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U.S. Policymakers' Perspectives Regarding the Causes of Terrorism and the Impact on U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

Jeffrey David McManus
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Jeff McManus

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Review Committee
Dr. Michael Brewer, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Haroon Khan, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Lydia Forsythe, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

U.S. counterterrorism policy appears to be influenced by different perspectives, as evidenced by conflicting statements by U.S. presidents regarding the causes of terrorism. Academic theories are not always applied by U.S. government employees who develop, influence, and implement counterterrorism policy. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand U.S. government policymakers' perspectives on the causes of terrorism, the influences on these views, and the impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. Six theories regarding the causes of terrorism provided the theoretical framework. Additional theories related to individual and organizational impact on decision-making provided a broader conceptual framework. Data were collected from interviews and survey questionnaires from 31 participants. Data were coded and categorized for thematic analysis. Five key findings were observed: (a) Root causes theory was a predominant factor in participants' understanding of the cause of terrorism, (b) personal experiences are a dominant influence on these views, (c) organizational influence on the views of terrorism varied by organization, (d) participants viewed their interagency colleagues as well informed regarding the causes of terrorism, and (e) individual views among U.S. policymakers have a minimal impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. Findings may be used to influence U.S. counterterrorism policymakers' views at the national policy level.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the four most influential women who have positively impacted my life. My mother, Lorene, who set me on my life's path and with constant encouragement enabled me to dream big and set my course to success. My sister, Nanci, whom I miss every day, was a joy for the time she was in my life, and through whom I learned to live each day to its fullest, leaving no regrets. My daughter, Morganne, my Crown Princess, of whom I am always impressed and extremely proud, who along with her generation gives me hope for the future. My wife, Janet, my life companion and vastly better half, whose love, advice, support, guidance, and partnership helps me fulfill my potential every day to be the better man I am meant to be. It is for the four of them that I always strive to be the very best son, brother, father, and husband.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee, who were instrumental to me in this journey to my doctorate. To Dr. Michael Brewer, thank you for advice, support, and service to me as my committee chair; your mentorship has been invaluable. To Dr. Haroon Khan, my committee member, thank you for your feedback and guidance throughout this process. To my university research reviewer, Dr. Lydia Forsythe, thank you for pushing my dissertation to the next level. To my form & style technical editor, Dr. Joseph Gredler, thank you for the final polish. I would also like to acknowledge the Walden University technical support staff, without whose on-call support during all hours of the day (and night) this experience would have been a much more difficult process.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge the men and women of the U.S. federal civil service. These are the unsung heroes in America whose daily dedication and effort make the fundamental ideals of democratic representative government function. Every day they show up to work in offices in Washington, D.C., in every state and territory across the United States, and in posts around the world, supporting and defending the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic; bearing true faith and allegiance to the same; executing their obligations freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and well and faithfully discharging the duties of the office to which they are assigned. Thank you for your service!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This research study addressed the individual perspectives of U.S. government policymakers who work on counterterrorism policy. I identified what they view as the primary causes of terrorism and situated these views within the context of individual influences and bureaucratic, cultural, or other influences in the organizations where they work. Although research into U.S. counterterrorism policy exists, researchers had not conducted field interviews with mid-grade U.S. counterterrorism policymakers, relying instead on case studies or narrative methodologies. The results of this study may provide needed academic insights enabling a fuller understanding of not only the perspectives of U.S. policymakers on the causes of terrorism, but also what influences their perceptions, and how both impact the development of U.S. counterterrorism policy.

The first sections of this chapter provide an introduction to the study and a broader background of the topic. This is followed by the problem statement and a description of the purpose of the study. The research questions are then outlined. The theoretical foundation is articulated, which is followed by a description of the conceptual framework. The next section outlines the nature of the study, followed by the assumptions made, scope and delimitations used, and limitations of this research. The significance of the study is then addressed and placed in the wider academic body of knowledge. This chapter concludes with brief summary and an overview of Chapter 2.

Background

The term *terrorism* has many definitions (Nacos, 2012). There is general consensus that terrorism involves extreme violence, is focused against noncombatants, is

conducted by subnational or transnational groups, is based on political or ideological objectives, and is intended to cause broad fear and panic to force a particular outcome (Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2007; Borum, 2004; Laqueur, 1987; Moskalenko & McCauley, 2011; Nacos, 2012). The threat of terrorism, fueled by instability and active military conflict across much of North Africa and the Middle East, poses unique challenges to U.S. policymakers (Badea, Binningb, Verlhiaca, & Sherman, 2018; Ramakrishna, 2017; Sandler, 2014; Steele, Parker, & Lickel, 2015; Woods & Arthur, 2014). This instability is periodically punctuated by terrorist attacks against civilian soft targets in Europe, the United States, and other locations outside of obvious conflict zones (Badea et al., 2018; Sandler, 2014; Steele et al., 2015; Ramakrishna, 2017; Woods & Arthur, 2014).

Recommendations regarding U.S. counterterrorism policy are developed within select organizations of the U.S. government's executive branch (Emerson, 2014; Jordan, Kosal, & Rubin, 2016; Lint & Kassa, 2015). Diverse theories regarding the causes of terrorism emphasize different fundamental approaches, activities, and tools necessary to achieve success (Fukuyama, 2004; Huntington, 1996; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Kuzner, 2007; Newman, 2006; Sterling, 1981). Examples of differing perspectives regarding terrorism are evident in statements from recent U.S. presidents and key leaders within their respective administrations (Emerson, 2014; Jordan et al., 2016; Lint & Kassa, 2015). President George W. Bush and his administration used the term *radical Islam* cautiously, and also referred to terrorists as *evil* and *dead enders* (J. Phillips, 2005; Pilecki, Muro, Hammack, & Clemons, 2014). President Obama and his administration

were mostly circumspect regarding terrorism and Islam, stressing numerous causes depending on the particular venue being addressed (Goldberg, 2016; Stern, 2015). President Trump has used the term *radical Islamic terrorism* often in reference to its primary cause and motivation (Toosi, 2017). These statements reflect the dissonance in perspectives regarding the topic, sometimes by the same senior official articulating different positions at separate times (Goldberg, 2016; Pilecki et al., 2014).

Problem Statement

The theory a policy professional holds regarding the primary causes of terrorism is influenced by numerous factors, such as experience, education, profession, cultural awareness, and relationships (Akhtar, 2017; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Welch, 2016). Personal views may also be influenced by broader bureaucratic cultures (Janis, 1971; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). These factors impact the development and implementation of U.S. national counterterrorism policies (Akhtar, 2017; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010; Welch, 2016). Incorrectly applying tools to address terrorism based on one theoretical frame could be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worse (Garcia & Geva, 2016; Horne & Bestvater, 2016; Jackson, 2015; Lee, 2016). Effects would be exasperated, even incoherent, if different government organizations attempted to apply tools from conflicting theoretical frames simultaneously (Garcia & Geva, 2016; Horne & Bestvater, 2016; Jackson, 2015; Lee, 2016).

A literature review indicated a wide body of writing and research on differing theories regarding the causes of terrorism and suggested approaches for addressing the underlying factors (Fukuyama, 2004; Huntington, 1996; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011,

Kuzner, 2007; Newman, 2006; Sterling, 1981). Researchers also examined specific U.S. counterterrorism policies based in large part on narrative and case study methodologies that addressed not only institutional factors within the U.S. policymaking bureaucracy, but also what appears to be some consistency among the U.S. political elite regarding perspectives on terrorism (Desch, 2010; Goldsmith, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Stern, 2015). Broader insights into senior decision-making relative to counterterrorism policy exist as well (Klaidman, 2012; Mann, 2012; Sanger, 2012; Wolff, 2018; Woodward, 2007, 2011). Although these last examples may be based on firsthand accounts and contain rich detail, journalistic standards are not the same as scholarly standards and do not include acceptable research methodologies (Kassop, 2013).

Questions exist for scholars regarding what factors influence the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies (Jackson, 2011). A gap in research appeared to exist within the realm of U.S. counterterrorism policy at the intersection where academic theories on the causes of terrorism meet the reality of U.S. policymakers, with their individual perspectives and potential influences. Most studies in this area included historical archival data and little analysis of field interviews (Sageman, 2014). Kassop (2013) suggested that scholars need to conduct detailed research, including collecting data from current government counterterrorism officials, to confirm and explain factors that influence the decision process regarding counterterrorism policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand the link between theory and application, specifically the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories

regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. To address this gap, I used a qualitative approach including individual interviews and participant questionnaires to analyze U.S. policymakers' perspectives within organizational cultures and to assess the impacts on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

Research Questions

The following research question (RQ) was addressed in this study:

RQ: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views due to personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies, impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

In addition, the following five subquestions (SQs) were used to amplify the central research question:

SQ1: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories?

SQ2: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience?

SQ3: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations?

SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policymaking organizations?

SQ5: To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

Theoretical Foundation

Although there are various and somewhat divergent theories on the causes of modern terrorism, including similarities and differences in assumptions made, approaches used, and conclusions drawn, they provide a useful theoretical foundation for outlining key factors, constructs, variables, and relationships from which to understand individual worldviews and broader organizational implications (Akhtar, 2017; Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen-Smyth, 2011; Martin, 2017). Notable among them include the main terrorism theories of religious ideology (Berman, 2004; Huntington, 1996; Owen, 2014), root causes (Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006), state sponsorship (Arendt, 1953; Byman, 2007; Sterling, 1981), failed states (Crocker; 2003; Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004); rational choice (Crenshaw, 2003; Hoffman, 2011; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011), and group dynamics (Berrebi, 2009; Kuzner, 2007; Piazza, 2007).

I made no academic assessment or research judgment regarding the soundness of these six theories regarding the causes of terrorism (see Jackson, Toros, Jarvis, & Heath-Kelly, 2017; Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016). Rather, the theories were used to examine individual perceptions to understand the views of current U.S. counterterrorism policy professionals (see Jackson et al., 2011; Martin, 2017; Schroden et al., 2016; Silke & Schnidt-Petersen, 2017). Regardless of how these theories on the causes of terrorism are viewed in the academic community, they were relevant because they are routinely identified or alluded to in statements by senior U.S. officials or outlined in official U.S.

government policy documents that address terrorism (National Counterterrorism Center [NCTC], 2017; Office of the Director for National Intelligence [ODNI], n.d.; U.S. Department of State & Agency for International Development [USAID], 2016).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study included several additional theories that relate to why individual policymakers may have particular perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism. This conceptional framework consisted of two factors: individual factors and organizational factors. To address possible individual factors, elements from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989, 2001, 2011) and cultural theory (Douglas, 1985; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Wildavsky, 1987) were used to examine how individuals may view their surroundings, ascribe context to events, weigh select criteria, and make decisions. Regarding potential organizational factors, elements from resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), groupthink theory (Janis, 1971, 1972), and the organizational processes model (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999) were used to assess the individual perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism within the context of unique organizational bureaucracies, influences, or biases.

Nature of the Study

I used qualitative methodology, to explore and understand the meaning derived by individuals or groups associated with a social or human phenomenon (see Creswell, 2014). A naturalistic approach associated with a social construction perspective provided the appropriate research design to focus on how individuals perceive the world and how they interpret meaning based on their experiences (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A

qualitative phenomenological research strategy of inquiry allowed me to investigate, analyze, and understand individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism, as well as personal insights regarding bureaucratic influences and broader intradepartmental unity of effort.

Assumptions

Assumptions are a necessary part of qualitative research methodology (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Based on the phenomenon of interest, which was understanding the perspectives of current U.S. counterterrorism policymakers on the causes of terrorism, a number of assumptions were necessary due to the use of interviews to collect data (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The key assumptions made during the course of this study were as follows:

- U.S. counterterrorism policy professionals have individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism.
- Participants are willing to participate, share their experiences, and answer all questions openly and honestly.
- Information obtained from the participants provides a consistent and accurate representation of each participant's point of view.
- Selection criteria provided for suitable participants knowledgeable in counterterrorism policies and the organizational roles, responsibilities, bureaucracies, and cultural nuances of their organizations.
- Semistructured individual interviews provided appropriate detail to describe and understand the perceptions of the participants.

- Additional background information collected in the participant survey questionnaire is sufficient to provide meaningful context and nuance related to the perceptions articulated by study participants.
- The research questions, methodological structure, and research processes used in this study appropriately mitigate potential interviewer biases during individual interviews in the data collection process.
- The sample size and composition of the study participants are sufficient to obtain reliable data and enable meaningful conclusions within, among, and between the four selected U.S. counterterrorism policy organizations.
- The findings from the study may be generalized to similar populations of U.S. counterterrorism policy experts.
- The results of the study will enable positive social change in the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study addressed the *who*, *what*, and *why* necessary for comprehensively understanding the selected phenomenon of interest. The selected study population bound the *who,* which come from four key U.S. organizations whose employees are instrumental to the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy: Department of State, Department of Defense (DoD), the USAID, and the NCTC. Individual interviews were conducted across all four organizations, with participants required to have a minimum of 8-10 years of experience, leading to a total study sample of 31 participants. Political appointees, as well as U.S. government

employees with less than 8 years of experience, were excluded from the sample because of their relative short-term or intermittent government experience.

The theoretical framework for this research constituted the *what* and included six general theories regarding the causes of terrorism: religious ideology, root causes, state sponsorship, failed states, rational choice, and group dynamics. The *why* was examined through the conceptual framework and addressed how individual and organizational influencers may impact these perspectives. This focus included social cognitive theory, cultural theory, resource dependency theory, groupthink theory, and the organizational processes model. Perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism obtained from current U.S. government employees from the four organizations provided a useful understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Findings from this study were transferable for use and comparison with other relevant studies regarding counterterrorism policies.

Limitations

There were two acknowledged limitations in this study. First was the number of participants from a select number of U.S. policymaking organizations. Counterterrorism policy is addressed by, and influenced from, many U.S. departments and agencies across the executive branch. There are also key outside influencers, such as Congress, think tanks, lobbyists, and the media. The selection of study participants from four key organizations involved in counterterrorism policy spanning differing career perspectives such as diplomacy, defense, development, and intelligence was deliberate to collect a broad sample of perspectives on the phenomenon of interest. The number of participants from each of the four selected organizations was also purposeful, targeting those who

work in counterterrorism offices to provide a meaningful and representative sample of the broader bureaucracy (see Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013).

Additionally, my personal biases and those of the study participants may have limited the findings of the study. I am a career member of the federal civil service and have worked for the U.S. government in various capacities for 32 years, the last 16 years in defense policy organizations within the Pentagon. My participation in policymaking debates during the last decade and a half on the phenomenon of interest revealed differing worldviews from employees across the U.S. interagency counterterrorism policy community. I acknowledge that I have a particular worldview and perspective regarding the causes of terrorism, and I therefore had an inherent bias in my role as the researcher. The structured steps taken in the manner in which questions were developed, how individual interviews were conducted, the process and procedures followed to collect and process the qualitative data, and the approach used in the analysis of the data and development of findings and recommendations were assessed to have sufficiently mitigated the risks of my personal biases from tainting this research (see Anney, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Significance of the Study

This study was significant for individual American citizens and had ramifications for U.S. foreign policy and relationships with foreign countries and international organizations (see Jackson, 2011; Kassop, 2013, Sageman, 2014). This research was unique because it addressed six general academic theories regarding the causes of terrorism (see Fukuyama, 2004; Huntington, 1996; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Kuzner,

2007; Newman, 2006; Sterling, 1981), which were derived from studying terrorists and their actions from an outside-in perspective, focusing on individual U.S. government employees currently working in the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. Rather than attempting to assess these individual perspectives through analysis of policy documents, public statements, pronouncements, or the language from policy speeches, I leveraged my unique placement and access to obtain firsthand perspectives from U.S. counterterrorism policymakers.

The results of this study may provide a fuller understanding of individual and organizational factors that influence counterterrorism policy according to personal perspectives on the causes of terrorism (see Jackson, 2011; Kassop, 2013, Sageman, 2014). The qualitative methodology enabled me to explore and understand the meaning derived by U.S. counterterrorism policymakers regarding the causes of terrorism. The approach used in this study provided a template for other researchers interested in gaining a deeper understanding of significant policy issues affecting U.S. national security.

Summary

The threat of terrorism poses challenges for current U.S. policy. Counterterrorism policy appears to be influenced by individual perspectives evident by conflicting statements by U.S. presidents and their senior administration officials regarding the causes of terrorism. Differing theories on the causes of terrorism emphasize different approaches, which if applied simultaneously can be ineffective or counterproductive. A gap in research existed at the intersection where academic theories meet the reality of individual U.S. government employees who develop, influence, and implement

counterterrorism policy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perspectives of individual U.S. government policymakers regarding the causes of terrorism. The research question addressed individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views from personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies that shape U.S. counterterrorism policy. Qualitative phenomenological methodology was used to collect data from individual participant interviews and a detailed questionnaire. Research findings enabled strong analytic conclusions and meaningful recommendations grounded in solid academic research processes to strengthen U.S. counterterrorism initiatives at the national policy level.

This first chapter provided a background of this study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, primary and secondary research questions, theoretical foundation, conceptual framework, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes the literature search strategy, a general overview of U.S. policymaking and organizations, the theoretical foundation, the conceptual framework related to theories describing individual and organizational influences on perspectives, and the assessed gap in the literature regarding the phenomenon of interest.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The threat of terrorism poses challenges for current U.S. policy. The purpose of this literature review was to examine the information and research related to understanding the perspectives on terrorism of individual U.S. government policymakers, as well as determine a reasonable context for assessing possible individual and organizational influences on the shaping of these perspectives. An understanding of these perceptions may provide other researchers with valuable insights into factors that impact the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. In addition to providing the academic context for this research, this literature review also indicates how the resulting findings will contribute to the wider body of knowledge regarding individual perceptions on the causes of terrorism and how it is confronted through U.S. counterterrorism policy.

There exists a wide body of writing and research regarding differing theories on the causes of terrorism and suggested approaches for addressing the respective underlying factors (Fukuyama, 2004; Huntington, 1996; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011, Kuzner, 2007; Newman, 2006; Sterling, 1981). Research into specific U.S. counterterrorism policies exists as well, including apparent consistencies among some U.S. political elites regarding their perspectives on terrorism (Desch, 2010; Goldsmith, 2009; Jackson, 2011; Stern, 2015). Firsthand journalistic accounts regarding senior U.S. decision-makers' perspectives on terrorism also exist but are not based on scholarly approaches (Kassop, 2013; Klaidman, 2012; Mann, 2012; Sanger, 2012; Wolff, 2018; Woodward, 2007). Real questions still exist for scholars as to what factors influence the

development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies (Jackson, 2011; Kassop, 2013).

This literature review is organized to systematically address *who*, *what*, and *why* for understanding the selected phenomenon of interest. The scope of *who* is defined by the four selected stakeholder organizations. The theoretical framework for this research constitutes the *what*, which includes six general theories regarding the causes of terrorism. The *why* is the conceptual framework of both individual and organizational influencers for these perspectives. All three provide a strong research foundation from which to describe, assess, and understand U.S. counterterrorism policymakers' perspectives on the causes of terrorism.

The first section of the chapter provides a description of the literature search strategy used to gather relevant information and research. The second section provides a U.S. policy overview as a general foundation related to the policymaking process, how terrorism is defined, the primary U.S. organizations involved in counterterrorism policy, the individual roles and responsibilities of individual policymakers, and how policy is implemented. The third section provides the theoretical foundation upon which this study was based, which includes six general theories regarding the causes of terrorism. This is followed by a section that addresses some other conceptual theories used to describe and assess both individual and organizational influences on U.S. policymakers' perceptions of the causes of terrorism. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the gap in the literature regarding this specific phenomenon to demonstrate how the research benefits the academic body of knowledge.

Literature Review and Search Strategy

This literature review focused on retrieving and reviewing literature in three primary areas: policy development, processes, and implementation; theories on the causes of terrorism; and theories relative to the development of individual perspectives within the context of personal and organizational influences. The literature search strategy included the Walden University library and its linked research databases: Digital National Security Archive, EBSCO ebooks, Homeland Security Digital Library, International Security and Counterterrorism Reference Center, Military and Government Collection, Political Science Complete, ProQuest Central, and SAGE Journals. An emphasis was placed on finding peer-reviewed journals published within the last 5 years; however, this was not a rigid criterion to exclude relevant research, especially foundational literature regarding the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

In addition to key word searches within these specific databases, Google Scholar was also used to search for relevant literature from peer-reviewed periodicals or journals. Many of the identified articles were available in the Walden University library, which I linked to in Google Scholar. Google Scholar was also used to identify relevant books or particular portions obtained electronically. Broader Google searches were also used in a limited fashion to identify statements made by political leaders reported by news media entities, such as *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*, and *Politico*, as well as by selected organizations such as The Heritage Foundation.

The search strategy included a topic- or subject-based approach to identify potential research to inform this study. Key words used in the literature search included

U.S. policy process, counterterrorism policy, counterterrorism policy stakeholders, counterterrorism policy organizations, individual roles in counterterrorism policy, U.S. counterterrorism programs, counterterrorism program implementation, terrorism, terrorism definition, terrorism theory, causes of terrorism, cause of terrorism theory, terrorism religious ideology, terrorism root causes, State sponsorship of terrorism, terrorism and failed states, terrorism as rational choice, group dynamics and terrorism, U.S. government employees and terrorism, U.S. government employee terrorism perspectives, terrorism and social cognitive theory, organizational influence bias, resource dependency theory, groupthink theory, organizational process model, and multiple combinations of these search terms.

Policy Context

Before delving into the theoretical foundations regarding terrorism and conceptual frameworks that assist in understanding individual and organizational influence factors impacting how terrorism is viewed, a general background regarding the structure and process of counterterrorism policymaking is warranted. This is done to place the phenomenon of interest for this study, which is individual policymakers' perspectives on the causes of terrorism, in the broader context. The information provided in this section includes the U.S. policymaking process and definitions of *terrorism* and *counterterrorism* from a U.S. government perspective. The primary U.S. organizations in the executive branch involved in making counterterrorism policy are then identified, as are their generally observed organizational cultures. The roles and responsibilities of individual policymakers within this environment is then highlighted, as is some of the primary

outside influences of policy, such as Congress, think tanks, lobbyists, and the media. This section ends with a summary of how U.S. policy is implemented by departments and agencies once decisions are made.

Policymaking Process

The term *policy* is used liberally when discussing the functions of government (Hoffman & Neuhard, 2016; McConnell, 2010). The term can be defined as "a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions" (Policy, 2018a, para. 2.a.). In the government context, policy is focused on meeting identified goals or objectives (Hoffman & Neuhard, 2016; Miller, 2013; Policy, 2018b). Policy is made through an integrated, coordinated process across federal departments and agencies that work to set goals, identify courses of action, build consensus, and seek decisions by senior government officials (George, 2017; Gvosdev, 2017; Miller, 2013).

The current policymaking structure is the same as that established by Brent Scowcroft, the national security advisor to President George H. W. Bush (George, 2017). The process is managed by the National Security Council (NSC) staff, which identifies issues and topics and brings together policy experts from across the interagency (George, 2017; Gvosdev, 2017; Miller, 2013). The structure consists of numerous topically based interagency working groups or policy coordination committees, the deputies committee (made up of deputy secretaries and chaired by the deputy national security advisor), the principal committee (the cabinet secretary level, chaired by the national security advisor), and the full NSC (again with cabinet secretaries, but chaired by the President) (George,

2017; Rothkopf, 2014; Whittaker, Brown, Smith, & McCune, 2011). Only major decisions are pushed up to deputies or higher, or where interagency consensus at lower levels cannot be reached (George, 2017). The process is generally structured to centralize policy development, enabled and managed via the NSC staff, and decentralize policy execution through departments and agencies within their respective programs and activities.

The interagency consists of the mid- to senior-level policy personnel from across all the relevant departments and agencies for a given topic (George, 2017; Hoffman & Neuhard, 2016; Miller, 2013). This interdepartmental enterprise includes government experts from both regional offices and functional offices (Gvosdev, 2017; Hoffman & Neuhard, 2016). Due to the span of the U.S. federal bureaucracy, coordination of effort to develop policy and build consensus can be difficult, with many challenges (George, 2017). The policy experts within the departments and agencies are knowledgeable of their authorities, resources, and programs and are protective of their organizations' prerogatives (George, 2017). These policy experts can at times resist what they view as undue interference by the NSC staff, crossing from what needs to be done into the details of how policies are being resourced and implemented (Gvosdev, 2017; Hoffman & Neuhard, 2016). The trend for NSC staff involvement in the details of policy implementation is evidenced by the growing number of NSC staff personnel over the last four presidential administrations (Gvosdev, 2017). The NSC staff of 50 under George H. W. Bush grew to approximately 100 under Bill Clinton, then doubled to 200 under George W. Bush and doubled again to over 400 under Barack Obama (Gvosdev, 2017).

This steady increase in the size of the NSC staff over time has been attributed by some to suspicions by presidents that the national security bureaucracy is not moving aggressively enough to support their policy objectives and decisions (Chollet, 2016).

Terrorism and Counterterrorism Defined

The term *terrorism* has many definitions (Nacos, 2012). Three of note follow from different official definitions from U.S. departments or agencies. From the Department of State, terrorism means "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents" (Kraft & Marks, 2011, p. 3). The Department of Defense (2018a) defines *terrorism* as "the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political" (p. 219). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (n.d.) distinguished between international and domestic terrorism, with *international terrorism* "perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)" (What We Investigate: Terrorism section, para. 2) and *domestic terrorism* "perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature" (What We Investigate: Terrorism section, para. 3). There is general consensus across these and other definitions that terrorism involves extreme violence, is focused against noncombatants, is conducted by subnational or transnational groups, is based on political or ideological objectives, and is intended to cause broad fear and panic to force a

particular outcome (Bongar et al., 2007; Borum, 2004; Laqueur, 1987; Moskalenko & McCauley, 2011; Nacos, 2012).

In contrast, *counterterrorism* functions are the "activities and operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals" (U.S. Department of Defense, 2018a, p. 55). Since the September 11 attack, counterterrorism policy has played an increasingly central role in U.S. government foreign policy (Lint & Kassa, 2015; Nacos, 2012). This is in large part due to the increased public perception of the terrorist threat, fueled by increasing political instability and long-term military conflict across much of North Africa and the Middle East in the last decade (Badea et al., 2018; Sandler, 2014; Woods & Arthur, 2014). The public concerns over terrorism are periodically punctuated by terrorist attacks against civilian soft targets in Europe, the United States, and other locations outside of obvious conflict zones (Ramakrishna, 2017; Steele et al., 2015; Woods & Arthur, 2014). The difficulty and complexities of the situation make it difficult for U.S. policymakers to develop and maintain a consistent counterterrorism policy in which they try to balance public fears, align suitable government programs and activities, and maintain foreign relationships (Crenshaw, 2001).

Primary Counterterrorism Policy Stakeholder Organizations

The setting for this research was U.S. government employees who work developing and implementing policy within the main U.S. departments and agencies involved in counterterrorism. The four primary organizations involved in this effort

include the Departments of State and Defense, the USAID, and the NCTC (Crenshaw, 2001). In the current U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy this is commonly described as the '3-D's' for *diplomacy*, *development*, and *defense* (George, 2017; Keane & Diesen, 2015; Kraft & Marks, 2011). These departments and agencies, along with many others, provide the depth of experience and expertise that influence the development of counterterrorism policy options, and help translate identified policy goals and objectives into language that drives programs, activities, and ultimately resources (Beasley, Kaarbo, Hermann, & Hermann, 2001; Crenshaw, 2001; Kraft & Marks, 2011). Policymakers within each department or agency bring not only unique program and activity expertise to the counterterrorism challenge, they also bring insights gained over time, which influences their perspective (Keane & Diesen, 2015; Morin & Paquin, 2018).

State Department. The Department of State is the lead Federal agency for advancing U.S. interests abroad (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; Ross, 2007; U.S. Department of State, n.d.a.). The foreign service officers, career members of the civil service, and foreign national employees of the State Department do this through diplomacy, advocacy, and assistance (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a.). The State Department employs approximately 66,000 people, of which about 23,000 are U.S. citizens and the rest are foreign national support staff (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; U.S. Department of State, n.d.a.). The annual State Department budget is $22 billion (U.S. Department of State, 2018). Approximately 8,000 of State Department personnel, fully one-third of their U.S. citizen workforce, are deployed overseas, serving in U.S. embassies, consulates, or in other foreign capacities (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a.).

There is a distinctive diplomatic culture among State Department personal, which is generally described as having fluency in languages, extensive foreign experience, a broad perspective, open and tolerant, a ready sympathy for foreigners and their points of view, an appreciation for nuance and ambiguity, and a fondness for process and negotiation (George, 2017; Haass, 2017; Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; Ross, 2007). This culture has its roots in the 'balance-of-power' system between nations, structured around state sovereignty, and enabled by diplomatic structures, processes, negotiation, and persuasion (Lauren, Craig, & George, 2007; Ross, 2007). To some in the interagency, State Department personnel are also viewed as having an aversion to strategic planning, tying goals to distinct timelines, or linking policy objectives directly to resources (George, 2017; Haass, 2017).

Defense Department. The largest Federal department by far in both personnel and resources is the Department of Defense (Gates, 2014; George, 2017; Smith & Gerstein, 2007; U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). Made up of civilian employees, military personnel, and support contractors, the mission of the Defense Department "is to provide a lethal Joint Force to defend the security of our country and sustain American influence abroad" (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d., Mission section, para. 1). The Defense Department employs 742,000 government civilians, 1.3 million uniformed military personnel (i.e., across the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps), and is the largest employer in the world (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). It has an annual budget of $686 billion (with $617 billion in the base budget plus $69 billon for overseas contingency operations), which totals more than the defense budgets of the next fourteen

countries combined (Garamone, 2018; George, 2017; Taylor & Karklis, 2016; U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). The sheer size of U.S. military forces, combat capabilities, extensive worldwide presence, and global reach of the Defense Department underpins the U.S. international role as a superpower (Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; George, 2017; Rodman, 2009).

Regarding policymaking, the culture among civilians within the Office of the Secretary of Defense generally tends to be more conservative in approach, somewhat risk adverse, and skeptical of foreign government intentions or promises (Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; George, 2017). They tend to focus more on capabilities than intentions, viewing situations in many cases as risks rather than opportunities, driven in large part by the tendency of the rest of the interagency (and the White House) to go to the military solution first (Gates, 2014; George, 2017; Smith & Gerstein, 2007). Some of this is driven by the large budget and extensive resources of DoD when compared to other departments and agencies (Gates, 2014; George, 2017; Smith & Gerstein, 2007). Unlike other departments and agencies, senior leadership in the Office of the Secretary of Defense is also more political, with presidential appointees filling most of the senior executive positions, at numbers which are a larger percentage than that in the rest of the interagency (Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; George, 2017; Smith & Gerstein, 2007). The uniformed military, represented mostly by the Joint Staff in policymaking, is also impacted by culture and tradition (Donnithorne, 2017; George, 2017; Golby & Karlin, 2018; Smith & Gerstein, 2007). While military service on the Joint Staff in Washington is expected to be ‘joint,’ blending the capabilities of all four branches of the military, their

distinctive service cultures can play a role in how they view issues and present options (Donnithorne, 2017; George, 2017; Golby & Karlin, 2018; Smith & Gerstein, 2007)

U.S. Agency for International Development. The USAID is the lead agency in the U.S. government for providing development and humanitarian assistance (USAID, 2018a). Their stated mission is to "promote and demonstrate democratic values abroad, and advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world," leading U.S. Government "international development and disaster assistance through partnerships and investments that save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises and progress beyond assistance" (USAID, 2018b, Mission, Vision, and Values section, para. 1). USAID personnel work closely with international and non-governmental relief organizations, as well as coordinates developmental and humanitarian assistance activities with other countries and regional entities (Hills, 2006; Howell & Lind, 2009; Modirzadeh, Lewis, & Bruderlein, 2011; USAID, 2018a). USAID has an annual budget of approximately $15 billion, and employs approximately 3,100 government personnel, split between members of the USAID foreign service (at 1,600) and career civil service (at 1,500) (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; USAID, 2017; U.S. Department of State, 2018). Almost 60 percent (or 900-1,000 people) of USAID's foreign service officers are deployed at regional offices overseas, as well as in larger U.S. embassies, and they are supported by 4,500 foreign national employees who assist them in managing and implementing development programs at the local level (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008).

Like the bureaucracies briefly described above, USAID also has a recognized culture among its personnel (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; Ross, 2007; USAID, 2018a). The relatively small size of the workforce, as compared to other U.S. federal departments and agencies, strengthens its employees' sense of purpose and enhances personal relationships (Hills, 2006; Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; Ross, 2007). With their deep local roots, they can be perceived as passionate about their work, dedicated, and altruistic (Aldrich, 2014; Hills, 2006; Howell & Lind, 2009; Ross, 2007). They have keen individual knowledge at the local level, nuanced cultural awareness, and language skills, based on long term service in country- or regional-specific program management (Aldrich, 2014; Hills, 2006; Howell & Lind, 2009; Ross, 2007). Many of them have unique specialization and skills in such fields as agriculture, sanitation, health care, disaster relief, community development, family affairs, and conflict resolution (Kopp & Gillespie, 2008; Modirzadeh, Lewis, & Bruderlein, 2011; Ross, 2007).

