian agencies entering the policy equation to a far greater extent than in years past,

thus enhanced interagency coordination developing, and then P/CVE related policies

rapidly evolving. Unfortunately, this took approximately a decade to reach a robust level

of policy support and was then rushed into implementation without fully understanding

what was needed and how best to achieve those ends. Again, it was a reactionary

approach due to the lack of policy understanding and historical awareness from similar

experiences in American history, such as counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam. And

while military personnel losses have been relatively minimal in comparison to previous

wars, the toll it took on the respective countries' civilian populations has been extreme

and tragic, and tarnished America's reputation as a human-rights focused nation. Given

this, not only has a military heavy approach not produced the intended results the United

States has sought, but it has also come at arguably unsustainable costs in life, national

reputation, and financial burden. Yet, it took almost nine years of intense combat

operations in several countries around the world before there was an awakening and admission that this reliance was failing. And yet, in some corners of the government, this thinking has still not been fully embraced.

While civilian agencies have long been involved in many P/CVE operations around the world, it was not until 2010 that a determined effort was put forth to utilize USAID more effectively in these environments. However, after nearly a decade of combat operations in violent regions, where destroyed or severely damaged communities now exist, it can be argued by that point the damage is done. At such a point, reversing such negative trends becomes nearly impossible in the short-term and even extremely difficult in the long-term. Therefore, given America has extreme reliance on the military, I believe this phenomenon and its root causes must be better understood. In terms of P/CVE, it is imperative to understand why even in non-traditional military environments this endures.

While a few of these factors were discussed in this paper, such as governance and policy entrenchment that favor military resourcing and approaches, it was not as deeply studied as it could be, as doing so progresses beyond the scope of this study. Certainly, while policy that focuses on military solutions has its merits, such as ensuring a robust national defense posture, an overreliance can lend itself to policy inflexibility. I believe that is what occurred in the case of P/CVE policy in the TSCTP countries and beyond. This inflexibility must be better understood and shared broadly with the policy community to assist in offering more successful policy approaches, and particularly so in respect to non-traditional conflict challenges such as P/CVE environments.

Implications

This study lends itself well to positive social change on a variety of social change topics. First, it offers unique insights into important policy themes that have not been thoroughly examined previously. To this end, it adds new material to the body of scholarly work which serves to reinforce the notion that military led solutions are not always effective in countering and preventing violent extremism. Often throughout history, the U.S. government leaned heavily on military solutions to violent engagements, and certainly there are circumstances where military force is required, but the analysis shows that is not a foregone conclusion in all circumstances. Each situation should be examined carefully to weigh the pros and cons of using military force, civilian aid approaches, or an orchestrated approach using both. However, even in orchestrated approaches, one may be more prominent than the other and that too should be considered carefully.

Development solutions which seek to mitigate the underlying causes of violent extremism are an especially important aspect in devising an effective P/CVE associated strategy and policy. This has been demonstrated time and again throughout history. While violence is always an easy option, in today's world it has not been effective in mitigating many of these types of challenges throughout the world. This has been especially so regarding the TSCTP countries where extremist-based violence has flourished. This is further exacerbated when civilian populations dominate the operational space as many of these P/CVE related problems are in urban population centers. Obviously, the blowback from disproportionate violence often exceeds the gains made in the short-term, and over

the long term can lead to undesirable results and protracted conflict. Such violence often

fans the flames leading to furthering violent extremism, which can be argued has been the

case in western Africa. Rather than violence meeting violence, or the face of U.S. aid

being represented by American soldiers, it is often more effective to demonstrate to the

population that it is civilians assisting civilians, even when attempting to implement

P/CVE-based foreign aid programs in conflict regions. In this sense, optics matter and

should be carefully considered when devising policy that aims at reducing violence. And

while implementing this concept may require policy reorientation to strengthen civilian

foreign aid organizations, it may be a worthwhile endeavor as it would better balance

America's ability to mitigate extremism as well as offer America's civilian and military

leaders with additional strategic and tactical options when confronting violent extremism.

Further, as this study has described in the literature review, this is far from being

an ideological point, but rather this observation is rooted in recent history and a rich body

of existing analysis, much of it by notable military scholars within the last fifty years.

