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**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA:
SURVEILLANCE AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

by

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UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
BLM	Black Lives Matter
COINTELPRO	Counterintelligence Program
COMINFIL	Communist Infiltration Program
DOJ	Department of Justice
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FISA	Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act
FISC	Federal Intelligence Surveillance Court
IC	Intelligence Community
ISI	Islamic State of Iraq
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JAS	Jaish Ansar al-Sunna
JTJ	Jama'at al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSA	National Security Agency
SMMS	Social Media Monitoring Software

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I. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA: SURVEILLANCE AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

A. BACKGROUND

Social movements are recognized as essential elements of political processes, especially in a democracy where they are often viewed as politics outside the institutional structures. However, movements can also be destabilizing and problematic for national security as shown by the activities of ISIS in recent years. As of February 2017, ISIS had carried out or inspired over 140 attacks in 29 countries since it declared itself a caliphate in June of 2014.¹ ISIS is a global, radical, violent, and revolutionary movement that poses a security threat to several states across the world, indirectly in some instances. For example, the Elton Simpson shooting in Dallas (Texas) on May 3, 2015, was inspired by ISIS. Although Simpson had never visited locations where ISIS is physically present, he was able to gain access to their ideology and message through Twitter.²

The relationship between the media and social movements is not new and it is an essential element of democratic practices. Media provides social movements with an audience, a platform to lay out their agenda, and an opportunity to gain support.³ This historical relationship is also guaranteed under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, as its framers understood the importance of providing a non-state owned communicative tool to the public. In contemporary times, the traditional relationship between movements, whether reformist, revolutionary, violent, or radical and media remains as movements need the media to get their message to the public; however, thanks to social media, the access is wider, faster and at the same time, can be individualized as never before.

¹ Tim Lister et al., "ISIS goes Global: 143 Attacks in 29 Countries Have Killed 2043," CNN, February 13, 2017, accessed February 25, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/world/mapping-isis-attacks-around-the-world/>.

² Ibid.

³ Brian A. Monahan, *The Shock of the News: Media Coverage and the Making of 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 19.

B. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

ISIS and other terrorist movements, such as Al Qaeda, communicate primarily through social media and as result, national agencies are finding ways to expand their scrutiny of social media sites. However, terrorist organizations are not the sole users of social media. Domestic non-violent movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM) also rely on social media to get their message across. Yet, national agencies do not differentiate between them in surveillance, building their surveillance strategies around violent movements such as ISIS as they respond specifically to security threats. The question that emerges then is what is the difference between the use and purpose of social media by these two very distinct movements and what are the implications of national security strategies designed for external terrorist movements upon domestic movements such as BLM which are considered to be part of the normal democratic process? This thesis will conclude with national security recommendations regarding how the state could balance rights and security with domestic non-violent movements.

C. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The U.S. Intelligence Council's 2017 publication, *Global Trends: Paradox of Progress*, predicts a bleak world setting in the approaching years. It presents a scenario of many economic, political, societal, geopolitical, and environmental stressors that may be encountered in the near future that could lead to conflict within and between nations.⁴ Many of these stressors are already apparent and are resulting in an increased trend of contentious politics. According to the National Intelligence Council "advanced information technology will amplify difference over inequality, globalization, politics, and corruption, while perceived humiliation and injustice will spur protests and violent mobilization."⁵

⁴ National Intelligence Council, "Global Trends: Paradox of Progress," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, accessed January 22, 2017, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/the-next-five-years>.

⁵ Ibid.

Pew Research Center reports that digital media is at the forefront of the advanced information technology that is mentioned in the *Global Trends* publication and that the Internet is amassing a near monopoly over information exchange compared to the television networks, newspapers, and magazines that have existed in previous decades. As the most recent American presidential election and Arab Spring movements illustrate, social media is increasingly more relevant in the dissemination of information, whether by means of news organizations or first-hand accounts of current events to the world, and in some cases—in real time.⁶ A Pew Research Center poll documented its findings in, *News Use Across Social Media Platforms in 2016*, and concludes that roughly 62% of Americans get their news from social media.⁷ Social media, however, is used for more than current events and casual exchanges between friends; it can also be used for networking on a global scale, as demonstrated by radical movements such as *al Qaeda* and ISIS. Since the 62% mentioned above are exposed to a lot more than news and friends when they access various social media websites, it is important to study how movements, violent or non-violent, use social media and understand the differences between them.

This research is significant in various different ways. First, by researching two different movements, ISIS and BLM, one external and violent and the other domestic and non-violent respectively, this thesis contributes to security literature and policy by illuminating the differences between them. By doing this, this thesis contributes to the strategy on how to address them differently. Since ISIS is a global threat, the significance of this goes beyond the United States. Second, this research contributes to our understanding of how state policy, in this case surveillance, can shape social movements, and therefore, democratic processes. What happens when policy designed for one

⁶ Pew Research Center, “Election 2016: Campaigns as a Direct Source of News,” Pew Research Center, July 18, 2016, accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/18/election-2016-campaigns-as-a-direct-source-of-news/>; Heather Brown, Emily Guskin, and Amy Mitchell, “The Role of Social Media in the Arab Uprisings,” Pew Research Center, November 28, 2016, accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.journalism.org/2012/11/28/role-social-media-arab-uprisings/>.

⁷ Jeffrey Gottfried and Elisa Shearer, “News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2016,” Pew Research Center, May 26, 2016, accessed January 22, 2017, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/>.

movement effects a different movement? And, lastly, this research contributes to social movement theory by showing how different objectives influence framing in the media.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

The case studies of ISIS and BLM vary in their objectives and outcomes drastically, yet their relationship with the media and success strategies have some apparent similarities as they both seek to use media to support their objectives. Yet, it is essential to differentiate between them as they represent two variations in social movement studies. Therefore, this literature review focuses on understanding different types of social movements, their relationship with media, and the role national security plays in domestic social movements. An overview of how movements use media and social media provides an understanding of the basic overarching commonalities and differences between the movements and their mediums of communication. The last part of the review briefly examines how state reaction to social movements can result in shaping them.

1. Social Movements: Definitions and Characteristics

Social movements can be synonymous with particular political loyalties, religious convictions, the economy, ethnicities, and can even be associated with revolution, violence, and extremism. DeFronzo provides a general definition of social movements stating that they are a “persistent, organized effort by a relatively large number of people either to bring about social change or resist it.”⁸ Tarrow provides a more granular definition by suggesting that social movements are a product of the broader realm of contentious politics: “when ordinary people, often in league with more influential citizens, join forces in confrontations with elites, authorities, and opponents.”⁹ That being said, contentious politics can be momentary, sporadic, and spontaneous, but social movements cannot. The distinction between contentious politics and social movements is

⁸ James DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 5th ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2015), 9.

⁹ Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

that latter involves the resonance of collective action frames and sustained challenges against powerful opponents.¹⁰

Collective action, protest, and various forms of civil disobedience have existed throughout history; however, for this research, Tilly's framework of late eighteenth century origin of social movements in North America and Western Europe are more aligned with the existence of movements in more democratized, contemporary times. Tilly attributes three factors to the formation of modern social movements: a campaign, a social movement repertoire, and displays of "worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies."¹¹ A campaign involves "a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities;" a social movement repertoire is a combination of various forms of political action: rallies, demonstrations, petitions and the like.¹²

The development of social movements is dynamic and contingent on many variables, but the most significant involves context. Della Porta and Diani argue that social change and social conditions aid in the determination of that context.¹³ When change occurs in a society, the location, interests, and diminished relevance of existing interests facilitate the emergence of social groups.¹⁴ More specifically, the time, place, and sources of contention have an impact on what types of groups form and what their objectives are. According to Della Porta and Diani, societal conditions "have important influences upon the distribution of resources that are conducive to participation in collective action, such as education, and/or facilitate the articulation of interests."¹⁵ These resources can also be associated with economic, religious, or cultural issues.

¹⁰ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 2.

¹¹ Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768–2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004) 3–4.

¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 35.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Rather than associate the formation of social movements with deprivation, extremism, or violence; Tarrow attributes them to “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.”¹⁶ He does so by giving social movements four basic properties: collective challenge, common purpose, solidarity and collective identity, and sustaining contentious politics.¹⁷ Tarrow states that collective challenge occurs when movements “mount contentious challenges through disruptive direct action against elites, authorities, other groups, or cultural codes.”¹⁸ Common purpose involves a convergence and/or overlapping causes and values.¹⁹ Solidarity and collective identity are achieved when leadership capitalizes on ingrained, sometimes already existing, identity or solidarity.²⁰ As previously stated, the sustainment of contentious politics is what creates the distinction between contentious politics and a social movement. It is the persistence of contentious politics and sustainment of collective action against opponents that distinguish it from previous forms of contention.²¹ Tarrow argues that “when contention spreads across an entire society, as it sometimes does, we see a cycle of contention; when such a cycle is organized around opposed or multiple sovereignties, the outcome is a revolution.”²² All social movements have political objectives. They all exist within the realm of contentious politics, use sustained collective action to challenge powerful opponents, and ultimately function to achieve political ends. Taking into account this literature, both ISIS and BLM categorically meet the criteria of being social movements.

¹⁶ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 4.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹ Ibid., 6.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid., 10.