USAID personnel involvement in counterterrorism policy ebbs and flows somewhat depending on administration priorities, which defines how closely development gets aligned with diplomacy and defense (i.e., the '3-D's" mentioned previously) (George, 2017; Keane & Diesen, 2015; Kraft & Marks, 2011). Since September 11, 2001, it is generally recognized that there has been an increased 'securitization' of development assistance (Howell & Lind, 2009). This has resulted in the use of development projects in many ways as tools for terrorism prevention (Aldrich, 2014; Arel-Bundock, Atkinson, & Potter, 2015; Miles, 2012; Modirzadeh, Lewis, & Bruderlein, 2011). Some development professionals, both inside of USAID as well with

their partners, are concerned with this trend, however, which has closely linked and integrated development with security (Arel-Bundock, Atkinson, & Potter, 2015; Hills, 2006; Modirzadeh, Lewis, & Bruderlein, 2011).

National Counterterrorism Center. The NCTC was created in 2004 in the aftermath of the 9/11 commission (Fessenden, 2005; George, 2017; Kean & Hamilton, 2004; Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), n.d.; Priest & Arkin, 2012). Part of the new ODNI, the NCTC is one of four analytic centers within that organization that was created by Congress (ODNI, n.d.; Priest & Arkin, 2012; Reinwald, 2007). The NCTC mission is to "lead and integrate the national counterterrorism (CT) effort by fusing foreign and domestic CT information, providing terrorism analysis, sharing information with partners across the CT enterprise, and driving whole-of-government action to secure our national CT objectives" (ODNI, n.d.).

NCTC is staffed by more than 1,000 personnel, with almost half of NCTC's workforce being liaisons officers or employees detailed from approximately 20 different Federal departments and agencies—from intelligence, defense and military, homeland security, and law enforcement communities (Fessenden, 2005; George, 2017; Reinwald, 2007; ODNI, n.d.). The NCTC budget is classified, as is the annual budget for all of the U.S. intelligence community, but open source information indicates the overall intelligence community budget is funded at approximately $42 million (Fessenden, 2005; NCTC, 2017). NCTC has the responsibilities for integrating analysis and coordinating information sharing from across the intelligence community (George, 2017; NCTC, 2017; ODNI, n.d.; Priest & Arkin, 2012; Reinwald, 2007). As such, the NCTC provides

an interagency forum and supporting process to link national-level counterterrorism policy to strategic operational objectives and tasks for counterterrorism (NCTC, 2017; ODNI, n.d.).

Being an intelligence entity, the organizational culture at NCTC shares many of the traits that are routinely used to describe intelligence professionals (Bean, 2009; Best, 2011; (Fessenden, 2005; Kean & Hamilton, 2004). This organizational culture includes dedication to mission, being analytic and technical, and having a process-oriented view (Bruijn, 2006; Johnston, 2005; Priest & Arkin, 2012). The process perspective is viewed by some in the interagency as somewhat overdone, as they are known for broad coordination of their products and efforts to reach consensus in their assessments (Johnston, 2005; Jones, 2006; Kean & Hamilton, 2004). They have a general reputation for ambiguity, nuance, and avoiding taking sides in policy debates (Feith, 2008; Johnston, 2005; Jones, 2006; Rodman, 2009). They focus on what is known, based on a regimented assessment of confidence levels, and avoid predictions or extrapolation (Jones, 2006; NCTC, 2017).

The broader intelligence community, of which NCTC is one part, is viewed by some in the interagency as ‘stove-piped,’ with each of the 16 separate organizations that make up the intelligence community jealously guarding their own independent views and assessments (Bruijn, 2006; Fessenden, 2005; Garicano, & Posner, 2005; Kean & Hamilton, 2004). They report both majority and dissenting assessments in the same product (NCTC, 2017). The perceived culture regarding intelligence professionals by many in the interagency is due in large part to the role they play in U.S. government

policymaking (Cronin, 2010; Garicano, & Posner, 2005; Marrin, 2007). They are policy advisors, not policymakers, and pride themselves in being objective and unbiased (Fessenden, 2005; Marrin, 2007; NCTC, 2017; Rodman, 2009). This can, however, cause some policymakers to gravitate to those select intelligence products that reinforce their own views and perspectives (Feith, 2008; Fessenden, 2005; Kean & Hamilton, 2004; Marrin, 2007).

Individual Policymaker Roles and Responsibilities

Individual government employees in U.S. departments and agencies can and do have real impact in both the development and implementation of policy decisions (George, 2017; Halperin & Clapp, 2007; Kraft & Marsk, 2011; McCormick, 2012). This is due to a couple of factors, first of which is their access and placement within the policy bureaucracy (Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; Halperin & Clapp, 2007; Kraft & Marsk, 2011; Rodman, 2009). They serve at the touch point between senior decision makers in government and the programs and activities necessary for carrying out policy decisions (Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; Ross, 2007; Rodman, 2009). Senior decision makers are those at the highest levels of government, including the political appointees who are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, but also include the additional political appointees who are placed in lower level positions by the president but don't require Congressional confirmation (George, 2017; Halperin & Clapp, 2007; Jackson, 2015a).

The political appointees number approximately 4,000 individuals across the various departments and agencies of the U.S. executive branch, and of these more than 1,200 require Senate confirmation (Piaker, 2016; Political Appointee Tracker, 2018). For

reference, the number of presidential nominated, Senate confirmed political positions at the four departments or agencies referenced above, which represent their respective senior leadership, include 161 at State, 57 at Defense, 11 at USAID, and 1 at NCTC (Piaker, 2016; Political Appointee Tracker, 2018). Given the span of their responsibilities, and the complexities of the issues they must deal with on a daily basis, they are critically dependent upon the senior career members of the civil service (as well as the members of the foreign service and military) who support them as members of their immediate staff (Abrams, 2017; Cohen, 2018; Feith, 2008; Gates, 2014; Ross, 2007; Rodman, 2009). It is these individual government employees who frame the issues in papers, draft the policy positions for review, coordinate their review within the inter- and intra-departmental bureaucracy, present them for decisions, promulgate decisions into the interagency, and oversee implementation of decisions made (Cohen, 2018; Cotter, 2017; George, 2017; Halperin & Clapp, 2007; Kraft & Marks, 2011; McCormick, 2012).

A second factor, which is of no less significance, is the extensive knowledge and experience gained over many years, sometimes decades, resident in the members of the government civil service who have the information and skills critical to successful policymaking and implementation (Avey & Desch, 2014; Bacchus, 2015; Cohen, 2018; Destler, 2015).

Policy development and implementation is a complex and challenging environment, dealing with the details related to the programs and personnel available, the approved legislative authorities, the appropriated resources, the processes and mechanisms for achieving consensus, and the relationships (and trust) necessary across

the policymaking enterprise to work through difficult bureaucratic challenges (Abrams, 2017; Avey & Desch, 2014; Bacchus, 2015; Cotter, 2017; McCormick, 2012). The bureaucratic process is by its nature designed to be deliberative, which is why those individuals who have worked for extended times within the system and bureaucracy can and do have a tremendous amount of influence (Abrams, 2017; Avey & Desch, 2014; Bacchus, 2015; Cohen, 2018; Cotter, 2017; Destler, 2015).

Key Outside Influencers

Beyond just dealings with their own departments and agencies senior leaders, individual U.S. government employees who work in the policy environment are also attuned to other key entities that can and do influence the making of U.S. policy (George, 2017; Kraft & Marsk, 2011; McCormick, 2012). These entities include Congress (both elected members and their staff), think tanks, lobbyists, and the media (Eisenfeld, 2017; George, 2017; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). Part of the function of policy development and implementation by U.S. government employees includes routinely engaging with these entities (Eisenfeld, 2017; George, 2017; Kraft & Marsk, 2011). This engagement falls into two general categories, which is soliciting inputs and information in the development of policy, and then describing and explaining policy decisions and resulting programs and activities (George, 2017; Kraft & Marsk, 2011). The former category of engagement with outside entities serves to inform the development of potential policy options or courses of action that can be refined and recommended to senior policymakers (George, 2017; Kraft & Marsk, 2011; Milner & Tingley, 2015). The latter category of engagement contributes to an administration’s role and responsibility to

articulate policy decisions and actions of government to key stakeholders, principal among these being Congress and the general public (George, 2017; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Skidmore, 2012).

Congress. First and foremost, the principal outside influencer of policy is the Congress (Carter & Scott, 2010; Halperin & Clapp, 2007; Spanier & Nogee, 2013). As the directly elected representatives of the people, Congress is the organization that both authorizes programs and activities and appropriates the resources necessary for their implementation (Hersman, 2010; Mann, 2010; Spanier & Nogee, 2013). Since policy statements and documents provide the framework for setting the goals and objectives of government efforts, the Congress plays an integral role in the policy process (Skidmore, 2012; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016; Spanier & Nogee, 2013). Congressional authority within foreign policy is exercised in numerous ways. The Senate must confirm Presidential nominees for high executive branch positions, and once confirmed, routinely summon these senior leaders to testify before them on their efforts and activities (Auerswald & Maltzman, 2003; Gvosdev, 2017; Halperin & Clapp, 2007).

The power of the purse manifests itself through Congressional members, particularly in the appropriations committees, and their committee staff, who require significant reporting on program allocation and implementation (Hersman, 2010; McCormick, 2012; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). Since the budget is authorized and appropriated on an annual basis, members of Congress and their committee staff are continuously engaged with department and agency personnel in monitoring appropriations allocated in the past, discussing implementation in the present, and

planning for increases or reductions in the future (Hersman, 2010; Mann, 2010; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). For personnel in the State Department and USAID, it is the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee, House Foreign Affairs Committee, and House Appropriations Committee, that exert the most influence on foreign policy and foreign developmental aid (George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; Kraft & Marks, 2011; McCormick, 2012). For those in the Defense Department policy organizations, it is the Senate armed services committee, House armed services committee, and the respective Defense appropriation committees, that demand significant detail into military planning, activities, and operations (George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; Kraft & Marks, 2011; McCormick, 2012).

A significant number of the members of Congress have served multiple terms, many over decades, which provides them a great deal of knowledge, expertise, and legacy regarding the details of foreign policy (George, 2017; Mann, 2010; McCormick, 2012). This relative longevity is also reflected in the Congressional staff and the role they play, particularly with the Congressional committee staff, who have both the deep knowledge as well as the personal and professional relationships with the U.S. government employees who work in the policy environment (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012; George, 2017; Mann, 2010; McCormick, 2012). U.S. government employees who work developing and implementing foreign policy maintain a careful balance between the policy requirements of the president through the executive branch and the legislative oversight functions of the Congress (George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; Mann, 2010; McCormick, 2012).

Think tanks. Think tanks are not-for-profit organizations staffed by subject matter experts and policy practitioners that focus their analysis in areas related to foreign affairs and security policy (George, 2017; McGann, 2007; Nicander, 2015; Weidenbaum, 2011). This focus has direct implications to policy development regarding terrorism and counterterrorism (Kraft & Marks, 2011; McGann, 2007; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016; Weidenbaum, 2011). Differing from lobbying or issue advocacy groups, think tanks are generally research based organizations that in many cases serve as a bridge between the academic community and policymakers (Abelson, 2006; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Nicander, 2015; Nicander, 2016). By some counts there are more than 1,500 think tanks in the U.S., most located in and around Washington, D.C., providing independent analysis, advice, and exerting a significant amount of influence (McGann, 2007; Medvetz, 2012).

The best known, and considered both independent and bipartisan, are the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), the Brookings Institution, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), RAND Corporation, and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), with others like the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), and Cato Institute, generally described as having a more partisan perspective (Nicander, 2015; Nicander, 2016; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016; Weidenbaum, 2011). Many who are familiar with think tanks and their work refer to them as ‘non-academic researchers’ or ‘universities without students’ (Nicander, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016; Weidenbaum, 2011). These organizations, and their key personnel, are well-known in the policy environment of Washington, advising

policymakers, providing expert testimony to Congress before committees, and leveraged by journalists and the media (Medvetz, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Mulgan, 2006)

Think tanks play an important role in foreign and security policy generally, and counterterrorism policy specifically, for two reasons (Abelson, 2006; McGann, 2007; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). First is their strong reputation, which is based on the quality of their personnel and their products (Kraft & Marks, 2011; George, 2017; Nicander, 2016). Second is their networking, based on what some have identified as a 'revolving door' between their organizations and the government (George, 2017; Nicander, 2016; Weidenbaum, 2011). In essence, think tanks in Washington serve as a shadow bureaucracy for foreign and security policymaking, since many of their senior and mid-level employees consist of former government policymakers or senior decision makers (Abelson, 2006; Nicander, 2015; Nicander, 2016; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). This environment also provides their personnels' unique access to existing government employees in the Federal departments and agencies (Abelson, 2006; Nicander, 2015; Nicander, 2016; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). The more partisan Heritage Foundation, AEI, and Cato Institute, are even recognized as temporary placeholders for senior leaders in the party that is 'out of power,' that is, whichever party that doesn't hold the White House at a particular time (Abelson, 2006; George, 2017; Nicander, 2016). It is this revolving door, and staffing with past and potential future senior leaders, that requires current U.S. government policymakers to take think tanks, and the positions they espouse and the products they produce, very seriously (George, 2017; Nicander, 2016).

Lobbyists. Policymakers within the U.S. government are also directly engaged and influenced by individuals and groups who seek to push personal or collective policy agendas (Eisenfeld, 2017; George, 2017; Grossmann, 2012; McCormick, 2012). These types of outside influencers of policy are most commonly referred to as lobbyists, interest groups, or issue advocacy organizations (George, 2017; Grossmann, 2012; McCormick, 2012). There are hundreds, if not thousands, of specific interest groups within the U.S. that aggressively advocate for specific policy enactments (Grossmann, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016).

The principal focus of lobbying is on the Congress; however, executive branch departments and agencies are also regularly engaged by lobbying organizations regarding policy issues (George, 2017; Grossmann, 2012; McCormick, 2012). Lobbying is regulated, with groups declared and officially registered (Grossmann, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). In the foreign affairs and security domain, lobbying groups advocate for items across a wide spectrum of topics and issues, for example developmental assistance, humanitarian aid, foreign relations and positions for (and against) specific nations, security assistance, military education, human rights, rule of law, war crimes, etc. (Gabaccia, 2017; George, 2017; Gilens & Page, 2014; Newhouse, 2009; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016; Tidwell, 2017). In the area of foreign and defense policy, lobbyists can also represent foreign interests, both of governments as well as non-governmental organizations, and some foreign governments use lobbyists to great effect (Newhouse, 2009; Tidwell, 2017).

The power of lobbyists or issue advocacy groups to influence policy is in their collective membership as well as their ability to generate visibility and awareness, mobilize support or opposition, and build consensus across political coalitions (Gilens & Page, 2014; Grossmann, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). Influence on executive branch policymakers can also be brought to bear indirectly, as when lobbyists energize an elected member of Congress on an issue (or problem) within a specific program in a particular Federal department or agency (Eisenfeld, 2017; George, 2017; Milner & Tingley, 2015). The nature of the political systems and processes in the U.S. make influence efforts by lobbyists, interest groups, and issue advocacy organizations very effective, including in foreign and security policy (Eisenfeld, 2017; Gilens & Page, 2014; Shakoori, Kiani, & Heidarpour, 2016).

Media. The final key influence entity discussed is the media. This is a broad category, given the proliferation of information sources available via the Internet, and the term ‘the Media’ can mean a host of organizations existing across a wide array of products and platforms (Cohen, 2015; George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; McCormick, 2012). Examples specifically dedicated to professional journalism include traditional entities such as newspapers, magazines, and broadcast organizations, both television and radio (McCormick, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). Many of these also have an online presence on the Internet (Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). The traditional function of ‘the press’ has been to observe, investigate, and report to the public on the functions and activities of government (Felle, 2016; Graber & Dunaway, 2017). In this capacity, serving a non-governmental check and

balance function, the press is referred to by some as the ‘fourth estate’ (Felle, 2016; George, 2017; Graber & Dunaway, 2017).

In the emerging age of ‘fake news,’ and charges of bias in journalism, it can be increasingly difficult to know which are reputable, objectives sources and which are not (Entman, 2007; Felle, 2016; Hanitzsch & Vos, 2016; Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016; Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016; Weaver & Willnat, 2016). The 24-hour news cycle, with its need to fill time and generate revenue, has to many blurred the lines between the profession of journalism from those who provide subject matter knowledge or commentary on one hand, and those who state opinions or provide witty (or witless) entertainment on the other (Cohen, 2015; Meijer & Bijleveld, 2016; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Robinson, 2001; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). For issues related to government and politics, specifically regarding foreign affairs and security policy, the media entities generally recognized as objective, credible, and reliable, known for following the principals of professional journalism, exist across the platforms of print, television, and radio, all of which also maintain a presence online on the Internet (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012; Eisenfeld, 2017; Hersman, 2010; Milner & Tingley, 2015).

Media entities not only report on the making of policy, but also have a significant impact in influencing policy (Cohen, 2015; George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; McCormick, 2012; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). While the functions of policy development, particularly related to foreign affairs and security, are conducted outside of direct public view, journalists have significant access to policy stakeholders, from which they are able to obtain ‘inside information’ regarding issues, debates, and conflicts (Gadarian, 2010;

George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; McCormick, 2012; Robinson, 2001). As such, the media serves as a parallel process to the official policy mechanism for which policymakers can indirectly influence decisions, 'leaking' information to enhance certain positions or bring pressure to bear to achieve particular decisions (Cohen, 2015; McCormick, 2012; Milner & Tingley, 2015; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016).

U.S. government employees who work in foreign affairs and security policy are very attuned to media journalist's awareness of and reporting on topics of interest to their political leadership (George, 2017; Hersman, 2010; Mann, 2010; McCormick, 2012). Statements by senior political decision makers on policy issues that are reported in the media are watched closely by U.S. government employees, as are the reactions to these pronouncements by other political actors (George, 2017; Graber & Dunaway, 2017; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016). In addition, 'breaking news' items are also monitored closely, as these emergent issues can result in immediate shifts of focus or priority by senior political policymakers (George, 2017; Graber & Dunaway, 2017; Smith, Dunne, & Hadfield, 2016).

Counterterrorism Policy Implementation

Counterterrorism policy within the '3-D' construct, spanning *diplomacy*, *development*, and *defense* initiatives, is implemented through specific programs and activities (George, 2017; Keane & Diesen, 2015; Kraft & Marks, 2011). Diplomacy programs and activities related to counterterrorism are those implemented by the State Department (George, 2017; Kraft & Marks, 2011; U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.; U.S. Department of State, n.d.c.). Examples of these span a broad range of efforts, including

antiterrorism assistance programs, initiatives to counter violent extremism, countering terrorism finance, sponsoring international security awareness events and regional strategic initiatives, terrorist screening and interdiction programs, and specific regionally-based counterterrorism partnerships (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.; U.S. Department of State, n.d.c.). State Department counterterrorism programs are designed to strengthen bilateral and regional partnerships, support civilian capacities for governance, improve law enforcement and judicial capabilities, and enhance information sharing to counter terrorist threats (Bernard, 2016; Byman, 2015; Jordan, Kosal, & Rubin, 2016; U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.).

Numerous development programs and activities implemented by USAID also support counterterrorism policy (George, 2017; Kraft & Marks, 2011; USAID, n.d.; USAID, 2011; U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). These USAID initiatives fall under the category of working in crises and conflict (USAID, n.d.; USAID, 2011). Programs related to this category include political transition initiatives, peacebuilding and reconciliation, providing safe and secure environments, and community resilience, provide foundational support through prevention in areas that are at risk for terrorism (Jordan, Kosal, & Rubin, 2016; USAID, n.d.; USAID, 2011). For areas of instability and conflict, there are programs related to conflict mitigation and prevention, recovering from crisis, and atrocity prevention, that seek to address the challenges in areas where conflicts are ongoing (Jordan, Kosal, & Rubin, 2016; USAID, n.d.; USAID, 2011).

There is a special category of USAID development efforts that are specifically related to countering violent extremism, which are divided into two areas (USAID, 2011;

U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). The first seeks to counter what are called ‘push’ factors, such as social marginalization, ungoverned areas, government repression, human rights violations, corruption, and threat perceptions based on ethnic or cultural issues (Kraft & Marks, 2011; USAID, 2011; U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). The second area addresses ‘pull’ factors that influence individual radicalization and recruitment, such as social status, respect from peers, sense of belonging or commitment, personal empowerment, and achieving success and fulfilment (Kraft & Marks, 2011; USAID, 2011; U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). Some of these initiatives have been controversial within the development community, both inside and outside of government, where some resist what they view is an attempt to ‘securitize development’ (Bernard, 2016; Jordan, Kosal, & Rubin, 2016; USAID, 2011).

The Defense Department also conducts a robust range of programs and activities that support achievement of U.S. counterterrorism policy objectives (Defense Security Cooperation Agency [DSCA], n.d.; George, 2017; Kraft & Marks, 2011; McNerney, 2016). Foreign military sales, including with financing arrangements for resource-challenged nations, and the transfer of excess military equipment from U.S. stockpiles are provided for partner countries that face urgent or other capability gaps in their operations against terrorist or insurgent groups (DSCA, n.d.; George, 2017; Kraft & Marks, 2011; McNerney, 2016). A wide range of military-to-military training activities, including advising and assisting in partner nation counterterrorism operations, are also conducted by U.S. military personnel that support partner nation militaries in tactical proficiency

and operational capacity building (Carr, 2016; DSCA, n.d.; Frazier & Hutto, 2017; George, 2017; Kraft & Marks, 2011; Reveron, 2016).

Defense Department security cooperation projects focus on U.S. partner nations, primarily those that need to implement responsible civilian control of military and security forces, building up the institutions necessary to provide essential services to their own civilian populations (DSCA, n.d.; Kraft & Marks, 2011; Omelicheva, Carter, & Campbell, 2017; Reveron, 2016). Finally, the Defense Department also hosts mid-to-senior level military officers from allied and partner nations in numerous military education programs within the United States, such as that provided through the National Defense University, regional centers, and service war colleges (DSCA, n.d.; Kraft & Marks, 2011; Omelicheva, Carter, & Campbell, 2017; Reveron, 2016). These courses, many ending with academic degrees or professional certifications, provide for leadership development, strategic thinking, and operational planning, which all contribute to collective security and enhance U.S. military partnerships worldwide (Kraft & Marks, 2011; McNerney, 2016; Reveron, 2016).

Theoretical Foundations Regarding the Causes of Terrorism

Since the goal of this study was to understand individual policymakers perspectives on the causes of terrorism, it was necessary to have a baseline for which to describe what they may view as the prime motivators of terrorism. To this end, six primary theories related to what causes terrorism provided a sound research framework (Jackson, Toros, Jarvis, & Heath-Kelly, 2017; Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016). These theories address terrorism as being caused by religious ideology (Berman, 2004;

Huntington, 1996; Owen, 2014), root causes (Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006), State sponsorship (Arendt, 1953; Byman, 2007; Sterling, 1981), failed states (Crocker; 2003; Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004); rational choice (Crenshaw, 2003; Hoffman, 2011; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011), and group dynamics (Berrebi, 2009; Kuzner, 2007; Piazza, 2007). The underlying academic elements and key research findings of each of these theories are summarized in this section.

It is of note that while many of these theories share common characteristics, they are also unique in the assumptions made, approaches used, and conclusions drawn (Akhtar, 2017; Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen-Smyth, 2011; Martin, 2017). Research into the causes of terrorism is relatively recent, beginning in the 1970s following the end of colonialism and creation of new independent states in the post-World War II period, some of which involved violent political insurgencies (Hain & Pisoiu, 2017; Martin, 2017; Silke & Schnidt-Petersen, 2017). Prior to this, the research into the use of violence against civilians, whether political or military, was studied within the context of traditional warfare (Hain & Pisoiu, 2017; Martin, 2017; Silke & Schnidt-Petersen, 2017). There remain some in the academic community who believe that modern research into the causes of terrorism is skewed to an overly Western perspective (Jackson, Toros, Jarvis, & Heath-Kelly, 2017; Jarvis & Lister, 2014; Silke & Schnidt-Petersen, 2017). Others are concerned that modern research into the causes of terrorism is overly 'positivist,' attempting to only establish causal relationships between phenomena, such as violence and grievance, but missing broader and deeper critical academic opportunities for knowledge (Akhtar, 2017; Hain & Pisoiu, 2017).

This study made no academic assessment or research judgement regarding the soundness of specific theories on causes of terrorism (Jackson, Toros, Jarvis, & Heath-Kelly, 2017; Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016). I sought to leverage existing research from which to qualitatively view individual perceptions to understanding the views of current U.S. counterterrorism policy professionals (Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, & Breen-Smyth, 2011; Martin, 2017; Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016; Silke & Schnidt-Petersen, 2017). Regardless of how these numerous theories on the causes of terrorism are viewed in the academic community, they are relevant, since they are routinely identified or alluded to in official government policy documents that address terrorism (NCTC, 2017; ODNI, n.d.; U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.; U.S. Department of State, n.d.c.; U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016).

Religious Ideology

Huntington (1996) is considered by many the chief among modern political theorists who consider that ideology, specifically driven by culture, race, language, and religion, is the prime motivator for the use of violence against civilians as a means to achieve political ends. Others who have promoted this theory as a cause of terrorism include Berman (2004), Frum and Perle (2003), and Owen (2014). Ideology is defined as "a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory," and "the set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual" (Ideology, 2018, para. 1). Those who view religious ideology as a primary cause of terrorism also see religion as a central defining characteristic of culture and therefore of civilizations, and view clashes due to conflicting ideologies as the greatest threat to world

peace (Berman, 2004; Frum & Perle, 2003; Huntington, 1996; Owen, 2014). They stress that religious ideological factors create both global security challenges and an existential threat to the Westphalian state system (Antwi-Boateng, 2017; Carson & Suppenbach, 2018).

This theory usually presents 'political Islam,' termed *Islamism* by proponents of this theoretical approach, as a religious ideology that underline political approaches, systems, and structures, comparable by some to the totalitarian ideologies of Nazism and communism (Berman, 2004; Owen, 2014). Advocates of this theory often point to statements by notable terrorist such as Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leaders within al Qaeda and the Islamic State, respectively, to support their theoretical position (Ibrahim, 2007; Rubin, 2014; U.S. Department of State, 2004). Each of these terrorists routinely and consistently use the language of religion (in this case, Islam) as the principal justification of their violence, especially as it relates to the use of violence against civilian targets (Ibrahim, 2007; Rubin, 2014; U.S. Department of State, 2004). The perspective regarding religious ideology as a cause of terrorism is also reflected in statements by President's Bush, Obama, and Trump, and therefore has influenced U.S. counterterrorism policy (Goldberg, 2016; Johnson, 2002; Johnson & Hauslohner, 2017).

Qualitative studies demonstrate links between religious ideology and terror attack lethality (Carson & Suppenbach, 2018). Qualitative research findings also indicate both 'push' and 'pull' factors with religious ideology overtones, where radical Islamists are 'pushed' towards violence due to a backlash against the impacts of globalization and

'pulled' towards religious radicalization through global media availability, the purpose of a pure cause and lure of martyrdom, and influences of *Madrassas* (i.e., Islamic religious schools) (Antwi-Boateng, 2017; Buzdar, Tariq, & Ali, 2018; Carson & Suppenbach, 2018). The role of religion in radicalization can also be strengthened within cultures as well as across cultures, given that Islam is not a unitary belief structure but consists of numerous sects and splinter elements, notably that between the Salafi, Shi'a, and Sufi traditions, evidenced in recent times by the split between al Qaeda and the Islamic State (Cohen et al., 2018). Research further indicates radicalization can be a key component of conflict where radical leaders compete to obtain adherents and followers, whether locally via direct engagement or globally via the Internet; however, most studies show that individuals are still mostly influenced by personal, face-to-face interactions on the path to radicalization (Isaacs, 2017; Jiries, 2016)

Research results from quantitative methods also support the theory regarding religious ideology being a primary cause of terrorism (Barron & Maye, 2017; Cherney & Murphy, 2017; Neo et al., 2017). A multitude of research that analyzes population surveys spanning numerous regions (e.g., the U.S., Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, even Australia and Southeast Asia) demonstrate causal linkages between aspects of religious belief among Muslims and their support for, or even participation in, violence to achieve specific objectives (Barron & Maye, 2017; Burstein, 2018; Cherney & Murphy, 2017). Additionally, some research findings conclude that the presence of religious ideology espoused by attackers correlates with more deadly attack tactics and patterns (Burstein, 2018). This is particularly the case for those who indicate a strong belief in the

concept of *jihad* (as 'holy war') (Barron & Maye, 2017; Cherney & Murphy, 2017). Quantitative studies also demonstrate results that indicate measurable impacts from the portrayal in the media of discrimination against Muslims and the propensity of radicalized Muslims to use violence and terrorism in support of a perceived cause or to even exact revenge (Saiya, 2017; Schbley, 2004; Neo et al., 2017).

There are studies, however, that demonstrate using the language of 'religious ideology' in describing terrorism is unhelpful (Francis, 2016; Gunning & Jackson, 2011). This research indicates perceived differences between 'religious' and 'secular' acts of violence against civilians is over-simplistic or even misleading (Gunning & Jackson, 2011; Sing, 2016). The underlying factors used in research design is critical, and opponents of the 'religious ideology' theory as a cause of terrorism stress that some key assumptions about the motives, causes, and behavior of groups are in many cases unsupported (Francis, 2016; Gunning & Jackson, 2011). This opposing research indicates making connections between Islam and violence only contributes to 'Islamophobia,' undermining a fuller understanding on root causes of political violence, and even building the growth of intolerant attitudes against Muslims (Pop, 2016; Sing, 2016). Some research even indicates possible links between government efforts to delegitimizing certain actors while attempting to justify contentious counterterrorist practices (Gunning & Jackson, 2011).

Application of this theory in U.S. counterterrorism policy is evidenced predominately in military responses through combat operations as well as programs related to countering violent extremism (Kraft & Marks, 2011; McIntosh, 2015;

Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016; Tan, 2009). These responses have three primary objectives, which is to degrade and destroy Islamist armed groups, deter potential future attacks by demonstrating strength and resolve, and undermine the ideological justification that underpins Islamist religious justification for violence (Kraft & Marks, 2011; Schroden, Rosenau, & Warner, 2016; Tan, 2009). Significant U.S. military operations against al Qaeda and Islamic State forces and operatives in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, have been underway for over 17 years (Cronin, 2015; McIntosh, 2015). These operations are also augmented by periodic drone strikes in other locations, such as in North Africa, Somalia, and Yemen (Jordan, 2009; McCrisken, 2013). Counter narrative campaigns, embedded in broader U.S. countering violent extremism programs, are also focused on undermining Islamist religious messaging that justifies violence (Aly, 2013; Holtmann, 2013; U.S. State Department & USAID, 2016). These efforts remain controversial, as many who don't subscribe to the role of religious ideology in terrorist motivation still question the coherence and effectiveness of counter narrative efforts (Betz, 2008; Prentice, 2012; Quiggin, 2009).

Root Causes

The root causes theory as it relates to the motivations of terrorism stresses key underlying factors, mostly related to economic, educational, demographic, and political issues, as the fundamental reasons individuals move to the use of violence to achieve political objectives (Betts, 2002; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000). Much of the theoretical underpinnings of this approach is based on research into the economics of violence and conflict that preceded the attacks of 9/11 (Abadie, 2006; Alesina, Ozler, Roubini, &

Swagel, 1996; Becker, 1983; Hirshleifer, 1991). As such, this approach makes linkages between poverty, political instability, and the use of violence (Abadie, 2006; Alesina et al., 1996). Some research indicated poor economic conditions in a country increase the probability of political coups or serve as reliable predictions for the outbreak of civil wars (Alesina et al., 1996; Collier & Hoeffer, 2004; Miguel, Satyanath, & Sergenti, 2004). This theory also highlights the role of poverty in explaining how violence and terrorism would be exasperated when combined with the presence of rampant disease, corruption, and competition for reducing resources necessary for a minimal level of personal sustainment (Feldman, 2009; Miguel et al., 2004).

A broad lack of education among a population has also been researched as another key economic factor to explain a root cause of terrorism (Feldman, 2009; Newman, 2006). Studies suggest that there are potential linkages, at least at the individual level, of a lower standard of living and low education both being present in those who participate in terrorist attacks (Khan & Azam, 2008; Newman, 2006). Other research focuses on other potential causal factors, such as discrimination and political grievance, arbitrary actions and physical abuse by security services, and lack of opportunities for betterment or advancement (Betts, 2002; Feldman, 2009; Krueger & Malecˇkova´, 2003). The root cause of terrorism perspective can be seen in U.S. counterterrorism policy, even that articulated relatively recently, particularly related to programs designed to counter violent extremism (U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016). “In many environments where the risk of violent extremism is high, development has failed to take root, gover-

nance is weak, access to education and training is limited, economic opportunities are few, and unemployment is high" (U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016, p. 4).