Further, scholars and observers of P/CVE policy need look no further than the many

rigorous studies that have shown the trend of growing violent extremism which has

grown in spite of the enormous sums of money and resources sent to fight violent

extremism in its many forms, including the TSCTP region. This is well understood and

often stated within USAID's own policy documents which have long acknowledged the

growing violence in West Africa, stating:

> In recent years, the landscape of violent extremism in West Africa has grown
>
> increasingly fractured and complex. Boko Haram has devastated livelihoods in

the Lake Chad Basin. Conflict in northern Mali appears increasingly intractable, allowing violent extremist groups to operate with relative impunity and carry out attacks throughout the region. The continued trouble in Libya threatens to export new strains of violent extremism and ethnic tension to West Africa. Taking place against a backdrop of persistent social and economic vulnerability, this insecurity has sparked a surge in migration and smuggling. The regional trade routes that once moved salt and myrrh increasingly facilitate the flow of guns, drugs, people, and violent ideology. (USAID, 2016)

In short, the situation has not improved, but rather has grown and evolved to become an even more daunting challenge. One solution that policy makers may opt to consider more deeply is ramping up civilian led approaches to the region. Such a shift may serve to dampen violent extremism in the region. Naturally, that approach comes with some risks, as extremists will likely increase the targeting of civilian aid workers, particularly if they deem an increase in civilian-led aid to be a threat to their sway over the population.

Achieving the goal of a more prosperous and peaceful West Africa region, able to cope with the growing challenges and instability associated with violent extremism, would be an extraordinary positive social and governance change for the region. Naturally, there is no single solution to such a complex international challenge but enabling viable policy and strategic options to complex emergencies is sound governance. Such an outcome has the potential to contribute to positive social change that can lead to more peaceful communities in violence affected communities as well as a less strained American population, military, and economy.

A plausible recommendation regarding this is to study whether having a stronger foreign aid civilian structure in place, properly staffed, trained, and resourced in P/CVE and other such related foreign aid approaches, would help achieve the foreign policy objectives of P/CVE and thus that of the TSCTP region and beyond. P/CVE approaches have been discussed as a priority within numerous national level policies and strategies. As such, it would seem to be in the national interest to better understand where the shortcomings are and how best to strengthen the organizations responsible for implementing these national priorities. As this study has highlighted, while much technical analysis has been conducted as it pertains to specific development tools and disciplines, little P/CVE policy level analysis has been completed. As the study's literature review and other past literature reviews have highlighted, most of the analysis is highly technical in nature, such as examining youth, education, health, economics, and other technical fields as related to P/CVE. However, noncomprehensive technical approaches will not solve the complexities of violent extremism. Rather, it will likely require multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and coordinated tools and programs, guided by sound policy and strategy, to provide effective solutions. This is the primary recommendation resulting from this study and which in my opinion will serve as both a policy and societal benefit.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, several dominant themes emerged that encapsulate the research questions, much of the literature, and the six identified themes. These broad conclusions serve as what I perceive to be key lessons that policy makers may wish to

consider as P/CVE policy is developed and issued. In addition, practitioners and scholars may also wish to consider these broad conclusions to assess whether policy has been soundly developed and communicated, as well as fully understood by the target audiences.

First, P/CVE policy development has served to reinforce the fact that policy coordination is an important function. The evidence suggests that policy coordination has in fact been done reasonably well through joint strategies and policies being issued every few years, many of such documents at least touching on P/CVE and others significantly focusing on P/CVE. Yet, what also is clear is that policy coordination is merely one aspect to effective policy development and implementation. This study illustrated that there are a wide range of stakeholders that are in some fashion responsible for effective P/CVE policy and strategy implementation. For the civilian agencies, this coordination has generally occurred at the various governmental levels, such as jointly between USAID and the DOS and within USAID bureaus and offices. However, those levels are often not implementing the policies themselves, but rather manage contracts and grants for those that implement the P/CVE programs. Thus, coordination is extremely important between government and non-governmental stakeholders. And while non-governmental organizations often contribute input at the policy level, the critical component of P/CVE is at the field implementation level, where policies come to fruition or fail. Thus, based on the vast amount of policy material and the interview feedback, greater focus should be placed not just at the intergovernmental coordination levels, but also greater coordination at the nongovernmental field level. This would likely enhance the quality of P/CVE

program implementation as well as better inform government policy makers and coordinators.