2. Revolutionary Movements

Revolutionary movements are social movements. Tilly places revolutionary movements within the realm of social movements stating that it is “a social movement advancing exclusive competing claims to control of the state, or some segment of it.”²³ DeFronzo elaborates and makes the distinction between reformatory and revolutionary movements, but categorically places both within the realm of social movements as well. He argues that a reformatory movement’s objective is to modestly change parts of the existing social, political, and economic institutions; whereas a revolutionary movement intends to significantly alter or replace those institutions.²⁴ Tarrow further deconstructs revolutions by stating that revolutionary situations are “moments of deep fragmentation in state power,” and that revolutionary outcomes, “effective transfers of state power to new sets of actors,” are both necessary for a full-fledged revolution to occur.²⁵ By looking at revolutionary movements through the lens of social movements, we are able to further determine why revolutionary movements come to fruition.

The occurrence of revolutionary movements can be attributed to a state’s weakness. Skocpol provides a comparative historical analysis among multiple countries and concludes that when states are vulnerable to the disintegration of existing military and bureaucratic institutions, they are susceptible to a revolution.²⁶ Though her study is derivative of revolutions within feudal systems, the premise still pertains to contemporary socio-political structures. The disintegration of those institutions provides revolutionary movements with opportunities. Goodwin argues that states which are repressive, exclusive, and possess weak infrastructural power facilitate the incubation of revolutionary movements; states with the aforementioned characteristics that are also

²³ Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492–1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 10.

²⁴ DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 10.

²⁵ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 157.

²⁶ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 154.

patrimonial are more likely to be overthrown.²⁷ He attributes this to the state's violent repression compelling "oppressed groups into revolutionary movements, and the state's weakness prevents the state from destroying such movements."²⁸ Which is similar to Tarrow's "state strength and prevailing strategies," which argues that weak, inclusive states result in strong mobilization and less violence, whereas strong, exclusive states result in less mobilization and more violence.²⁹ A distinction must be made between strong and weak states; a strong state is more centralized and more prone to exercise repression; a weak state is more decentralized and encourages participation.³⁰ Therein lies the strong state's vulnerability, according to Tarrow, it provides "dissidents an odd sort of advantage—a unified field and a centralized target to attack once the system is weakened."³¹ Making decentralized, inclusive states, such as representative democracies, less susceptible to revolutionary movements than autocratic, centralized states.

A revolution does not require violence, but violence often occurs. DeFronzo argues that "revolutionary social change can be brought about through non-violent means such as peaceful labor strikes or democratic elections" but, the most successful movements tend to involve some degree of violence from the participants and the opposition.³² A social movement does not need to be violent to be revolutionary; however, when a movement uses violence, it does not necessarily categorize it as a revolutionary movement. Tarrow argues that violence can be an effective tactic for attracting attention and publicity, but it tends to ward off potential participants and sympathizers.³³ Additionally, the use of violence has consequences: movements that use violence will likely receive it in return.³⁴

²⁷ Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945–1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 30.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 81–84.

³⁰ Ibid., 81.

³¹ Ibid., 82.

³² DeFronzo, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 11.

³³ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 96.

³⁴ Ibid., 88.

Social movements have a life cycle and this is essential for reformist movements such as BLM. Della Porta and Diani state that some movements “become institutionalized, turning themselves into political parties or interest groups; others become more radical and turn to violent forms of action; some turn commercial and involve themselves in the market; yet others turn inward, becoming similar to religious sects.”³⁵ Movements use violence because they believe it is important for achieving political objectives and other, non-violent methods are not an option. Revolutionary movements such as ISIS that want to significantly alter or replace existing institutions and as a result may be radical or use violence. However, violence can be divisive and that is why reformist movements such as BLM tend to avoid a repertoire of violence. By doing so, they are able to gain sympathizers and convey their message within existing political institutions to influence change.

3. Why Social Movements Radicalize

Movements radicalize for many reasons and this is important to understand for the case studies because a non-radical movement such as BLM could radicalize under certain circumstances. One is able to better understand what actions are necessary to prevent radicalization by examining why movements radicalize. What makes movements transition from a repertoire of non-violent collective action to violence and extremism? Della Porta and Diani argue that factors attributed to organizational change include: opportunities available within political systems; organizational cultures; changes in technology and the methods by which communication is disseminated.³⁶ Is the emergence of terrorism and extremism an exception to these factors? Richardson argues that “terrorism is not caused by religion, globalization, political structures, or psychopaths” and that “political and economic inequalities and social alienation are risk factors for the emergence of terrorism.”³⁷ The premise is valuable at the micro-level, but

³⁵ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 161.

³⁶ Ibid., 161–162.

³⁷ Louise Richardson, “The Roots of Terrorism: An Overview,” in *The Roots of Terrorism*, ed. Louise Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.

not at the expense of dispelling the overarching factors of organizational change. One could empirically infer that social alienation, political and economic inequalities can be derivative of any of the macro-level organizational change factors. Perhaps the movements themselves provide causation for change.

Terrorist and extremist groups are products of social movements. Rinehart argues that “many terrorist groups spring from ineffective and unpopular social movements” and that “extremists inclined to use terrorism for various reasons will often hijack a social movement that has been unable to accomplish its objectives and will transform the social movement into a terrorist organization.”³⁸ Rinehart attributes three factors as to why social movements resort to extremism: leadership; frustration-aggression theory; and the ascension of violent personalities to leadership roles.³⁹ Leadership dictates the path of the movement; an extremist leader may use violence to achieve objectives and will likely eliminate dissidents within the group. Conversely, a moderate leader, who does not adhere to violence, will likely denounce it and also eliminate dissidents.⁴⁰ Frustration-aggression theory suggests that the accumulation of objective failures results in frustration and as that frustration increases, so does the inclination to use violence.⁴¹ The ascension of a violent leader may involve a hijacking of the group by a violent personality or the radicalization of the original leader.⁴² These factors are closely interrelated, but the most significant is the application of the frustration-aggression theory. If movements are not effectively achieving goals and are accumulating failures; frustration will lead to schisms within the organization’s leadership. Objective failures of movements can be attributed to weak or absent political opportunities.

Richardson and Rinehart provide compelling arguments for the transition of social movements to extremist/terrorist movements, but all are still derivative, in one way or

³⁸ Christine Sixta Rinehart, *Volatile Social Movements and The Origins of Terrorism: The Radicalization of Change* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 1.

³⁹ Ibid., 141–142.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 141.

⁴¹ Ibid., 142.

⁴² Ibid.

another, of Della Porta and Diani's four factors that attribute to organizational change. Opportunities available within political systems, in particular, can have a direct impact on the factors that Richardson and Rinehart present. After all, terrorist, revolutionary, and reformist movements are a means to a political end and political opportunities are significant to how those ends are reached.

According to Della Porta, these opportunities can also present themselves by state action. Using a comparative case study, she finds that protest policing can act as "an important barometer of the political opportunities available for social movements" and suggests that it may also affect a movement's repertoire of action.⁴³ She finds that political opportunities available within political systems involve shifts in national strategies, configurations of power within the polity, and bureaucratic policy choices effect how protest policing is implemented.⁴⁴ She arrives at three conclusions regarding how state action of protest policing can affect a movement's repertoire. First, a more tolerant, softer policing approach leads to the diffusion of protest.⁴⁵ Second, "a repressive and hard policing of protest results in a shrinking of mass movements, but a radicalization of smaller protest groups."⁴⁶ Third, she finds that "preventative, selective, and legal protest policing isolates the more violent wings of social movements and helps the integration of the more moderate ones."⁴⁷ This thesis may not focus on protest policing per se, but it does concern the imposition of state action on protest movements and the result of those actions. These conclusions may be valuable when determining national security recommendations regarding how the state could balance rights and security with domestic non-violent movements.

⁴³ Donatella Della Porta, "Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protest," in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarty, and Mayer N. Zald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 62.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 91–92.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 92.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Political opportunities matter for movements. Tarrow states that “contention is more closely related to opportunities for—and limited by constraints upon—collective action than by the persistent social or economic factors that people experience.”⁴⁸ Since terrorist, revolutionary, and reformist movements have political ends, political opportunity is the peak factor by which movements will create or resist change and how they will achieve their ends. Tarrow states that political opportunities become available to challengers “when institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines.”⁴⁹ Taking this framework into consideration, one can logically deduce that the outcomes of movements are based on available political opportunities and state strength. Tarrow also argues that “by communicating information about what they do, once formed, movements create opportunities—for their own supporters, for others, for parties, and elites.”⁵⁰ Movements accomplish this by diffusing collective action.⁵¹ The use of media is a powerful and effective way to diffuse collective action and to create political opportunities.

4. Relationship between Media and Social Movements

Like most social movements, both BLM and ISIS rely on the media to get their message across and to create political opportunities. The literature broadly illustrates the similar use of media by radical and non-radical social movements. It addresses how radical and non-radical movements use media to get the attention of the public and the different tactics the movements may employ to create their political opportunities. However, by not comparing a radical movement to a non-radical movement, the different objectives for communicating with the public are not distinctly identified. Rucht states that most social movements actively seek media attention to win over the public and

⁴⁸ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 71.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 72.

⁵¹ Ibid.

influence policy makers.⁵² Gamson and Meyer argue that, “ownership and consumption patterns of media, as well as their relation to the state and political parties, are relatively stable and generally beyond the scope of movement claims.”⁵³ Access to media provides movements with a line of communication to the public, government, and the organizations that will frame their group and broadcast their agenda. An effective way for movements to attain this opportunity is through demonstrations and other forms of collective action. Movements exist within the realm of contentious politics, but contentious politics and collective action alone are often not enough to achieve political objectives. A group, in its rudimentary form, must ally with powerful actors, and other more powerful, groups to form a protest constituency.”⁵⁴ According to Della Porta and Diani leadership emerges from this constituency and manages external communication.⁵⁵ Media disseminates the message and imagery of the protest constituency to the public, decision makers, and to get their support and/or attention.