A review of recent academic literature demonstrates qualitative research that build on the root causes perspective that terrorist violence is an economic phenomenon (Ayegba, 2015; Chauhan & Foster, 2014; Intriligator, 2010). Studies regarding populations for regions in both Africa and the Middle East highlight connections between poverty, unemployment, age, and violence of a terrorist nature (Ayegba, 2015; Caruso & Gavrilova, 2012; Chauhan & Foster, 2014). Research results suggest that there are also positive indications within the root causes framework that these types of economic factors can be exasperated by a young population demographic, particularly young men, as well as the presence of repression and brutality by state security forces (Caruso & Gavrilova, 2012; Intriligator, 2010; Jarvis & Lister, 2016). The impact of education upon populations is another contributing root cause that has also been studied, in the context of how it contributes to social differences, social fractures, and political violence (Jarvis & Lister, 2016). When economic differences manifest itself as a real or perceived discrimination of an ethnic minority, this also has been shown through qualitative analysis to be a valid predictor of domestic violence, including terrorism (Ayegba, 2015; Piazza, 2011). More research through qualitative methods into broader socio-economic and contributing factors as root causes for terrorism is clearly warranted in the academic community (Caruso & Gavrilova, 2012; Chauhan & Foster, 2014).

Root cause theory regarding terrorism has also been studied through quantitative methods (Campos & Gassebner, 2013; Jacques & Taylor, 2013; Qvortrup & Lijphart;

2013; Shahbaz, 2013). Research indicates that explanations on the use of terrorism where economics is a contributing root cause has consistency (Bird, Blomberg, & Hess, 2008; Qvortrup & Lijphart; 2013). In Europe, there are quantitative results demonstrating that terrorists come from relatively poor background (or are first- or second-generation immigrants from poor countries), who become disenchanted and angry in their new home (Bird, Blomberg, & Hess, 2008; Qvortrup & Lijphart; 2013). Economic factors have also been highlighted as a quantitatively determined contributor to terrorism in Pakistan, which like its neighbor Afghanistan, suffers from a steady stream of terrorism attacks against civilian targets (Shahbaz, 2013). The potential role of poverty as a causal factor for terrorism has also been studied in the Israeli-Palestinian context, even as it relates to motivational differences between male and female terrorist attackers (Jacques & Taylor, 2013). Within the U.S. domestic context, studies have indicated less linkages between poverty or economic factors and terrorist attacks (Piazza, 2017). However, the root causes theory for terrorism is not without its critics in the academic community (Djankov & Reynal-Querol, 2010; Mintz & Brule, 2009). Some find the linkage between poverty and terrorism spurious, based on faulty assumptions and biased perspectives (Djankov & Reynal-Querol, 2010). Others question the research findings, stressing that the evidence is weak since it may be more inferentially based and not grounded on a solid data foundation (Mintz & Brule, 2009).

Regardless of its academic critics, however, the root cause of terrorism theory, particularly in the context of poverty and despair as a driver of terrorism, was prevalent in statements made by senior leadership within both the Bush and Obama administrations

(Acosta, 2015; Aldrich, 2014; Bush, 2002a; Powell, 2009; Sterman, 2015). In a Washington summit on countering extremism, President Obama called on governments to "address the grievances that terrorists exploit, both political and economic" (Acosta, 2015, para. 2). Obama's Secretary of State, John Kerry, routinely used similar language about fighting violent extremism by countering poverty. "The fight against violent extremism will continue for decades unless the root causes of despair and hopelessness are addressed" (Morello, 2015, para. 1). "We have a huge common interest in dealing with this issue of poverty, which in many cases is the root cause of terrorism" (Sterman, 2015, para. 2). In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, President Bush told a gathering of economic leaders at a United Nations summit, "we fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror" (Bush, 2002a, para. 3). The use of developmental assistance programs to counter terrorism was also articulated by Secretary of State Colin Powell, who often spoke of development as a core national security issue, drawing direct links between terrorism and poverty (Powell, 2009). While the language of root cause theory is absent from how President Trump speaks about terrorism, its legacy remains in numerous aspects of developmental assistance programs and activities in the State Department and USAID under the auspices of the countering violent extremism framework (Aldrich, 2014; U.S. Department of State, n.d.b.; U.S. Department of State, n.d.c.; U.S. Department of State & USAID, 2016).

State Sponsorship

Traditional or orthodox political perspectives on the cause of terrorism, directly linking political violence by rebels, insurgents, or terrorists, to state sponsorship are

provided by Arendt (1953), Richardson (1998, 1999), Sterling (1981), and more recently, Byman (2007). In this theory, nation-states provide the backing, funding, guidance, and motivation to terrorist groups and individuals, which are then encouraged or utilized to target opposing states or groups in order to indirectly influence political decisions and achieve political ends (Arendt, 1953; Byman, 2007; Richardson, 1998 & 1999; Sterling, 1981). Coming out of World War II, many academics and political theorists in the West viewed the totalitarian communist regime in the Soviet Union as the principal sponsor of guerrilla and insurgent movements across the world, working to undermine and destabilize democratic countries friendly with the West (Arendt, 1953; Sterling, 1981). It was no secret that the foreign policy goal of the Soviet Union and its communist client states, such as Cuba, were openly directed towards world domination (Arendt, 1953; Sterling, 1981). The view of the Soviet Union as a destabilizing actor against democracy was a prevailing image up to and through the 1980s, clearly evident in both academic studies as well as in political rhetoric, such as President Reagan's repeated references to the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' (Busch, 1997; Byman, 2007; Goodnight, 1986; Richardson, 1999).

Over time, other nations were identified as state sponsors of terrorism, principal among these including Iran, Libya, the Palestinians, and Syria (Byman, 2007; Richardson, 1999; Sterling, 1981). In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, and the coincident end of the Cold War, a further evolution occurred (Hoyt, 2000; Richardson, 1998). Evolving through the 1990s, Iraq, Sudan, and North Korea were recognized as also becoming main sponsors of terrorists and their attacks, in what some

referred to as a transition from the communist ‘Reds’ to the up and coming ‘Rogue’ states (Hoyt, 2000; Krebs & Lobasz, 2007. By the late 1990s there were seven states identified by the U.S. government as official state sponsors of terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria (Richardson, 1998).

State sponsorship as a key cause of terrorism is evident in the political rhetoric of the last several administrations (Haass, 2013; Krebs & Lobasz, 2007; Shear & Sanger, 2017). One of the key political justifications for the U.S. attack against Afghanistan following 9/11 was over its refusal to apprehend and turn over al-Qaeda fighters, allowing official safe haven to al-Qaeda to operate from its territory in the execution of their terrorist planning, training, and launching of global attacks (Krebs & Lobasz, 2007). In addition, being a state sponsor of terrorism was also one of the political justifications used by the Bush administration for the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Haass, 2013; Krebs & Lobasz, 2007). In the aftermath of the Arab Spring uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa in 2011, President Obama designated Syria under the Bashir Assad regime as a ‘state sponsor of terror’ of groups conducting attacks in the region and used this in 2012, as well as Assad’s brutal crackdown against his own population, to initiate economic sanctions (Haass, 2013). Most recently, the Trump administration designated North Korea as a state sponsor of terror in late 2017, using this and other coercive efforts to punish North Korea for its continued development of nuclear weapons and aggressive testing of ballistic missile upon which to deliver them (Shear & Sanger, 2017). There remain four countries that are officially identified by the U.S. government as ‘state sponsors of terrorism,’ which are Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria (Shear & Sanger,

2017; U.S. Department of State, n.d.d.). Being so designated means that each are sanctioned from receiving any U.S. foreign assistance, no defense exports or sales, and severe financial and economic restrictions (U.S. Department of State, n.d.d.).

There are a multitude of qualitative research studies that address why states seek to sponsor terrorist groups (Bapat, 2011; Berkowitz, 2017; Cunningham, 2010; Regan, 2002; Salehyan, 2010). Research indicates that states use terrorist groups, usually on a covert basis (but not always), to apply coercion on other states in areas where cooperation or diplomacy fails to achieve political objectives (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, & Joyce, 2008; Bapat, 2007; Bapat, 2011). States are more likely to employ terrorist proxies against their enemies when they assess the strategic benefits outweigh the potential risks of exposure or retaliation (Berkowitz, 2017; Cunningham, 2010; Regan, 2002; Salehyan, 2010). Some qualitative studies indicate that the states that are most likely to sponsor terrorists groups against their enemies are those that are moderately weak or those that are major powers (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, & Joyce, 2008; Bapat, 2007; Bapat, 2011; Berkowitz, 2017). Terrorist groups also actively seek state sponsors as well, for numerous reasons, not least being to obtain financial resources (Bapat & Bond, 2012; Freeman, 2011; Regan, 2002; Salehyan, 2010). Terrorist groups can also obtain intelligence and weaponry from state sponsors, in many cases much more easily than they can obtain it through other means (Bapat & Bond, 2012; Carter, 2012). By aligning with a state sponsor, terrorists are able to increase their lethality and thereby their impact and influence (Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, & Joyce, 2008; Bapat, 2007; Bapat & Bond, 2012; Freeman, 2011). Some research findings demonstrate that the more vulnerable the

terrorist group, the higher the probability it will seek to align itself with a state sponsor (Bapat & Bond, 2012; Carter, 2012). State sponsorship can also have its drawbacks, however, in loss of some autonomy (Carter, 2012). It can even seriously backfire, and data from some research demonstrates cases where a state sponsor may be pressured by a stronger state to betray individual terrorists, their plots, or even enable broader retaliatory action (Carter, 2012).

Research into specific states that sponsor terrorism is also plentiful. Data shows that terrorist groups from certain countries have a higher likelihood to attack American targets or citizens (Carter, 2012; Neumayer & Plümper, 2011). This appears to be due to numerous factors, including in countries that receive significant U.S. military aid, or places where there are U.S. military personnel stationed or operating (Neumayer & Plümper, 2011). There is also plentiful research into specific states that sponsor terrorist groups (Byman, 2007). Libya's role as a state sponsor of terror in the 1970s and 1980s, and the factors that were leveraged to advance its political and economic interests, provides a good example (Ani & Uzodike, 2015). Another example of a long-term state sponsor of terrorism is Iran, which remains a designated state sponsor of terrorist by the U.S. government (Byman, 2008; U.S. Department of State, n.d.d.; Wigginton et al., 2015). Iran has used its al-Qods Force to support, fund, and train terrorist groups across the Middle East (Wigginton et al., 2015). However, research indicates that over time Iran has become more cautious and circumspect in its overt support to terrorist organizations, with data showing this may be due to an evolving attempt to avoid United Nations condemnation and appear more normalized in the international environment (Byman,

2008; Wigginton et al., 2015). While not officially sanctioned by the U.S., both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia appear as nations that research has demonstrated are examples of apparent U.S. allies that also support terrorist groups to achieve political interests, sometimes even against the U.S. (Byman, 2008; Riedel, 2008).

Quantitative studies into state sponsorship of terrorism also highlights several key research results. Research findings conclude that rivalries between medium or weak states in close proximity is a reliable predictor for states that sponsor terrorism (Findley, Piazza, & Young, 2012; Salehyan, Gleditsch, & Cunningham, 2011). Findings also indicate that the willingness of terrorist groups to accept support from a state sponsor is more likely in countries that suffer from existing internal discord, have ongoing and open conflicts underway, or where the local government receives significant security or military support from a foreign power (Morgan, Bapat, & Krustev, 2009; Salehyan et al., 2011). Quantitative research also indicates economic ramifications for states that are sanctioned as state sponsors of terrorism (Breuer, Felde, & Steininger, 2017; Byman, 2007; Morgan et al., 2009). Findings indicate that the stock prices for companies that withdraw business from countries declared ‘state sponsors of terrorism’ rise, however, there is also evidence that some businesses that remain in these countries over a longer-term period may also benefit from positive stock results (Breuer et al., 2017). Some researchers disagree that overt state sponsorship remains a viable tool, due mostly to the negative international reaction for it being a means to achieve political objectives, combined with the apparent growing lack of state control over the groups they do sponsor (Hamilt & Gray, 2012; O’Sullivan, 2010).

Evidence of the impact of the theory of state sponsorship of terrorist on U.S. policy exists beyond statements and rhetoric of senior U.S. political leaders (Haass, 2013; Krebs & Lobasz, 2007; Shear & Sanger, 2017). With the end of the Cold War and U.S. dominance in the international environment, sanctions became a clear tool used by U.S. policymakers to coerce 'problem' states, particularly those identified as state sponsors of terrorism (Eckert, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2010; Tucker, 1998). In many cases, the use of economic sanctions is the way for political leaders to appear tough without having to cross into more coercive methods, such as military action (Maller, 2010). Economic sanctions against states identified by the U.S. State Department as 'state sponsors of terrorism' is evident in current policy towards the four countries currently on this list: Syria (since 1979), Iran (since 1984), Sudan (since 1993), and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, i.e., North Korea, since 2017) (U.S. Department of State, n.d.d.).

Failed States

Research regarding failed states as a theory for explaining the cause of terrorism is provided by Crocker (2003), Hamre and Sullivan (2002), Rotberg (2002), and Takeyh and Gvosdev (2002). Foundations for this perspective can be found in the concept of the 'quasi-state' as outlined by Jackson (1990). He studied the creation of Third World nations post World War II, where in many cases in post-colonial regions (e.g., Africa, the Middle East) weak states were established and fostered by the broader international community in spite of whether they were or were not ready for independence or self-governance (Jackson, 1990). These 'quasi-states' as he called them were areas of

'negative sovereignty,' or places that had the trappings of a nation but lacked the basic elements necessary for true governance or control (Jackson, 1990). Dorff (1996) continued this theme regarding 'weak states,' arguing that the inability of a state to control violence, specifically terrorism, would lead to the use of more violence, in addition to other problems such as gross violations of human rights. Fukuyama (2004) is a well-known and more recent proponent within the field of international relations that expanded on this theory (i.e., quasi- or weak-states as 'failed' or 'failing states') for explaining terrorist violence.

In general, this theory posits that a lack of effective governance, in many cases combined with multi-ethnic tensions or conflict and a repressive security regime, fosters the development, use, and export of terrorist violence by groups out of these weak states (Crocker; 2003; Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Rotberg, 2002). It is the weakness of state institutions across functions related to security, finance, health, education, and commerce, among others, that serves to draw terrorists (and criminal elements) to these locations (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Takeyh & Gvosdev, 2002). It becomes a predictable cycle of violence fueled by the breakdown of civil institutions and authority (Mallaby, 2002; Takeyh & Gvosdev, 2002). Terrorists and their groups are drawn to these 'safe havens,' precisely because the lack of central authority provides them the freedom and autonomy to recruit, organize, fund, train, and stage operations, without the risk of any real interference (Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Mallaby, 2002; Takeyh & Gvosdev, 2002). At the same time, being a terrorist group located within a 'sovereign state' also provides a semblance of protection under international norms, since it is difficult for a stronger state

to directly interfere in another weaker state absent a justification and authorization under international principles and law (Takeyh & Gvosdev, 2002). This is the real-world ramification of 'negative sovereignty' (Jackson, 1990). Proponents of the failed state theory as the primary cause of terrorism point to the need, therefore, of strengthening the institutions of weak or failing (or even failed) states in order to begin to address the 'root cause' of terrorism (Crocker, 2003; Mallaby, 2002; Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Rotberg, 2002).

The view regarding weak or failing states and linkages to terrorism can be seen in statements by U.S. administration officials over the last several decades. President Clinton used as justification the lack of governance for his involvement in Somalia (Rieff, 1999). While this intervention was primarily justified as a humanitarian initiative, it also had a security aspect, which over time led to increased U.S. military counterterrorism efforts that ultimately led to the failed 'Black Hawk Down' incident while attempting to capture Faraka Aideed, a Somali warlord (Ibrahim, 2010). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the National Security Strategy published by the George W. Bush administration in 2002 clearly stated that "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones" (Bush, 2002b, p. 1). Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State in the Bush administration, also made it clear that nations that could not exercise appropriate sovereignty and control over their territory had 'spillover effects' on neighboring and regional states in the form of terrorism (Garfinkle, 2005). In his last State of the Union speech in 2016, President Obama also highlighted the threat of

terrorism posed by failing states, a more serious threat to American security that that posed by ‘evil empires’ (Patrick, 2016).

There are distinct qualitative findings that demonstrate links between failed or failing states and the prevalence of terrorism (Chenoweth, 2013; George, 2016; Howard, 2016). Failed states are viewed as a magnet for terrorism and other forms of political violence, with research indicating local citizens are driven to violence when chronic deprivation and corruption close normal pathways to success and security (George, 2016; Howard, 2016). Studies show that failed states experience a higher level of violence and terrorism that stable states (Chenoweth, 2013; George, 2016). There are country-specific examples and other case studies that provide qualitative evidence of the link between failed states and terrorism (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012; Patrick, 2007; Piazza, 2008). Boko Haram in northern Nigeria is in great part enabled by the corruption and failure of the Nigerian government (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012). Research demonstrates that other weak or failing states, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, or other African nations across the Trans-Sahara, or failed states like Somalia, are much more likely to both host terrorist groups as well as suffer inordinately from these groups’ attacks (Piazza, 2008). Some research has even mapped the intersections between failed governance and terrorism (Patrick, 2007).

Research into the factors indicating a failed state are numerous, but usually highlight state authority, capacity for basic services, and legitimacy (Grävingholt, Ziaja, & Kreibaum, 2015; Howard, 2010). Other key contributing factors include ethnic divisions, corruption, porous borders and migration flow, and changes due to climate or

environment (Howard, 2010). These factors for failure are complex, however, with conflicting research results apparent across the literature (Jones, 2008; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Newman, 2007). Some findings call for increased research into broader foundational flaws, such as socioeconomics and political underdevelopment, and even the legacy impacts of post-colonial transformation (Jones, 2008; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011). A failed state may be a contributing reason but may not be the singular causal factor for terrorism some researchers imply, since terrorist attacks also occur in strong, stable states, including Western democracies, indicating that state failure may not be a sufficient explanation for the presence of, and attacks by, terrorists (Newman, 2007).

Some findings indicate perspectives within wealthy, strong, and stable states may be biased and unduly influence how the link between failed states and terrorism is viewed (Bueger & Bethke, 2014; Chenoweth, 2013; Newman, 2007). Some research outright questions the validity of the claim that failed or failing states are linked to terrorism at all (Call, 2008; Coggins, 2015; Hehir, 2007). A study of data over ten years from 153 countries found quantitative evidence that prevailing research studies often disregard broader political context (Coggins, 2015). When other violence is included, some research indicates limited statistical differences between strong and weak states regarding acts of terrorism (Hehir, 2007). Many studies demonstrate that terrorist groups can and do emerge from states viewed as strong, stable, advanced, and democratic, indicating the 'strength' of the state doesn't necessarily correlate with the presence of terrorist groups and terrorist attacks (Call, 2008; Mazarr, 2014; Newman, 2007). These researchers rather see undue influence of a broader, post 9/11 'state-building narrative' that has biased how

failed states are viewed, being more supportive of strategic objectives rather than analytic rigor (Hehir, 2007; Mazarr, 2014).

The challenges posed by ‘failed’ or ‘failing states,’ in the context of a theory for the cause of terrorism, is evident in statements by senior U.S. policymakers from both parties across the last several administrations. The National Security Strategy authored by the George W. Bush administration in 2002 highlighted the dangers of ‘weak states’ being ‘vulnerable to terrorist networks’ and posing “as great a danger to our national interests as strong states” (Bush, 2002b; Cover Letter, para. 7; see also Rice, 2003). A specific example of the impact of this guidance is seen in the creation (in 2004) of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization within the State Department to lead U.S. government efforts to respond effectively to address failing states, with a special focus on Afghanistan and Iraq (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005; Krasner & Pascual, 2005). This office has evolved over time, but still exists as the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations within the State Department, working to address the causes of violent conflict and terrorism through targeted, in-country development assistance programs (U.S. Department of State, n.d.e.). Another specific example was the creation (also in 2004) of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), established to help weak states build the elements of basic services to help avoid internal conflicts that have the potential of destabilizing neighbors and provide ungoverned territory as safe havens for terrorists (François & Sud, 2006; Millennium Challenge Corporation, n.d.). The MCC collaborates with poor countries, creating

compacts for long term development projects, often in the hundreds-of-millions of dollars over many years (Millennium Challenge Corporation, n.d.).

The theme regarding the potential dangers of terrorism being caused by 'failing states' was continued by the Obama administration in the *2010 National Security Strategy of the United States* (Obama, 2010). The theory of failed states as a cause of terrorism is most recently reflected in the *2017 National Security Strategy of the United States* approved by the Trump administration, which states "the United States will also assist fragile states to prevent threats to the U.S. homeland. Transnational threat organizations, such as jihadist terrorists and organized crime, often operate freely from fragile states and undermine sovereign governments. Failing states can destabilize entire regions" (Trump, 2017, p. 39).

Rational Choice

Crenshaw (2003), Hoffman (2011), and Krieger and Meierrieks (2011), are key proponents of rational choice terrorism theory, where the use of violence to achieve political objectives is assessed to be primarily based on a rational cost-benefit calculation, with violence used against civilians when other avenues for achieving political ends are deemed unavailable or ineffective. There are many aspects or academic perspectives within rational choice theory regarding terrorism that relate the terrorists criteria to items such as economic, political, institutional, and even demographic factors (Hoffman, 2011; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011). When assumed to be 'rational actors,' terrorists make conscious and deliberate decisions regarding objectives, targets, and timing for the use of violence in order to maximize the utility towards the outcomes they desire (Sandler &

Enders, 2004). Unfortunately, as a tactic for achieving political objectives, violence targeted against civilians by terrorists has been shown to be very effective (Hoffman, 2011).

The aspects of rational choice for the use of violence within the field of international relations and political science is traditionally derived from state-on-state theory (Crenshaw, 2003; Hoffman, 2011, Jackson, 2008). The 'rational' factors used to influence the actions of states fall into numerous categories (Drezner, 2011; Pouliot, 2016). Diplomats use demarches and other forms of official statements of protest to highlight problems and build diplomatic pressure (Pouliot, 2016). Sanctions are also leveraged to bring economic hardship and therefore coercive influence to bear to alter the cost-benefit calculation and influence behavior (Drezner, 2011; Roehrig, 2009; Seliktar, 2011). Military actions are also a form of 'coercive diplomacy' to compel changes in state behavior (Jakobsen, 2011; Wilner, 2011). Examples of the use of these types of coercive tools in the terrorist context are numerous, at least where the U.S. has tried to alter other states rational cost-benefit calculus regarding the sponsorship or use of terrorism (Crenshaw, 2003). Examples include: U.S. military attacks in 1993 against Iraq following its attempt to assassinate President George H. W. Bush during his visit to Kuwait; severe economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran when its involvement in the 1996 Khobar Towers attack was revealed; and the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 following the 9/11 attack, when the Taliban refused the U.S. ultimatum to hand over Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda fighters (Crenshaw, 2003; Seliktar, 2011 Seliktar, 2011; Tarzi, 2005).

As with nation-states, when rational decision theory is applied to terrorist groups, similar cost-benefit calculations can be observed (Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Sandler & Enders, 2004). As rational actors, terrorist use violence directed at both state institutions as well as against civilian targets in order to maximize the political and societal impacts to achieve particular goals and objectives (Crenshaw, 2003; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011; Sandler & Enders, 2004). The factors used by individual terrorists and terrorist groups span numerous elements, including economic, political, institutional, and even demographic or ethnic criteria, however, while all of these play a role, it remains difficult to apply single motivational models broadly to explain or predict violent acts by terrorists (Sandler & Enders, 2004). Rationality regarding terrorists use of violence appears focused, and although terrorists do move beyond narrow self-interest in some cases, the use of terrorist violence remains a calculated tactical act with the goal of achieving strategic goals (Caplan, 2006; Frey & Luechinger, 2004). This view of rationality leads some to conclude that counterterrorism policies that aim to reduce the potential benefits of the use of violence against civilians rather than attempting to increase the cost of its use may be more effective within the rational act theoretical frame (Frey & Luechinger, 2004; Sprinzak, 2000; Victoroff, 2005).

There is a range of both qualitative and quantitative research that provide insights into rationality as it relates to terrorism. A large body of evidence indicates that terrorists are rational individuals who consciously use violence against civilians to achieve objectives (Abrahms, 2008; Shughart & William, 2011). While terrorism can be considered a tactic, it has a well-recognized strategic affect (Chenoweth et al., 2009;

Shughart & William, 2011). It has been shown that the use of terrorism by individuals is undeniably rational from both a 'means-ends' sense as well as for how it is employed (Abrahms, 2008; Littler, 2017; Shughart & William, 2011). Individual or collective terrorist groups manage tradeoffs between obtaining the resources and the amount of damage or death inflicted, whether from a bombing, a shooting, or running people down with trucks (Abrahms, 2008; Chenoweth et al., 2009; Littler, 2017). Terrorists have also been shown to be adept at dealing with defenses or countermeasures, finding 'safe havens' from which to arm and train, and maneuvering through or around police or security forces in order to reach civilian targets (Phillips, 2009; Shughart & William, 2011).

Rationality as a component of motivation is central if terrorists themselves and the death and destruction they inflict are to be deterred in any meaningful way by states (Crenshaw, 2003; Kallberg & Thuraisingham, 2014; Miller, 2013). Deterring terrorism is extremely difficult, if not impossible, if a baseline of the potential motivation is not well understood (Crenshaw, 2003; Kallberg & Thuraisingham, 2014; Miller, 2013). One area of particular interest for understanding rationality and motivation is that of suicide terrorists – those individuals or groups that knowingly plan to kill themselves in the conduct of their terrorist attack (Hoffman & McCormick, 2004; Pape, 2003; Van Um, 2011). It is this area where researchers struggle to find analytic explanations, especially since research indicates that terrorist groups that employ suicide operations gain more by way of political concessions that those groups that don't use it as part of attack operations (Hoffman & McCormick, 2004; Pape, 2003).

Opposing views in research regarding ‘rational choice’ theory as a cause of terrorism typically are based on the extreme complexity of the environment, or even biased subjectivity by the observer, in defining what is actually ‘rational’ (Hewitt, 2003; Nalbandov, 2013). Some studies content that true rationality may or may not be determinable in the conduct of terrorist attacks, and that studies that indicate otherwise are inherently biased (Jackson, 2008; Nalbandov, 2013). Rationality may also be situational dependent or change dynamically from time to time depending on the influence of multiple, competing priority variables (Nalbandov, 2013). Some research indicates it may be psychological factors, even mental illness, that causes what is deemed ‘irrational’ terrorist attacks (Corner & Gill, 2015; Merari, 2010). Research findings indicate, for example, that a high prevalence of mental health disorders exists for some ‘lone-actor’ terrorists, which contradicts the notion that terrorist are ‘normal’ (Corner, Gill, & Mason, 2016; Weenik, 2015). These and other research findings contend that select behavioral aspects or cues regarding individual terrorists can be profiled, and possibly serve as predictors of impending violence (Gruenewald, Chermak, & Freilich, 2013; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014). Others claim these types of profiles cannot be usefully leveraged at the individual level, only generally across groups or organizations (Gill, Horgan, & Deckert, 2014).

In some respects, the ‘rational choice theory’ for describing the cause of terrorism underpins many of the theories discussed previously (Hewitt, 2003). Each of these theories represent different frames or potential decision criteria that influence or drive terrorists’ decisions, whether it be religion, poverty, lack of education or opportunity,

political ideology, or repression or persecution (Berman, 2004; Betts, 2002; Byman, 2007; Crocker; 2003; Frum & Perle, 2003; Hamre & Sullivan, 2002; Huntington, 1996; Newman, 2006; Richardson, 1998 & 1999; Sterling, 1981; Tandon, 2000). Evidence of senior leaders and policymakers assuming various forms of 'rational choice' theory as a driver of terrorism exist across many of the policies, programs, and pronouncements highlighted in previous sections. Counter narrative campaigns against Islamist religious messaging that justifies violence assume religion is the motivating rationality (Aly, 2013; Holtmann, 2013). Many development, reconstruction, and stabilization programs by the U.S. government are allocated in the context of alleviating poverty and despair, assuming to influence the rational decision criteria of terrorists (Acosta, 2015; Aldrich, 2014; Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005; Krasner & Pascual, 2005; Sterman, 2015).

Group Dynamics

Kuzner (2007), Piazza (2006, 2007), and Berrebi (2009), have outlined key aspects of group dynamics terrorist theory, where individual perspectives, influencers, and motivations due to inter-group relationships and interactions underpin decisions for the use of violence against civilians for political ends. This approach has legacy analytic roots in social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity theory is based on the concept that people define themselves in terms of their relationships to others and to social groups (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It is membership within a social group that is a primary influence of how an individual views context, the value criteria that is used for assessing situations, and selection of available choices for final decisions (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Huddy,

2001). Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) stated that people need to belong, judge their group in contrast with other groups, which serves as a reinforcing commitment to both the group as well as to self-identity. This group commitment and solidarity is of particular importance during conflict (Melucci, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The greater the perceived differences between the groups in the eyes of the individual, as well as how potential threats to the group are perceived, determines the intensity of the conflict (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Huddy, 2001; Melucci, 1995).

Applied to terrorism, group dynamics as a motivator for violence is usually in the context of a reaction to a perceived threat to a group (Berrebi, 2009; Wright, 2015). In this sense, the use of violence is 'justified' to right a perceived wrong, whether for pure revenge, or as a means of defense, or in a broader attempt to achieve a better or stronger position for the group (Fischer, Haslam, & Smith, 2010; Ginges & Atran, 2009; Wright, 2015). Group dynamics theory plays a central role to many in defining the 'radicalization' process' (Doosje et al., 2016; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Doosje et al. (2016) and others generally break this down into three primary steps, all of which are closely linked to perceived impacts to a 'group.' First is the sensitivity or grievance phase, where injustices are observed, and resentments are built up (Borum, 2011; Doosje et al., 2016; Klandermans, 2014). Second is the membership phase, where resentment transitions into collective solidarity with an identified movement or organization (Doosje et al., 2016; Klandermans, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Silke, 2008). Finally comes the action phase, where resentment, combined with membership, leads to action, which can span efforts from simple resistance to more serious confrontations or attacks (Borum,

2011; Doosje et al., 2016; Klandermans, 2014). As such, group radicalization for whatever the cause is based on growing extremes of identity, belief, commitment, and behavior in support of what in the end is conflict or violence between identifiable groups (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Kuzner, 2007; Strelan & Lawani, 2010). Whatever way the group is quantified and defined, it serves within the group dynamic frame as the underlying basis for understanding and explaining terrorism, what Piazza (2006) defines in his 'social cleavage theory.'

There is a body of research that provides both qualitative and quantitative evidence for group dynamics being a cause of terrorism. Analysis of terrorists' statements, narratives, and post-attack interviews provides keen insights into terrorists perceptions, motivations, and the impact of group dynamics (Altier, Horgan, & Thoroughgood, 2012; Bartlett & Miller, 2012). As such, the use of terrorism has been demonstrated to be a 'social' phenomenon, with individuals motivated by their status within a particular group, as well as how they perceive their fellow group members view them individually (Bartlett & Miller, 2012; Simi, Bubolz, & Hardman, 2013). The sense of self and identity within the 'in group' influences behavior and decision making, with terrorist groups showing significantly higher motivational factors when compared to non-terrorist groups (Gunning, 2009; Smith, 2008a; van de Linde & van der Duin, 2011). The group dynamic is also shown to be influenced by how individuals view themselves in the context of being in an 'out group' as well, and this view also contributes to the intensity of the 'in group' motivation (Bohorquez et al., 2009; Desmarais & Cranmer, 2013; Smith, 2008a). Group dynamics even play a role with what are termed 'lone wolf'

terrorists, where even self-identified communities of interest or belief absent actual group membership or interaction has been repeatedly shown to be a factor in the justification for terrorist violence (Spaaij, 2010).

There is broad research related to understanding group dynamics theory as a primary cause of terrorism, and opposing research views are few (Murdoch, 2016). Within the psychological community there are those, however, who urge caution (Murdoch, 2016; O'Hara, 2007). While they will agree that there is solid research evidence that group dynamics play a role in radicalization and even the use of terrorist violence, they also point to other dynamics that influence individual behaviors (Hulme, 2014). As demonstrated in earlier sections, there is a large body of research that provides evidence that other possible contributing factors, such as poverty, globalization, racism and discrimination, even climate change impacts, can influence how individuals view their situation, referred to by some as psychological literacy, being determinate for cost-benefit criteria that drive how they make decisions (Hulme, 2014; Banyard & Hulme, 2015). Those researchers who appear to oppose viewing group dynamics as a primary driver of terrorism seem less concerned with the concept of group dynamics itself than they are with the potential misunderstanding or bias in research that may attempt to oversimplify the situation or context within the terrorist's environment (Murdoch, 2016; O'Hara, 2007). To these researchers, inaccurate or misguided psychological knowledge about an individual terrorist or larger terrorist group may be worse than a lack of psychological literacy, as it would bias the research results just the same (Hulme, 2014; Murdoch, 2016; O'Hara, 2007).