Second, history is replete with demonstrations and lessons that can and should be deeply studied by P/CVE policy makers, agency leaders, and implementers. In short, all levels should be familiar with P/CVE and its predecessor policies to distill from those experiences key lessons that remain relevant today. This study has demonstrated that P/CVE and its closely related policy predecessors have gone through many periods of change. Some of those changes were catalyzed by major events that reshaped America's policy priorities, while others gradually changed over time due to new leadership and shifting political and policy priorities. This is natural in many ways and policy change often occurs organically across all sectors of government. However, those many changes offer opportunities to study how and why those changes occurred and whether they achieved success or not. This is particularly the case for events like Vietnam, which had robust counterinsurgency efforts over many years, and which left behind a robust body of academic and non-academic literature. Thus, in many cases, there are applicable lessons that may well be applied to today's P/CVE challenges. I believe more comparative analysis would contribute much to better informing today's P/CVE policy makers and practitioners. Further, robust and well-supported studies of recent historical interventions should be conducted as timely as possible in order to capture the salient lessons from those involved before that generation passes and academics are no longer able to capture critical data directly from those individuals.

Third, this study demonstrated that important catalytic events, such as September 11, 2001, are not the only events that are important in understanding how and why P/CVE policy has changed. As reflected in the interviews, while many acknowledged major events such as September 11th playing an initial role, usually in the sense that the importance is commonsensical, all the interviewees listed several other lesser known events as also playing significant roles in their respective regions. While some of these events made it into major national media outlets, others are far lesser known by those not specifically attuned to the West Africa region. Further, it is not only events per se that remain relevant, but also conditions on the ground play a role. In addition, policies have a way of shaping events and conditions, and thus an understanding of secondary effects of new policy should be factored into what is driving P/CVE policy change.

Policies reflect decisions, and decisions have consequences. Therefore, close study by stakeholders should be continuously undertaken to understand all the relevant factors that have driven P/CVE policy change, as new factors will emerge and old factors will evolve, and these are important to understand and communicate. This is an important understanding to ensure that policy change is not reactive, as much of it has been over the past twenty years, but rather proactive in that when policy reforms occur, it is well informed change and not excessively focused on one event over the aggregate of many events over time. In turn, this helps avoid replicating past mistakes or overcorrecting or under-correcting existing P/CVE related policy.

Fourth, P/CVE is still an emerging policy field and discipline. While its predecessor approaches, such as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability

operations have long existed, P/CVE is relatively new and continues to rapidly evolve. However, relatively few policy documents focus solely on P/CVE. Much of the P/CVE guidance has been part of much broader policies and strategies that cover numerous foreign policy topics. Thus, P/CVE has developed in many ways independent of formal policy guidance, arguably down to the field mission and even individual level. In short, the way one practitioner perceives P/CVE can be dramatically different from another practitioner. This has only been compounded by rather stark definitional problems which struggle to differentiate P/CVE from related approaches. Given this, it may be time for more frequent P/CVE policy reviews to more clearly articulate P/CVE to DOS and USAID bureaus, offices, field missions, and implementers. Thus, an important lesson from this study and the existing literature is that there is currently a lack of clarity in how P/CVE should be defined, how to best apply it in varying environments, and how to understand if success is being achieved.

As interviewees stated, if P/CVE is to have a future in foreign aid, it needs to be more than something considered a funding mechanism requiring programs to be termed P/CVE to receive budgetary support. Nor can P/CVE be considered merely a combination of pre-existing development approaches repackaged and termed P/CVE. More frequent formal guidance, with contributions to government and non-government entities, would be beneficial for an array of stakeholders in better understanding what sets P/CVE apart in policy and in practice.

Fifth, this study argued that there has been relatively thorough coordination at all levels of government on P/CVE policy. However, that level of coordination does not

seem to exist between government and non-government entities. According to the existing scholarly literature, the technical USAID literature, and interviewee feedback, there is little policy coordination between the government and the implementers. In this sense, while there are contracts and grants that lay out desired outcomes, and routine reports from implementers to field missions, it is not clear if the feedback is being strongly considered for policy amendment. In short, while there is documentary support showing top-down policy coordination, there is far less support to indicate that there is bottom-up coordination occurring. This may be a cause of the considerable confusion and skepticism from field practitioners about the existing P/CVE policies. To achieve greater understanding between governmental and non-government organizations, particularly those who manage P/CVE grants and contracts and those who implement them, greater inclusion of field level implementers in policy making would be beneficial. In addition, companies and NGOs who implement P/CVE programs should be held more accountable to ensure their staff are more fully informed on USAID P/CVE policy, just as government managers should ensure their staff who manage such programs are well informed.