Spectacle gets media attention. The goal of media is to get the largest possible audience for the sake of economic survival and success.⁵⁶ Rucht argues that social movements want attention, but they also want commitment and support.⁵⁷ For these reasons, movements must choose their tactics carefully. Events that are dramatic, confrontational, and emotional with passionate, unpredictable participants garner attention, but violence and destruction are better for television.⁵⁸ The tactics movements choose can have positive and negative repercussions. Gamson and Meyer state that

⁵² Dieter Rucht, “The Quadruple ‘A’: Media Strategies of Protest Movements Since the 1960s,” in *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens, and Social Movements*, ed. Wim van de Donk, Brian D. Loader, Paul G. Nixon, and Dieter Rucht (New York: Routledge, 2004), 29.

⁵³ William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, “Framing Political Opportunity,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarty, and Mayer N. Zald (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 287.

⁵⁴ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 167.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Rucht, “The Quadruple ‘A’: Media Strategies of Protest Movements Since the 1960s,” 33.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gamson and Meyer, “Framing Political Opportunity,” 288.

“winning media attention requires strategies and tactics exactly opposite to those needed to win political standing within established institutions. The media rewards novelty, polemic, and confrontation, but institutional politics prizes predictability, moderation, and compromise.”⁵⁹ If movements fail to provide a compelling spectacle, they may not receive media coverage. Conversely, if they provide a spectacle that is too disruptive, violent, or destructive, they may not reap potential rewards or concessions from the institutions they are redressing their grievances to. Extremist groups, however, often depend on violent actions and the attention it brings.

Terrorist and extremist groups communicate with publics, governments, and media using a similar method. Nacos frames them as the “Triangles of Political Communication.”⁶⁰ In this framework, terrorists are able to communicate with domestic and international publics and governments through the media.⁶¹ What distinguishes Nacos’s paradigm from the previously mentioned framework is the use of the Internet. Nacos argues that the Internet circumvents the triangles of communication and “instead of depending solely on traditional media or traditional alternative media, individuals and all kinds of groups and organizations, including terrorists now have direct, easy, and fairly inexpensive access to computer-aided communication, most of all on social networks.”⁶² Pre-Internet, media organizations were able to mediate and censor political violence committed by terrorists. Now, terrorists have the ability to circumvent prior obstacles, directly engage in mass communication, and use violence to bolster visibility. If the information is available on the Internet and most of the public can freely access it; the media becomes obliged to cover, broadcast, and print it. Terrorists’ engagement in direct mass communication on the Internet has been significant, but it has not diminished the significance of traditional forms of media.⁶³

⁵⁹ Gamson and Meyer, “Framing Political Opportunity,” 288.

⁶⁰ Brigitte L. Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: Mainstream and Digital Media in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 32.

⁶¹ Ibid., 33.

⁶² Ibid., 36.

⁶³ Ibid., 175.

Nacos argues that terrorists rely on traditional media to achieve their media related goals.⁶⁴ These goals involve four communication related imperatives: public attention and intimidation; recognition of grievances and demands; respect and sympathy; and a degree of legitimacy.⁶⁵ To gain public attention and intimidation, terrorists use violence or spectacle to incite fear and anxiety within a society.⁶⁶ Once terrorists capture the attention of a society and are able to disseminate their motives and ideology, recognition of grievances and demands has occurred.⁶⁷ They gain respect and sympathy from their constituencies following a successful, well-publicized violent act.⁶⁸ They achieve a sense of legitimacy when they are acknowledged by adversarial leaders and governments.⁶⁹ The public, however, is increasingly getting its news from sources other than traditional media and most of those sources come from the Internet.

As Nacos mentioned, the Internet has yet to surpass the significance of traditional media for terrorist groups and the same is true for social movements.⁷⁰ Rucht argues that it will not “devalue the traditional mass media, which, as pre-selectors of credible information and as ‘serious’ political commentators, remain crucial to the broader populace to which most movements seek to appeal.”⁷¹ Traditional mass media remains paramount to the communication objectives of movements, but the methods by which the public is getting their news is undergoing change.

5. Social Movements and National Security

How social movements use media and social media, in a broad stroke, has been covered within this review, but literature related to national security is in transition in

⁶⁴ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, 37.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 38–41.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 175.

⁷¹ Rucht, “The Quadruple ‘A’: Media Strategies of Protest Movements Since the 1960s,” 30.

regard to future electronic surveillance outside of the United States because of the rapidly changing technology as well as the nature of the threat. The U.S. has used the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA) to conduct surveillance on non-U.S. citizens since its inception and its use has been well studied.⁷² Newer studies, however, have shifted away from solely relying on surveillance and censorship to combat the cause of extremism. Speckhard, Shajkovci, and Yayla argue that it is necessary to meet “ISIS’ online outreach methods, specifically by using graphically visual and emotionally compelling materials and standing up city-wide helplines and rapid intervention teams to actually reach out to vulnerable persons who are entering or are already on the terrorist trajectory.”⁷³ Other studies recommend that combatting extremism should be a multilateral approach that involves governments, academics, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁷⁴ There is a common theme, however, in that the majority of these studies focus solely on extremism derivative of Islamic faith, originating from the Middle East. This is problematic because such policies affect more than just the targeted groups.

The USA PATRIOT Act amended FISA in 2001 and extended the reach of counterterrorism surveillance by including domestic terrorism.⁷⁵ The function of domestic electronic surveillance in support of counterterrorism efforts post-9/11 is a point of contention among surveillance and civil liberties advocates. Janbek and Williams conclude that the Internet is a “key part of counterterrorism efforts, as it is an integral part

⁷² United States Congress, *Foreign Intelligence and Surveillance Act of 1978*, U.S. Government Publishing Office, October 25, 1978, accessed February 4, 2017, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg1783.pdf>.

⁷³ Anne Speckhard, Ardian Shajkovci, and Ahmet S. Yayla, “Defeating Isis on the Battleground as well as in the Online Battle Space: Considerations of the ‘New Normal’ and Available Online Weapons in the Struggle Ahead,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 9, no. 4 (2016), 9, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.9.4.1560>.

⁷⁴ Sharyl N. Cross, “Russia and Countering Violent Extremism in the Internet and Social Media: Exploring Prospects for U.S.-Russia Cooperation Beyond the ‘Reset,’” *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 4 (2013), 20, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.6.4.1>.

⁷⁵ United States Congress, *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act) Act of 2001*, October 24, 2001, accessed February 4, 2017, <https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ56/PLAW-107publ56.pdf>.

of some terrorist organization' strategies and operations.”⁷⁶ In the study, however, they do not advocate a position favoring the government's support of domestic surveillance or the oppositional stance taken by civil liberties advocates. Some studies conclude that the civil liberties argument is derivative of culture. Deflem and McDonough argue that surveillance critics are less concerned about incidents involving civil liberties violations and that grievances can “be viewed as a manifestation of certain cultural sensitivities related to privacy rights and personal liberties.”⁷⁷ They attribute their conclusion to the population's receding fear of potential terrorist attacks since 9/11.⁷⁸ Even if criticism involving civil liberties is due to cultural sensitivities, it may be having a negative impact on counterterrorism policy. In a 2012 study, Best, Krueger, and Pearson-Merkowitz found that a significant number of ordinary Americans feel anxious about domestic surveillance and that it has a negative impact on their attitudes regarding domestic counterterrorism policy.⁷⁹ If this is indeed the case, the surveillance of domestic social movements will likely reaffirm suspicions and contribute to the current climate of anxiety that exists within the American population. It may be perceived that current surveillance policy fails to balance rights with security and that it interferes with the normal democratic process as it pertains to social movements. Surveillance, however, is not limited to extremist movements.

There are few national security related studies that pertain to social movements. Many of studies that do involve surveillance demonstrate how they negatively impact civil liberties. Surveillance on domestic social movements is not a new in the United States. The notorious Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), established by the

⁷⁶ Dana Janbek and Valerie Williams, “The Role of the Internet Post-9/11 in Terrorism and Counterterrorism,” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2014), 306, <https://www.brown.edu/initiatives/journal-world-affairs/sites/brown.edu/initiatives/journal-world-affairs/files/private/articles/Janbek.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Mathieu Deflem and Shannon McDonough, “The Fear of Counterterrorism: Surveillance and Civil Liberties Since 9/11,” *Society* 52, no. 1 (2015), 70, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12115-014-9855-1>.

⁷⁸ Deflem and McDonough, “The Fear of Counterterrorism,” 77.