Evidence of senior leaders and policymakers articulating aspects of 'group dynamics' theory as a driver of terrorism exist across many of the strategies, policies, and programs, highlighted in previous sections. The most recent U.S. National Security Strategy, published by the Trump Administration in 2017, still highlights "transnational threat organizations" posing a serious threat to the United States, along with Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea (Trump, 2017, p. 39). This document acknowledges that America continues to wage war against jihadist terrorist groups, such as ISIS and al Qaeda, and that the threat from these groups will continue for the foreseeable future (Trump, 2017). This language continues the strategic theme articulated by the Obama Administration, which also highlighted the threats to the U.S. and its interests due to terrorists, their organizations, networks, and affiliates (Obama, 2010). The 'Global War on Terror' initiated under President George W. Bush in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks was focused on Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda and its affiliates (Bush, 2002b). President Bush also put in place a policy structure to identify and counter 'Foreign Terrorist Organizations' in Executive Order (EO) 13224 (U.S. Department of State, n.d.f.). EO 13224 provides a means to disrupt financial support networks for terrorists by formally designating terrorist organizations and then blocking the assets of foreign individuals who are members of the designated entity (U.S. Department of State, n.d.f.). Under EO 13224 there are currently 65 separate groups designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) by the U.S. State Department, clearly indicating that groups are viewed by the U.S. government as playing a central role in terrorist violence (U.S. Department of State, n.d.g.).

Conceptual Constructs That Influence Perspectives on Terrorism

This section adds a third lens, specifically a conceptual framework, to the literature review from which to help understand why individual policymakers may have particular perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism. First, individual factors related to policymakers' background, education, training, or experiences may be found to influence their perspectives on the causes of terrorism towards a particular theory. Social cognitive theory (Bandura 1989, 2001, & 2011) and cultural theory (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Douglas, 1985; Wildavsky, 1987) have both been used to describe, assess, and understand factors that influence how individuals view their surroundings, ascribe context to events, weigh select criteria, and make decisions. Insights from both these theories may help provide a conceptual construct to understand individual influence relative to the phenomenon of interest.

Second, assessing individual perspectives within the context of unique organizational bureaucracies might also explain particular influences or biases that may help in understanding particular alignment of an individual policymaker's views with a specific theory regarding the cause of terrorism. Specific organizational theories may therefore provide additional perspectives from which to view and understand the phenomenon. Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), groupthink theory (Janis, 1971; Janis, 1972), and the organizational processes model (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999), may also be applicable as conceptual constructs for understanding organizational influence on policymakers views regarding the causes of terrorism. The

underlying academic elements of each of these theories are briefly outlined in this section.

Social Cognitive Theory

Developed by Bandura (1989, 2001), the foundational element of social cognitive theory is that individuals learn by observing others. Behaviors that are learned, whether due to self-efficacy, positive reinforcement, or placement within specific environmental settings, become central to an individual's personality over time (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy is driven by the individual's beliefs in their ability to complete the replicated task or effort successfully (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2001). The attempted task is reinforced overtime when the task is recognized in a positive manner (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2001). The specific environmental setting of the individual provides repeated examples for correct behavior, a social context for positive recognition and reinforcement, and even appropriate social support and materials (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Learning within the social cognitive theory construct is motivated through processes such as the setting of goals, evaluations of progress, value judgements, social comparisons, and achievement of objectives (Bandura, 2011; Schunk & Usher, 2012). All of these structures and processes operate interactively as determinates that serve to influence, shape, and mold individual perspectives over time (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

There are research results where social cognitive theory has been applied to public sector employees. Self-efficacy has been demonstrated to be enhanced where public employees are given clear goals, offered training, coached and mentored during the

performance of tasks, and given evaluation feedback on their progress towards achieving an assigned objective (Latham, Borgogni, & Petitta, 2008; Rehg, Gundlach, & Grigorian, 2012). The impacts of positive reinforcement of individual actions overtime, through such mechanisms as coaching, mentoring, and recognition of performance, is another element of social cognitive theory that has been shown to positively motivate public sector employees (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2015; Latham et al., 2008; Wright, 2004). The environmental settings, or organizational context and culture, can also provide strong motivations to the unity of effort and execution of public service (Taylor, 2014). Over time, these environmental or organizational structures fundamentally shape how public employees react to situations, building a disciplined context for influencing individuals within organizational practices and performance effectiveness (Salas, Rosen, & DiazGranados, 2010; Taylor, 2014). While this research is not directed specifically at the counterterrorism policy environment, the general lessons from applying social cognitive theory research may help provide useful insights for understanding why U.S. government employees working in counterterrorism policy may view terrorism and its causes in particular ways.

If as according to Bandura (1989, 2001, 2011) perspectives and behaviors of individuals are shaped through their learning by observing others, then the analysis of what individual U.S. policymakers believe is the primary cause of terrorism can be informed by including participant questions that help put their views in context of their social environment. Their longevity within an organization, or their self-identification

within specific groups (e.g., professional, academic, political, religious, social), may provide useful insights for understanding the phenomenon under study.

Cultural Theory

First articulated by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), the primary perspective that underlies cultural theory is that individuals use a cultural lens, or filter, from which to view situations. This cultural lens provides a particular 'worldview' that influences not only how situations are perceived, but also impacts decisions made in response to situations (Douglas, 1985; Wildavsky, 1987). Cultural perspectives are shaped over time through people's socialization and daily interactions in two primary dimensions, which Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) called the 'group' and 'grid' dimensions. The 'group' dimension sets up the boundaries between 'us' and 'them,' or in the in-group and out-group, and defines the criteria for interactions, whether positive or negative, between various groups (Douglas, 1985; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Wildavsky, 1987). The 'grid' dimension sets up the conditions by which individuals interact within the groups to which they belong, including the in-group constraints as well as freedoms for social behavior and interactions groups (Douglas, 1985; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Wildavsky, 1987). Since culture is the primary, foundational element that defines these group and grid interactions, according to cultural theory there can be no individual perceptions absent a cultural framework (Douglas, 1985).

Looking at individual and societal challenges through a cultural perspective is not new and is recognized within the research community as falling under the constructivist's paradigm (Bigo, 2008). The application of the tenets of cultural theory in national

security policy has a classical legacy, with the writings of Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz, leveraged by those teaching military strategy to demonstrate the moral and physical attributes necessary to success in conflict (Lantis, 2009). It is also evident in the 'clash of civilizations' approach outlined by Huntington (1996). Beyond just conflict studies, cultural implications for broader public administration is also recognized as both a challenge as well as an opportunity (Bigo, 2008; Durodié, 2017; Tansey & O'riordan, 1999; Wright, 2015). It is used in the positive sense to help build a sense of community (group) that can influence motivation towards achievement of collective goals (Durodié, 2017; Tansey & O'riordan, 1999). In contrast, it can also be a negative factor, driving wedges between communities, particularly related to ethnicity, that can cause fear and distrust, which are also clearly demonstrated as powerful influencers and motivators to action (Tansey & O'riordan, 1999; Wright, 2015). There are academic examples of this cultural perspective applied in the counterterrorism policy area (Coaffee, 2006; Mythen & Walklate, 2006). Research shows that how terrorism is framed can have significant implications for how counterterrorism strategies are developed and applied, and a narrow cultural lens can be an overly simplistic construction when used to understand terrorism (Coaffee, 2006; Mythen & Walklate, 2006).

As with social cognitive theory, aspects of cultural theory as outlined by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) can be applicable to understanding why particular U.S. policymakers view the causes of terrorism the way that they do. Research questions that solicit how policymakers view culture, their own as well as others, may assist in viewing responses regarding terrorism in context. Cultural awareness, whether through an

individual's background, exposure to other cultures besides their own, even foreign travel, may help provide valuable context regarding individual policymaker's views on terrorism and how they might perceive the best approaches to addressing the terrorism challenge.

Resource Dependency Theory

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) developed resource dependency theory, which has been used to define and understand the cultures and constraints of organizations developing and implementing policy options. With theoretical roots in power dependence relations by Emerson (1962), resource dependency theory is premised on the foundation that external resources of organizations both bound and influence their activities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Since organizations depend on resources, they are the ultimate source of their structure, functions, operations, and power (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Since rarely do organizations control every aspect of their required resources, they are dependent on, and interconnected with, other organizations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Successful business executives and managers are those who understand the linkages between criticality and scarcity, with the critical resources being those that the organization must have to function (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Resource dependence theory is not just relevant to the private sector, and its effects on the nonprofit sector have also been studied (Carroll & Stater, 2008; Kerlin & Pollak, 2011; Ruggiano & Taliaferro, 2012; Sowa, 2009). Scholars argue that it is one of the main reasons nonprofit organizations have become more commercialized in recent times, with increasing competition between private and nonprofit sector, nonprofits are

using marketization techniques to compete for resources (Carroll & Stater, 2008; Kerlin & Pollak, 2011; Ruggiano & Taliaferro, 2012; Sowa, 2009). The principles of resource dependency theory also apply to the public sector and government organizations as well, where for example at the U.S. federal level, resources are authorized and appropriated by Congress and managed by and through various Federal departments and agencies (Kraft & Marks, 2011; George, 2017; Marvel & Marvel, 2008; Seidman, 1998).

Resource dependency theory has been leveraged across a wide spectrum of organizational research. It has been used in assessing the effects of reorganizations on companies and non-profits (Kerlin & Pollak, 2011; Seidman, 1998). In addition to research on private and public-sector organizations, resource dependency theory has also been applied in the international environment as well (Brechin & Ness; Ren, Gray, & Kim, 2009). The impact of resource dependency on executive or employee training, learning, and development, in order to address particular company challenges, is also well researched (Akrofi, 2016; Macagno, 2013; Menon, 2012). Aspects of leadership, including for senior executives, board members, managers, and team leaders, has also been analyzed by researchers through the lens of resource dependencies (Chen, Treviño, & Hambrick, 2009; Terry, 2015; Vandewaerde et al., 2011; Yar Hamidi & Gabrielsson, 2014). Beyond addressing those in leadership or management of organizations, understanding the decision-making factors and processes of general employees has also been reviewed through aspects of resource dependency theory, including on how these individual decisions impact broader organizational initiatives (Drees & Heugens, 2013; Huse, 2008; Nemati et al., 2010; Nienhüser, 2008). Finally, understanding potential

organizational influences on policy development has also leveraged resource dependency theory, addressing how government can offset or augment organizations ability to diversify across their resource base (Rivas, 2012; Sun, Mellahi, & Wright, 2012)

U.S. government departments and agencies depend on resources obtained in order to function. The U.S. Congress serves as the resource provider to federal public institutions, with financial resources distributed and overseen through the annual authorization and appropriation process. As such, key elements of Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependency theory can directly apply to U.S. government policymakers, and Congressional resource constraints may influence executive branch decision making, including in counterterrorism. Research questions that solicit individual knowledge regarding their own organizations counterterrorism authorities can help provide insights into whether individual perceptions on the cause of terrorism might be influenced by the authorities and tools available in the policymaker's organizational environment.

Groupthink Theory

Many non-academics may recognize the term 'groupthink' from George Orwell's (1950) classic fictional tale of the dystopian future, and it was further highlighted by Whyte (1952) as 'rationalized conformity' where the values of the group become inherently right and true precisely because it is the group's position. Within the academic community, however, it is Janis (1971, 1972, 1982, 1989) who refined the concept and further developed it as groupthink theory as a lens used to define and understand individuals functioning within bureaucracies that limit policy development and evaluation of options. Janis defines groupthink as a psychological phenomenon where

individuals in a group setting faced with a collective challenge drive to build harmony and consensus, while at the same time minimizing in-group conflict and suppressing dissent (Janis, 1972, 1982). Individuals in the group unconsciously (or are pressured consciously) to avoid identifying alternative options to the group for fear of being outside the norm (Janis, 1972, 1982). This can result in decisions that do not consider critical alternatives or viewpoints, blinding the group to potential disastrous consequences (Janis, 1972, 1982). In his original work on groupthink theory, Janis used a case study research approach to review several key foreign policy failures of the U.S. government, initially addressing the Roosevelt administration's failure to anticipate the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the Kennedy administration's Bay of Pigs disaster in 1961 (Janis, 1971, 1972). He subsequently analyzed the Johnson administrations policy for the Vietnam war from 1964-1967 and other foreign policy failures (Janis, 1982).

Groupthink theory is well known across the organizational research community. It appears routinely as both a theoretical and a conceptual framework in research seeking to describe and understand organizational dynamics, particularly the dynamics related to decision making processes. Growing out of how Janis first used the groupthink theoretical approach, much of this research is focused on decision making in international relations (Kertzer & Tingley, 2018; Morin & Paquin, 2018; Schafer & Crichlow, 2010). However, it has also been expanded to other non-public bureaucratic organizations (Klein & Stern, 2009; Lunenburg, 2010). Groupthink principles have been used extensively by researchers to analyze and assess numerous types of organizations beyond just the public sector, including across a wide variety of private business entities, as well as

organizations as varied as education, academia, health care, construction, etc. (Hassan, 2013; Klein & Stern, 2009; Lunenburg, 2010; Rose, 2011; Straus, Parker, & Bruce, 2011; Tuuli, Rowlinson, & Koh, 2010). Groupthink has helped organizational researchers understand dynamics due to an organization's size, age, culture, and diversity (Atiyah, 2016; Chung-An, 2014; Sahin, 2014). It is also of note that the particulars of groupthink theory are not always negative in the foreign policy environment, at least to some researchers (Monroy & Sánchez, 2017). Sometimes the group cohesiveness and concurrence-seeking tendencies that are key to groupthink tenants may also be useful for explaining successful foreign policy decision outcomes (Monroy & Sánchez, 2017).

Janis (1972, 1982) described three basic factors that lead to groupthink: overestimation of the group and its capabilities, closed-minded rationalizing of opposing options or warnings, and pressures toward uniformity and the illusion of unanimity. All of these basic factors have unique symptoms (Janis, 1972, 1982). These symptoms, should they appear during the interview phase of this research, can help explain why particular views by U.S. counterterrorism policymakers on the causes of terrorism may exist, especially where common themes or trends are observed within the differing U.S. government agencies that work in the counterterrorism environment.

Organizational Process Model

The organizational process model is one of three political decision-making models developed by Graham Allison (1969, 1971) in his assessment of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (the others being the rational actors model and the governmental politics model). The organization process model posits that existing governmental organization,

structure, and bureaucratic processes limits a nation's actions, often biasing the final policy decision outcome (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In many cases, decisions by individuals in government are typically constrained to the first proposed course of action that adequately addresses the issue, successfully achieves consensus, and best limits short-term uncertainty (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999). There are several key factors indicative in this model. First, leaders break challenges down into composite parts, usually along organizational lines within the bureaucracy, rather than deal with the whole challenge (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Second, the first course of action identified that satisfies the immediate challenge is usually selected, putting off longer term (and sometimes harder) solutions (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Third, due to time constraints during a crisis, preexisting structures and processes govern how the challenge is addressed, which can limit innovation and creativity in developing possible solutions (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999). Finally, and in a similar manner, decisions are also effectively limited to pre-existing plans and pre-developed responses (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999).

Allison's (1969, 1971) approach for understanding decision making is well known in the organizational research community (Guilhot, 2016; McConnell, 2016). The fundamentals of the organizational process model are used in a variety of studies as a key framework for understanding how foreign policy is made, particularly during crisis situations (Guilhot, 2016; McConnell, 2016; Redd & Mintz, 2013). Of particular note are the limitations imposed on decision makers by established bureaucratic structures and processes (Kuwashima, 2014; Schreyogg & Sydow, 2011). In some cases, processes are

demonstrated to be both rigid and entrapping, which are self-reinforcing in how they are used and implemented over time (Kuwashima, 2014; Schreyogg & Sydow, 2011). The data available to decision makers can also drive decision making into a particular process, or to a set of planned response options (Masha, 2014; Amason & Mooney, 2008). The processes used can also be very specific to, and limited by, the type of organization designated as the lead for option development by the interagency (Barbuto, 2016).

There are many modern examples of Allison's organizational process model being used to explain and understand perceived policy failures (Allison, 1969; Allison, 1971). These examples include the George W. Bush administration's decision-making process leading to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Mitchell & Massoud, 2009; Smith, 2008b). The Obama administration's decisions regarding the troop surge into Afghanistan in 2009 and the Libyan intervention in 2011 have also been assessed using the organizational process model (Blomdahl, 2016; Marsh, 2014). Other foreign policy environments, such as in southeast Asia between India and Pakistan, Japan's security policymaking, and even policy decision making in the European Union, have all been assessed using Allison's model (Allison, 1969; Allison, 1971; Chowdhury & Islam, 2017; Howe, 2010; Zahariadis, 2013). Allison himself applied his organizational process model in 2012 by assessing the U.S. policy towards Iran in the area of Obama administration efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon (Allison, 2012).

U.S. government departments and agencies depend on organizational structures and policy processes to address policy challenges, whether long-term and enduring or emergent or in a crisis. Therefore, Allison's (1969, 1971) organizational process model

can be useful in understanding perspectives of U.S. policymakers within the various departments and agencies that work counterterrorism policy. The individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism of these policymakers may be impacted by the organizational factors outlined by Allison (1969, 1971). These factors, such as sub-dividing the challenge among different organizations, or a focus on immediate versus longer-term solutions, or use of pre-existing options, lend themselves to tailored research questions to help provide contextual insights into individual study participant perceptions on the cause of terrorism.

Gap in Research

Insights into senior decision making relative to counterterrorism policy exist (Klaidman, 2012; Mann, 2012; Sanger, 2012; Wolff, 2018; Woodward, 2007; Woodward, 2011). The policy decision making by the George W. Bush administration in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, including the decisions to conduct military operations in Afghanistan and the subsequent invasion of Iraq in 2003, were addressed by well know authors (Woodward, 2007; Woodward, 2011). Several books provided interviews and insights into the workings of the Obama administration, covering critical foreign policy decisions related to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and the counterterrorism decision making surrounding drone strikes in Africa and the Middle East (Klaidman, 2012; Mann, 2012; Sanger, 2012). The latest example of such insight is that into the Trump administration following its first year in office (Wolff, 2018). While these sources may be based on first-hand accounts and contain rich detail, journalistic standards are not the same as those

necessary for a scholarly approach and do not use acceptable research methodologies (Kassop, 2013).

There is academic research into U.S. counterterrorism policies. Of particular interest is the policy for the use of drone strikes in Africa and the Middle East (Cronin, 2010; Desch, 2010). The policies for aggressively engaging threats posed by terrorists against Americans and U.S. interests were very similar between the George W. Bush and Obama administrations (Desch, 2010; Goldsmith, 2009; Jackson, 2015a; Pilecki, Muro, Hammack, & Clemons, 2014). These and other counterterrorism policies demonstrates empirical evidence of some consistency among the U.S. political elite regarding perspectives on terrorism over the last decade (Cronin, 2010; Cronin, 2013; Goldsmith, 2009; Stern, 2015). Most studies related to U.S. counterterrorism policy use historical archival research, or textual analysis from speeches, policy pronouncements, or policy documents, including little or no analysis of actual qualitative interviews of U.S. government counterterrorism policy experts (Jackson, 2011; Jackson, 2015a; Jackson, 2015b Pilecki, Muro, Hammack, & Clemons, 2014; Sageman, 2014).

There are research studies in specific areas of counterterrorism policy where interviews of government or military officials have been conducted. As an example, Jordan, Kosal, and Rubin (2016) conducted extensive interviews with U.S. government officials regarding views on counterterrorism policy, finding that ‘kinetic activity’ (i.e., military strikes against terrorist targets) is the predominant, sometimes default option. Interview data from government officials suggest that the Internet’s value to terrorists as a source of practical knowledge is overblown (Kenney, 2010). Current and former

military drone pilots who have participated in executing strikes against terrorists in Africa and the Middle East have been queried regarding their personal experiences (Bentley, 2018). Federal, state, and metropolitan police officials who work in counterterrorism programs have also been interviewed to understand their perspectives on the effectiveness of various counterterrorism initiatives (Nussbaum, 2012; Ortiz, Hendricks, & Sugie, 2007).

However, real questions still exist for scholars as to what factors influence the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies (Jackson, 2011; Krieger & Meierrieks, 2011). A gap in research existed at the intersection where academic theories meet the reality of individual U.S. government employees who develop, influence, and implement counterterrorism policy. Most studies related to this area use historical archival research and little analysis of actual field interviews (Sageman, 2014). Kassop (2013) suggested that scholars need to conduct detailed research, including collecting data from current and past government counterterrorism officials, to confirm and explain actual factors that may influence the decision process regarding counterterrorism policy more fully.

Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to examine in depth the academic research available to help frame the understanding of individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism of U.S. government policymakers who work in key U.S. government organizations that develop and shape counterterrorism policy, programs, and initiatives. This literature review first provided a baseline description of the policymaking process

within the U.S. government, focusing on particular implications to counterterrorism efforts. It then systematically addressed the key elements of *who*, *what*, and *why* that is necessary to fully understand the selected phenomenon of interest. The scope of *who* describes the four key organizations that are the focus of this study—State Department, Defense Department, USAID, and the NCTC—including details about their unique histories, organizational structures, cultures, roles, and responsibilities within the U.S. counterterrorism policymaking process. Several additional key outside influencers of U.S. policymaking were also described to provide additional context for this research—Congress, think tanks, lobbyists, and the media.

The *what* leverage six generally recognized theories used within academia to understand the causes of terrorist—religious ideology, root causes, state sponsorship, failed states, rational choice, and group dynamics—each of which contain a wide body of academic writing and research regarding their unique assumptions, underlying factors, and suggested approaches and tools for mitigation. These six theories provide the theoretical framework upon which is study is based. The broader issue as to *why* individual policymakers have particular perceptions regarding specific causes of terrorism provides the conceptual framework of this study. This conceptual framework leverages five theories recognized in academia for their applicability to understanding either individual or organizational influence on decision making—social cognitive theory, cultural theory, resource dependency theory, groupthink theory, and the organizational process model.

This literature review clearly demonstrates the research gap that exists at the intersection where academic theories on the causes of terrorism meets the reality of the actual perceptions of individual U.S. policymakers. Qualitative data collected from current U.S. government counterterrorism officials, particularly at the mid-to-senior levels of the career civil service, sheds important light on the actual perspectives that inform and influence the current decision-making process regarding U.S. counterterrorism policy. The nature of this study is therefore based on a qualitative research methodology, since it is a solid approach for exploring and understanding the meaning derived by individuals or groups associated with a social or human phenomenon. The next chapter describes in detail how a phenomenological research strategy of inquiry allowed the investigation, analysis, and understanding of these individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism and helped frame them within the broader context of individual or organizational influences.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand the linkages between theory and application, specifically the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. To address this gap, I used a qualitative approach through individual interviews and a participant questionnaire to analyze U.S. policymakers' perspectives within organizational cultures and assess the impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. The first section of the chapter provides an overview of the research design, including a rationale for why this type of research approach was selected for this study. The second section outlines the role of the researcher as the observer, which includes how potential researcher perspectives and biases were minimized and mitigated. The third section outlines the study methodology, including participant selection, the basis for instrument development and deployment, details regarding recruiting participants, the collection of qualitative data through individual interviews and a survey questionnaire, a detailed data analysis plan, and issues of trustworthiness, including ethical procedures. This chapter concludes with a brief summary and transition.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

To bridge the gap in knowledge by exploring, understanding, and explaining the perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism of professionals working in key U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations, this phenomenological research study addressed one central research question: To what extent do individual perspectives

on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views due to personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies, impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy? The following five subquestions were also considered, further amplifying the central research question:

SQ1: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories?

SQ2: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience?

SQ3: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations?

SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policymaking organizations?

SQ5: To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

Central Concept of the Study

Recommendations regarding U.S. counterterrorism policy are developed within the principal foreign policymaking organizations of the U.S. government's executive branch. Specific worldviews and diverse terrorism theories emphasize different fundamental approaches, activities, and tools necessary to achieve success in mitigating the threats posed by terrorism. Which theory regarding the causes of terrorism a particular policymaker or policy professional holds is influenced by personal experience,

including factors such as professional expertise, academic education, career progression, cultural awareness, and personal relationships. The effects of individual perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism may also be impacted when these views are not merely personal but are influenced by broader organizational cultures and bureaucratic structures that are reflected across institutions.

How personal factors and organizational cultures impact career policymakers' decision-making is unclear, with potentially significant implications for the development and implementation of U.S. national counterterrorism policies and programs. Incorrectly applying counterterrorism tools to address terrorism based on one theoretical frame could be ineffective and may exacerbate the terrorist problem if different organizations attempt to apply tools from conflicting theoretical frames simultaneously.

Research Tradition and Rationale

The nature of this study was a qualitative, which provided a solid approach for exploring and understanding the meaning derived by individuals or groups associated with a social or human problem (see Creswell, 2014). I explored individual counterterrorism policy professionals' worldviews regarding how they define the underlying causes of terrorism. A naturalistic approach associated with a social construction perspective provided an appropriate research design to focus on how individuals perceive the world and how they interpret meaning based on their experiences (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

A qualitative phenomenological research design allowed me to investigate, analyze, and understand policymakers' worldviews and potential organizational biases.

Viewing study participants both individually and organizationally, factoring in shared participant experiences, authorities, and resources, allowed me to observe unique bureaucracies and provided insights into the impact of the phenomenon on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

Role of the Researcher

My role in this study was to serve as an observer-participant conducting one-on-one interviews and administering queries and probes as necessary (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I also deployed a one-page survey questionnaire to each interview participant prior to the start of each data collection session. I had the sole responsibility for performing the study, including selecting participants, gaining and documenting their informed consent, conducting interviews, collecting and processing the data, analyzing the results, and preparing the findings. All participants were presented with the same interview questions and questionnaire, and I served as the sole instrument for obtaining their verbal and written responses (Knox & Burkard, 2009; Lavis, 2010). I leveraged my familiarity and experience with the topic to create a climate of familiarity that enabled participants to provide insightful and nuanced responses (see Moustakas, 1994).

I am a career member of the federal civil service and have worked for the U.S. government in various capacities for over 32 years, including the last 17 years in Washington, D.C. working in policy development and implementation in the area of counterterrorism. I actively participated in interagency policymaking during the last 15 years. This experience assisted me during individual interview sessions because I am

knowledgeable about policy processes, procedures, vocabulary, organizations, and bureaucratic interactions, which enabled me to develop trust and confidence with participants. There are benefits in selecting a topic or setting in which the researcher identifies and participates (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

I recognize that as a former member of the U.S. counterterrorism policy community I have a particular worldview and personal perspective regarding causes of terrorism, and that I may have had inherent bias in my role as a researcher. Care was taken to ensure balance and objectivity in the interviewing and data collection process. The bias risk was mitigated through several careful procedures, including recording and transcribing verbatim all interviews, and by using the same interview questions with limited and constrained probes with every participant. Given my background in the field, it was possible that some study participants knew about me, and some had worked with me in various official capacities related to policy topics. However, I did not have any relationship with participants outside of the standard work-related engagement or beyond the normal interactions conducted within the professional policy environment. I did, however, leverage my access, placement, and previous professional relationships across the interagency, which helped me recruit suitable participants.

Methodology

Participants and Selection Logic

The purpose of the study was understanding perspectives of current U.S. government policymakers working in key offices within the principal foreign policy organizations responsible for developing and implementing counterterrorism policy.

These include the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the National Counter-Terrorism Center. Although the names of participants were included as part of the data collection process, individual names were not included when transcripts were made from the recorded interview sessions. In addition, individual participant names were not recorded in the process of deploying and collecting the individual survey questionnaires. No participants are identified by name in this study. Themes and findings arising from the data analysis are only characterized based on organization, not individual names.

The participant selection criteria were individuals employed in one of the four U.S. federal organizations responsible for developing and implementing counterterrorism policy. The sampling for participants for interviews was not random but was targeted to include interested and cooperative employees with more than 8-10 years of government experience whose work included development and implementation of counterterrorism policies within these organizations. The criteria for exclusion were political appointees, because of their short-term experience within government.

The sample included participants from the four organizations that lead U.S. counterterrorism policymaking. Between six and eight individual interviews were conducted per organization, translating into 31 total participants across all four organizations. Although the broader policymaking entities of these organizations consist of 300-400 individuals each, those working specifically on counterterrorism policy is a subset within these policy organizations. I assumed that the sample of 31 participants would enable data saturation (see Mason, 2010).

Given my current position, I had unique access and placement to enable me to contact the subject counterterrorism organizations, identify and recruit participants, and collect the data. Participants were identified through a three-step process. In Step 1, I contacted former professional colleagues in each of the four organizations. This engagement was conducted in person so the scope and purpose of the research could be fully explained. Colleagues' advice was solicited in identifying the appropriate office managers or supervisors. Step 2 was contacting the identified office managers or supervisors to obtain permission to address them and their staff via e-mail to explain the scope and purpose of the research, build interest and cooperation, and recruit participants. Those interested then responded with their contact information, enabling follow-up engagement for scheduling individual interviews.

Step 3 was contacting the list of potential study candidates via e-mail using a study invitation template (see Appendix C) that was tailored to match details for each organization. Once suitable and willing participants for the study were identified, individual consent was then obtained to ensure transparency in how the information collected in the research project was to be managed. This consent required approval by the Walden University institutional review board (IRB). The Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-21-18-0545148. Informed consent was required from each study participant and was obtained in writing using a consent form template.

As a qualitative research project, it was difficult to predict exactly how many interviews and participants were required for this study to be statistically significant, since a standard used for quantitative research doesn't directly apply for qualitative

methods (see Baker, Edwards, & Doidge, 2012). For a qualitative research methodology, Baker, Edwards, and Doidge (2012) stress that researchers should solicit data from interviews until different answers to research questions are no longer received (Baker, Edwards, & Doidge, 2012). Some research suggests that saturation can occur in a typical qualitative research study within six to twelve interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The research goal of this study followed the concept that saturation occurred when the collection of new data did not add any additional input to the qualitative themes identified as part of this project (see Mason, 2010).

Instrumentation

Two researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first instrument was a series of structured but open-ended questions that relate to each of the five subquestions that amplify the central research question. The interview questions consisted of several questions to address each of the five research subquestions. The interview questions were deployed in a semi-structured manner, with probes used only as necessary to provide clarification to participant responses (Creswell, 2014; Knox & Burkard, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). Use of a semi-structured format for interviews allowed participants to respond to the questions in a full narrative based on their unique perspective and experience, and therefore did not limit responses to pre-determined answers (Knox & Burkard, 2009; Morse & Field, 1995). I conducted all interview sessions as the researcher in face-to-face settings, and all were fully audio recorded for later transcription and analysis (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

The second data collection instrument was a survey questionnaire that was also deployed to each interview participant. This secondary instrument collected information related to the participant's individual background (see Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). The questionnaire included information related to organization of employment, years of service, work experience (e.g., career field, amount of service overseas), scope of international travel, cultural awareness, level of education (e.g., level of degree(s), academic field), and level of religiosity. This secondary instrument provided broader context to assist in understanding the factors that lead to the development of individual worldviews and perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism due to individual or organizational influence (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

A small pilot study involving two participants was conducted prior to the formal data collection to assist in refining the interview questions and questionnaire (see Creswell, 2012). This pilot involved two professional peers from my organization's leadership and professional development office. The pilot study was used to determine whether the planned questions for the interviews were ambiguous, leading, or insufficiently open to address the fundamental aspects of the five research subquestions and the central research question.

Data Collection Plan

Rooms were arranged and scheduled at three of the four departments or agencies selected for this study within which the individual interview sessions were conducted. The rooms were all small conference rooms or training rooms, each with chairs as well as small, classroom type tables upon which the recording equipment was placed. Special

permission was obtained to use recording equipment. This wasn't problematic, as each of the departments or agencies identified had facilities already dedicated for the execution of professional development and training, or for public affairs interviews with the media. The recording equipment consisted of a laptop computer with an external microphone in order to enhance the quality of audio recordings. I operated this recording equipment in my role as the researcher, having successfully tested and deployed it during the pilot study discussed above.

The entire interview data collection occurred over a period of 13 weeks, from February through May 2019, with each of the four departments or agencies occurring on separate weeks. A week or two separated the interviews between organizations, allowing for the collation and management of the data recordings and survey questionnaires. Arrangements were made with each department or agency to conduct the individual interviews during normal work hours (i.e., 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) over two to three consecutive days. This minimized the impact on the organizations as well as simplified the data collection by the researcher. The average duration of each of the individual interview sessions was 30-45 minutes.

As expected, the existing pool of U.S. counterterrorism policy professionals within each of the four selected departments or agencies provided a robust pool of participants that were interested and willing to volunteer for the study. Office managers proved extremely helpful in recruiting a suitable number of participants from the organizations identified. Other than re-iterating the parameters and confidentiality of the consent agreement during each interview, no debriefings or exit procedures from the

study were conducted. There was no requirement for follow-up procedures or follow-on interviews with the participants.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan for this research consisted of two parts. First was the analysis of the transcript data collected from the individual interviews. The interview questions were divided into three general parts, each part consisting of a series of questions: individual perspectives, collective influences and biases, and inter-departmental similarities and differences. Each of the three parts were initially analyzed separately through qualitative methods, with results compared as appropriate. Transcript data from each interview session was organized by question and response, with each individual answer sentence coded for descriptive identifiers (i.e., first cycle), further coded for concept identifiers (i.e., second cycle), and then grouped by categories (i.e., third cycle) that emerged from the qualitative analysis. General themes were then identified (i.e., fourth cycle) and assessed, first within the parameters of each subresearch question (e.g., individual views on terrorism, potential individual or organizational influences) to identify analytic trends, with assessed similarities, differences, or gaps, identified for further analysis.