Knowledge of organizational policy is reflective of competence and professionalism, particularly in emerging disciplines without a long track record, and this awareness helps ensure coordination and common understanding. This top-down and bottom-up combination of policy coordination would likely serve future P/CVE policy amendments well by reducing confusion and skepticism by implementers and government program managers.

Finally, there is now a realization, even if not a broad realization and acceptance, that military solutions are not always the best option when mitigating violent extremism. Naturally, the U.S. military is robust and well-resourced and can be mobilized at a moment's notice. Thus, as a policy maker, it is easy to default to the military solutions and interventions for P/CVE challenges. History reflects that trend. However, as history has demonstrated repeatedly over decades, this should not be an automatic default decision in favor of military approaches. In fact, undertaking such interventions in urban populations, which often characterize P/CVE interventions, gains are frequently undermined by military entities being the face of such efforts. Seeing soldiers delivering food and goods is often perceived negatively by the population who feel threatened or violated by such military interventions, even when humanitarian in nature. In short, they can be viewed as uninvited and threatening guests, even when violent extremists exist in their community, but are just that, often seen as part of their community.

Alternatively, civilian agencies working with the local population can have a more effective result by reducing the threat and community tension. Further, civilian personnel are often more effective at working with local organizations and local community leaders to help stem the tide of radicalization and violent extremism. When civilians work with other civilians, it is perceived less as coercive and more as a partnership. In these environments, perception is reality, and the perceptions of the civilian population must be constantly understood, assessed, and adjusted to achieve the intended results of mitigating violence and extremism. However, the key to such effective interventions is having civilian agencies robust enough in personnel and resources to

undertake effective P/CVE programs throughout the world. This change would go quite far in furthering policy options for civilian and military leadership alike to more effectively prevent and counter violent extremism in West Africa and around the world.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Email Notification

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your interest in being a participant in my Dissertation research. The purpose of this study is to examine the following questions related to Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE).

1) Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

2) What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

If you consent, the interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy of the notes. Information from the interviews will be confidential, and you will remain anonymous for the purposes of this study.

I am reaching out to you because it is my understanding that you meet one or more of the following criteria:

1) Current employee practitioner of a NGOs or corporation that implement P/CVE programs. However, due to ethical considerations, I am not seeking to interview employees working on current USAID programs.

2) Academic with strong knowledge of P/CVE as it pertains to U.S. development assistance

3) Published author with strong knowledge of P/CVE as it pertains to U.S. development assistance.

4) Think Tank specialist with professional experience and knowledge of P/CVE as it pertains to U.S. development assistance.

5) Independent P/CVE practitioner working in the field of U.S. development assistance (e.g., independent contractors, or grant recipient, undertaking P/CVE work pertaining to U.S. development assistance).

If you meet the above criteria and would like to participate in this study, please return the response notification at the bottom of this page in the addressed via email (Jason.alexander2@waldenu.edu). Once I receive your reply, I will contact you to arrange a date and time for our interview. If you do not wish to participate, no one will contact you, and your anonymity will remain protected. Should you choose to participate, please do not discuss any sensitive information during the interview. Thank you for considering being a part of this study.

Sincerely

Jason S. Alexander

Response Notification

Yes. I am interested in being a participant in your study. Please contact me to arrange an interview or to give further details.

Name: …………………………………………………......

Phone number or email address: ……………………………….

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol for P/CVE Regional and National Policy Experts and

Practitioners

Dissertation Topic: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: U.S.

Foreign Policy and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

Time of the Interview: XXXX

Date: Month Day, Year

Place: XXXX

Interviewer: Jason Alexander, PhD Candidate, Walden University

Name: XXXX

Interviewee category (circle): 1) researcher/academic, 2) practitioner, 3) NGO, 4)

Think Tank, 5) Other

Brief description of the Project: This study, which will be public upon

completion, seeks to better understand the nature of P/CVE policy evolution as it pertains

to Official Development Assistance. The data collecting during this interview will

contribute to the analysis in identifying the relevant factors that have led to policy change

over time. In turn, this will help to effectively respond to the research questions. Please

do not discuss any sensitive information.