⁷⁹ Samuel J. Best, Brian S. Krueger, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, “Al Qaeda Versus Big Brother: Anxiety About Government Monitoring and Support for Domestic Counterterrorism Policies,” *Political Behavior* 34, no. 2 (2012), 607, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11109-011-9177-6>.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1956, used clandestine operations and surveillance to collect intelligence on the Communist Party of the United States.⁸⁰ COINTELPRO was later expanded in the 1960s to cover extremist groups,⁸¹ but the program also targeted mainstream civil rights groups such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).⁸² Congress ceased its operations in 1971 and its existence has remained a blemish on the FBI's history.⁸³ Surveillance on domestic social movements still occurs. In a 2014 study, Rafail analyzed a database of 409 social movements in Philadelphia and found that over 23% of them were under electronic surveillance.⁸⁴ He refers to modern surveillance on social movements as covert repression and states that it is "primarily directed at the peace, environmental, animal rights, other progressive, and conservative/right movements as well as groups that operate largely outside of public view."⁸⁵ A 2008 study conducted by Starr et al. finds that the "lack of clarity about who is targeted for surveillance has led to a rationalization of repression, taking the form of blaming young people for their repression...and little support for...defendants and others facing illegal investigations, 'terrorist' indictments, absurd bonds, and decades-long sentences for non-violent political activities."⁸⁶ Participants in movements fear the consequences of surveillance and either go underground or cease their association with their movement.⁸⁷ In February 2017, a judge ordered the New York City Police Department to release records of undercover

⁸⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "COINTELPRO," FBI's FOIA Library, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://vault.fbi.gov/cointel-pro>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Seeta Pena Gangadharan, "From COINTELPRO to Prism," *Washington Informer*, June 27, 2013, accessed February 12, 2017, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1411092115?accountid=12702>.

⁸³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "COINTELPRO."

⁸⁴ Patrick Rafail, "What Makes Protest Dangerous? Ideology, Contentious Tactics, and Covert Surveillance," in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change, Volume 37*, ed. Lynne M. Woehrle Greenwich: JAI Press, 2014, 256, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X20140000037026>.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 256–257.

⁸⁶ Amory Starr, et al., "The Impacts of State Surveillance on Political Assembly and Association: A Socio-Legal Analysis," *Qualitative Sociology* 31, no. 3 (2008), 266–267, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-008-9107-z>.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 267.

surveillance that it conducted on Black Lives Matter in 2014.⁸⁸ Repression, whether overt or covert can lead to extremism and violence because it can limit or eliminate actual or perceived political opportunities for movements.

Social movements, whether reformist, revolutionary, or radical, are more similar than assumed at face value. They all exist within the realm of contentious politics, use sustained collective action to challenge powerful opponents, and ultimately function to achieve political ends. There is, however, disparity between reformist movements, radical movements, and the means they use to achieve their political ends—namely violence. Radical groups are often a product of failed or ineffective social movements and rely on a repertoire of violence due to limited political opportunities. Non-radical and radical movements use media in a similar way to create political opportunities. The role of traditional media remains significant, but trends indicate that social media will become more prevalent in the future. The symbiotic relationship between traditional media and social media provides political opportunities for non-radical and radical movements and enables the movements to directly communicate with a global audience. The state is faced with a complicated problem trying to balance rights because both types of movements use social media as a platform to create political opportunities.

E. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The literature reviewed provides the foundation for comparing BLM to ISIS. First, both are social movements. They are engaged in sustained collective action to challenge more powerful opponents in order to achieve political objectives. As with other social movements, radical or otherwise, they both need media to achieve their political objectives; however, their different objectives shape this relationship. BLM is a non-violent reformist movement that aims to bring change into existing institutions to achieve political objectives. ISIS is a radical revolutionary movement that uses violent tactics to drastically alter or replace existing institutions. Second, both movements use media to

⁸⁸ Aaron Morrison, “Activists Win Access to NYPD’s Black Lives Matter Surveillance Files,” *Mic*, February 8, 2017, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://mic.com/articles/168043/activists-win-access-to-nypd-s-black-lives-matter-surveillance-files#.s5jhaTpoG>.

create political opportunities by getting the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations. Third, both movements use social media as a means to directly communicate with governments, populations, and news organizations. A study of the two movements' relationship with media will help narrow down fundamental differences between them and demonstrate how existing national security strategies may complicate how the state balances rights and security.

This thesis asks the question of what is the difference between the use and purpose of social media by these two different movements and what are the implications of national security strategies designed for external terrorist movements upon domestic movements? The initial hypothesis this thesis will explore is that both movements use social media to communicate with governments, populations, and news organizations, but their purpose is different; while one seeks to gain sympathizers within institutional structures, the other is seeking recruits to overthrow institutional structures. Therefore, their objectives shape the relationship with media and therefore, civil society. Additionally, the use of existing national security policy and strategy, designed for extraneous terrorist threats, on domestic non-violent movements will likely result in negative outcomes and unintended consequences at the domestic front.

F. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis compares the use of social media by ISIS and BLM using a comparative framework and it applies existing national security policy and strategy to that framework. Analyzing the use of social media by these movements helped identify differences between how the movements use social media. The application of existing national security policy and strategy to the comparative framework helps us understand the potential outcomes of non-radical domestic social movements affected by that policy and strategy.

Comparing the different use of social media and the purpose it serves between groups like ISIS and BLM help us to understand how an effective policy for threats abroad could potentially have negative effects on domestic non-radical movements. The case studies of ISIS and BLM contain multiple primary and secondary sources which

construct a comparative framework. Primary sources for ISIS include news media websites, such as *The Atlantic* and BBC; government documents and blogs. Primary sources for BLM include social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter; news media websites, such as Fox News and CNN; news articles from sources such as *The New York Post* and *The New York Times*; government documents, and BLM websites. Secondary sources for both ISIS and BLM include peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books.

The analysis of existing national security policy and strategy and its application to the comparative framework include both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include government websites and official documents; news media websites, and interviews to examine past and current policy. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books to support arguments in favor of national security recommendations.

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II. CURRENT ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE POLICY: IS THE PUBLIC AT RISK?

Sims and Gerber argue that intelligence policy “involves decisions about risk versus gain, the adjustment of means to ends, embedding innovation with proven tradecraft and questions of public tolerance.”⁸⁹ Intelligence policy over the course of U.S. history captures the essence of this argument. Historically, a national security threat emerges, the state implements an over-reactive policy to combat the threat, and a period of reform and adjustments follows. History also indicates that during these periods of overreach, segments of the domestic, such as social movements, public become targets as a result of these policies. Currently, the terrorist threat in the U.S. has yet to diminish and post-9/11 intelligence policy has been mostly left intact. This chapter argues that while the current domestic intelligence policy emerging out of 9/11 does not directly place segments of the domestic public at risk of unlawful surveillance or such activities, the use of unregulated services in the private sector being used by law enforcement and other government agencies do put domestic groups engaged in democratic activities at risk.

This chapter is partitioned into four sections. The first section provides a historical summary of domestic intelligence policy in the United States. This section establishes the cyclical nature of U.S. intelligence policy and demonstrates how its attempts at targeting national security negatively impacted groups in the domestic population. The second section expands on current policy, its reach, and some of its more controversial elements. The third section examines current policy, how it permits the electronic surveillance of radical groups on social media, and whether or not other groups in the domestic public are at risk. Additionally, this section provides greater detail on policy and law which permit the electronic surveillance of U.S. citizens and methods by which surveillance may be conducted on social media. The final section is comprised of findings and conclusions. This section expands on current policy and practices in a

⁸⁹ Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber, “Introduction” in *Transforming U.S. Intelligence*, ed. Jennifer E. Sims and Burton Gerber (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2005), xii.

domestic political context to understand how groups other than national security threats are at risk of having their democratic activities undermined.

A. THE HISTORY OF INTELLIGENCE POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES

Intelligence policy, in its current manifestation, did not exist when the United States was founded in 1776. However, the Constitution of the United States of America provided rights for citizens that would later put limitations on the reach of intelligence policy. Lowenthal argues that “the bill of rights (Amendments I-X) establishes citizens’ rights that have to be taken into account in intelligence activities.”⁹⁰ These rights include the “freedom of speech and the press (First Amendment); no search and seizure of personal possessions without a specific warrant showing causes (Fourth Amendment); no deprivation of life or liberty without due process of the law (Fifth Amendment); and no cruel or unusual punishment (Eighth amendment).”⁹¹ Over time, these rights have provided guidelines and limitations for drafting and implementing policy; however, they have historically been infringed upon in support of national security objectives.

The strength of Constitutional rights was tested early in U.S. history. The Sedition Act of 1798 is perhaps the earliest and most flagrant violation of these rights. Treverton states that the “Alien and Sedition Acts were passed in 1798 in response to concerns that social upheaval like that seen in the French Revolution would occur in the United States.”⁹² The Sedition Act “outlawed conspiracies ‘to oppose any measure or measures of the government.’ Going further, the act made it illegal for anyone to express ‘any false, scandalous and malicious writing’ against Congress or the president.”⁹³ This legislation not only targeted political dissent among the general population, it also allowed the Federalist majority to attack political opposition and many considered it a violation of the

⁹⁰ Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2017), 35.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹² Gregory F. Treverton, *Reorganizing U.S. Domestic Intelligence: Assessing the Options* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2008), 6.

⁹³ Constitutional Rights Foundation, “The Alien and Sedition Acts: Defining American Freedom,” Constitutional Rights Foundation, accessed June 2, 2017, <http://www.crf-usa.org/america-responds-to-terrorism/the-alien-and-sedition-acts.html>.