As discussed above, the sample size consists of six to eight individual participants within each organization, for a total sample size of 31 individuals. As planned, each individual interviews lasted on average 30-45 minutes, which translated into approximately 25 hours of recorded transcript data. The volume of data did not preclude

the use of a manual coding process, but the commercially available software tool *NVIVO 12* was also used to assist the qualitative analysis process.

Additional data was also collected from each participant prior to each interview through a short, written survey questionnaire. These questions, numbering 20, solicited background information, such as information related to education level and type, years of employment, work experience, amount of international travel or service overseas, cultural awareness, and level of religiosity. This quantitative data was collected and organized in a combined data set and analyzed using *IBM SPSS Statistics 25*. The quantitative data from the survey questionnaire was organized by organization (i.e., individuals were anonymized in the data set), and it provided context for the collected qualitative interview data. Use of the survey questionnaire assisted in a fuller understanding of the factors that lead to the development of individual worldviews and perspectives regarding the causes of terrorism, as well as organizational factors or biases, and other educational or experiential influence.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through the four standard factors described by Anney (2014), Bitsch (2005), and Shenton (2004). Regarding *credibility*, which is focused on the internal validity of this research, there is clear and credible alignment between this study's problem statement, research purpose, research questions, and methodology (see Anney, 2014; Shenton, 2004). This ensured that the qualitative data collected and analyzed actually addressed what was intended (Anney, 2014, p. 276). The use of multiple participants within a single organization, and then including participants

from multiple organizations, provided a level of triangulation that strengthened the analytic results and conclusions of this study (Toma, 2014; Tracy, 2010). For *transferability*, although individual study participants were not identified by name in this study, participants are appropriately described to sufficiently highlight their collective involvement in the development and implementation of counterterrorism policy. This demonstrated the specific context of the data collection and allows other researchers or readers of this study to be able to compare and contrast the analytic results with other relevant research studies (Anney, 2014, p. 276; Bitsch, 2005, p. 75; Shenton, 2004, p. 70).

To ensure *dependability*, strong data collection and management techniques were used throughout this process, including audio recordings of all interview sessions, documented transcripts from each audio file, digitally scanned copies of every survey questionnaire, demonstrating for subsequent research a level of confidence that a similar research project would yield similar analytic results (see Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Finally, *confirmability* was addressed through the research plan, demonstrating the manner in which interviews were conducted, the process and procedures used to collect and process the qualitative data, and logic used in the analysis of the data and development of findings and recommendations, mitigated risk of researcher bias tainting the analytic results (Anney, 2014, p. 279; Shenton, 2004, p. 72; Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392).

Ethical Procedures

Once participants for the study were identified, consent was formally obtained in writing to ensure transparency in how the information collected in this research was managed. Research did not proceed until formal approval by the Walden University IRB was obtained. In accordance with the highest standards of qualitative research methods, the identities, rights, and needs of each study participant were respected and protected (see Creswell, 2013). After IRB approval, each participant was fully informed of the objectives of the research in writing on the consent form and reminded verbally prior to the start of every individual interview session. The fact that study participation was voluntary was stressed, as was the fact that participation and interview responses would remain anonymous, with individuals only identified by a numeric participant code. A single digital master file linking individual participant names with their assigned numeric participant code was kept by the researcher on a single password-protected laptop, and this file was deleted once the requirements of the dissertation was completed.

Audio files from every interview was stored on the single password-protected laptop computer belonging to the researcher. The individual audio files were only identified by the participant code and were transmitted to the commercial online service REV for transcription into Word documents. At no time did transcript files identify a particular individual, neither in the file name nor in the document text. Each participant was also provided a digital copy of their respective transcript if requested, enabling them to review, verify, and approve its use in the research. Digital copies of all audio files were deleted once the requirements of the dissertation were fully completed.

The handwritten survey questionnaire data also did not identify a particular individual by name, but were only identified using the participant code discussed above. Each handwritten survey was scanned into an individual PDF digital file for storage, with hardcopies of the surveys destroyed once this scanning was completed. Data from these surveys was subsequently input manually by the researcher into a quantitative data set using *IBM SPSS Statistics 25*, where it was collectively stored, organized, and analyzed. All individual interview transcripts, as well as the digitally stored survey questionnaires, remain on the researcher's password-protected laptop for a period of five years as required by Walden University.

Summary

The methodology described in this chapter summarizes the research steps that were taken for data collection, organization, analysis, and protection, to enable research to understand the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. The qualitative approach described, informed by the collected quantitative survey questionnaire data, enabled well-grounded academic research into individual policymakers perspectives, within the context of organizational bureaucracies and cultures, to quantify impacts on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to understand the linkages between theory and application, specifically the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories regarding the causes of terrorism among professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. To address this gap, I used a qualitative approach through individual interviews and participant questionnaires to analyze individual perspectives within and across organizational cultures and to assess the impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. The research question addressed in this study was as follows: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views due to personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies, impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy? There were five subquestions that were used to amplify the central research question:

SQ1: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories?

SQ2: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience?

SQ3: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations?

SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policymaking organizations?

SQ5: To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

The first section of this chapter provides the analytic context, including the setting for the participants and organizations, key demographics of those interviewed, an overview of the data collected, and highlights from the data analysis process. The second section addresses trustworthiness through evidence of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The third section presents the study's results and provides a summary of the emerging themes from the data analysis. These results are then discussed in more detail, highlighting the observed themes for how terrorism is viewed, the potential impact of personal and organizational influences, commonality and differences across the interagency, and overall U.S. counterterrorism policy. This chapter concludes with a brief summary and transition.

Analytic Context

The analytic context includes the setting for the participants and organizations, key demographics of those interviewed, an overview of the data collected, and highlights from the data analysis process.

Setting

I conducted one-on-one interviews with study participants from four separate U.S. government organizations involved in counterterrorism policy in the Washington, D.C. area over a period of 13 weeks from February through May 2019. I used a semistructured interview format, including 11 standardized questions (see Appendix A) to enable study participants to describe their perspectives on a range of terrorism-related issues. To

provide a sense of familiarity, comfort, and privacy, I conducted the interviews at participants' respective home agency in small conference rooms. Interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, although a few went over 1 hour. Probes and follow-up questions were used sparingly to gather deeper insights and clarity on initial responses. Four interviews were conducted over the phone due to the unavailability of a suitable facility or the participant's inability to participate in a sit-down, face-to-face interview.

Each participant also provided data from a survey questionnaire that consisted of 20 questions (see Appendix B). These data provided broader individual-specific background information related to education level and type, years of employment, work experience, amount of international travel or service overseas, cultural awareness, and level of religiosity, which provided a broader context from which to analyze the interview data.

Demographics

A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to identify and recruit current U.S. government employees and military officers working in counterterrorism policy offices with at least 8-10 years of overall experience. Of the approximately 100 individuals contacted, 31 volunteered to participate in the study. Almost 70% were 40 years old or older, and more than 75% had worked for the federal government more than 10 years. Half had more than 5 years working counterterrorism policy. Three quarters of the study participants were male. The sample had a strong academic background, with over 80% having master's degrees, multiple master's degrees, or doctorates. A summary of study

participant demographics is shown in Table 1. The full demographic data set from the entire 20-question survey questionnaire is shown in Appendix D.

An overview of the organizational demographics is provided in Table 2. These data showed that 87% of State Department participants were older than 41 years, and almost 40% had served in the federal government more than 20 years. Half of the State Department participants (50% or 4 individuals) had doctoral degrees, almost 90% had been in more than 16 countries, and almost 40% had served in a foreign post for more than 10 years. For participants from USAID, 75% were older than 41 years, and 75% had a master's degree. The gender split in the USAID participants was 50/50; 75% had served in the federal government more than 10 years, and 25% had served in a foreign post more than 10 years. Within OSD, 56% were older than 41 years, and 85% had a master's degree. The gender split in OSD was 71% male, 28% female. For the Joint Staff, half of those participating were under 40 years, and more than 80% had one or more master's degrees. There were no women participants from the Joint Staff. Two thirds of the Joint Staff participants had been in more than 16 countries, and two thirds had been deployed overseas for more than 5 years. The full demographic data set from the entire 20-question survey questionnaire is shown in Appendix D.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with 31 participants. These included eight from the State Department, eight from USAID, two from NCTC and from within DoD, seven from OSD, and six from the Joint Staff. Each study participant signed a consent form and completed the one-page survey questionnaire. Interviews with the State Department

Table 1

Study Participant General Demographics

				DoD		TOTAL	
Category	**State**	**USAID**	**NCTC**	**OSD**	**JS**	**#**	**%**
Age Range							
20 to 30	1	0	0	1	0	**2**	**6.45**
31 to 40	0	2	1	2	3	**8**	**25.81**
41 to 50	5	2	1	1	2	**11**	**35.48**
51 to 60	2	4	0	2	1	**9**	**29.03**
>60	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**3.23**
Gender							
Male	7	4	1	5	6	**23**	**74.19**
Female	1	4	1	2	0	**8**	**25.81**
Education Level							
No College	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
BA/BS	2	0	1	1	1	**5**	**16.13**
MA/MS	2	6	0	6	3	**17**	**54.84**
Multiple MA/MS	0	1	1	0	2	**4**	**12.90**
PhD/JD	4	1	0	0	0	**5**	**16.13**
Years of Federal Service							
1 to 10	1	2	1	3	0	**7**	**22.58**
11 to 20	4	4	1	1	3	**13**	**41.94**
21 to 30	3	2	0	0	2	**7**	**22.58**
>30	0	0	0	3	1	**4**	**12.90**
Number of Countries Visited							
0 (None)	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
1 to 5	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
6 to 10	0	0	1	1	1	**3**	**9.68**
11 to 15	1	0	1	2	1	**5**	**16.13**
>16	7	8	0	4	4	**23**	**74.19**
Cumulative Years Living/Serving Abroad							
0 (None)	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
1 to 5	4	4	2	5	2	**17**	**54.84**
6 to 10	1	2	0	2	3	**8**	**25.81**
11 to 15	2	1	0	0	1	**4**	**12.90**
>16	1	1	0	0	0	**2**	**6.45**

Table 2

Organizational Demographics Results Overview

State Department Participants													
Age Range			**Gender**			**Education Level**			**Years of Federal Service**			**Years Living or Serving Abroad**		
Data	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**
20-30	1	**12.5**	Male	7	**87.5**	No College	0	**0**	1-10	1	**12.5**	None	0	**0**
31-40	0	**0**	Female	1	**12.5**	BA/BS	2	**25**	11-21	4	**50**	1-5	4	**50**
41-50	5	**62.5**				MA/MS	2	**25**	21-30	3	**37.5**	6-10	1	**12.5**
51-60	2	**25**				+MA/MS	0	**0**	>30	0	**0**	11-15	2	**25**
>60	0	**0**				PhD/JD	4	**50**				>16	1	**12.5**
USAID Participants														
Age Range			**Gender**			**Education Level**			**Years of Federal Service**			**Years Living or Serving Abroad**		
Data	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**
20-30	0	**0**	Male	4	**50**	No College	0	**0**	1-10	2	**25**	None	0	**0**
31-40	2	**25**	Female	4	**50**	BA/BS	0	**0**	11-21	4	**50**	1-5	4	**50**
41-50	2	**25**				MA/MS	6	**75**	21-30	2	**25**	6-10	2	**25**
51-60	4	**50**				+MA/MS	1	**12.5**	>30	0	**0**	11-15	1	**12.5**
>60	0	**0**				PhD/JD	1	**12.5**				>16	1	**12.5**
NCTC Participants														
Age Range			**Gender**			**Education Level**			**Years of Federal Service**			**Years Living or Serving Abroad**		
Data	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**
20-30	0	**0**	Male	1	**50**	No College	0	**0**	1-10	1	**50**	None	0	**0**
31-40	1	**50**	Female	1	**50**	BA/BS	1	**50**	11-21	1	**50**	1-5	2	**100**
41-50	1	**50**				MA/MS	0	**0**	21-30	0	**0**	6-10	0	**0**
51-60	0	**0**				+MA/MS	1	**50**	>30	0	**0**	11-15	0	**0**
>60	0	**0**				PhD/JD	0	**0**				>16	0	**0**

(continued)

OSD Participants

Age Range			Gender			Education Level			Years of Federal Service			Years Living or Serving Abroad		
Data	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**
20-30	1	**14.3**	Male	5	**71.4**	No College	0	**0**	1-10	3	**42.9**	None	0	**0**
31-40	2	**28.6**	Female	2	**28.6**	BA/BS	1	**14.3**	11-21	1	**14.3**	1-5	5	**71.4**
41-50	1	**14.3**				MA/MS	6	**85.7**	21-30	0	**0**	6-10	2	**28.6**
51-60	2	**28.6**				+MA/MS	0	**0**	>30	3	**42.9**	11-15	0	**0**
>60	1	**14.3**				PhD/JD	0	**0**				>16	0	**0**

Joint Staff Participants

Age Range			Gender			Education Level			Years of Federal Service			Years Living or Serving Abroad		
Data	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**	**Data**	**#**	**%**
20-30	0	**0**	Male	6	**100**	No College	0	**0**	1-10	0	**0**	None	0	**0**
31-40	3	**50**	Female	0	**0**	BA/BS	1	**16.7**	11-21	3	**50**	1-5	2	**33.3**
41-50	2	**33.3**				MA/MS	3	**50**	21-30	2	**33.3**	6-10	3	**50**
51-60	1	**16.7**				+MA/MS	2	**33.3**	>30	1	**16.7**	11-15	1	**16.7**
>60	0	**0**				PhD/JD	0	**0**				>16	0	**0**

participants occurred over three days (February 6, 7, and 12, 2019), and were conducted in small conference or training rooms in the Harry S. Truman building in Washington, D.C., the headquarters of the U.S. Department of State. Interviews with the USAID participants occurred over four days (March 14, 20, 21, and 22, 2019); seven were conducted in their library in the Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center, the headquarters of USAID in Washington, D.C., and one was conducted over the phone. Interviews with the two NCTC participants were conducted over the phone on April 22 and 26, 2019. Interviews with the DoD participants from OSD and Joint Staff occurred over four weeks (April 12 to May 10, 2019), and all but one were conducted in a small conference room in the Pentagon Library & Conference Center, located adjacent to the

Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense in Washington, D.C. One OSD interview was conducted over the phone on May 6, 2019.

Given my current position, I had unique access and placement that enabled me to contact the subject counterterrorism organizations, identify and recruit study participants, and collect the necessary data. Participants were identified and invited through a three-step process. In Step 1, former professional colleagues in each of the four organizations were contacted by phone, and the scope and purpose of the research were explained. Colleagues' advice was then used to identify the appropriate office managers or supervisors.

The next step was contacting the identified office managers or supervisors to obtain their permission to conduct the study within their organizational offices. First contact was made by phone to set up subsequent face-to-face meetings from which to explain the scope and purpose of the research. Permission from each office manager or supervisor was obtained via signed letters of cooperation. These were then submitted to the Walden University's IRB to obtain formal academic authorization to recruit and interview study participants.

Once formal IRB authorization was obtained, follow up phone calls or face-to-face meetings were conducted with each office manager or supervisor to alert them that staff recruiting was ready to commence, allowing them to shape how best to recruit participants from within their respective offices. For the State Department, USAID, and the Joint Staff, office managers or supervisors had me prepare a group recruiting email which they then forwarded to their own staff on my behalf. For OSD, office managers or

supervisors provided me a list of names and contact information for me to e-mail directly from among their staff to recruit participants. My recruiting e-mails leveraged the template shown in Appendix C, with minor deviations to personalize it for individuals and organizations. Participants then responded directly to me via e-mail or phone indicating their willingness to participate.

Recruiting at NCTC posed a challenge. Office managers were contacted directly, and while supportive, none were willing to sign a letter of cooperation. Their referrals to the NCTC public affairs office ended with no follow through, and numerous attempts to gain support and approval failed. A follow up recruitment plan for NCTC was subsequently developed and approved by the Walden University IRB, authorizing me to contact NCTC employees directly outside of business hours. Eight NCTC employees were contacted by phone, but only two were willing to volunteer to be participants.

Once volunteers for the study were identified, interviews were scheduled using both phone and e-mail. Scheduling emails included the consent form, survey questionnaire, and instructions regarding the conduct of the interview. Prior to the start of all interviews, the consent form was reviewed, and a signature obtained, the completed survey questionnaire (at Appendix B) was collected, and the basics of the interview recording was reviewed. The audio recording then started, and the interviews were conducted using the questions shown in Appendix A. Upon completion of the interview, the audio recording was terminated, and the participant thanked. Audio files were uploaded to the commercial transcription service REV at the end of the day, resulting in interview transcriptions in MS Word file format being received within 12 to 24 hours. A

"thank you" e-mail (shown at Appendix C) was sent to each participant within one to two days of the interview, with a digital copy of the audio transcription MS Word file attached for those participants who had requested a copy be provided.

Although the venue for interviews changed by organization, basic parameters remained the same, either using a small conference or training room that enabled private, one-on-one discussions, or having a private, one-on-one phone conversation. No unusual or unexpected circumstances were encountered in the data collection process.

Data Analysis

In completing the goals of this phenomenological study, the analysis of data collected was critical in understanding the perspectives of current U.S. government policymakers regarding the causes of terrorism and the impacts on the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. Data analysis was conducted in four specific phases. First was the *preparation phase* to prepare the raw data, in the form of recorded audio files, to a format enabling qualitative analysis (see Patton, 2014; Richards & Morse, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Audio files were transcribed using REV, a web-based commercial transcription service, which converted the audio MP4 digital files into Microsoft Word documents (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). These Word documents were then organized in two formats for later analytic processing: individual interview files, maintained in file folders corresponding to the organization of the participant; and individual question files, where all the interview responses for every participant within each organization for each interview question were combined into a single narrative file.

This phase also included the conversion of data results from the individual survey questionnaires into a dataset created using the *IBM SPSS Statistics 25* software tool. Creation of this dataset was done manually. This dataset enabled broader context from which to analyze the collected qualitative interview data, which assisted in deeper understanding of factors related to participants' perspectives on the causes of terrorism, including organizational factors or biases, and other educational or experience-related influence.

Second was the *coding phase*, which was done manually using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets organized by participant, their organization, and interview question. The first coding pass on the data reviewed the text from every interview in detail (see Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016; Yin, 2011). Key words and phrases from each of the 11 interview questions were identified and recorded in the Excel spreadsheet. In the second coding pass, identified key words and phrases across participants within specific organizations for each question were reviewed and refined, resulting in the identification of specific categories to summarize or generalize first coding pass results (see Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016; Yin, 2011). The third coding pass addressed identified categories, pulling out noted themes for each of the interview questions, structured within organizations (see Richards & Morse, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Saldaña, 2016). The fourth coding pass focused on the interview question files, where, as discussed above, all the participant responses within a single organization were blended and combined into a single narrative file.

Third was the *review phase*, where analysis moved above the individual data and codes and focused exclusively on categories and themes identified within organization for each interview question (see Richards & Morse, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). Using the *NVIVO 12* software tool, identified categories and themes from the manual coding process outlined above were further reviewed to highlight particular word counts, as well as assess word linkages and associations. This additional analysis was performed leveraging the capabilities provided by *NVIVO 12*, using the combined narrative files created for each question, which were organization based. This further analysis reassessed and refined identified categories and themes highlighted in the manual coding process described above (see Richards & Morse, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). Categories and themes were modified as necessary to accommodate the additional analytic insights identified through the use of *NVIVO 12*.

Fourth and finally was the *results phase*, where themes identified for each of the three research subquestions were presented as the analytic interpretation of the research findings to increase understanding into the perspectives of current U.S. government policymakers on the causes of terrorism and impacts on development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. These results are presented in the analytic results section that follows.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As outlined in chapter 3, trustworthiness was addressed through the four standard factors described by Anney (2014), Bitsch (2005), and Shenton (2004). How each factor was addressed and successfully achieved is discussed below.

Credibility

Regarding *credibility*, the internal validity of this research, there is clear and credible alignment between this study's problem statement, research purpose, research questions, and methodology, which was maintained throughout the course of the data collection and analysis process (see Anney, 2014, p. 276; Shenton, 2004). This ensured that qualitative data collected throughout the one-on-one interviews with participants, as well as the quantitative data collected via the survey questionnaires, fully addressed what was intended for this study (see Anney, 2014). The use of multiple participants within each organization, and including participants from across the multiple organizations, provided a strong level of triangulation that strengthened the analytic results and conclusions of this study (Toma, 2014; Tracy, 2010).

Transferability

For *transferability*, although individual study participants were not identified by name in this study, participants were appropriately described with a suitable level of detail to sufficiently highlight their collective involvement in the development and implementation of counterterrorism policy. This demonstrated the specific context of the data collection and allows other researchers or readers of this study to be able to compare

and contrast the analytic results with other relevant studies (Anney, 2014, p. 276; Bitsch, 2005, p. 75; Shenton, 2004, p. 70).

Dependability

To ensure *dependability* of the study, strong data collection and management techniques were used throughout this process, including audio recordings of all interview sessions, documented transcripts from each audio file, and digitally scanned copies of every survey questionnaire (see Anney, 2014, p. 278; Bitsch, 2005, p. 86; Shenton, 2004, p. 71). These actions demonstrate to future researchers a level of confidence that a similar research project would yield similar analytic results (see Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005; Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Finally, *confirmability* was addressed through the research plan, demonstrating the manner in which interviews were conducted, the process and procedures used to collect and process the qualitative data, and the logic used in the analysis of the data and development of findings and recommendations, mitigated risk of researcher bias tainting the analytic results presented in this study (Anney, 2014, p. 279; Shenton, 2004, p. 72; Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392).

Analytic Results

This study was designed to address a single research question: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views due to personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies, impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy? Five

subquestions were developed to amplify the central research question, and 11 specific interview questions were deployed to each participant to gain their individual insights and perspectives. The interview questions are shown in Appendix A, which also shows how these interview questions align within the five research subquestions. An overview of the qualitative themes observed by organization are shown below in Table 3, with a full list of detailed data categories and themes resulting from the results phase of the data collection process shown in Appendix E.

An overview of the key analytic themes that emerged is presented below, with views and quotes from specific study participants (e.g., 104, 302, 505) identified using the following numeric series structure in order to protect individual identities: 100's for the State Department, 200's for USAID, 300's for NCTC, 400's for OSD, and 500's for the Joint Staff. A comprehensive presentation of the detailed participant responses to every interview question from which the analytic themes emerged is also shown in Appendix F.

Themes Regarding How Terrorism Is Viewed

An individual's sense of *grievances* was the theme most expressed across the majority of participants as the primary cause of terrorism, especially from those within USAID, OSD, and the Joint Staff (204, 206, 208, 403, 404, 503, 505). Participants expressed numerous variations on this theme, and stressed that the sense of grievance could be due to many differing factors, such as perceptions over inequities in status (204, 406, 503, 505), housing (205, 207), or economic opportunity (105, 204, 406, 407).

Table 3

Summary of Qualitative Themes Observed

Interview Question	State	USAID	NCTC	DoD	
				OSD	JS
SQ1: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories?					
2. What do you feel are the primary causes of terrorism today?	Complex Depends	Marginalization Grievances Frustration	Personal- Motivation Individual- Factors	Grievances Ideology Need Purpose	Inequities Governance Grievances Ideology
1. How does the threat of terrorism equate to other threats to U.S. national security?	Important	Medium Overblown	Medium Not Existential	Not Existential Medium High	Medium
SQ2: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience?					
3. What has had the greatest influence on your own understanding regarding the causes of terrorism?	Reading Experience Living Abroad	Experience Reading Studying	Experience	Experience Living Abroad	Experience
SQ3: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policy making organizations?					
7. Have your own perspectives on the causes of terrorism been influenced by your organization?	Somewhat	Very Much	Not Much Somewhat	Definitely	*
6. How widely shared is your view regarding the causes of terrorism among others across your organization?	Generally	Very Well Fairly Well	Somewhat	Very Well Fairly Well Not Sure	Generally
SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policy making organizations?					
5. How well do you think your organization's counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism?	Generally Very Well	Very Well	Somewhat Incredibly Well	Very Well Not Much	Very Well Medium

(Continued)

Interview Question	State	USAID	NCTC	DoD	
				OSD	JS
SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policy making organizations?					
9. How well do you think counterterrorism policy professionals that you work with outside your organization understand the causes of terrorism?	Generally Very Well	*	Good Generally	Good	Generally Varied
10. How much common understanding regarding the underlying causes of terrorism do you see across the organizations who work counterterrorism policy?	Generally	Generally Somewhat	Somewhat	Generally	Generally Common View
SQ5: To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?					
4. How could the U.S. best address the threat of terrorism?	Consistency	Prevention	Less Strikes Via Partners	*	Via Partners Coalitions
8. How is your organization enabled or hindered by its existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?	Constrained Limited Hindered	Hindered	Both Adequate	Limited	Limited
11. How much do you think other organizations working counterterrorism policy are enabled or hindered by their own existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?	Imbalances Overlapping	Hindered Imbalances	Both Adequate	Hindered	Hindered Limited

* *Note*. No Emerging Theme Noted.

Participant 406 succinctly expressed this as overall "…disenfranchisement and feeling socially excluded, economically disadvantaged and politically disenfranchised in your community with no options," which open populations up to recruitment to terrorist groups and organizations. Participant 205 referred to broader forces that precluded normal options, a sense "…that there are forces that they can't change through the current system. The only way to really affect the change is to do something drastic."

Marginalization, whether due to race, ethnicity, language, location, etc., was also expressed by those interviewed (203, 206, 207, 405, 506) as causing perceptions of grievance. Several views were like participant 206, who expressed it as "…a sense of marginalization, lack of inclusion in the political system, grievances, whether they be individual or whether it's a group affinity type grievance, seems to be one of the major drivers." Lack of governance and personal security was also expressed (206, 406, 503) as being a major cause of grievance, particularly when combined with physical repression and arbitrary abuse or punishment threatening individuals' sense of safety (207, 402, 404). Participants discussed how these grievance factors lead to growing frustrations, a sense of helplessness, with limited options for improvement, leading in the views of a majority of participants to the consideration for, and use of, terrorist violence.

However, the view regarding perceived causes of terrorism was not unanimous. Of note were the views expressed by participants from the State Department, where the common theme noted (101, 103, 105, 107, 108) was the *complexity* of the problem set and its dependence on the unique situations due to local or regional dynamics. Responses were like that expressed by participant 101: "I think it's a really complicated process that

involves everything from economics, sociology, political circumstances, history. In some cases, it's not genetic, but family related." State Department participants also pushed back on the basic assumption of the question of terrorist causes itself (402 expressed this view as well), stressing instead that the complexities of the phenomenon of terrorist violence was set within an elaborate and dynamic structure of individual and family (106, 402), local (104), even regional dependencies (108). Participant 105 said "It's not just one or two factors that go into it. It's more complex than that…" One State Department participant (101) highlighted examples of extreme differences in terrorist behavior by siblings growing up in the same situation – one choosing a violent path with the other not.

The theme of *ideology* as a cause of terrorism was mentioned by five OSD and Joint Staff participants (401, 404, 501, 502, 504). A few others (105, 201, 207, 301) also mentioned the role of ideology in radicalization to terrorist violence. However, ideology was specifically challenged by several State Department participants as being overly simplistic an explanation regarding terrorism (101, 103, 107, 108).

Regarding perceived seriousness of the terrorism threat, views by participants varied. An observed theme that the overall threat of terrorism is *medium*, but definitely *not existential*, was noted in the commonality of responses by participants from USAID, OSD, and the Joint Staff (203, 205, 206, 207, 401, 403, 405, 406, 501 through 506). The view expressed by participant 203 was representative of others, who said terrorism is "Something to keep an eye on, but not something to be so consumed with that all of your resources flow in that direction." Both NCTC participants also agreed with this view

(301, 302). The outliers were again participants from the State Department, where a variety of perspectives were expressed, with no noted commonality of theme. Some (102, 107) viewed the terrorist threat as high, even existential, but others differed, with one (108) even having the perspective that the seriousness is "vastly exaggerated." This last perspective was shared by two participants from USAID (202, 208), who expressed the view that the issue is "well overblown."

Themes Regarding Personal Influences

The most common theme observed from participants regarding what influenced their own views regarding terrorism was that of *experience*. Responses were similar to that of participant 108, who said "Key to my views is the field experience I have had, I think…" Participant 208 expressed it in a similar manner: "I guess it's my lived experience. Interacting with people, both those on, what I would say are extremist spectrums, or people who have held extreme views on either side of it." However, the exact nature of experience was further qualified or refined by participants, who expressed additional details in numerous ways. The first refinement noted was that highlighting their *professional experience* serving in their official capacities, working foreign policy related portfolios across their careers (105, 107, 302, 401, 404, 406, 501). Participant 401 expressed it as: "Professional experience of studying terrorists and just being involved in the problem for so long, just that longevity of it…" A nuance on this theme was observed in responses from USAID participants, who identified their *travel experience*, specifically serving in overseas posts, which provided them rich cultural exposure through close interactions with local populations (202, 203, 204, 205, 206).

Another variation on the theme of experience was that of *living abroad* as having an identified influence on participants in how they viewed terrorism (102, 105, 108, 403, 405). Participant 405 talked about the lived experience: “I think it has to be living abroad and seeing it, being in these cultures. And living around the people who are fighting it kind of on the front lines is the biggest one.” In each of these cases, the participants had served overseas in conflict-prone areas and discussed how this experience living in areas experiencing terrorist violence influenced their perspectives. The responses from most the Joint Staff participants (502 through 506 but expressed as well by 201) also discussed how living abroad influenced their views regarding terrorism, although for each of them it was specific to their own combat experiences in the context of their deployments throughout their personal military careers. Participant 502 said: “I would say just my experience overseas deployed to environments obviously that are ripe for terrorist organizations because they lack security, because they lacked any sort of government, and a group.” This view was shared by Participant 504: “I think experience. Seeing it firsthand, …both in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

While not a common theme, several participants highlighted *experience from violence* as having a significant influence on how they view terrorism. Two (106, 207) related personal experiences related to the 9/11 attack that they said greatly influenced how they view terrorism. Two others (301, 401) highlighted other firsthand experience observing terrorist violence with greatly influencing their views on the topic. Two others (206, 402) related unique *childhood experiences* as having influenced their views on terrorism. One (206) discussed the experience of growing up poor in an economically

challenged region of the U.S., and how this provided unique insight and understanding into how stressed populations deal with their government. The other (402) talked about how growing up hearing his father and other Vietnam veterans talk about that conflict influenced how he looks at foreign policy, especially regarding conflict and terrorism.

Another lesser observed theme was the influence of *reading* on views regarding terrorism. This theme was observed in the responses from State Department and USAID participants (103, 107, 201, 205, but also 407). A couple of participants (104, 206) refined the theme of reading to that gained through their own academic study. References to the influence of reading was articulated in ways such as doing "…a lot of reading. I think just trying to be open to all of the opinions that are out there and being able to assess it together" (205). One (208) stressed their extensive personal interest and reading in the subject of history as having a large influence on their views regarding terrorism: "I guess, I'm a student of history, so that first and foremost as an amateur historian, I am able to take a long view where terrorism has always been part of the human condition…"

Themes Regarding Bureaucratic or Organizational Influences

Two distinct themes were observed regarding the influence of organizations on personal views of terrorism. On one hand were the views of 16 participants, who expressed the perspective that their views had *definitely* or *very much* been influenced by their organizations (102, 107, 201 through 208, 404, 405, 406, 501, 503, 505). The view expressed by participant 204 was common to many in this group, saying: "Yeah, I think how it got framed in my head with drivers, etc. It was definitely influenced by the agency because that was sort of the framework through which to process. So, I think that did

influence it a lot." This positive theme was also reflected in the number of participants (again, a total of 16) who felt their own views regarding terrorism were shared across their organization *very well* (102, 106, 202 through 206, 401, 402, 406, 501, 503, 505, 506). While these two groups did not overlay exactly one-to-one, the overlap between these two views was significant (i.e., 11 of the 16 participants).

Two interesting discrepancies within this theme were noted, with participant 203 stating their views were shared with fellow career civilian coworkers, but not with their political leadership. Participant 204 expressed a generational difference, with a common view among younger employees, but not as much common view with their older colleagues. Three from OSD (403, 405, 407) were *not sure* whether their own views regarding the causes of terrorism were shared among their colleagues.

In contrast was the theme by many of the other participants (a total of nine) that there was *not much* perceived influence on their individual views on terrorism resulting from their organization, or at most only *somewhat* of an influence (101, 103, 104, 105, 301, 403, 502, 504, 506). Participant 105 thought external factors were more important: "My initial reaction would be to say, it's probably more shaped by external factors than internal factors." In a similar manner, participant 301 answered this question with: "Not much, no. I feel I actually brought more from the outside based on my personal experience than what I gained from the bureaucratic experience." From the broader perspective, 11 participants also had the more negative view that their own views regarding terrorism were only *somewhat* or *generally* shared among their colleagues (101, 103, 104, 107, 108, 201, 206, 207, 302, 502, 504). Only one participant (301) said

that their views regarding terrorism were definitely not shared across their organization: "I do not believe they share my view very much."