Research Objectives

1)   Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism

Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance

policy?

2)	What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

Interview Questions:

Objective 1: Has regional policy, as reflected in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, been implemented in alignment with USAID's P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

1.	Which policies do you consider the most important related to USAID work on P/CVE? Please explain.

2.	Which policies do you consider the most important related to USAID work on the TSCTP? Please explain.

3.	Do you think there is alignment between agency P/CVE policy and the TSCTP? How so?

4.	Does the TSCTP policy and USAID P/CVE policy intersect? Are they mutually reinforcing?

5.	In your opinion, has the TSCTP policy been implemented to achieve P/CVE? How so?

6.	If you think there were policy changes to P/CVE or TSCTP policies, has it been agency wide, regional, or specific to certain countries? Please explain.

7.	Have certain TSCTP countries had more success with P/CVE? Please explain.

Objective 2: What factors have led to changes in P/CVE TSCTP regional policy as well as the broader USAID P/CVE foreign assistance policy?

8.   Has USAID's P/CVE foreign policy changed over time? How so? Why / why not?

9.   Has USAID's TSCTP policy evolved over time? How so? Why? / Why not?

10.   What events in the past do you think have had an effect on regional or agency P/CVE policy? Explain.

11.   If so, what factors do you think have been the most important in defining USAID's role in P/CVE?

12.   Have there been any particular circumstances that have led to changes in regional or agency level P/CVE policy? And for the TSCTP policy?

13.   What information or factors do you rely on when trying to understand how the P/CVE policies have, or have not, changed over time?

14.   Have there been any previous regional or agency policies, regulations, or political decisions related to P/CVE that you think have had an effect on current P/CVE policy? Please explain.

15.   What current policies, regulations, or political decisions do you think have influence on the way in which agency or regional P/CVE policy is developed and implemented?

16.   Do you think that P/CVE is seen as an important policy approach in the agency or at the regional TSCTP level? Please explain.

17.   Do you think that P/CVE policy has a viable future in the agency or at the regional TSCTP level? Please explain.

Conclusion: Thank you for your time, candor, and responsiveness. The information you have provided will be of value to this study. No names will be used during this study nor will names be included in the final dissertation. The collection of this information is for analytical purposes in support of this study only.

Appendix C: List of Collected Documents for Document Analysis

Appendix C

List of Collected Documents for Document Analysis

Category	Document Title	Year
National Policy and Strategy		
	National Security Strategy 1987	1987
	National Security Strategy 1988	1988
	National Security Strategy 1990	1990
	National Security Strategy 1991	1991
	National Security Strategy 1993	1993
	National Security Strategy 1994	1994
	National Security Strategy 1995	1995
	National Security Strategy 1996	1996
	National Security Strategy 1997	1997
	National Security Strategy 1998	1998
	National Security Strategy 1999	1999
	National Security Strategy 2000	2000
	National Security Strategy 2002	2002
	National Strategy for Combating Terrorism	2006
	National Security Strategy 2006	2006
	National Security Strategy 2010	2010
	Fact Sheet: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism	2015
	National Security Strategy 2015	2015
	Developing an Integrated Global Engagement Center to Support Government-wide Counterterrorism Communications Activities Directed Abroad and Revoking Executive Order 13584	2016
	National Security Strategy 2017	2017
	National Strategy for Counterterrorism	2018
	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Act of 2018	2018
Agency or Specialist Assessments		
	USAID/West Africa Peace through Development (PDEV) Program Assessment Report	2005
	U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management	2005
	Peace Through Development II: Impact Evaluation Endline Evaluation	2005
	Countering Violent Extremism in West Africa	2017
Department of State and USAID Strategies		
	USAID West Africa RDCS 2015-2020	2005
	2010 QDDR	2005
	DOS & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism	2005
	US Government Counterinsurgency Guide	2009
	2015 QDDR	2015
Agency Policy Support		
	U.S. State Department and USAID Supported Initiatives to Counter Violent Extremism	2015
	New Frameworks for Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken	2016
P/CVE Policies		
	Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism	2009

Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming	2009
USAID Evidence Summit Development to Counter Insurgency	2010
Integrating the Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy in the Program Cycle	2014