First Amendment.⁹⁴ The act later expired as scheduled and was not renewed by the newly elected President, Thomas Jefferson, in 1801. Schaefer argues that “during subsequent episodes of wartime, Congress enacted laws that restricted civil liberties (using the same national security arguments that underlay the Alien and Sedition Acts), but never to the extent that the Alien and Sedition laws of 1798 did.”⁹⁵

Domestic intelligence policy in the United States is cyclical. Treverton argues that “gathering intelligence at home is as old as the Republic. It was, however, the twentieth century that saw domestic intelligence increasing formalized in government institutions and that also witnessed several cycles of what was perceived as excessive zealotry followed by retrenchment.”⁹⁶ There are multiple examples of this cycle throughout the twentieth century. The outbreak of World War I, for example, resulted in new policies being enacted to support national security at the expense of civil liberties.

World War I presented the United States with the national security threat “of German agents, including sabotage and espionage.”⁹⁷ To combat this threat, Congress passed a series of legislation to expand domestic intelligence activities. Two major policies, the Espionage Act of 1917 and its amendment, the Sedition Act of 1918, “made it a crime to ‘willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of the Government of the United States’ or to ‘willfully urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of the production’ of the things ‘necessary or essential to the prosecution of the war.’”⁹⁸ The policies, however, were left in place following World War I to combat the growing threat of militant and anarchist groups.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Constitutional Rights Foundation, “The Alien and Sedition Acts: Defining American Freedom.”

⁹⁵ Agnes Gerben Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States: Lessons for Assessing the Creation of a New Counterterrorism Intelligence Agency” in *The Challenge of Domestic Intelligence in a Free Society: A Multidisciplinary Look at the Creation of a U.S. Domestic Counterterrorism Intelligence Agency*, ed. Brian A. Jackson (Santa Monica: Rand, 2009), 15.

⁹⁶ Treverton, *Reorganizing U.S. Domestic Intelligence*, 6.

⁹⁷ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 19.

⁹⁸ Public Broadcasting Corporation, “The Sedition Act of 1918: From the United States Statutes at Large, V. 40. (April 1917- March 1919),” Public Broadcasting Corporation, accessed June 3, 2017, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/capitalism/sources_document1.html.

⁹⁹ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 20.

These policies, and others of this time, led “to the ‘Palmer Raids’ and the detention of some 10,000 suspected Communists and Communist Labor Party members in 33 cities” in the 1920s.¹⁰⁰ The Sedition Act of 1918 was repealed in 1920 following the Palmer Raids, but most of Espionage Act of 1917 remained intact and still does to this day.

Despite the modest reforms to post-World War I intelligence policy, overreach continued. Treverton argues that, “in later years, as the definition of threats broadened and the range of people subject to domestic intelligence attention increased, the FBI built lists of people labeled as Communists, subversives, and threats of other kinds.”¹⁰¹ As a result, “domestic organizations, beginning with Communist groups, hate groups, civil rights groups, and antiwar organizations” became targets throughout the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁰² This continued throughout the 1960s and over these decades, intelligence agencies developed multiple programs which conducted surveillance on American citizens. The FBI’s Communist Infiltration program (COMINFIL), for example, generated files on about 432,000 individuals and groups by 1960.¹⁰³ Another FBI program, COINTELPRO, established in 1956 to infiltrate communist organizations, was later used to collect intelligence and conduct clandestine operations on civil rights and anti-war activists.¹⁰⁴ The CIA program, Operation CHAOS, was established in 1967 due to “White House pressure for intelligence about foreign influence on American dissent,” but largely focused on anti-war and civil rights activists.¹⁰⁵ While active, Operation CHAOS “amassed thousands of files on Americans, indexed hundreds of thousands of Americans into its computer records, and disseminated thousands of reports about Americans to the FBI and other government offices.”¹⁰⁶ However, the 1970s brought about a period of reform.

¹⁰⁰ Treverton, *Reorganizing U.S. Domestic Intelligence*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 34.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 33, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 33–4, 38.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 34.

Treverton argues that “in their time, the Alien and Sedition Acts and Palmer Raids after World War I eventually came to be perceived as abuses of power; in the 1970s, the nation reacted similarly to the post-World War II expansion of domestic intelligence.”¹⁰⁷ The findings of the Church and Pike Committees in the early 1970s brought about more drastic reforms than those that had followed the post-World War I policies. The committees’ investigations found that the government agencies engaged in domestic intelligence lacked adequate oversight, were politically influenced, and had used their “powers inappropriately and in some cases illegally.”¹⁰⁸ As Treverton argues, “those investigations and their aftermath set the context for domestic intelligence in the United States until September 11.”¹⁰⁹ From a policy standpoint, that context was set with the passing of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

B. DOMESTIC U.S. INTELLIGENCE POLICY TODAY

The passing of FISA in 1978 altered post-World War II intelligence policy by increasing the oversight of surveillance activities and establishing guidelines for how surveillance was to be conducted in the United States. FISA “established the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Courts (FISC), one at the district court level for initial review of surveillance applications, and one at the appellate level should the government appeal a district level denial of an application.”¹¹⁰ Additionally, the act “provided special procedures for conducting electronic surveillance for foreign intelligence purposes and provided a framework for the surveillance of U.S. citizens and others who the court determined to be potential agents of a foreign power.”¹¹¹ Subsequent amendments in the 1990s expanded FISA authority. These amendments, however, were modest compared to the changes that would occur in the twenty-first century.

¹⁰⁷ Treverton, *Reorganizing U.S. Domestic Intelligence*, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ James H. McAdams III, “Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA): An Overview,” Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, accessed June 3, 2017, https://www.fletc.gov/sites/default/files/imported_files/training/programs/legal-division/downloads-articles-and-faqs/research-by-subject/miscellaneous/ForeignIntelligenceSurveillanceAct.pdf, 2.

¹¹¹ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 39.

The attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, reshaped U.S. domestic intelligence policy into what it is currently. Following the attack, Congress passed sweeping legislation to counter the prevailing terrorist threat. The most significant of this legislation is the United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (USA PATRIOT Act) in October 2001. The Act was designed for four primary purposes: “enhancing the federal government’s capacity to share intelligence;” “strengthening the criminal laws against terrorism;” “removing obstacles to investigating terrorism;” “and updating the law to reflect new technology.”¹¹² It did so by easing “restrictions on the government’s ability to collect information regarding people’s activities and conversations, both in domestic criminal investigations and in the realms of foreign intelligence gathering and national security.”¹¹³ Since its passing, the PATRIOT Act has by-in-large been left intact despite having been drafted with multiple sunset provisions. Liu and Doyle state that “subsequent legislation made most of these changes permanent. However, a number of authorities affecting the collection of foreign intelligence information are still temporary.”¹¹⁴ One example of the subsequent legislation is the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, which granted “immunity to telecommunications companies that cooperate with federal law enforcement agencies by providing personal records of suspected individuals, and it allows the government to conduct warrantless surveillance for up to a week instead of the previously allowed 48 hours.”¹¹⁵

Post-9/11 intelligence policies are criticized for their overreach and infringement of civil liberties like other intelligence policies throughout U.S. history. The Council on Foreign Relations states that “in 2005, the Bush administration came under fire from Democrats and activist groups after press reports disclosed the National Security

¹¹² McAdams, “Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA),” 6.

¹¹³ Edward C. Liu and Charles Doyle, “Government Collection of Private Information: Background and Issues Related to the USA Patriot Act Reauthorization,” Congressional Research Service, June 16, 2011, 1.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, summary.

¹¹⁵ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 43.

Agency's warrantless wiretapping program.”¹¹⁶ This criticism, however, crosses partisan cleavages. In 2013, the Obama administration also faced scrutiny following the leak of two National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance programs, which operated under the legal framework of the USA PATRIOT Act and FISA, by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. One of these programs, PRISM, allowed “the U.S. intelligence community to gain access from nine Internet companies to a wide range of digital information, including emails and stored data, on foreign targets operating outside the United States.”¹¹⁷ Skype, YouTube, Facebook, and Google are some examples of the nine companies identified in the leak.¹¹⁸ Much of the data obtained by the NSA through PRISM was on U.S. citizens. It was argued however, that PRISM was legally sanctioned “under Section 702 of FISA that permits the targeting of non-U.S. persons abroad without individualized court orders.”¹¹⁹ As of 2017, the NSA is “no longer collecting Americans’ emails and texts exchanged with people overseas that simply mention identifying terms—like email address—for foreigners the agency is spying on, but are neither to nor from those targets.”¹²⁰

The USA Freedom Act of 2015 was initially designed to quell the criticism that followed the Snowden leaks, but it came up short. Early drafts of the bill banned “the bulk collection of data of Americans’ telephone records and Internet metadata” and limited “the government’s data collection to the ‘greatest extent reasonably practical.’”¹²¹ However, reforms to the USA PATRIOT Act were minimal. The USA Freedom Act provides some additional oversight by providing “the government with new reporting

¹¹⁶ Newsteam Staff, “U.S. Domestic Surveillance,” Council on Foreign Relations, updated December 18, 2013, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-domestic-surveillance>.

¹¹⁷ Washington Post, “NSA Slides Explain the PRISM Data-collection Program,” *The Washington Post*, updated July 10, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/special/politics/prism-collection-documents/>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Newsteam Staff, “U.S. Domestic Surveillance.”

¹²⁰ Charlie Savage, “NSA Ends Controversial Part of Warrantless Surveillance Program,” *The Seattle Times*, updated April 28, 2017, <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nsa-halts-collection-of-americans-emails-about-foreign-surveillance-targets/>.