These views regarding the influence of their organization on their own perspectives were set within the general context that their coworkers understand the causes of terrorism *very well*, a view expressed by a majority (19 total) of participants (102, 105, 107, 201 through 208, 302, 401, 402, 403, 406, 502, 504, 506). Seven felt their colleagues *generally* understood the causes of terrorism (101, 103, 104, 106, 407, 501, 503). There were only three participants (403, 404, 505) who had a divergent view, that being their counterterrorism policy colleagues did *not well* understand the causes of terrorism.

Themes Regarding the Interagency

An overall positive theme emerged from study participants regarding their perceptions on the level of understanding on the causes of terrorism by their interagency colleagues. A total of 15 participants had the perception that their counterterrorism policy colleagues across the interagency understand the causes of terrorism *good* or *very well* (102, 106, 107, 201, 207, 301, 302, 401, 402, 405, 406, 407, 501, 503, 505). Many of these perspectives were like that expressed by participant 407: "I think there's a lot of folks that do have a good understanding." Several, like participant 207, expressed perspectives that their interagency colleagues had extensive understanding on the causes of terrorism – "The level of knowledge, expertise, and also tolerance in the community is really striking, and I think is underappreciated outside of the community." Nine additional participants had the view that their interagency colleagues had a *general*

understanding (101, 103, 104, 105, 201, 204, 205, 208, 502). These views were very similar to how participants assessed the level of understanding regarding terrorism among colleagues within their own organization. The outlying, divergent views regarding their interagency colleagues were expressed by several USAID colleagues, but not as a specific theme. Participant 203 said they didn't know, and participant 204 had the perspective that the level of understanding varied across organizations. Participant 206 felt things were improving over time.

Another theme emerged that indicated study participants had the overall impression that there is a common level of understanding regarding the causes of terrorism amongst their interagency colleagues. A total of 11 study participants expressed perceptions that there is *generally* a common understanding across the interagency regarding the causes of terrorism. (104, 106, 201, 202, 203, 404, 405, 406, 502, 503, 504), with two additional (301, 506) expressing that there was *somewhat* of a common understanding across the interagency. Participant 401 stated this as "I think there's symmetry, it's not bad," which was a view expressed by many. Several others in this group expressed it like participant 404: "I mean I think on a macro level, yeah, I mean people realize that these are incredibly complex problem sets…" The noted divergent views were from Joint Staff participants, two of whom also expressed perspectives that a common understanding is not there (501, 505), or the view expressed by participant 504, who felt that counterterrorism policy professionals are just fatigued after dealing with the challenge for 18 years: "I think people are at fatigue. I'm not sure there's much else we can do that we aren't already doing."

Themes Regarding U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

Unlike the areas discussed above, no common theme emerged on the topic of how the U.S. could best address the threat of terrorism. Responses from study participants were extremely varied on this topic, both within and between organizations. Only within USAID was there some internal commonality, with five of the eight respondents (202, 204, 205, 206, 208) expressing *prevention* activities being among the best ways to address the threats posed by terrorism. A few, such as participant 101, spoke in generalities: "I think the best way to deal with it, is to be aware that it's not a one size fits all kind of thing." Participant 401 highlighted terrorism as a condition to be managed, not a problem that could ever be solved. "We can get to a point where it is a condition we've mitigated, it's a condition that we can live with, but…it's probably not something [we can eliminate completely]." Participant 406 said the U.S. approach should be much less that what it's been doing: "Maybe we should take a more backseat, hands off approach by empowering and supporting the local governments… I feel like the U.S. should take a less prominent role in the counter terrorism programming that it's doing, and that's on all fronts."

Regarding organizational empowerment, whether their own or their view of other entities, the overwhelming theme was U.S. organizations are *constrained, limited*, and *hindered*, by existing authorities and available resources in their ability to address terrorism. This negative theme of constraint or hinderance was observed in a total of 26 study participants, making it the predominate perspective across the board (101 through 108, 201 through 208, 401 through 407, 501, 502, 505). Comments such as the following

were typical responses. “So, [resources are] totally inadequate to take anything to scale…” (from participant 202). “But you know, you can always do more with more…” (from participant 203). Participant 208 felt their full potential is hindered: “So it means that we’re never able to truly meet our potential in this space because it’s under resourced.” Participant 404 said: “I think we’re largely hindered from engaging effectively.”

However, there were a few outliers from this last theme. Both NCTC participants (301, 302) felt their organizations and others in the interagency had *adequate* authorities and resources. A few Joint Staff participants also shared this divergent view, with three respondents (503, 504, 506) reflecting that their and other organizations are *not hindered* in their efforts to address terrorism.

Summary

The first section of this chapter provided the analytic context of this research project, including a review of the setting for the participants and organizations addressed, highlighting key demographics of those interviewed. It also provided an overview of the data collected and summarized the data analysis process. The second section addressed trustworthiness, highlighting the demonstrated evidence of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The third section presented the study’s analytic results, first by restating the research question, and then providing a summary of the emerging themes from the data collection interviews of study participants. These results were then discussed in greater detail, highlighting the observed themes for how terrorism is viewed, the potential impacts of personal and organizational influences, commonality and

differences across the interagency, and overall U.S. counterterrorism policy. The final chapter presents the study's analytic findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to understand the linkages between theory and application, specifically the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. I used qualitative methodology, including individual interviews and data from participant questionnaires, to analyze individual perspectives within and across organizational cultures and to assess the impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. Unlike other studies related to this area, which included historical archival data and little analysis of field interviews (Kassop, 2013; Sageman, 2014), this study included insights provided by current government counterterrorism officials to address their views on the causes of terrorism and their reflections on the factors that influence their decision-making process regarding counterterrorism policy development.

In addressing the primary research question and its five subquestions, the following key findings were observed. First was the predominance among study participants of root causes theory as the primary cause of terrorism. Second was personal experiences are a dominant influence in views on terrorism. Third was perspectives regarding organizational influence on participants' views of terrorism varied by organization. Fourth, participants viewed their colleagues as well versed in the causes of terrorism. Finally, individual views had a minimal impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

The first section of this chapter provides the interpretation of the key findings. The second section addresses the limitations of the study, which is followed by a series of recommendations, including areas that would benefit from further research. Potential implications of the research are then reviewed, including areas in which this research can influence positive social change in the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. Final reflections on the study are then presented. The chapter closes with an overall conclusion to the research project.

Interpretation of the Findings

Qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews, supported by analysis of data gathered from the survey questionnaire, resulted in five key findings. These findings are set within the broader context of *who*, *what*, and *why* for understanding the selected phenomenon of interest defined by the research question: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism among U.S. policymakers, and the possible influences on these views due to personal factors, organizational cultures, and interagency bureaucracies, impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

The *who* was a static baseline purposely selected as the target of this research, including four primary organizations in the executive branch of the U.S. government responsible for developing and implementing counterterrorism policy: the State and Defense Departments, USAID, and NCTC. The first key finding addressed *what* U.S. policy professionals think causes terrorism. The next three key findings addressed *why* based on policy professionals' personal experiences, bureaucratic cultures, or interagency

similarities and differences in views. The last key finding addressed how these factors impact U.S. counterterrorism policy.

Predominance of 'Root Cause' Theory Perspectives

The first subquestion of this study was the following: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories? This issue was the foundational baseline of this entire study, which is why it appeared at the beginning of the main research question and all five of the research subquestions. The theoretical framework of this research (primary theories on the causes of terrorism) was the lens through which the emerging themes from the study participants were interpreted.

One finding from this study was that most study participants viewed grievances as the primary cause of terrorism. Participants reported that these grievances could be due to many factors, such as inequities in status, housing, or economic opportunity. Marginalization was also mentioned, as was lack of governance, personal security, repression, and arbitrary abuse or punishment by the authorities. Participants discussed how these grievance factors lead to growing frustrations, a sense of helplessness, and limited options for improvement, causing affected individuals to consider and then resorting to terrorist violence.

The emerging theme that grievances, due to chronic inequities, marginalization, repression by authorities, lack of recourse, and overall helplessness, are the primary cause of terrorism aligns with the fundamental elements of root causes theory (see Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000). Root causes theory as it relates to the motivations of terrorism stresses key underlying factors related to economic, educational,

demographic, and political issues as the fundamental reasons individuals use violence to achieve political objectives (see Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000). In addition, participants' identification of arbitrary actions and physical abuse by government military or security services and a lack of opportunities for betterment or advancement as key factors among the grievances further aligns with root causes research by Betts (2002), Feldman (2009), and Krueger and Malecˇkova´ (2003).

The view of grievance being the primary cause of terrorism was not unanimous, however. Some participants expressed the complexity of the problem set and its dependence on the unique situations due to local or regional dynamics. These participants discussed how complex dependencies are usually set within an elaborate and dynamic structure of individual, family, local, and regional dependencies. This view regarding the causes of terrorism aligns with group dynamics theory described by Berrebi (2009), Kuzner (2007), and Piazza (2007), in which individual perspectives and influences due to intergroup relationships underpin decisions for the use of violence against civilians for political ends. Within group dynamics theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) discussed how individuals need a sense of group belonging and judge their group in contrast with other groups. These types of group commitment and solidarity are of particular importance during conflict and have been shown to be a powerful motivator to violence (Melucci, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

This finding provides unique research-based insights into the views on the causes of terrorism among current U.S. counterterrorism policymakers. The finding extends knowledge within the academic community, as called for by Kassop (2013) and Sageman

(2014), who highlighted the need for researchers to collect data from current and previous U.S. government officials regarding their views on terrorism, moving beyond textual or narrative-based analysis of official U.S. policy speeches and documents. Insights that policymakers view grievances as a primary cause of terrorism, which aligns with root causes theory, and that differences in views also exist, namely aligning with group dynamics theory, provided for a better understanding of how U.S. policymakers shape and implement counterterrorism policy.

Personal Experiences Are a Dominant Influence in Views on Terrorism

The second research subquestion of this study was the following: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience? Participant perspectives regarding personal experience were viewed through the conceptual framework of this study to understand how individuals view their surroundings, ascribe context to events, weigh select criteria, and make decisions. Notable among these theories that address the role of individual factors as influences on decision-making are social cognitive theory (Bandura 1989, 2001, 2011) and cultural theory (Douglas, 1985; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Wildavsky, 1987). Key aspects of these theories were reflected in participants' perspectives regarding the influence of their experiences on their views.

Data analysis indicated that participants' views regarding terrorism are significantly influenced by their personal experience. One important factor mentioned by many participants was professional experience serving in their official capacities and working on foreign-policy-related portfolios throughout their careers. Another factor

reported was travel experience, specifically serving in overseas posts or on deployment, which provided participants with cultural exposure through close interactions with local populations. Finally, the experience of living abroad was also highlighted by study participants as having a significant influence on how they view terrorism, especially those who had served overseas in conflict-prone areas.

Study participants' identification of professional experiences as the primary influence on their perspectives regarding terrorism aligns within the social cognitive theoretical framework. Developed by Bandura (1989, 2001), the foundational element of social cognitive theory is that individuals learn by observing others. Behaviors that are learned, including those from placement within specific environmental settings, are central to an individual's personality and perspectives over time (Bandura, 1989, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). The data collected from the survey questionnaire (see Table 1 and Appendix D) showed the length of service among the study sample. Almost 70% were 40 years old or older, and more than 75% had worked for the federal government more than 10 years. More than 50% had worked in counterterrorism policy for more than 5 years. Taylor's (2014) research regarding social cognitive theory demonstrated that organizational context and culture provide strong motivations to the unity of effort and execution of public service. Over a period of time, the work environment and organizational structures shape how public employees view and react to situations (Salas et al., 2010; Taylor, 2014). These factors were demonstrated in my participants' description of the importance of their personal experiences in how they view the causes of terrorism.

Participants in the current study also highlighted the role of travel (i.e., personal and business) and living abroad as key elements of their experience influencing their views on terrorism, a finding that directly aligns within cultural theory. As articulated by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), the primary perspective that underlies cultural theory is that individuals use a cultural lens, or filter, from which to view situations. This cultural lens provides a particular worldview that not only influences how situations are viewed, but also impacts how decisions are made in response to situations (Douglas, 1985; Wildavsky, 1987). The additional data collected from participants via the survey questionnaire (see Table 1 and Appendix D) demonstrated the significant cultural awareness among the study sample. More than 80% of study participants assessed their cultural awareness at High or Expert, with 75% having been to more than 15 countries, 50% having lived abroad more than 5 cumulative years, and almost 20% having lived abroad more than 10 years. Almost 75% speak one or more languages. Research by Coaffee (2006) and Mythen and Walklate (2006) showed how terrorism is framed by individuals, which has significant implications for how counterterrorism strategies are developed and applied. An overly narrow cultural lens can result in an overly simplistic construction when used to understand terrorism (Coaffee, 2006; Mythen & Walklate, 2006). A lack of cultural awareness was not observed in the current study's sample.

This finding provides unique research-based insight into the importance of personal experience as a key influence on U.S. policymakers' views of terrorism. Elements from social construction theory and cultural theory are present in their views, given their rich descriptions of their working experience within the federal

counterterrorism policy community, or more broadly from their extensive travel or experiences living abroad in areas plagued by terrorist violence. This research filled a gap in academic knowledge by demonstrating the importance of personal experience as an influence on how the causes of terrorism are viewed and addressed.

Regarding Organizational Influence, It Depends

The third research subquestion of this study asked – To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations? Participant perspectives regarding organizational influence was viewed through the conceptual framework of this study to understand how individuals view their surroundings, ascribe context to events, weigh select criteria, and make decisions. Three organizational theories were used to shed insights into participants views: resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), the organizational processes model (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999), and groupthink theory (Janis, 1971, 1972).

The finding from this research is that views by participants regarding organizational influences on how they perceive the causes of terrorism depends on the organization. Two distinct, conflicting themes were observed regarding the potential influence of organizations on personal views regarding terrorism. On one hand, 50% of participants had the perspective that their views had been influenced by their organization. This group entailed all the participants from USAID and half each from the OSD and Joint Staff. Most of these participants also had the perspective that their own views regarding terrorism were shared across their organization. On the other hand, 30%

of the participants, half from the State Department and half from the Joint Staff, expressed perceptions that their individual views regarding terrorism had not been influenced by their organization. With a few additions, this same cohort also expressed the perspective that their own views regarding terrorism were only somewhat shared among their colleagues.

In addition to the expressed benefits of experienced colleagues and ability for recurring foreign travel, USAID participants also had the view that their organization provided the framework from which they view the terrorism problem. Many specifically referred to the 'prevention framework,' discussing their organization's efforts to get ahead of possible causes of terrorism with vulnerable populations. In this sense, this perspective is reflective of the organization process model, since the stated prevention framework by so many participants indicates it is inherent in USAID's structure and programming processes (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Kuwashima, 2014; Schreyogg & Sydow, 2011). A well-established organizational structure can overly focus on particular responses and can be self-reinforcing in how they are used and implemented over time (Kuwashima, 2014; Schreyogg & Sydow, 2011).

These participants didn't articulate this prevention framework was specifically limiting. However, other responses to interview questions indicated they (as well as the majority of all participants) did feel strongly that their organization's efforts were hindered by both authorities and resources. Perceptions regarding bureaucratic limitations are indicative of not only Allison's (1971) organization process model, but also that of resource dependency theory premised by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978). The overwhelming

commonality in the views by participants that their organizations are fundamentally hindered in their activities, both due to authorities and appropriations from Congress, aligns within the foundational element described by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), where external resources of organizations both bound and influence their activities, functions, and operations.

Only within USAID participants was an organizational alignment apparent, with perspectives their organization did influence their employees' views regarding terrorism. While 30% of the participants expressed the perception that their individual views regarding terrorism had not been influenced by their organization, this view was not expressed by a majority from any other organization, being shared by half of the participants from the State Department and the Joint Staff, respectively. These views run counter to the elements of both Allison's (1971) organization process model and Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependency theory. There is no apparent analytic reason for these differences in views regarding organizational influences from the participant interviews or the collected survey data. The entire participant sample indicated similarities in length of service, with 75% having worked for the federal government more than 10 years, and more than 50% working specifically in counterterrorism policy for more than 5 years (see Table 1 and Appendix D).

The level of data collected from the interviews and the survey data does not appear to be sufficient to reasonably determine whether elements of Janis' (1972, 1982) groupthink theory can be applied to the observed results regarding organizational influences. As discussed above, there seemed to be correlation within the participant

cohort who expressed the perspective their organization had influenced their views regarding terrorism, feeling that their views were shared with colleagues within their organization as well. In contrast, the cohort who didn't have perspectives of organizational influence also didn't assess their views were shared with colleagues. In neither of these cohorts was any data observed indicating whether participants were unconsciously or consciously pressured to modify their views, which is the underlying element of the groupthink theory described by Janis (1972, 1982).

These findings regarding presence of organizational influence provides research-based insight into the views of U.S. counterterrorism policymakers. The only observed organizational alignment occurred within the participants from USAID, who were part of the 50% of the study participants expressing the perspective that their views had been influenced by their organizations. These views appear in alignment with key elements in both the organization process model and resource dependency theory (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The other 30% of participants, however, had differing views, with perceptions their organization didn't have influence on their views of terrorism. This research demonstrates a continued gap in knowledge regarding the presence of, and details regarding, organizational influence on U.S. counterterrorism policymakers, requiring further academic research.

Participants Think Their Colleagues Understand Terrorism Well

The fourth research subquestion of this study asked – To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policymaking organizations? Participant views on the causes of terrorism are the

foundational baseline of this study and are discussed in detail in the first research finding above. However, the purpose of this research subquestion was to gain insight into participants' views regarding the level of perceived understanding of terrorism, both within their own organization as well as more broadly across the interagency. The finding from the data is clear that most participants view their colleagues working counterterrorism policy, both within (83%) and without (75%) their own organization, as having a very good understanding of the causes of terrorism. This result was consistent across all the organizations included in this research, with no organizational-unique dynamics or discrepancies noted.

As discussed previously, the view most prevalent across participants was that of grievances being the primary cause of terrorism, a view that aligns with the fundamental elements of root causes theory (Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000). This perspective was not unanimous, however. Some participants expressed the overall complexity of terrorism, being dependent on unique local or regional dynamics, a perspective that aligns with group dynamics theory (Berrebi, 2009; Kuzner, 2007; & Piazza, 2007). Regardless of these results, 83% of study participants expressed the perspective that their colleagues within their own organization had a general or more understanding of the causes of terrorism. Looking across their colleagues in their interagency partner organizations, there was just a slightly lower response, with 75% expressing the view that their interagency colleagues had a general or better understanding of the causes of terrorism.

Derived from responses from interviewing participants within the primary U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations, this finding provided unique research-based insights into how they view their colleagues understanding of the causes of terrorism. These results extend knowledge within the research community interested in counterterrorism policy issues and implications. As called for by Kassop (2013) and Sageman (2014), the results provide a greater understanding of how U.S. policymakers view and interact with their colleagues in developing and implementing counterterrorism policy.

Individual Views Have Minimal Impact on U.S. Counterterrorism Policy

The fifth research subquestion of this study asked – To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy? The finding from this research indicate policymakers' individual views do not appear to impact in any meaningful way the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policy. This finding is based on the view by participants that their own organization, as well as their partner organizations across the interagency, are constrained, limited, and hindered in their ability to address terrorism by existing authorities and available resources. This perspective was observed from 83% of participants, making it the predominate perspective across the board.

This finding appears independent of observing elements of both root causes theory (Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000) and group dynamics theory (Berrebi, 2009; Kuzner, 2007; & Piazza, 2007) in participants' perspectives on the causes of terrorism. The overwhelming view of organizational constraint among

participants also reflects key elements fundamental to both the organizational processes model (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999), and resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

This finding confirmed fundamental elements of both Allison's (1971) organizational processes model and Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependency theory, adding unique research-based insights into how counterterrorism policymakers view their organizations ability to adequately address terrorism being hindered and constrained. The results of this study extend knowledge within the research community interested in counterterrorism policy issues and implications.

Limitations of the Study

Two potential limitations that might have impacted the trustworthiness of this research were presented in Chapter 1. First was the scope of the participant pool to enable a suitable sample from which to determine meaningful perspectives from across the primary counterterrorism policymaking organizations in the U.S. government. Second was the acknowledged researcher self-perspectives and possible biases on the subject being studied.

The only unexpected limitation to this study was the number of participants recruited from NCTC. While generally supportive, none of the NCTC office managers contacted were willing to sign a letter of cooperation. Subsequent referrals to the NCTC public affairs office ended up with no follow through, despite numerous attempts. As subsequently approved by the Walden University IRB, I contacted NCTC employees directly outside of business hours in an attempt to get them to volunteer to participate.

Eight NCTC employees were individually contacted by phone, but only two were willing to volunteer to be participants. Insights provided by these two NCTC volunteers were valuable, but the lack of the planned six to eight participants precluded meaningful extrapolation of qualitative results for NCTC.

There were no additional unexpected limitations to the study. I conducted the rest of the study recruiting and interviews as planned, and I had no indication of any limits to the trustworthiness of the participants. Potential researcher biases were carefully managed through the deliberate and structured steps taken in the manner in which questions were developed, how interviews were conducted, the process and procedures utilized to collect and process the data, and the analytic logic used to analyze the results. These steps, and the rigorous analytic development of findings and recommendations, sufficiently mitigated the risks of researcher biases from tainting this research.

Recommendations

This study was conducted to fill the gap in knowledge regarding the factors influencing the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies (Jackson, 2011; Kassop, 2013; Sageman, 2014). Moving beyond historical archival research, this study incorporated qualitative data collected from current government counterterrorism officials regarding their perspectives on the causes of terrorism and the factors that influence their decision processes regarding counterterrorism policy. Even with the analytic findings outlined above, several recommendations for future research arise as a result of this study.

First, although this research found a predominance of root cause theory perspectives (Betts, 2002; Lake, 2004; Newman, 2006; Tandon, 2000) among the counterterrorism policy officials across the four key U.S. executive branch departments or agencies, it is recommended that additional qualitative research would expand the body of knowledge and provide further insights. Detailed research focusing within each of the four organizations that were the focus of this study, including policy professionals with other functional or regional expertise, would expand understanding on how terrorism and its causes are viewed within and among other offices or bureaus. Particular perspectives within the participants from the State Department, namely views aligning with group dynamics theory (Berrebi, 2009; Kuzner, 2007; Piazza, 2007), might provide further insight into how policy professionals working in the diplomatic service view terrorism and its causes. Future researchers might also leverage an expanded data sampling approach, using broader quantitative techniques, such as a detailed survey instrument to a larger participant pool, to enable deeper statistical and trend analysis. This type of expanded research would help broaden academic understanding and confirm the research findings made in this study.

Second, while this study showed that personal experiences are a dominant influence among U.S. counterterrorism policy officials in their views on terrorism, findings regarding organizational influence were not as clear. Therefore, additional research that specifically focuses on organizational factors, such as described in resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and the organizational processes model (Allison, 1971; Allison & Zelikow, 1999), might articulate key organizational factors

within or between U.S. policymaking organizations. A qualitative approach focusing solely on gaining insights into how policymakers are influenced in their views of terrorism over time, using either a broader series of interview questions, or even a longitudinal study of a selected group of participants within a particular organization over a period of time, would provide broader and deeper understanding into the impacts of organizations on employees views. Other organizational influence theories might also be utilized, such as groupthink theory postulated by Janis (1971, 1972), as highlighted in this study, or other relevant theories. Future researchers might also leverage a broader quantitative research technique, leveraging a survey instrument to a larger participant pool, to provide further statistical and trend analysis. This type of expanded research would assist filling the continuing gap in knowledge regarding organizational influence on how U.S. policymakers view the causes of terrorism.

Third, one of the findings of this study indicated individual views on the causes of terrorism have minimal impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy. Participants in this study expressed the overwhelming view that their ability to influence their organizations policies and programs to counter terrorism are constrained, limited, and hindered by existing authorities and available resources. This finding is worthy of additional research to confirm its validity. It is recommended that additional qualitative research build upon this study in order to further understand these perspectives. Research could focus on a deeper understanding of whether these perceived constraints are due to factors related to authorities or appropriations. This study used a phenomenological strategy of inquiry to gather insights from study participants. Future researchers might leverage a similar

approach, or use other techniques, such as a qualitative case study methodology focused on a particular counterterrorism program or activity, or a broader narrative research approach, using focus groups to gather deeper insights into how policymakers view limitations in developing or implementing counterterrorism programs. Additional data collection and research analysis could help shed further insights into this topic.

Fourth, one of the acknowledged limitations of this study was the lower number than planned of participants from the intelligence community. While the intelligence community is not a policymaking organization, it is keenly involved in the policymaking process, including for counterterrorism. The views of intelligence analysts, such as those who work at NCTC, are important to understanding how counterterrorism policy is developed and implemented. It is therefore recommended that further research be conducted into the perspectives of NCTC and other intelligence professionals regarding how they view the causes of terrorism, and what may or may not influence their perspectives. Current or previous government employees of the U.S. intelligence community conducting research for higher academic degrees may be better positioned, given their placement and access within the intelligence community, to understand both the processes required and receive the necessary approvals to collect either qualitative or quantitative data and conduct rigorous research to help fill the gap in knowledge in this important area of U.S. policy.

Fifth and finally, political appointees were specifically excluded from this study in order to focus specifically on the perspectives of career U.S. government employees working in counterterrorism policy. It is recommended that future research be conducted

into the views and perspective on the causes of terrorism by political appointees in the key counterterrorism policymaking departments and agencies, such as the Defense Department, State Department, and USAID. This further research, including on how individual and organizational factors influence these views, would serve to complement this study, and further fill the gap in knowledge outlined by Jackson (2011), Kassop (2013), and Sageman (2014).

Implications

The insights gained from this study are beneficial to positive social change at the national policy level in numerous ways. First, this is a topic of extreme relevance for today, having significant ramifications for U.S. foreign policy and relationships with foreign countries and international organizations (Jackson, 2011; Kassop, 2013, Sageman, 2014). As articulated earlier, using six academic theories regarding the causes of terrorism proved a valid lens from which to view and understand U.S. counterterrorism policy professionals' views on the causes of terrorism. At the individual level, root causes theory was found to be the predominant view among counterterrorism policymakers as the primary cause of terrorism, and participants expressed the view that their personal experiences were the dominant influence on these views. These results were found by obtaining direct, first-hand perspectives from individual U.S. counterterrorism policymakers themselves, using a qualitative methodology. This approach provided more detail and nuance than could have been gathered indirectly from analysis of policy documents, public statements or pronouncements, or the language from policy speeches.

Second, at the organizational level, the role of organizational influence on counterterrorism policymakers varied between organizations, although policymakers were found to have positive views of their colleagues understanding of the causes of terrorism. Since the findings regarding organizational influence was not conclusive, the implication is that a more focused qualitative approach is required, possibly augmented by interviewing groups of individuals through a focus group setting, along with a more detailed survey questionnaire to obtain deeper insights into how organizational factors may work with individual factors to influence how terrorism is viewed within U.S. policymaking organizations.

Finally, the qualitative methodology used in this study proved effective in exploring and understanding the meaning derived by individuals or groups associated with a social or human problem, such as views regarding the causes of terrorism by U.S. counterterrorism policymakers. The implications of the approach, method, and process used in this study provided a valid template for use by other researchers interested in gaining deeper understanding on other significant policy issues effecting U.S. national security.

Reflections

I was motivated to conduct research into this topic based on a desire to gain deeper insights into a subject for which I have a keen personal interest and within which I have dedicated almost a third of my professional career. I am a career member of the federal civil service and have worked for the U.S. government in various capacities for over 32 years, the last 17 years in Washington, D.C., working policy development and

implementation, including the last 11 years in the area of counterterrorism. Many of the policy discussions in which I've participated regarding U.S. policy responses to address terrorism were passionate, with organizational positions strenuously stated and defended by myself and my interagency colleagues.

Based on this experience I gathered what I believed was antidotal evidence into what I perceived were individual biases aligning within bureaucratic cultures among my counterterrorism policy colleagues. Although my research methodology used a qualitative versus a quantitative approach, I had a perceived hypothesis going into this project that I would observe distinct and different views regarding the causes of terrorism from across the four organizations I selected to study. I'd also expected organizational culture to be the primary influence on policymakers' views regarding terrorism. It was to gain further insights and understanding into this antidotal evidence that drove me to select this topic and subject my own views to the rigors of scholarly research.

What I found through the course of this study turned out different than my personal expectations when I started. The semi-structured conversations I conducted during interviews with participants from across the interagency provided much deeper insights into individual views and perceptions regarding the causes of terrorism than I'd experienced before. I found that my previous experiences in policy discussions and debates regarding terrorism were more superficial than I'd believed at the time. The structure and rigor of the qualitative process allowed me to move beyond a given policy topic or program, with the potential for a particular organizational approach or position and dig deeper into participants' personal views and perspectives. Many of these views

were based on deep personal experiences, items that with the clarity of hindsight I'd rarely seen arise during policy debates.

This scholarly process has helped me understand the significant role an individual's life journey can have on one's views. As I've learned through this research, personal experiences gained from life's journey are not always apparent in the policymaking process. This research has demonstrated to me how easy it can be absent a rigorous approach to superficially extrapolate a policymaker's stated position on terrorism into an erroneous perception of their personal views.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the linkages between theory and application, specifically the prevalence of particular worldviews and unique theories regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. The research approach used a qualitative methodology through one-on-one interviews and detailed participant questionnaires, analyzing individual perspectives within the broader context of both personal experiences and organizational cultures, in order to assess impacts on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

This research helps fill the gap in academic knowledge outlined by Jackson (2011), Kassop (2013), Krieger and Meierrieks (2011), and Sageman (2014), who all called for scholars to investigate what factors influence the development and implementation of U.S. counterterrorism policies. Unlike other research on this topic, many of which use historical archival research and little analysis of actual field interviews, this study involved collecting qualitative data from current government

counterterrorism officials to identify their actual views on the causes of terrorism and their perceptions on how they've been influenced by personal experiences and organizational cultures.

Five key findings were observed. First, root causes theory was a predominant factor in participants' understanding of the cause of terrorism. Second, personal experiences are a dominant influence on these views. Third, organizational influence on the views of terrorism varied by organization. Fourth, participants viewed their interagency colleagues as well informed regarding the causes of terrorism. Finally, individual views among U.S. policymakers have a minimal impact on U.S. counterterrorism policy.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions Deployed to Study Participants

1. How does the threat of terrorism equate to other threats to U.S. national security?
2. What do you feel are the primary causes of terrorism today?
3. What has had the greatest influence on your own understanding regarding the causes of terrorism?
4. How could the U.S. best address the threat of terrorism?
5. How well do you think your organization's counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism?
6. How widely shared is your view regarding the causes of terrorism among others across your organization?
7. Have your own perspectives on the causes of terrorism been influenced by your organization?
8. How is your organization enabled or hindered by its existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?
9. How well do you think counterterrorism policy professionals that you work with outside your organization understand the causes of terrorism?
10. How much common understanding regarding the underlying causes of terrorism do you see across the organizations that work counterterrorism policy?
11. How much do you think other organizations working counterterrorism policy are enabled or hindered by their own existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?

Interview Questions (Aligned by Research Subquestions)

SQ1: To what extent do individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism align with existing academic theories?

2. What do you feel are the primary causes of terrorism today?

1. How does the threat of terrorism equate to other threats to U.S. national security?

SQ2: To what extent can these perspectives on the causes of terrorism be understood through individual factors related to personal experience?

3. What has had the greatest influence on your own understanding regarding the causes of terrorism?

SQ3: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism influenced by existing bureaucratic cultures in specific U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations?

7. Have your own perspectives on the causes of terrorism been influenced by your organization?

6. How widely shared is your view regarding the causes of terrorism among others across your organization?

SQ4: To what extent are these perspectives on the causes of terrorism reflected between and among the key policymaking organizations?

5. How well do you think your organization's counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism?

9. How well do you think counterterrorism policy professionals that you work with outside your organization understand the causes of terrorism?

10. How much common understanding regarding the underlying causes of terrorism do you see across the organizations that work counterterrorism policy?

SQ5: To what extent do these perspectives impact the shaping of U.S. counterterrorism policy?

4. How could the U.S. best address the threat of terrorism?

8. How is your organization enabled or hindered by its existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?

11. How much do you think other organizations working counterterrorism policy are enabled or hindered by their own existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?

Appendix B: Participant Survey Questionnaire

Circle Answer that Applies:

Organization: DoD/OSD; DoD/JS; State Dept; USAID; NCTC

Age Range: 20-30; 30-40; 41-50; 51-60; >60

Gender: Male; Female

Marital Status: Single; Married; Separated/Divorced

Years Married: 1-10; 11-20; 21-30; >30

Do You Have Children: Yes; No

Education Level: No College; BA/BS; MA/MS; Multiple MA/MS; PhD

Education Category: International Relations; Political Science; Finance/Economics; Social Sciences; Humanities/History; Science/Engineering; Other

Years of Professional Experience: 1-10; 11-20; 21-30; >30

Years of Federal Service: 1-10; 11-20; 21-30; >30

Years in Counterterrorism Policy: 1-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16-20; >20

Self-Assessed Cultural Awareness: Low; Medium; High; Expert

Number of Countries Visited: 1-5; 6-10; 11-15; >16

Cumulative Years Living/Serving Abroad: 1-5; 6-10; 11-15; >16

Language Skills: English Only; 1 Additional; 2+ Additional

Additional Language <u>Reading</u> Skills: None; Marginal; Fair; Proficient

Additional Language <u>Speaking</u> Skills: None; Marginal; Fair; Proficient

Assessed Current Religiosity: None; Low; Medium; High

Services Attended: Never; 1-3 times/year; 1-3 times/month; 1-3 times/week

Assessed Religiosity before 25 yrs old: None; Low; Medium; High

Appendix C: Pre- and Post-Interview Emails

Pre-Interview Email

<***Potential Study Participant Name***>,

As I presented recently at your office staff meeting, I am conducting research into personal perspectives and organizational factors within the U.S. policy community that may impact counterterrorism programs and activities. You indicated that you would like to participate in a one-on-one interview to discuss your perspectives on issues related to this topic. The interview will between 45-60 minutes and will be conducted at your facility to ease your participation. Your participation will also involve filling in a 1-page survey questionnaire just prior to the interview to collect information related to your personal background, education, and experience, which will provide context to your responses and be used for comparison with other study participants.

The interview discussion will be audio recorded, but no individual will be personally identified in the recording, transcripts, on the survey questionnaire, or in the subsequent research paper. A consent form will be provided to you and I would require your signature prior to participation in the study.

If you are still interested in participating, please reply in the affirmative to this email. Would [***insert time***] on [***insert date Month DD, YYYY***] in room [***insert building and room location***] work for your schedule? No response will be interpreted as an unwillingness to participate and no further action on your part is required.

Should you have any questions or require further information regarding this request, please contact me via phone at [***insert phone number***] or e-mail [***insert e-mail address***].

Post-Interview Email

< ***Study Participant Name***>,

Thank you for participating in the one-on-one interview with me on [***insert date Month DD, YYYY***]. Your openness during the interview and perspectives that you provided were of great assistance to this research project. Your information will provide a significant piece of the collected data to help in understanding the prevalence of specific theories regarding the causes of terrorism in professionals working in U.S. counterterrorism policymaking organizations. Your involvement in this study will provide researchers, government entities, organizations, and citizens with insights into the perspectives of, and influences on, U.S. counterterrorism policymakers.

Please let me know if you would like copies of your interview recording and/or transcript, which I will provide to you upon request. I will send you via email an executive summary of the study's analytic results following completion of all interviews and preliminary analysis of the data.

As we discussed before and after the interview, your identity will be protected, with any information you provided presented as an alias (an assigned number), ensuring the anonymity of your responses. I will at no time include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of this study.

Should you have any additional questions, or require further information regarding this research study, please contact me via phone at [***insert phone number***] or e-mail [***insert e-mail address***].

Appendix D: Study Participant Demographics Data

Category	State	USAID	NCTC	DoD		TOTAL	
				OSD	JS	#	%
Age Range							
20 to 30	1	0	0	1	0	**2**	**6.45**
31 to 40	0	2	1	2	3	**8**	**25.81**
41 to 50	5	2	1	1	2	**11**	**35.48**
51 to 60	2	4	0	2	1	**9**	**29.03**
>60	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**3.23**
Gender							
Male	7	4	1	5	6	**23**	**74.19**
Female	1	4	1	2	0	**8**	**25.81**
Marital Status							
Single	0	2	0	2	1	**5**	**16.13**
Married	8	5	2	5	5	**25**	**80.65**
Separate/Divorced	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**3.23**
Years Married							
n/a	0	3	0	2	0	**5**	**16.67**
1 to 10	3	1	1	1	1	**7**	**23.33**
11 to 20	3	2	1	2	3	**11**	**36.67**
21 to 30	2	2	0	2	1	**7**	**23.33**
>30	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
Do You Have Children							
Yes	8	5	2	5	5	**25**	**71.43**
No	0	3	0	2	5	**10**	**28.57**
Education Level							
No College	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
BA/BS	2	0	1	1	1	**5**	**16.13**
MA/MS	2	6	0	6	3	**17**	**54.84**
Multiple MA/MS	0	1	1	0	2	**4**	**12.90**
PhD/JD	4	1	0	0	0	**5**	**16.13**
Education Category							
Int'l Relations	4	2	1	5	2	**14**	**45.16**
Political Science	2	3	1	0	1	**7**	**22.58**
Finance/Economics	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**3.23**
Social Sciences	0	2	0	0	0	**2**	**6.45**

(Continued**)**

Category	State	USAID	NCTC	DoD		TOTAL	
				OSD	JS	#	%
Education Category							
Humanities/History	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**3.23**
Science/Engineer	1	0	0	1	3	**5**	**16.13**
Other	1	0	0	0	0	**1**	**3.23**
Years of Professional Experience							
1 to 10	1	0	1	2	0	**4**	**12.90**
11 to 20	4	3	0	2	3	**12**	**38.71**
21 to 30	2	4	1	1	2	**10**	**32.26**
>30	1	1	0	2	1	**5**	**16.13**
Years of Federal Service							
1 to 10	1	2	1	3	0	**7**	**22.58**
11 to 20	4	4	1	1	3	**13**	**41.94**
21 to 30	3	2	0	0	2	**7**	**22.58**
>30	0	0	0	3	1	**4**	**12.90**
Years in CT Policy							
1 to 5	1	2	1	4	6	**14**	**45.16**
6 to 10	4	3	0	1	0	**8**	**25.81**
11 to 15	2	2	1	1	0	**6**	**19.35**
16 to 20	1	1	0	1	0	**3**	**9.68**
>20	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
Self-Assessed Cultural Awareness							
Low	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
Medium	0	1	0	2	2	**5**	**17.24**
High	5	2	1	4	4	**16**	**55.17**
Expert	2	4	1	1	0	**8**	**27.59**
Number of Countries Visited							
0 (None)	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
1 to 5	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
6 to 10	0	0	1	1	1	**3**	**9.68**
11 to 15	1	0	1	2	1	**5**	**16.13**
>16	7	8	0	4	4	**23**	**74.19**
Cumulative Years Living/Serving Abroad							
0 (None)	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0.00**
1 to 5	4	4	2	5	2	**17**	**54.84**
6 to 10	1	2	0	2	3	**8**	**25.81**

(Continued)

Category	State	USAID	NCTC	DoD		TOTAL	
				OSD	JS	#	%
Cumulative Years Living/Serving Abroad							
11 to 15	2	1	0	0	1	**4**	**12.90**
>16	1	1	0	0	0	**2**	**6.45**
Self-Assessed Language Skills							
English Only	0	1	1	3	3	**8**	**25.81**
1+ Language	1	4	1	2	2	**10**	**32.26**
2+ Languages	7	3	0	2	1	**13**	**41.94**
Additional Language Reading Skills							
None	0	0	1	3	3	**7**	**22.58**
Marginal	1	1	0	2	2	**6**	**19.35**
Fair	3	2	1	1	1	**8**	**25.81**
Proficient	4	5	0	1	0	**10**	**62.50**
Additional Language Speaking Skills							
None	0	0	1	3	2	**6**	**19.35**
Marginal	1	2	0	2	3	**8**	**25.81**
Fair	2	2	1	1	1	**7**	**22.58**
Proficient	5	4	0	1	0	**10**	**32.26**
Self-Assessed Current Religiosity							
None	2	0	0	1	0	**3**	**9.68**
Low	4	4	0	1	3	**12**	**38.71**
Medium	2	3	1	3	2	**11**	**35.48**
High	0	1	1	2	1	**5**	**16.13**
Religious Services Attended							
Never	2	0	0	3	0	**5**	**16.67**
1-3 Times/Year	4	4	1	0	4	**13**	**43.33**
1-3 Times/Month	1	1	0	2	1	**5**	**16.67**
1-3 Times/Week	1	2	1	2	1	**7**	**23.33**
Self-Assessed Religiosity Before 25-years Old							
None	2	0	0	2	1	**5**	**16.67**
Low	3	3	1	2	2	**11**	**36.67**
Medium	3	2	1	3	3	**12**	**42.86**
High	0	2	0	0	0	**2**	**6.67**

Appendix E: Qualitative Categories and Themes

Interview Questions	1. How does the threat of terrorism equate to other threats to U.S. national security?	2. What do you feel are the primary causes of terrorism today?	3. What has had the greatest influence on your own understanding regarding the causes of terrorism?	4. How could the U.S. best address the threat of terrorism?
		State		
Categories	Non-existential	Complicated	Time	Focus
	Real	Vulnerability	Experience	Patience
	Number one	Complex	Living abroad	Consistency
	Top tier	Depends	Reading	Depends
		Complex	Reading	Consistency
	Important	Dissatisfaction	Reading	Balance
	Medium	Depends	Living abroad	Less tactical
	Important	Complex	Experience	Varied
	Existential		Reading	Strategic
	Exaggerated		Experience	Discretion
			Living abroad	
Themes	Important	Complex	Reading	Consistency
		Depends	Experience	
			Living abroad	
		USAID		
Categories	Top tier	Political	Reading	Justice/Rule of Law programs
	Overblown	West's war on Islam	Experience	Deny-Degrade-Defeat
	Medium	Complex	Experience	Prevention
	Not biggest	Powerlessness	Experience	Domestic terrorism
	Important	Inequities	Reading	Less military
	Medium	Deprivation	Experience	Prevention
	Overblown	Frustration	Growing up poor	Prevention
	Outsized	Isolation	Academic study	Off ramp programs

(Continued)

		USAID		
		Marginalization	Experience	Prevention
		Marginalization	9/11	Lift travel ban
		Repression	Experience	Messaging
		Grievances	Academic study	Prevention
			Experience	
Themes	Medium	Marginalization	Experience	Prevention
	Overblown	Grievances	Reading	
		Frustration	Studying	
		NCTC		
Categories	Medium	Personal motivation	Religious belief	Not being PC
	Not existential	Grievances	Firsthand experience	Better profiling
	Real	Ideology (religious)	Work experience	Less kinetic strikes
		Deep-seated		Through partners
Themes	Medium	Personal Motivation	Experience	Less Strikes
	Not existential	Individual Factors		Via Partners
		OSD		
Categories	Not existential	Complex	Experience	Manage, not solve
	Lots of threats	Ideology	Living abroad	Not kinetic
	Pay attention	Social media	Dad (Vietnam vet)	More education
	Mid-tier	Lack of education	Living abroad	Build infrastructure
	Not existential	Grievances	Experience	Punish Saudi Arabia
	High (6 of 10)	Grievances	Living abroad	Counter ideology
	High	Desire utopia (ISIS)	Experience	Backseat, indirect
	At the top	Ideology	Books (study)	More dialog
		Grievances		
		Repression		
		Youth bulge		
		Need for purpose		

(Continued)

	OSD			
		Poor Disenfranchised Lack of education Economics		
Themes	Not existential Medium High	Grievances Ideology	Experience Living Abroad	
	Joint Staff			
Categories	Important Not #1 Baseline threat Medium 5 out of 10 Not existential 5 out of 5	Narrative Vulnerability Environment Ideology Local group Poor governance Social inequalities Population explosions Religious ideology Lack of education Chronic conditions Legacy grievances Disaffected population Radical ideology Social media	Networking Military experience Military experience Military experience Military experience Military experience	Through partners Coalitions Tougher on sponsors Diplomacy Development Limited goals Longer view Less overt
Themes	Medium	Inequities Governance Grievances Ideology	Experience	Via Partners Coalitions

(Continued)

Interview Questions	5. How well do you think your organization's counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism?	6. How widely shared is your view regarding the causes of terrorism among others across your organization?	7. Have your own perspectives on the causes of terrorism been influenced by your organization? In what ways?	8. How is your organization enabled or hindered by its existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?
		State		
Categories	Generally	Shared	Some	Constrained
	Exceptionally	Generally	Very much	Lacking
	Generally	Generally	Limited	Constrained
	Generally	Very well	Some	Limited
	Very well	Commonality	Less	Limited
	Generally	Generally	Very much	Hindered
	Very well		Definitely	Lacking
	Varied			Hindered
Themes	Generally	Generally	Somewhat	Constrained
	Very well			Limited
				Hindered
		USAID		
Categories	Very well	Somewhat	Very much	Hindered
	Very well	Mostly	Very much	Hindered
	Very well	Very well (career)	Very much	Hindered
	Very well	Somewhat (political)	Very much	Hindered
	Better than many	Generational gap	Very much	Hindered
	Pretty well	Fairly well	Very much	Enabled
	Very well	Pretty well	Very much	Hindered
	Fairly well	Diverse	Very much	Hindered
		Good corporate view	Very much	Hindered
				Hindered
				Hindered
				Hindered

(Continued)

		USAID		
Themes	Very Well	Very/Fairly Well	Very Much	Hindered
		NCTC		
Categories	Some (but afraid) Incredibly well	Some Somewhat	Not much Some	Adequate Somewhat hindered Mostly adequate
Themes	Somewhat Incredibly well	Somewhat	Not Much Somewhat	Both Adequate
		OSD		
Categories	Fairly well Smart people To quick to kinetic Not well Not well Pretty well Varies	Very well Fairly well Not sure Not well Just fatigue Not sure Generally Somewhat	Yes Balanced Not much Definitely Definitely Definitely Yes	Authorities good Limited resources Very understaffed Adequate Hindered Limited resources Limited authorities Both
Themes	Very Well Not Much	Very/Fairly Well Not Sure	Definitely	Limited
		Joint Staff		
Categories	Medium Very well Fairly Very well Not enough Pretty well	Shared Not well Shared Generally Firmly Shared	Yes No Yes No Yes Not really	Authorities good Lack of staff Authorities hindered Not hindered Not hindered Hindered intentionally Not hindered
Themes	Very well Medium	Generally		Not hindered

(Continued)

Interview Questions	9. How well do you think counterterrorism policy professionals that you work with outside your organization understand the causes of terrorism?	10. How much common understanding regarding the underlying causes of terrorism do you see across the organizations that work counterterrorism policy?	11. How much do you think other organizations working counterterrorism policy are enabled or hindered by their own existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism?
		State	
Categories	Generally	Generally	Imbalances
	Very well	Very much	Adequate
	Generally	Depends	Overlapping
	Generally	Generally	Overlapping
	Generally	Consensus	Imbalances
	Very well	Generally	Imbalances
	Very well		Imbalances
	Depends		Unbalanced
			Cumbersome
Themes	Generally	Generally	Imbalances
	Very Well		Overlapping
		USAID	
Categories	Generally	Generally	Hindered, prevention
	Less so	Generally	Hindered, resources
	Don’t know	Depends	Imbalances, resources
	Varied	Somewhat	Hindered, authorities
	Improved	Very good	Hindered, coordination
	Imbalanced	Somewhat	Imbalances, resources
	Very good		Imbalances, resources
	Uneven		
Themes		Generally	Hindered
		Somewhat	Imbalances

(Continued)

	NCTC		
Categories	Good understanding	Somewhat	Adequate
	General understanding	Program focus	Adequate
		Lack of strategic focus	Issue is coordination
Themes	Good Generally	Somewhat	Both Adequate
	OSD		
Categories	Pretty good	Generally	Hindered by resources
	Good understanding	Yes on macro	Hindered by resources
	Don't know	No on details	Hindered by resources
	Not really	Medium	Resources constrained
	Adequate	Generally	Hindered by resources
	Good understanding	Somewhat	Lack of resources
	Best in IC		Both
Themes	Good	Generally	Hindered by Resources
	Joint Staff		
Categories	Impressive knowledge	Some divergence	Lack of resources
	Generally	General understanding	Depends
	Very well	Commonly	Absolutely hindered
	Different perspectives	Fatigued	Severely limited
	Limited understanding	Not well	Limited
	Good understanding	More cautious	Both healthy
	Different perspectives	Balanced	
Themes	Generally	Generally	Hindered
	Varied	Common View	Limited

Appendix F: Detailed Analytic Results

Views Regarding the Seriousness of the Terrorism Threat

The first interview question to each study participant was *How does the threat of terrorism equate to other threats to U.S. national security*? The common response theme observed across respondents from all but one of the organizations were responses of terrorism being a *medium* threat but *not existential*. Two general discrepancies were noted from these primary response themes. Discussions with the State Department participants showed they had a variety of views, with only three of the eight expressing a common response theme in viewing the threat posed by terrorism as *important*. The other organizational outlier observed from this first question was from the USAID participants, where two respondents identified the perceived threat of terrorism as *medium*, and two others expressing it being *overblown*.

The interviews conducted with State Department participants showed they generally viewed the threat of terrorism as both *real* and *important*. In addition, their views indicated the problem posed by terrorism as ongoing. Participant 103 stated their view "…that terrorism is a perennial problem. There will always be a terrorism problem. There has always been a terrorism problem. It will continue in perpetuity." This view was articulated by several others. Another common view expressed was how the violence of terrorism is expressed in general terms. Participant 104 expressed this perspective as follows: "Terrorism, to me, is only a tactic. Terrorism is a technique. Terrorism itself isn't a threat, terrorist groups that use terrorism are certainly a threat."

The role of modern media, particularly social media, on how terrorism is viewed as a threat was also a common thread in responses from State Department participants. Participant 105 stated it as: “Terrorists don’t necessarily want a lot of dead bodies, but a lot of people watching.” The impact of the widespread visibility of terrorism through modern media also was highlighted by State Department respondents in the response it typically elicits. “Participant 101 felt that “…we [Americans] have vastly overreacted and over spent money and over committed ourselves to never ending wars overseas, in response to a threat that is a nuisance but not existential.” A similar comment from Participant 108 was “I think we [Americans] exaggerate the threat of terrorism to…U.S. national security. Obviously, it is a threat, but it’s not generally one that poses an existential threat to the U.S.” Of those interviewed, only Participant 107 expressed the threat of terrorism as “existential,” and only Participant 108 thought the terrorist threat was “exaggerated.”

Discussions at USAID on this question were the noted outlier from the views expressed by participants in the other organizations. While some said the terrorist threat is *medium*, most used language such as *overblown* or *outsized*. The following statements demonstrate this expressed sentiment. Participant 202 said: “I think it’s been well overblown.” In a similar manner, Participant 207 said: “I just don’t assess it to be as significant as we’ve allowed it.” Participant 208 expressed a similar view: “I think it has an outside impact in the narrative, and on policy, than what the actual threat is...” While this type response was observed in some of the State Department participants, the responses at USAID were much more pointed. The few at USAID who perceived the

threat of terrorism as *medium* also put this in a broader context of caution, as when Participant 203 said that terrorism is "Something to keep an eye on, but not something to be so consumed with that all of your resources flow in that direction." Only Participant 201 thought the threat of terrorism fell in the 'top tier' of threats to U.S. national security.

The views on the threat of terrorism expressed by the two NCTC participants were that while it remains a *real* threat, it is overall *medium* compared to other threats, and definitely *not existential*. The view of the threat of terrorism being a long-term challenge as viewed by the NCTC participants was evident in the discussions. Participant 301 put it this way: "It's [terrorism] not anything that's ever going to go away. We may be able to put it in a box somewhere or keep it simmering in the back burner… But I don't think we'll ever stop it or anything like that. I don't think we'll ever eradicate terrorism." It is the challenges posed by the U.S. response to acts of terrorism that elicited further comment from Participant 301, similar to the views noted by many State Department participants, stating: "What makes terrorism a threat…is the reason why terrorists exist and use terrorism, it's a psychological aspect of it, and that I do worry about. I do worry about that terrorism, unlike many threats, can make us as an American people do things that really are more of a threat to our way of life than any bomb or death can be."

Within OSD, the civilian policy side of DoD, responses to this question indicated they generally viewed the threat of terrorism as *high* or *medium*, but *not existential*. No real divergent categories or themes from the OSD participants on this question were noted. Participant 404 put it this way: "I would say in the current security environment,

sort of mid-tier, less than it was under prior administrations." A similar view was expressed by Participant 405 as "I think it is the threat closest to us, but it may not be the largest. It's definitely not an existential threat." While many of the OSD participants specifically stated their view that the threat of terrorism is not existential, they also were clear in their assessment that a terrorist attack is much more likely to occur than other threats to U.S. national security. Participant 401 said: "I think the likelihood of a terrorist attack is more likely than the [other] threats." Participant 405 expressed the likelihood as follows: "But if we're talking about terms of what is the active threat towards U.S. citizens or interest abroad, I would say it's gotta [sic] be terrorism."

Most of the OSD participants mentioned the *2018 National Defense Strategy* (NDS) when expressing their views regarding the threat posed by terrorism, where threats from violent extremist organizations is placed lower than the threats to national security posed by nations such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea (U.S. Department of Defense, 2018b). The views expressed by OSD participants on the threat of terrorism tracked with the NDS, demonstrating the influence this document has had on DoD policy professionals. Participant 401 said that "There are other threats which actually do pose an existential threat to the United States…," a view shared by Participant 405, as "There's definitely a larger military threat from them [China, Russia, Iran, North Korea]." It is of note that the threat rankings outlined in the NDS were also specifically highlighted by several study participants at both State Department and USAID as well.

For the Joint Staff, their participants expressed a common view that the threat of terrorism is *medium* or *mid-tier*. Participant 505 said: "On a scale of one to ten, I would

say terrorism is probably a five…" Others (notably Participants 501 and 506) expressed the threat as "5 out of 10" or "5 of 5," an oblique reference to how terrorism is ranked in the NDS (U.S. Department of Defense, 2018b). The threat posed by terrorism was not downplayed, however, by the Joint Staff participants. Many talked about its negative impacts on U.S. national interests. Participant 501 highlighted its importance: "It's a key threat. It's a key concern for what we're working on, not only to our physical homeland, but to our equities or our interests abroad." Whether the threat of terrorism could ever be eliminated was also specifically mentioned by several Joint Staff participants, with a similar consensus as that expressed by several State Department participants. Participant 503 said that terrorism is "something to be managed, but never defeated." Participant 505 had a similar view: "Terrorism is an enduring threat and it will never be completely extinguished…" Of those interviewed, only Participant 505 expressed the threat of terrorism as "important," adding that the threat posed by terrorism is "not existential."

Perceptions Regarding the Causes of Terrorism

The second interview question to each study participant was *What do you feel are the primary causes of terrorism today*? A common theme regarding *grievances* as a primary cause of terrorism was observed in responses from participants from three organizations: USAID, OSD, and the Joint Staff. This theme was further amplified in these responses for grievances due to perceived *inequities*, *marginalization*, *frustration*, and *lack of governance* as principal causes of terrorism. Responses from State Department participants differed from this common theme, with these participants resisting naming any one particular cause for terrorism, stressing instead the complexities

of the phenomena due to local or regional dependencies. A total of five OSD and Joint Staff participants additionally highlighted the role of *ideology* as a cause for terrorism, with the two NCTC participants identifying either *personal purposes* or *individual factors* as the main causal factor.

The interviews conducted with State Department participants showed they as a group resisted the identification of a single cause for terrorist violence. Instead, most State Department participants stressed the complexity of the problem, with numerous dependencies as potential motivators for terrorist violence due to local, tribal, or regional dynamics. Views along this line were as follows: "I think it's a really complicated process that involves everything from economics, sociology, political circumstances, history. In some cases, it's not genetic, but family related" (from Participant 101), or "It's not just one or two factors that go into it. It's more complex than that" (from Participant 105). Broader complexities due to historical factors, or societal vulnerabilities, were also part of the views expressed by State Department participants. Participant 103 sees "…more of historical grievances and economic drivers that open the aperture for terrorist ideology to take hold." Participant 102 highlighted the general *vulnerability* of a population as an underlying cause: "It is vulnerability. Social economic drivers, opportunists, radicalizers, who are pressing upon those vulnerabilities." Dissatisfaction due to vulnerabilities was also a point made by Participant 108, specifically "…dissatisfaction is always there, otherwise you wouldn't go trying to blow people up."

The common theme emerging from the USAID participants responses to this question were overwhelmingly *marginalization*, *grievances*, and *frustration*. Participant

206 expressed it as "…a sense of marginalization, lack of inclusion in the political system, grievances, whether they be individual or whether it's a group affinity type grievance, seems to be one of the major drivers." Participant 205 made reference to broader forces that precluded normal options, a sense "…that there are forces that they can't change through the current system. The only way to really affect the change is to do something drastic." Two other themes emerging from some USAID participants were *deprivation* and *powerlessness*. Participant 204 said: "I think it is inequity in perceptions of relative deprivation as much as it is or probably more than ideology. This susceptibility of terrorism and terrorism is an expression of frustration, of not being able to have your voice heard through the normal modalities." Participant 203 shared a similar view: "I think it's about powerlessness, which I would equate to exclusion and injustice." Two divergent categories were expressed in comments from Participants 202 and 205, with Participant 202 citing the "West's war on Islam" as a primary cause of terrorism, and Participant 205 stressing "personal isolation" as a primary driver.

The views expressed by the NCTC participants were unique to each respondent. Participant 301 was very clear that they believed *religious ideology* was the primary driver of terrorism in the modern age, with simmering hatreds that are "…very deep-seated and rooted. The deepest one that you'll find is the religious motivation for terrorism." The other, Participant 302, talked about individual factors and *personal motivations*, as in "…what's in it for them, what's in it for the terrorist, what are they losing if they do this, do they have the access and the ability and the willingness to actually go through with suffering." Participant 302's perspective additionally

highlighted five factors observed in the radicalization process, being namely "personalizer [factors], group factors, community factors, socio political [factors], and ideological factors," with each and every one playing some combined role into why a person is radicalized and ultimately commits acts of terrorism.

As stated above, the OSD participants' views aligned with the common theme observed across USAID and the Joint Staff, that being grievances as a primary cause of terrorism, where "…disenfranchisement and feeling socially excluded, economically disadvantaged and politically disenfranchised in your community with no options" (from Participant 406) open populations up to recruitment to terrorist groups and organizations. Another category noted in the OSD participants that was unique was the desire for purpose among young, frustrated populations as a key cause of terrorism, being of particular concern as this view is easily exploited by a strong ideology. Participant 405 expressed this as "A youth bulge that is not gainfully employed that sees itself as not having many options and is looking for a sense of belonging to a larger cause." Only one, Participant 401, expressed the view that "there's no one driver, and consequently, there's no one thing you can fix or take away that would remove terrorism…" One other, Participant 402, highlighted that terrorisms "…breeding grounds are centered in ignorance, lack of education, [and] lack of resources."

Many of the Joint Staff participants shared the view with USAID and OSD that underlying *grievances* are a primary cause of terrorism. Many of the Joint Staff responses further stressed particular areas of grievances, such as from Participant 503, who stated that "…poor governance, social inequalities, [and] the population explosions that are

occurring." The views regarding ideology, specifically religious ideology and narratives, were also a recurring view as to the causes of terrorism. Participant 504 said: "I think it's religious ideology and lack of education." Participant 502 had a similar view regarding the role of ideology: "They have to have an ideology that supports that [violence]." Only a few (namely Participants 502 and 506) expressed other views regarding primary causes of terrorism, such as lack of education, local groups, and social media.

Influences on These Views

The third interview question to each study participant was *What has had the greatest influence on your own understanding regarding the causes of terrorism*? The common themes of *experience* and *living abroad* was observed across all five organizations. The theme of experience was qualified in numerous ways, including from personal experience due to travel overseas as well as professional experience working foreign policy related portfolios. Responses from State Department and USAID participants both had an additional common theme of *reading*, with USAID participants further adding *academic study* as a strong influencer on their views regarding terrorism and its causes. The responses from all the Joint Staff participants indicate their experience in the context of their personal military careers.

Almost all the responses to this question from the State Department participants highlighted the combined influences of *experiences*, *living abroad*, and *reading*. No divergent categories or themes were observed. A common perspective was reflected in statements such as that from Participant 104: "For me, the grounding was academic. Proving ground was the field experience…" The role of field experience was also

highlighted by Participant 108: “Key to my views is the field experience I have had, I think…” Statements such as “I read a lot. I read a lot of what other people think and have to say about terrorism…” (from Participant 103) was also common in most of the responses from the State Department participants. For many, it was also the combinations of these factors as overall influencers of their perspectives. The view provided by Participant 107 articulated this combination of factors: “It’s a combination of things. It is, you know, reading up on what scholars, journalists, others who are smart in the realm of counter terrorism, sort of just their analysis, but also combining that with face to face interaction that I’ve had with people who have been affected by terrorism, victims of terrorism, those who are fighting against terrorism from a criminal justice, law enforcement point of view and their insights. So for me it’s the combination.”

As with the State Department participants, the common themes of *reading* and *experience* were predominant in the USAID participants. References to the influence of reading was articulated in ways such as doing “…a lot of reading. I think just trying to be open to all of the opinions that are out there and being able to assess it together” (from Participant 205). The role of reading was also stated in the past tense by Participant 208, based on academic foundations: “I guess, I’m a student of history, so that first and foremost as an amateur historian, I am able to take a long view where terrorism has always been part of the human condition…” The role of experience in the context of travel and field work was also seen in most of the responses of the USAID participants to this question. Participant 203 said: “Working in the field. I mean, just being, working in this area. Reading, talking to people, being in the field, talking to people on the

ground…" Participant 208 said: "So, I guess it's my lived experience. Interacting with people, both those on, what I would say are extremist spectrums, or people who have held extreme views on either side of it."

The one divergent or unique view expressed within the USAID participants came from Participant 206, who cited growing up poor in a marginalized area of the United States, and how that influenced this individual's overall view of the terrorism challenge. "I grew up in a more economically and socially marginalized part of the United States. Where, in that part of the country, there are a number of groups who are anti-government associated groups. And so, the mindset [towards using violence against authority] was not unfamiliar to me in people that I had grown up around and that I knew, and I could see how a sense of marginalization fed into that particular mindset, and I could see how it could potentially transition into more radicalized or violent behavior."

Both of the NCTC participants identified the key role of *experience* having particular influence on their views regarding the causes of terrorism. Participant 301 also expressed the influence of a personal religious view, specifically articulated as "My own personal background, my own personal religious understanding of motivations and my family's life and how we kind of got to where we are." Like the reference from the one USAID participant on the influence of growing up poor, this personal identification from Participant 301 on the role their personal religious view influencing how they viewed the causes of terrorism was a unique one not expressed in a similar manner by any other study participant.

The common themes of *experience* and *living abroad* appeared in responses from most of the OSD participants. Participant 401 expressed it as: "Professional experience of studying terrorists and just being involved in the problem for so long, just that longevity of it…" Participant 404 put it this way: "I think hands down, my work here in…policy [making]… There was a great deal of exposure to it and various manifestations." Participant 405 talked about the lived experience: "I think it has to be living abroad and seeing it, being in these cultures. And living around the people who are fighting it kind of on the front lines is the biggest one."

One divergent view within the OSD participants, but similar in many respects to the preceding divergent views from the one participant from USAID and one from NCTC, regarding the effects of childhood experiences on how issues are viewed later in life was a statement by Participant 402 in answering this question. "This is gonna [sic] sound funny. Probably my dad. My dad served in Vietnam. In working with him, and being in contact with all the vets that came back after that war, there was always conversations. Most folks don't realize that we won every single engagement in Vietnam. Every one of them. Hands down, they [the Vietcong enemy] were just slaughtered, okay, and yet, we lost the war, and we lost the war because of political will, and we lost the war because we didn't understand tribalism, and we didn't understand insurgencies…"

The Joint Staff participants also stressed the same theme of *experience* as having the greatest influence on their views of the causes of terrorism. Their references to experience, however, was exclusively linked to their *military experience* in their careers and spanning their deployments. Participant 502 said: "I would say just my experience

overseas deployed to environments obviously that are ripe for terrorist organizations because they lack security, because they lacked any sort of government, and a group." This view was shared by Participant 504: "I think experience. Seeing it firsthand. People living in poverty, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, coupled with a religion that at times can be radical…" The only divergent response came from Participant 501, who also identified *networking* as a key influence on their perspectives on terrorism, expressed as "By and large it's the networking, and gaining the perspectives of others."

Views on How the Terrorist Threat Should be Addressed

The fourth interview question to each study participant was *How could the U.S. best address the threat of terrorism*? Responses from participants were extremely varied on this question and no common theme emerged across the organizations. Responses to this question were extremely varied both within and between organizations. Only within USAID was there some internal commonality, with five respondents expressing *prevention* activities being among the best ways to address the threats posed by terrorism.

Responses from State Department participants were varied, with no real theme emerging. *Consistency* in approach was mentioned by a few of those interviewed, but this response did not occur on a scale to be an observed theme. A few, such as Participant 101, spoke in generalities: "I think the best way to deal with it, is to be aware that it's not a one size fits all kind of thing." This view was shared by Participant 104: "One size does not fit all for terrorists. It just doesn't. That's not an effective way to combat terrorism." One (Participant 106) stressed moving beyond a focus on kinetic strikes: "So, to me, you've got to be looking beyond the direct-action response." Others like Participant 102

reflected on the need for a long-term approach: “If I were to put into one word it would be patience. We have to remain patient; we have to be flexible, and we have to be willing to go through the time and the different avenues to combat terrorism.” A similar view came from Participant 104: “It is clear, to me at least, we are not going to defeat terrorism in those places until there is a political solution that brings stability to the country.”