¹²¹ Washington Post, “USA Freedom Act: What’s in, What’s Out,” *The Washington Post*, June 2, 2015, accessed June 3, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/usa-freedom-act/>.

requirements to FISA authorities and requiring the FISC “to designate a panel of ‘amicus curiae,’ or advocates, to represent the public’s interest in cases that involve novel or significant legal issues.”¹²² Additionally, it provides slightly more transparency by giving “private companies more opportunities to publically report information about the number of FISA orders they receive” and declassifying “FISA court opinions that contain significant legal interpretations, or, if declassification is not possible, requires that a summary is provided.”¹²³ Overall though, the act bolstered existing policy. It left bulk data collection in place, increased “the maximum penalty for material support to terrorism,” and extended “the expiration of three PATRIOT Act provisions—Section 215, roving wiretaps, and the lone wolf surveillance authority—to December 2019.”¹²⁴

C. INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The following section will examine how domestic intelligence policy permits the electronic surveillance of radical groups on social media and determine whether or not other groups in the domestic public are at risk. This section discusses the role of radical groups on social media, policies which enable the intelligence community to conduct electronic surveillance on radical groups using social media, and whether or not non-radical groups are at risk.

Conducting surveillance on radical groups by way of social media is necessary because these groups use it to achieve strategic objectives. Fidler states that “policymakers have long feared terrorists will exploit the Internet for propaganda, recruiting, fundraising, and cyberattacks.”¹²⁵ He continues by arguing that “although terrorists have not yet shown much interest or skill in cyberattacks, their use of the Internet to communicate led to expanded government surveillance, sanctions against

¹²² Washington Post, “USA Freedom Act.”

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ David P. Fidler, “Countering Islamic State Exploitation of the Internet,” Council on Foreign Relations, June 18, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/report/countering-islamic-state-exploitation-Internet>.

incitement of terrorism, and effort against extremist radicalization and violence.”¹²⁶ Social media has become the choice Internet medium for radical groups, such as *al-Qaeda* and ISIS, to radicalize individuals, recruit prospective followers, disseminate propaganda, and engage in global communication. In 2013, Von Behr, Reding, Edwards, and Gribbon conducted a comparative analysis on fifteen case studies and concluded that the Internet and social media in particular, has an impact on radicalization. Their findings indicate that “the Internet creates more opportunities to become radicalized;” “the Internet may provide a greater opportunity than offline interactions to confirm existing beliefs;” and the Internet facilitates the radicalization process.¹²⁷ The role of social media has expanded the reach of radical organizations. ISIS for example, has carried out or inspired over 140 attacks in 29 countries since February of 2017.¹²⁸ Social media played a role in many of these attacks.¹²⁹ Easterly and Geltzer argue that “so-called lone actors may be inspired by the recruitment videos and hashtag campaigns delivered via social media by the Islamic State and other terrorist groups.”¹³⁰ The use of social media by radical groups and the security concerns it presents to governments and populations makes electronic surveillance of social media necessary. It may provide law enforcement and intelligence agencies with valuable information that could help thwart potential attacks.

The surveillance of social media falls under the broader category of electronic surveillance. FISA is the primary legislative framework which allows the IC to conduct surveillance on radical groups extraneous to the United States. According to Liu and Doyle, “FISA governs the gathering of information about foreign powers, including

¹²⁶ Fidler, “Countering Islamic State Exploitation of the Internet.”

¹²⁷ Ines von Behr, Anais Reding, Charlie Edwards, and Luke Gribbon, “Radicalisation in the Digital Era,” Rand, 2013, xii, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR453/RAND_RR453.pdf.

¹²⁸ Tim Lister et al., “ISIS goes Global: 143 Attacks in 29 Countries Have Killed 2043,” CNN, February 13, 2017, accessed February 25, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/17/world/mapping-isis-attacks-around-the-world/>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Jen Easterly and Joshua A. Geltzer, “The Islamic State and the End of Lone-Wolf Terrorism,” *Foreign Policy*, May 23, 2017, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/23/the-islamic-state-and-the-end-of-lone-wolf-terrorism/>.

international terrorist organizations such as *al Qaeda*, and their agents.”¹³¹ FISA authorizes court ordered and non-court ordered electronic surveillance. For court ordered authorization, the FISC reviews requests from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and upon approval, provides a warrant for electronic surveillance.¹³² This process requires that the applicant, the DOJ or intelligence agencies, for an electronic surveillance warrant demonstrate to the court that “the target of the electronic surveillance is a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power;” “each of the facilities or places at which the electronic surveillance is directed is being used, or is about to be used, by a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power;” “a statement of the proposed minimization procedures;” among other requirements.¹³³ Additionally, it requires the approval of the Attorney General.¹³⁴ Non-court ordered electronic surveillance must be authorized by the President through the Attorney General and may only be authorized for up to one year.¹³⁵ To do this, the Attorney General must certify in writing and under oath that “the acquisition of the contents of communications transmitted by means of communications used exclusively between or among foreign powers”; “the acquisition of technical intelligence...from property or premises under the open and exclusive control of a foreign power”; that “there is no substantial likelihood that the surveillance will acquire the contents of any communication to which a United States person is a party”; and that minimization procedures are in place.¹³⁶ Subsequent legislation, however, has altered this process.

¹³¹ Liu and Doyle, “Government Collection of Private Information,” 7.

¹³² U.S. Department of Justice, “The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA),” U.S. Department of Justice, updated September 19, 2013, <https://it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty/authorities/statutes/1286>.

¹³³ Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1804 (a)(3)(A)(B)(4), Cornell Law School, accessed 10 June, 2017, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/50/1804>.

¹³⁴ Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1804 (d)(1)(2), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/50/1804>.

¹³⁵ Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1802 (a)(1), Cornell Law School, accessed 10 June, 2017, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/50/1802>.

¹³⁶ Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1802 (a)(1).

As discussed, subsequent amendments to FISA such as the USA PATRIOT Act, the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, and the USA Freedom Act have expanded FISA's reach. Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008, for example, may be the most contentious change to FISA in recent history. Section 702 "facilitates the targeted acquisition of foreign intelligence information concerning foreign targets located outside the United States under court oversight."¹³⁷ Mann states that it "has sparked concern about the potential for warrantless surveillance of U.S. persons."¹³⁸ He argues, however, that, "Section 702 explicitly prohibits both the direct and indirect intentional targeting of U.S. persons or of any person known to be in the U.S., the communications of some U.S. persons are occasionally collected in the course of legitimate operations."¹³⁹ His assessment of Section 702 determines that the collection of data on U.S. citizens was not intentional. He argues that, "compliance issues are not willful violations. Rather, they are often the result of changes or weaknesses in software technology, computer errors, or operator mistakes, each of which is reported as an incident."¹⁴⁰

The PRISM program, under Section 702 and the metadata collection program under Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act were both subject to oversight. Former ODNI General Counsel Robert S. Litt argues that "all three branches of Government knew about these programs, approved them, and helped to ensure that they complied with the law."¹⁴¹ He states that the programs were "authorized by Congress and are carefully overseen by the Congressional intelligence and judiciary committees"; "conducted with the approval of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance court and under its supervision";

¹³⁷ Director of National Intelligence, "Facts on the Collection of Intelligence Pursuant to Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, June 8, 2013, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Facts%20on%20the%20Collection%20of%20Intelligence%20Pursuant%20to%20Section%20702.pdf>.

¹³⁸ Scott F. Mann, "Fact Sheet: FISA Section 702," Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 27, 2014, accessed 12 June, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/fact-sheet-fisa-section-702>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Robert S. Litt, "An Overview of Intelligence Collection," Office of the Director of National Intelligence: IC on the Record, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Tumblr (blog), July 18, 2013, <https://icontherecord.tumblr.com/post/57724442606/privacy-technology-national-security-an>.

and were “subject to extensive, court-ordered oversight by the Executive Branch.”¹⁴² The government argues that PRISM and the collection program developed under Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act “disrupted more than 50 terrorist plots in the United States and abroad, including a plan to bomb the New York Stock Exchange.”¹⁴³ Despite the controversy surrounding Section 702 and Section 215, their existence can be justified. First, both PRISM and the metadata collection program were permitted by law. Second, both programs were subject to extensive oversight and approval by all three branches of government. Third, Section 702 prohibits the collection of data on U.S. citizens and the metadata collection program under Section 215 requires a subpoena and FISC approval to collect data.¹⁴⁴ Finally, it can be argued that the programs were effective in stopping terrorist attacks. For electronic surveillance to be legally conducted on U.S. citizens, it must undergo extensive judicial review under FISA and criminal law.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, FISA “established the only circumstances under which an electronic surveillance could lawfully be conducted in the United States for the purpose of collecting foreign intelligence or foreign counterintelligence.”¹⁴⁵ However, those persons must be either a foreign power or agents of a foreign power.¹⁴⁶ The law authorizes the surveillance of U.S. persons if they are determined to be “an agent of a foreign power” under two conditions. First, if the person “knowingly engages in clandestine intelligence gathering activities for a foreign power which activities constitute a violation of U.S. criminal statutes.”¹⁴⁷ Second, if the person “knowingly engages in sabotage or international terrorism, or activities in preparation

¹⁴² Litt, “An Overview of Intelligence Collection.”

¹⁴³ Ellen Nakashima, “Officials: Surveillance Programs Foiled More than 50 Terrorist Plots,” *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2013, accessed June 12, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/officials-surveillance-programs-foiled-more-than-50-terrorist-plots/2013/06/18/d657cb56-d83e-11e2-9df4-895344c13c30_story.html?utm_term=.ae0447e3015c.