As mentioned above, an emerging theme related to this question was only observed from the USAID participants, where *prevention* was prevalent in their collective responses. These types of responses stressed getting out in front of the terrorism problem. “I think we need to focus a lot more on looking at the drivers; what causes people to participate. I would like to see us to have more of a focus on prevention to the extent that we can” (from Participant 206). “I think that we have to find avenues for people who are going in those directions. We need to be able to identify them and have outlets for them to off-ramp” (from Participant 205). “We also have to take a step back and make sure that we are identifying and addressing the condition which are leading people to commit terrorist acts” (from Participant 208) A few perspectives, like on from Participant 204, took issue with a perceived over-emphasis on a military solution: “Not by military means. I think that’s a tool. I think the best way that U.S can address the threat of terrorism is looking at the various tools it that has as a toolkit.” Using partnerships and coalitions as exhibited in the current ‘defeat ISIS coalition’ was also mentioned by Participant 202 as a better approach. “So, I actually think that the overall de-ISIS campaign plan…has it right. Roughly, it’s deny them territory, defeat them on the ground. Go for it. It’s prevent them

from acting as a global brand. Reduce them to local insurgencies or resistance groups that can be handled through the capacity of partnerships."

No theme emerged from the responses of the NCTC participants. Participant 302 indicated support for limited military strikes, but also limiting expectations for what this could achieve: "Accepting that our place in the kinetic world is important and maybe the greatest contribution we can have to limiting our expectations…" The other, Participant 301, didn't offer a solution but expressed concerns that as society we are overly cautious in addressing the terrorism problem head on. Participant 301 stated it this way: "You're not going to do it by not calling things as they are. And what I mean by that is we are too politically correct for our own good. And this is as a society. As a culture and as a society, we are too scared to call things out because we don't want to offend or hurt anybody. And what ends up happening is we water everything down."

Responses to this question from OSD participants was also varied, with no discernable theme emerging from their answers. Participant 401 highlighted terrorism as a condition to be managed, not a problem that could ever be solved. "We can get to a point where it is a condition we've mitigated, it's a condition that we can live with, but…it's probably not something [we can eliminate completely]." Participant 402 on the other hand suggested more investments in education programs: "[Educated] aren't gullible people… Without education, you don't know any different [way to deal with problems]… I think education is huge. I think we've missed the boat [in our approach]…" Another, Participant 404, suggested rethinking our strategic partnerships, especially with countries like Saudi Arabia: "I think we need to take a much more

realistic stand with regard to our counter terrorism partners. Particularly those in the Middle East where I think it's a matter of expediency. Some would argue of necessity that we've engaged with partners and enabled [bad behavior], for example, Saudi Arabia…" Participant 404 also suggested a reduction in military response options: "We definitely need to dial down our military solutions to problems that are in essence not military." This last view was also articulated by Participant 406, who said: "Maybe we should take a more backseat, hands off approach by empowering and supporting the local governments… I feel like the U.S. should take a less prominent role in the counter terrorism programming that it's doing, and that's on all fronts."

Several Joint Staff participants talked about using *partners and coalitions*, but this wasn't assessed to be an overall theme observed. Participant 501 put it this way: "Through our partners, and building, maintaining, not building, but maintaining…a global coalition where we leverage everybody else's capacity, capability and knowledge, and especially regional knowledge to address this globally." One comment, made by Participant 502, mirrored the one observed with Participant 404 from OSD about limiting our involvement with strategic partners in the Middle East: "There needs to be a stronger stance on countries or groups that support the ideology that lends itself to extremism and extremist thoughts that lead to a terrorist act." Another, Participant 504, stressed like Participant 402 from OSD the importance of education: "You have to affect the politics to incorporate education, to incorporate the reprieve from poverty. So that starts at the political level." Participant 506 worried that we overreact to the terrorism issue: "When we respond with so much fear, anger, outrage, and then ultimately disproportionate

retaliation in a lot of cases, we just play to their narrative." A similar comment came from Participant 505, who indicated an unrealistic desire to 'fix the problem' – "Our current policy seems to be we gotta [sic] stay and fix everything. Our inclination is to get involved as opposed to our inclination being every opportunity we have, we need to step away."

Views on Inter-Organizational Understanding on the Causes of Terrorism

The fifth interview question to each study participant was *How well do you think your organization's counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism?* The common response theme observed from across all five organizations were perceptions that their organizations' counterterrorism policy professionals understand the causes of terrorism *very well*. Two general discrepancies were noted from this primary response theme. Discussions with the OSD participants showed two had divergent perceptions that their counterterrorism policy colleagues did *not well* understand the causes of terrorism. Three of the Joint Staff participant's expressed divergent perspectives that their military colleagues had only a *medium* understanding of the causes of terrorism.

Two themes in answer to this question was evident in responses from the State Department participants. On one hand, many had perceptions that their diplomatic colleagues working in counterterrorism policy understand the causes of terrorism *very well*. Participant 102 had a view shared by many at the State Department: "I think if any entity understands the nuances [regarding terrorism] it is the State Department because of their experiences as well their access to information." However, there were also many of

the State Department participants, like Participant 103, who expressed their view that their State Department counterterrorism colleagues *generally* understood the causes of terrorism: "I think that it is a sliding scale. On the whole, I think that we are generally an organization that generally understands drivers of violent extremism." Similar to this view, Participant 108 expressed it as "I think it varies. I think that, likewise, across the interagency, it's kind of hit and miss."

The common theme emerging from the USAID participants responses to this question were overwhelmingly *very well*. "I think actually pretty well…" (Participant 201). "I think pretty well, [as] it's a small handful of people that have really worked in depth on this, but I think most of us have worked on it for a number of years now. We've worked seamlessly together" (Participant 206). There were some noted caveats, however. Participant 203 said: "At the technical level, fairly well. At the policy level, mixed." This 'technical' caveat was stated in the context of those who work predominately in the field, as opposed to the 'policy level,' which seemed to imply those spending most of their time and effort within the USAID headquarters in Washington. Another nuance was expressed by Participant 205 as follows: "I think better than many. I don't think that they understand as well the structures of terrorist groups, but I think they have a better sense of what is drawing people in than most other government organizations. This is because we [USAID] have more people on the ground." Beyond these nuances, no real divergent categories or themes were observed.

The responses to this question by the two NCTC participants did not result in a common theme. Participant 302's views regarding colleagues understanding was

"Incredibly well, as this community is frankly been together, it's actually not as big as, it's not that big of a community. [Many in the] CT [counterterrorism] community have been around and most of us have grown up professionally together…" The view expressed by Participant 301 was starkly different, however – "They understand the real causes and motivations behind terrorism that we're trying to counter and fight. But for political reasons… they will not call it as it is. …Behind the curtain they will speak one certain way and they know what the actual cause is on, what the reality is on. But you'd never get them to own up to that on a TV camera…"

Two common themes appeared in responses from the OSD participants, that of *well* and *not well*, which was interesting. Participants from two separate counterterrorism offices within OSD were interviewed, but these different themes were not aligned to either office. On the one side were perspectives like "I think fairly well…" (from Participant 401) and "Certainly well above average across the board" (from Participant 402). However, the corresponding theme of *not well* was also expressed by many participants, like the comment from Participant 404: "I think there's some understanding. I don't know that the depth is there…" This last view regarding perceived 'depth' of understanding was expressed in the context of the fast pace of the workload. Another way this view was expressed was by Participant 405, who said "I actually don't think we do because I don't think we spend as much time in counterterrorism policy contemplating or analyzing the causes as much as we do how to fix the immediate problem, which is protect the homeland, protect U.S. interests now." There was one divergent view expressed by Participant 403, who articulated a standard tendency for their OSD

colleagues being "…to quick to go kinetic…" rather than spending the necessary time trying to understand the underlying causes of terrorism.

The Joint Staff participants also stressed the theme of *very well* in their responses to this question, but *medium* was also a noted theme. "I think they understand well, yeah very well..." (from Participant 502). "I think we're fairly clear on most of it" (from Participant 503). "I think we understand it well, but that's all we've been doing for 18 years…" (from Participant 504). One interesting aspect in this view, however, was expressed by Participant 505 as a caveat to this perspective: "I think they understand the underlying, very high strategic level causes. What I don't think that they understand firmly enough is how the tactical aspect of it and our engagements on the ground either inflate or deflate the underlying disgruntlement of our opposing force." In this context the term 'opposing force' was meant to mean the terrorist group we are fighting. Only Participant 506 expressed the divergent view that their military colleagues understanding the causes of terrorism was *not enough*.

Individual Views Within Organizations

The sixth interview question to each study participant was *How widely shared is your view regarding the causes of terrorism among others across your organization*? There were two themes noted in responses to this question. Participants from the State Department, NCTC, and the Joint Staff had perceptions their individual views on the causes of terrorism were *somewhat* or *generally* shared among their colleagues. The response theme noted from participants from USAID and OSD was their personal views were shared within their organizations *very well*. However, three OSD participants

expressed the divergent perspective that they were n*ot sure* whether their own views regarding the causes of terrorism were shared among their colleagues.

The perspectives from State Department participants were consistent with the theme that their coworkers *generally* shared their views regarding the causes of terrorism. Participant 102 said "I think it's a shared understanding," and Participant 105 agreed: "I think so. I don't get any indication that it's not." Participant 107 said something similar: "I think we do have a commonality of perspective." A deeper assessment was provided by Participant 104, whose perspective as that "I think we're all within sort of one standard deviation from the norm on this. No one would take a violent exception to what I've said in regarding drivers and stuff because we do study the problem."

USAID participants perspectives were that their own views regarding the causes of terrorism were shared across their organization *very well*. "I think fairly well" (from Participant 205). "I think we all are on the same page, to greater or lesser extent. Not everybody looks at it through the same, exactly the same lens. I think we generally sort of get how these things play out" (from Participant 203). "I think in USAID there's a whole that is definitely the corporate view. People see terrorism as a problem, many of the countries in which we've worked are impacted by terrorism" (from Participant 208). Participant 201 stated their own views were *somewhat* shared with their coworkers, and Participant 207 said the understanding of the causes of terrorism across USAID policy professionals was *diverse*.

Both NCTC participants had perspectives that their own views on the causes of terrorism were *somewhat* shared with their colleagues in NCTC. However, Participant

301 was very clear that they didn't feel the broader nuance they had regarding the religious motivations to violence was a common perspective, stating: "I do not believe they share my view very much [regarding religious motivations]."

Two countering themes were noted in the responses from participants from OSD. For many, their perspective was a common understanding on the causes of terrorism was *well* shared. "I think fairly well" (from Participant 401). "I would say yeah, by and large. I mean, we've been at this [a long time]... Most everybody that's active duty right now have grown up with the challenge in the desert and the counter-terrorism challenge. It's pervasive. They've grown up with it" (from Participant 402). However, there were also several OSD participants that also expressed the perspective that they were *not sure* of their coworkers' views. Participant 405 said: "I would like to think that we all kind of share that same view, but I'm not sure. It's not something that we've discussed." One divergent perspective expressed by Participant 404, whose view was that their coworkers were just fatigued with the issue: "Most people have the view and attitude that they're kind of done with this, and we've done what needed to be done, and its time to move on."

The view that their individual perspectives on the causes of terrorism was *generally* shared among their coworkers was the common theme among the Joint Staff participants. Participant 505 said: "I think that's very, very, a very common theme, if you will, maintaining a coalition, sharing of information, is really the best way for us to get at this." Participant 505 went on to say: "I think we firmly understand this. We're engaging with our counterparts in the field regularly… We've lived it recently [on deployment]." Participant 503 agreed: "I think it's fairly well understood." Only Participant 502

expressed a divergent perspective that their own view was *not well* shared across the organization.

Organizational Influences on Individual Views

The seventh interview question to each study participant was *Have your own perspectives on the causes of terrorism been influenced by your organization*? There were two themes noted in responses to this question. Participants from USAID and OSD had similar perceptions of *very much* and *definitely* for whether they felt their organizations had influenced their views on the causes of terrorism. In contrast, participants from State Department and NCTC shared response themes of *somewhat* or *not much* as to whether they perceived being influenced in their views by their organizations. The Joint Staff participants were evenly split, with three each way, between perceptions of *yes* and *no* regarding this question.,

State Department participants shared the general theme of *somewhat* regarding whether they perceived their views regarding the causes of terrorism were influenced by their organization. Several expressed the nuance that external influences weighted more in their perceptions. Participant 101 said: “I think to some extent. When you’re working within a bureaucracy on these very big and complicated issues, you really get a sense of what’s possible and what’s not possible.” Participant 105 though external factors were more important: “My initial reaction would be to say, it’s probably more shaped by external factors than internal factors.” A limited divergent view felt that their perceptions were *very much* or *definitely* influenced by the State Department organization. Participant 107 put it this way in response: “I’d say yes because it exposes you to different trains of

thought as to what the roots are, and you have some people who are very knowledgeable of what they are…"

Responses from USAID participants perceptions to this question were strongly aligned with the theme that their organization had *very much* influenced their views on the causes of terrorism. Participant 204 put it this way: "Yeah, I think how it got framed in my head with drivers, etc. It was definitely influenced by the agency because that was sort of the framework through which to process. So, I think that did influence it a lot." Participant 204 further clarified the importance of their organization on their view of terrorism: "What the agency did is really kind of help crystallize and formulate how to process that and articulate some of that…" No divergent views from this response theme were noted among the other USAID participants.

The responses from the two NCTC participants were consistent, which was the perception that their organization had *not much* or just *some* influence on their views. Participant 301 answered this question with: "Not much. No. I feel I actually brought more from the outside based on my personal experience than what I gained from the bureaucratic experience." Participant 302 wasn't sure: "I can't tell, I've been in this business for so long I can't tell. I can't remember a time you know, I don't feel like I've changed…"

The theme of *definitely* was a consistent view from the OSD participants on this question. "Yeah. I think to a very, very large degree…" (from Participant 404). "Yes, definitely…" (from Participants 405, 406, and 407). There was one divergent view expressed, however, where Participant 403's perception regarding how the organization

influenced their individual view was very low: “I’m thinking really hard, because I don’t think so. I think that as I described to you, my experience overseas was [much more] foundational.”

The Joint Staff participants were almost exactly split, with half saying *yes, definitely* they had been definitely influenced by their organization. Participant 501 said: “Oh, absolutely, to the extent that I believe what I believe is by and large not only driven by our network of interagency and coalition colleagues, but based on the experience of my direct leaders.” Participant 502 agreed, but with a slight caveat: “Yeah, but I’d also like to say or think that I can step back from that and look at a broader picture…” The other stated perception was the opposite vew, saying *no, not really,* expressed such as the response from Participant 504: “I would say everybody comes in with their own perspective… My perspective’s pretty solidified. For me, it’s only reinforced that perspective.” One interesting nuance was stated by Participant 505 as follows: “It [the organization] has changed how I viewed the problem, but out of necessity in order to get the solutions that the war fighter needs.”

Perspectives on Organizational Empowerment in Counterterrorism Efforts

The eighth interview question to each study participant was *How is your organization enabled or hindered by its existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism*? The principal theme noted for this question were from the State, USAID, and OSD participants, who expressed the shared perception that their respective organizations were *constrained*, *limited*, and *hindered*, by their existing authorities and available resources in their ability to address terrorism. Both NCTC participants had a differing

view, that their organizations authorities and resources were *adequate*. The Joint Staff was the noted divergent view from the other organizations, with four respondents reflecting that they are *not hindered* in their efforts to address terrorism.

The State Department participants all expressed the common theme that their organization is *constrained, limited,* and *hindered* by existing authorities or resources. Regarding authority limitations, Participant 106 said: "Absolutely, confronting authorities and everything else and jumping through hoops and the lack of flexibility because congressional oversight for the department is increasingly high." Participant 102 pointed out similarly: "I think an issue might be that everybody else has similar authorities. So there isn't a really clear line of effort whose got what…" Other views, like that of Participant 103, stressed the issue being more a lack of resources rather than authorities: "I think, for the most part, there are very few things that I'm aware of that we have really wanted to do that we've run into a problem of authority. It's mostly a lack of resources." A similar view was "I think the resourcing is difficult" (from Participant 106). Participant 104 said if they could "…wave a magic wand, I would make money more flexible..." Beyond just authorities and resources, Participant 104 also highlighted the limitations and constraints due to working processes across the organization – "Coordination, that is like a chronic problem across everything I've ever worked on in the State department. We have a lot of cooks in the kitchen."

USAID participants shared a common theme in their responses to this question in that their perspectives indicated their organization is *hindered*, primarily regarding resources. "Resourcing is a challenge, I'll be honest, because so much of USAID money

is earmarked and it's earmarked for the traditional sectors" (from Participant 201). "So, [resources are] totally inadequate to take anything to scale…" (from Participant 202). "But you know, you can always do more with more…" (from Participant 203). Participant 208 felt USAID's full potential is hindered: "So it means that we're never able to truly meet our potential in this space because it's under resourced." There were many shared clarification views by the USAID participants as to *earmarks* being the principal limiting factor in resourcing. "Because everyone is constrained by earmarks, constrained by the flavor of money they have, how discretionary it is or not" (from Participant 206). "Our budget and the earmarks, and the authorities for the different flavors of money, is driving the programming that is possible, as opposed to, you know, what we really need to do…" (from Participant 207). Another view, this time from Participant 203, stressed the need for more people as the limiting resource: "I would say, we're hindered by it in a sense of, we don't have enough people, we never have enough people to execute programs."

Both NCTC participants had views that their organizations authorities and resources were *adequate*. Participant 301 expressed the view as: "I bet the resources that I see even in the current organization [under Trump administration] is not resourced to the level I think it was back then [under Obama administration] in terms of resourcing." Participant 302 was more circumspect: "I'm probably committing a bureaucratic sin, [but] it would be inappropriate for me to say that anywhere in the CT [counterterrorism] community, we deserve or need more resources. That's just not reality, even if true, the

reality is we have been invested in heavily over the years, and appropriately. We should not be asking for more…"

While a common response them of being generally *limited* was expressed by many OSD participants, there were other views. Several were regarding limitations due to lack of authorities Participant 404 said: "I think we're largely hindered from engaging effectively." Participant 405 made a similar observation: "I think we have the proper amount of resources. I'm not sure we have the proper authorities, broadly." Other comments reflected perspectives that the limitations were due to lack of resources, such as that by Participant 401: "Resources, we could always use more resources." Participant 402 specifically highlighted the resource limitations was specific to staffing challenges, stating: "From a personnel standpoint, it's ridiculously understaffed for what we're expected to do." There were some divergent views, however, like that from Participant 403: "We have enough resources and we have enough authority."

The Joint Staff participants had general responses reflecting that they are *not hindered* in their efforts to address terrorism. Participant 503 put it this way: "I don't think we are [hindered]… I don't think people actually know all the authorities that are out there, and don't know how to apply the existing authorities that we have with it." Participant 504 agreed, saying: "I think we have enough resources… I wouldn't say we're hindered." However, there were some divergent views. "You always will be limited by resources. You always will to some sense" (from Participant 502). "I think you're definitely hindered by authorities, but that's a good thing…" (from Participant 506). An interesting reflection on 'hinderances' was made by Participant 505: "The

hinder part is, I think, [is] put there intentionally. I hope it's put there intentionally. Because otherwise we'd use force to answer almost any problem when we might not always be the right answer."

Insights into Interagency Understanding on the Causes of Terrorism

The ninth interview question to each study participant was *How well do you think counterterrorism policy professionals that you work with outside your organization understand the causes of terrorism*? The common response theme observed from across four of the five organizations were perceptions that their counterterrorism policy colleagues across the interagency understand the causes of terrorism *generally*, *good*, and *very well*. Responses to this question from USAID participants were the divergent view. However, this divergence was not in the form of a common theme, but their perspectives on this question varied broadly. Two of the Joint Staff participants also expressed a different perspective, namely expressing the view that their interagency counterterrorism policy colleagues had *differing perspectives* regarding their understanding of the causes of terrorism.

The State Department participants expressed the common theme in response to this question, with perspectives that their interagency counterterrorism colleagues *generally* or *very well* understand the causes of terrorism. Participant 101 said: "You know…, I think that people understand it, but there are so many different cross-cutting ... I think the more people know about it, the more complicated they think that it is." Participant 102 agreed: "From an interagency perspective, and what we've seen in the academic community, I think they have a very good understand of the drivers of

terrorism." A few State Department participants had more nuance in their perspectives of their interagency counterterrorism policy colleagues, with concerns expressed about bureaucratic stovepipes. Participant 103 expressed it as: "I think that we are very stove-piped and very narrow, sometimes, in our focus. Unfortunately, a lot of us have been socialized within our own agencies and not socialized to other agencies on their views. I see that come across very often when I work with counter-terrorism professionals from other agencies." Participant 105 sees more reaction than true understanding: "I would say, if I had to give a report card approach, just on our broad USG understanding, I think we've been quick to react and assume, without clearly understanding all the drivers." Participant 108's view highlighted the potential impact due to organizational culture, stating: "It depends. It depends on what agency you're talking about. It depends on whether you're talking about analysts or sort of action guys. It depends."

The perspectives on this question from the USAID participants was varied, with no noted theme emerging from their responses. Some like Participant 207 expressed perspectives that their interagency colleagues had extensive understanding on the causes of terrorism – "The level of knowledge, expertise, and also tolerance in the community is really striking, and I think is underappreciated outside of the community." Others like Participants 201 and 206 expressed more moderate views, but still with a positive perspective regarding their interagency colleagues understanding. "I think for the most part there is people who've been doing it for a while, I think it generally pretty consistent" (from Participant 201). "You know, I think it's improved over the years. Had you asked me that same question ten years ago, I would have said there's a real lack of

understanding in terms of who causes. I do think we're getting better as a community, an interagency community, and understanding the nuances" (from Participant 206). A few like Participant 202 expressed perspectives that their colleagues had less understanding: "I think probably less so because they often lack what we have, which is missions on the ground. Most of our people are forward deployed, they're in missions, they're doing other things in these countries. So, we've got that." Participant 205 agreed with this view: "I haven't seen a lot. I see occasionally some. But I think it's not great."

Both NCTC participants had perspectives that were consistent with the common response theme noted, that being their interagency colleagues had a *general* or *good* understanding of the causes of terrorism. Participant 301 felt "…they [have] a very good understanding of just their slice of the pie of how it touches terrorism or what they can do." Participant 302 expressed the more detailed view that organizational biases influenced the level of understanding, saying: "I think you see natural understandable and predictable biases, organizational cultural biases in the approaches. I see less interagency cohesion on trying to do things together in that space, than in the past. But I think that's probably replicated on everything." The lack of workable policy processes was also highlighted by Participant 301 as having a negative impact: "Yeah, I mean [the] interagency processes hasn't been working, that's not just this [CT] mission. We've been on…a 5-6 year kind of downward trend on how I think, from my perspective, on how the interagency's process been working."

The OSD participants responses to this question also showed the prevalent theme that their interagency colleagues have a *good* understanding of the causes of terrorism.

Participant 406 said: “I mean, people who work on CT [counterterrorism] issues, I think they also have a good understanding of CT [counterterrorism] causes, effects, approaches, that kind of thing, but I think that their focus is on different aspects of it…” Participant 407 agreed: “I think there’s a lot of folks that do have a good understanding.” One perspective from Participant 401 expressed it as follows: “I think sort of the bureaucratic truism of where you stand depends on where you sit is especially evident within the inner agency and CT [counterterrorism], and the causes of terrorism and what to do to address those in order to reduce the problem set and/or mitigate the conditions of terrorism are based on the tool sets that your agency works with. That said, I mean, I think there is a pretty good understanding writ large across the interagency colored by the bureaucratic/organizational biases of where people work towards solving the CT [counterterrorism] problem.” There were two divergent perspectives expressed, however, by Participants 403 and 404. Participant 404 had the perspective that there wasn’t a good understanding of the causes among their interagency colleagues: “No, I don’t think by in large they do. They tend to think that the organization you’re apart of eventually tends to be the lens through which you view all these problems.” The other, Participant 403, expressed it a bit differently, stressing the challenges of working within bureaucracies. “It sounds so terrible, but I feel like most of the time we’re stuck in the bureaucracy and that we’re working bureaucratically.”

The perspectives of several of the Joint Staff participants aligned with the noted theme that their interagency colleagues *generally* or *very well* understood the causes of terrorism. “I think they understand very well” (from Participant 503). “I think there’s an

incredible and impressive amount of education and knowledge" (from Participant 501). Many others, however, expressed the view that their interagency colleagues had *different perspectives*, particularly in how terrorist groups are defined and prioritized. Participant 502 put it this way: "I think they do as well, but I think where people differ, again we're talking extremes of opinions, is what they believe a terrorist group would be." Participant 503's view was: "Where people potentially differ is what the prioritization of those terrorist groups are and what we can do against them." Participant 501 had the view that colleagues understanding are stove piped within organizations: "I think it would depend on one department or agency versus another… But…it may be very kind of stove piped within their lane."

Insights into Commonality of Views Across Interagency Regarding Terrorism

The tenth interview question to each study participant was *How much common understanding regarding the underlying causes of terrorism do you see across the organizations that work counterterrorism policy*? The common response theme observed from across all five organizations were perceptions that there is *generally* a common understanding across the interagency regarding the causes of terrorism. Participants from USAID and NCTC also expressed the perspective that there was *somewhat* of a common understanding across the interagency. The noted divergent views were from Joint Staff participants, three of whom also expressed perspectives that a common understanding is not there, or that counterterrorism policy professionals are just fatigued after dealing with the challenge for 18 years.

State Department participants had perspectives that there *generally* is a common understanding on the causes of terrorism across the interagency counterterrorism policy professionals. However, there were several noted nuances in responses. Participant 101 had concerns that overall understanding was overshadowed by the day-to-day taskings: "While we're looking at sort of the background noise of what is causing this [terrorism] over the long run, there's much more of a focus on the day-to-day [situation]." They went on to highlight perspectives on root cause theory. "I think there's a lot of discussion of the root cause, we're not supposed to use that phrase, or we weren't for a while, root causes of terrorism" (from Participant 101). Similar to perspectives expressed by OSD participants to the previous question, many State Department participants had views that organizational structures and processes get in the way of a common understanding. "I would say we get ... once we get up to a certain level, we get a lack of synchronization because people need to own things. To some degree, we're all serving different masters" (from Participant 106). "Where it gets a little more complicated in terms of interagency coordination, is that you have multiple agencies with very similar authorities…" (from Participant 107).

The USAID participants expressed the common theme in response to this question, that there is *generally* or *somewhat* of an understanding of the causes of terrorism across the interagency. Their views stressed this in more of a negative way than being positive. Participant 202 said: "I think we tend to have the same conversations over and over again, we tend to do the same superficial assessments over and over again." Participant 203 said: "I think it comes to where you stand and depends on where you sit,

right?" Participant 208 felt "…there is still a long way to go…" Two USAID participants noted the challenge of the time necessary to achieve understanding of terrorism's causes. One, Participant 203, reflected that: "There is not necessarily enough time…bringing everybody up to the same level so that we have a greater understanding…before we sit down and try to come up with things collectively. There is a lot of educating each other as we go." The other, Participant 208, felt that: "Our attention spans are short, and…people don't have the inclination to really want to understand the complex dynamic that...our own actions and the reaction that those create."

Both NCTC participants had the view that there is *somewhat* of a common understanding of the causes of terrorism across the interagency. Participant 301 felt it is less so, as "…maybe that's why things ended up being ineffective because we didn't all have the synergy and the understanding of the cause…" The other, Participant 302, was also skeptical regarding a common understanding, expressing the view that the commonality was more due to common effort, driving a common understanding. "There is synergy, in that everybody that touches [particular] lines of effort knew what they had to do, and we have to work together because we have a common goal… So there is synergy in that. But that's again to doing an action or an outcome, not in the understanding." Participant 301 also highlighted organizational challenges impacting a common understanding. "I don't think so. And the reason why is again very political because it goes back to the organization and the framework…"

The OSD participants responses to this question also reflected the common theme with perspectives that their interagency colleagues *generally* had a common

understanding of the causes of terrorism. “I think there’s symmetry, it’s not bad” (from Participant 401). “I mean I think on a macro level, yeah, I mean people realize that these are incredibly complex problem sets…” (from Participant 404). “In some regards, yes. But also, in some ways, no…” (Participant 405). Participant 407 expressed the perspective that a common understanding appeared to be superficial. “I think on the surface it would seem like there is some alignment but as soon as you get past that there’s a lot of cases where you’re getting right back into the individual atmosphere and the culture within or among agencies and departments, which can be disabling.”

The Joint Staff participants also expressed the common theme that their interagency colleagues *generally* had a common understanding of the causes of terrorism. Participant 502 expressed it as: “I think there’s a common understanding…” Participant 503’s view was: “Actually, I think compared to other functional issues, we’re fairly flat, fairly dynamic.” However, some Joint Staff participants also expressed a variety of nuances in their perceptions. Participant 501 noted the organizational divergences: “Based on the many different discussions, I would think there’s some divergence from one department or agency to another.” Participant 505 felt a common view wasn’t that prevalent: “I think the understanding of it is not really well understood commonly…” The view expressed by Participant 504 attributed a possible lack of a common understanding to fatigue with the terrorism challenge: “I think it’s changed. Again, I think 18 years has gotten mundane. I think people are at fatigue. I’m not sure there’s much else we can do that we aren’t already doing. The areas that we talked about, that

what drives terrorism, we could absolutely do more, but those that we would like to do more just aren't there."

Perspectives on Interagency Empowerment in Counterterrorism Efforts

The eleventh and final interview question to each study participant was *How much do you think other organizations working counterterrorism policy are enabled or hindered by their own existing authorities and resources in addressing terrorism*? The common response theme observed across four of the five organizations were perceptions that other organizations are *hindered*, principally due to a lack of or *imbalances* in resources, in addressing terrorism. The noted divergent view was from NCTC, where both participants had perspectives that other organizations authorities and resources are adequate, with one additionally noting some hinderances due to coordination issues.

State Department participants expressed a common theme in their responses to this question, with perspectives that their partner interagency organizations suffer from a resource *imbalance* hindering their ability to address terrorism. "If we had clear authorities as to who owns what and then the resources that matched that policy then I think we would have a little bit easier time" (from Participant 102). "I think we're absolutely under resourced in the long term goals that require patience…" "I think there is a, largely, an imbalance of resources right now for counter-terrorism professionals across the space" (from Participant 103). "I don't see a graded balance [in resourcing]…" (from Participant 105). Another perspective expressed by Participant 101 was that partner organizations working counterterrorism are not hindered by authorities or resources, but have challenges with scope of their required efforts – "I think that's one of the problems

that you run into, and it's not necessarily an inhibition by authorities, or an enabling by authorities, it's just that whatever you're doing has to somehow be looked at in the broadest possible sense and that doesn't always happen."

The USAID participants also expressed the common theme that interagency partner organizations working counterterrorism are *hindered* in addressing terrorism, with several particularly noting the *imbalances* in the allocation of resources. Participant 207 noted the broader challenges posed by the bureaucracy: "Something that I do think is a significant hindrance is the [bureaucratic] turf battles…" Participant 207 further reflected that the primary hinderance was a lack of leadership: "There's no coming together of a few, not everyone, a few important leaders to decide what do we want to do about this problem set…" Participant 205 shared the perspective that resourcing of counterterrorism programs was fine, with more of an imbalance in the seemingly default to use military options – "No, we're not [hindered]. But I do think that it was too easy to take people out [i.e., via drone strikes] and take people off the battlefield in a way that I think upended the balance, sort of overstepped. So, a phrase I used all the time…is our analysis cannot stop at dead."

Both NCTC participants had perspectives that both the authorities and resources available to their interagency partner organization to address terrorism is *adequate*. Participant 301 expressed the view that they really didn't know. "You know, I don't know. I honestly don't know if I have an answer to that… I don't get a sense that a lot of things are authorities, I think that some people blame authorities for things… I sort of think people hide behind that sometimes…" The other, Participant 302, didn't really

think authorities or resources were a key factor in addressing terrorism. “I don’t think it matters. I don’t think it matters how much authority or funding or whatever that they actually have. I think what matters most is that [departments and agencies] agree on [and work towards] a particular goal…”

The common theme that interagency partner organizations are *hindered* by resources in addressing terrorism was predominate in responses from the OSD participants. “Resources in that they are hindered” (from Participant 407). “State [Department] is definitely hindered by their resources for sure. I don’t know that intel [i.e., intelligence] agencies are hindered so much by their resources or their authorities, from my perspective… But I’m not sure that they are asking for more or they want more…” (from Participant 405). “I do think that on the development side they don’t have as many resources…” (from Participant 406).

Many of the Joint Staff participants also shared the perspective that interagency partner organizations are *hindered* by resources in addressing terrorism. Participant 506 said: “Absolutely. They are hindered. I don’t think within DOD we are... Most of it’s not even necessarily authorities, it’s resources.” Another, Participant 504, stressed the limitations in resources was more due to the lack of personnel or staff, not just a lack of program resources: “Yeah…I think they are severely limited. Where the Department of Defense writ large, we’re pretty unlimited in what we can do in the counter-terrorism space, especially when it comes to direct action piece. [But] compared with our interagency partners, I mean, we’re talking people. We’re talking horsepower, money, resources. They just can’t keep up, and the demand for their capabilities is that much

higher." There were also several divergent views expressed by a few Joint Staff participants, such as Participant 502 feeling that the situation differed across organizations, and Participant 506 having the perspective that authorities and resources were healthy among interagency partners working counterterrorism programs.