¹⁴⁴ Litt, “An Overview of Intelligence Collection.”

¹⁴⁵ McAdams, “Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA),” 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁴⁷ McAdams, “Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).”

therefore, on behalf of a foreign power.”¹⁴⁸ Under FISA, if a U.S. citizen is colluding with a foreign radical organization, that citizen can legally be surveilled. For U.S.-based radical groups, however, surveillance is permitted under the statutory framework of criminal law.

If surveillance is conducted on a U.S. citizen without a foreign connection, the cause must be criminal in nature and it must undergo judicial review and approval. Title III of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act Title III of the Act “authorizes law enforcement agencies to surveil electronic communications during criminal investigations.”¹⁴⁹ To obtain a warrant under this Act, “law enforcement agencies must present a federal court with ‘probable cause’ of a crime.”¹⁵⁰ Judicial oversight is central to the process of obtaining a warrant under Title III. Prior to a judge authorizing a warrant, they require “a detailed description of the suspected criminal activity, time and place of the planned surveillance, ‘minimization’ procedures to ensure private conversations are not recorded, periodic reports to the court, and evidence that all other investigative options have been exhausted.”¹⁵¹

Current intelligence policy and criminal law dictate the procedures necessary for government agencies to conduct electronic surveillance, but the methods used by the IC to conduct surveillance on social media are somewhat nebulous. As the Snowden leaks indicate, the IC has devised creative and sophisticated ways of collecting intelligence on groups and individuals that use social media. However, aside from what was revealed in leaks, the methods and technologies used to conduct surveillance on the Internet and social media are guarded and highly classified. This makes it difficult to ascertain the scope and reach of the programs currently being used by the IC. Lowenthal, however, suggests that there are less intrusive methods by which the IC can conduct surveillance

¹⁴⁸ McAdams, “Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).”

¹⁴⁹ Masood Farivar, “Sorting Out U.S. Surveillance Methods, Laws,” Voice of America, April 12, 2017, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/sorting-out-united-states-surveillance-methods-laws/3807708.html>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

on social media. He argues that, “social media should be considered a subset of OSINT” or open source intelligence.¹⁵² Open source intelligence is unclassified, publically accessible information such as media, academic papers, and other public data.¹⁵³ Since “social media users willingly post their views, photos, and so on to the World Wide Web,” it makes the information publically available.¹⁵⁴ He also argues that, “social media, like all other collection sources, are subject to deception” and it is a raw source of intelligence that “must be assessed—just like any other intelligence—before becoming the basis for substantial reporting.”¹⁵⁵ One method of accumulating and assessing open source intelligence on social media is through social media monitoring software or SMMS.

SMMS services can provide data and analysis for marketing and surveillance purposes via open source information from social media. G2 Crowd states that SMMS, “provides functionality for listening, tracking, and gathering relevant content across wide ranges of social media.”¹⁵⁶ According to the ACLU, “SMMS performs highly sophisticated fishing expeditions across the Internet, using complex algorithms to analyze and organize data into much more than a set of search results.”¹⁵⁷ SMMS is typically used by companies to collect marketing data such as demographics, trends, and brand reputation.¹⁵⁸ However, SMMS may also be used to collect and analyze open source intelligence and—it makes sense. For example, police departments using SMMS services by a company called Geofeedia were able to prevent shootings, combat human

¹⁵² Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, 152.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ G2 Crowd, “Best Social Media Monitoring Software,” G2 Crowd Inc., accessed June 13, 2017, <https://www.g2crowd.com/categories/social-media-monitoring>.

¹⁵⁷ Kimberly McCullough, “Why Government Use of Social Media Monitoring Software is a Direct Threat to Our Liberty and Privacy,” American Civil Liberties Union, May 6, 2016, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/speak-freely/why-government-use-social-media-monitoring-software-direct-threat-our-liberty-and>.

¹⁵⁸ G2 Crowd, “Best Social Media Monitoring Software.”

trafficking, and apprehend vandals.¹⁵⁹ Also, as previously discussed, terrorist organizations use social media to pursue strategic objectives. Perhaps SMMS would be valuable in thwarting terrorist attacks? It can certainly be argued that SMMS services could be valuable to law enforcement and the IC; however, some segments of the domestic public were targeted by law enforcement with the assistance of SMMS. McCullough argues that SMMS “can monitor protests, identify the leaders of political and social movements, and measure our influence.”¹⁶⁰

Police departments have used SMMS services to monitor domestic social movements. The ACLU reports that “analysts at the Oregon Department of Justice used a tool called Digital Stakeout to surveil people—including the department’s very own director of civil rights—who used over 30 hashtags on social media, such as #BlackLivesMatter and #fuckthepolice.”¹⁶¹ They also found that the Fresno Police Department “was using a MediaSonar social media surveillance tool that boasted the capacity to identify so-called ‘threats to public safety’ by monitoring hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter, #DontShoot, #ImUnarmed, #PoliceBrutality, and #ItsTimeforChange.”¹⁶² Additionally, the ACLU found that the police in San Jose used “Geofeedia software to monitor South Asian, Muslim, and Sikh protesters.”¹⁶³ Also, many SMMS service providers market themselves to law enforcement based on their ability to monitor protests. Records obtained by the ACLU “show that Geofeedia’s marketing materials, for instance, refer to unions and activist groups as ‘overt threats,’ ”

¹⁵⁹ Mike Harris, “Local Law Enforcement Taps Social Media Monitoring Software,” Emergency Management, December 23, 2016, accessed 12 June, 2017, <http://www.govtech.com/em/safety/Local-Law-Enforcement-Taps-Social-Media-Monitoring-Software.html>.

¹⁶⁰ McCullough, “Why Government Use of Social Media Monitoring Software is a Direct Threat to Our Liberty and Privacy.”

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Nicole Ozer, “Police Use of Social Media Surveillance Software is Escalating, and Activists are in the Digital Crosshairs,” Medium, September 22, 2016, accessed 12 June, 2017, https://medium.com/@ACLU_NorCal/police-use-of-social-media-surveillance-software-is-escalating-and-activists-are-in-the-digital-d29d8f89c48#.fowkro6dy.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

and suggest the product can be used in ways that target activists of color.”¹⁶⁴ By October 2016, “Facebook, Instagram, and then Twitter all suspended Geofeedia’s access to their data feeds.”¹⁶⁵ However, he argues that Geofeedia is just one of many companies “offering these services to law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies” and that “the use of social media monitoring, including for real-time protest response and profiling of individuals, is fully entrenched in the modern surveillance state.”¹⁶⁶

D. SUMMARY

Over the course of U.S. history, domestic intelligence policy has been cyclical; a national security threat emerges, over-reactive policy is implemented to combat the threat, and a period of reform follows. During these periods of overreach, other parts of the domestic public were targeted as a result of these policies. Many of the groups targeted in the twentieth century were reformist social movements such as the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war protesters. Near the end of the twentieth century, the findings of the Church and Pike Committees led to sweeping intelligence reform. The most notable reform was the passing of FISA.

The beginning of the twenty-first century, however, brought about new national security threats. In response, the Federal Government implemented new policies to help agencies combat that threat. Currently, the national security threat of terrorism in the U.S. has yet to diminish and post-9/11 intelligence policy was mostly left intact and in many instances, its reach has been extended. To put current policy into perspective, the example of electronic surveillance on social media was used to determine whether or not groups in the domestic population are susceptible to policy overreach as other groups in the past.

¹⁶⁴ Ozer, “Police Use of Social Media Surveillance Software is Escalating, and Activists are in the Digital Crosshairs.”

¹⁶⁵ Kalev Leetaru, “Geofeedia is Just the Tip of the Iceberg: The Era of Social Surveillance,” *Forbes*, October 12, 2016, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2016/10/12/geofeedia-is-just-the-tip-of-the-iceberg-the-era-of-social-surveillance/#5c23ced25b90>.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

Based on the reviewed literature and sources, it does not appear that current domestic intelligence policy poses a risk to groups in the domestic population as it has in the past. This conclusion was arrived at for many reasons. First, U.S. intelligence policy and criminal law prohibits the electronic surveillance of U.S. citizens without a judicial oversight and approval. Second, various agencies and branches of government provide oversight and approval for policy, procedures, programs, and practices used to conduct electronic surveillance. Finally, there are examples of unintentional data collection of U.S. citizens; however, no group within the domestic public has been targeted by the federal government like other groups had been in the first half of the twentieth century. However, electronic surveillance is currently being conducted outside the confines of domestic intelligence policy.

SMMS services, unlike current domestic intelligence policy, can be used to electronically surveil groups in the domestic population. McCullough argues that “by its very nature, SMMS improperly blankets a whole range of innocent people without any evidence of wrongdoing. Instead of specific criminal activity prompting an investigation, investigators use SMMS to cast nets so wide they encompass the entire Internet.”¹⁶⁷ Her argument is analogous to events which happened in the past. Schaefer argues that between the 1950s and 1970s, “the U.S. government cast its widest net ever in an attempt to find communists. This net began with the establishment of the security Index, and continued with the CI, COMINFIL, COINTELPRO, CHAOS, and MINARET programs. The wide net cast by the FBI, CIA, and NSA caught up thousands of innocent Americans.”¹⁶⁸ History demonstrates that casting wide nets can have a negative impact on the domestic public and social movements in particular. Additionally, Ozer states that the ACLU “found no evidence...of any public notice, debate, community input, or lawmaker vote about use of this invasive surveillance” and “no agency produced a use policy that would limit how the tools were used and help protect civil rights and civil

¹⁶⁷ McCullough, “Why Government Use of Social Media Monitoring Software is a Direct Threat to Our Liberty and Privacy.”

¹⁶⁸ Schaefer, “The History of Domestic Intelligence in the United States,” 45.

liberties.”¹⁶⁹ Without policy, oversight, or transparency, the use of SMMS services by law enforcement and the IC could yield unintended consequences. Groups engaged in democratic activities, such as those engaged in collective action, are especially vulnerable to SMMS services and other services like it.

¹⁶⁹ Ozer, “Police Use of Social Media Surveillance Software is Escalating, and Activists are in the Digital Crosshairs.”

III. ISIS: A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY FOR CHAOS

The Internet and social media changed the calculus in the Global War on Terrorism. With these modes of communication, radical organizations are able to expand their sphere of influence by directly communicating with populations beyond regional battlefields. ISIS, in particular, is adept with its use of the Internet and social media and its social media strategy effectively supports its political objectives. The intelligence community depends on the latitude current surveillance policy provides to combat the threat of radical groups in the U.S. and around the world. This chapter examines the origins of ISIS and identifies its political and social media objectives to provide an overview of the group's social media strategy.

A. THE ORIGINS OF ISIS

The emergence of ISIS is as complicated as the debate over its name.¹⁷⁰ The group emerged as a result of the convergence and evolution of multiple militant groups dating back to the Soviet Union's war against the mujahedeen in Afghanistan, which lasted from 1979–1989.¹⁷¹ To understand and simplify the convoluted nature of the organizational development of ISIS, we will focus on two critical factors which led to the creation of ISIS in its modern form: the key players and organizational shifts leading up to its current state and the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. By understanding the key players and organizational interrelationships, one is able to understand the complicated web of organizations and ideology that inevitably shaped ISIS into its current form. Additionally, discussing the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq is significant because it provides context for how various groups got a foothold in the region prior to coalescing into ISIS.

¹⁷⁰ Cecily Hilleary, "What's in a Name? Debating the Islamic State Moniker(s)," Voice of America, updated October 4, 2014, accessed June 22, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/the-isis-isil-debate-whats-in-a-name/2472132.html>.

¹⁷¹ Bill Moyers, "Brief History of al-Qaeda," Bill Moyers Journal, PBS, accessed April 30, 2017, <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07272007/alqaeda.html>.

1. The Organizational Evolution of ISIS

The beginnings of ISIS can be traced to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.¹⁷² His promotion of sectarian and ethnic violence helped shape ISIS' ideological foundation.¹⁷³ He was born in 1966 as Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah to a Bedouin family in Jordan and spent much of his youth as a criminal and in conflict with the Islamic faith.¹⁷⁴ However, his association with multiple militant groups throughout his life enabled him to gain influence and inspire ISIS' ideology. His association with militant groups began when he joined the mujahedeen in Afghanistan at the tail-end of the Soviet-Afghan War in 1989.¹⁷⁵ In 1993, he returned to Jordan and formed *al-Tawhid*, and later *Bayat al-Imam* with other Soviet-Afghan War veterans.¹⁷⁶ The objective of these groups was to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy and establish an Islamic State as they had seen successfully developing with the *Taliban*.¹⁷⁷ This goal, however, would never come to fruition. Al-Zarqawi was sentenced to a Jordanian prison in 1994 for having weapons in his home, but was later released in 1999.¹⁷⁸

In 1999, following his release from Jordanian prison, al-Zarqawi returned to Afghanistan and met with another Soviet-Afghan War veteran Osama bin Laden. The two were introduced through a former Soviet-Afghan militant leader named Abu Kutaiba al-Urduni.¹⁷⁹ During this meeting, bin Laden and al-Zarqawi realized the ideological rifts

¹⁷² Thom Patterson, "The Unlikely Godfather of the Islamic State," CNN, updated July 3, 2016, accessed April 30, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/29/middleeast/declassified-zarqawi-father-of-isis/>.

¹⁷³ Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015, 49.

¹⁷⁴ Mary Anne Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," *The Atlantic*, July/August Issue, updated June 8, 2006, accessed April 30, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/07/the-short-violent-life-of-abu-musab-al-zarqawi/304983/>.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Yonah Alexander and Dean Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders* (New York: Lexington, 2015), 3.

¹⁷⁷ Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi."

¹⁷⁸ Alexander and Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Weaver, "The Short, Violent Life of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi."

between them which led to al-Zarqawi not joining *al-Qaeda*.¹⁸⁰ Al-Zarqawi thought that bin Laden needed to focus more on Israel and was too soft on non-Salafis.¹⁸¹ Bin Laden suspected al-Zarqawi of being a spy for the Jordanian government and was troubled by his propensity for violence and hostility toward the Shia.¹⁸² For the time being, the two would go their separate ways. However, bin Laden provided monetary support for al-Zarqawi to establish a training camp in Herat, Afghanistan where he formed *Jund al-Sham*. Al-Zarqawi established a large network throughout the region that supported militant operations in the years leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq

Al-Zarqawi and bin Laden reunited following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003; however, formal organizational unity did not immediately occur. Al-Zarqawi initially assumed a support role for *al-Qaeda* operations in Iraq. Upon *al-Qaeda*'s request, al-Zarqawi began funneling foreign fighters through Syria into Iraq by way of networks he had established in the years following his first meeting with bin Laden in 1999.¹⁸³ Later, al-Zarqawi merged *Jund al-Sham* with other jihadists and formed *Jama'at al-Tawhid w'al-Jihad* (JTJ).¹⁸⁴ Meanwhile, Islamist groups in the region other than JTJ formed *Jaish Ansar al-Sunna* (JAS).¹⁸⁵ Though being separate, the groups shared similar ambitions and were in line with *al-Qaeda*'s ideology.¹⁸⁶ These groups became the foundation for ISIS in its current form. Atwan argues that "from the outset, all these groups—from which ISIS/IS would emerge—expressed the intention of establishing an Islamic state in Iraq once the invaders had been expelled."¹⁸⁷ In 2004, al-Zarqawi

¹⁸⁰ Alexander and Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders*, 3.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 47.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

formally pledged his loyalty to *al-Qaeda* and renamed his group “*al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers*” also referred to as *al-Qaeda in Iraq* (AQI).¹⁸⁸

Al-Zarqawi’s focus on brutal sectarian violence against non-Salafis, rather than the occupying U.S. forces, and his abrasive personality began to erode his support within the *al-Qaeda* ranks by 2005.¹⁸⁹ This ultimately led to his removal from the *al-Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers*’ leadership.¹⁹⁰ The following year, Al-Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. air strike in Iraq. He was succeeded by Abu Ayyub al-Masri who restructured the group and named it the *Islamic State of Iraq* (ISI).¹⁹¹ Al-Masri’s hold on ISI was short-lived; he was also killed in a U.S. led air strike in 2010. To put an Iraqi face on the group, leadership was given to, ISIS’ current leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.¹⁹² By this time, ISI was primarily comprised of Iraqi fighters including former Baathists and local jihadis whereas former versions of the group were largely comprised of foreign fighters.¹⁹³

ISIS officially declared itself a caliphate in 2014, but many organizations and prominent figures contributed to its development since the Soviet-Afghan War. Al-Zarqawi in particular, left behind an ideological legacy of extreme violence, sectarian conflict, and regional focus that would later shape ISIS’ *modus operandi*. However, the previous chronology only provides organizational and ideological context for the development of ISIS. To understand how ISI and other extremist groups got a foothold in Iraq, one must examine the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

¹⁸⁸ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 49; M. J. Kirdar, “Al-Qaeda in Iraq,” AQAM Futures Project Case Study Series, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011, accessed May 2, 2017, 3, https://csisprod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/legacy_files/files/publication/110614_Kirdar_AlQaedaIraq_Web.pdf.

¹⁸⁹ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 48–51.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 51

¹⁹¹ Alexander and Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders*, 5.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 5–6.

2. The U.S. Occupation of Iraq

The United States declared the end of major hostilities in Iraq on May 1, 2003. The elimination of Saddam Hussein's regime and the Baath government produced a political vacuum. This political vacuum provided early opportunities for the insurgent groups, which would later form ISIS, to establish a presence in the country. Atwan states that "as the U.S. invasion began, Zarqawi met with *al-Qaeda's* military strategist Mohammad Ibrahim Makkawi (one of Saif al-Adel's many aliases) and agreed to help al-Qaeda recruits enter Iraq via Syria."¹⁹⁴ Al-Zarqawi was able to support this endeavor due to the networks he had set up following his meeting with bin Laden in 1999. There are, however, other factors that supported the migration of insurgent groups and foreign fighters to Iraq.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq prompted the migration of insurgency groups into the country, but other factors contributed to efficacy of the groups while in the country and the continued migration of foreign fighters. Much of the sectarian strife in Iraq, following the U.S. invasion in 2003, is a consequence of the U.S. backed Shia political majority put into power following the demise of Hussain's regime. As a central leader of the Shia majority, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, in particular was responsible for eroding relations with the Sunni minority. According to Atwan, Maliki's regime "was as corrupt as any Middle Eastern dictatorship; pro-Iran and openly prejudiced against the Sunni minority, it not only opened sectarian wounds, but allowed them to fester."¹⁹⁵ For example, he was known to squander foreign aid for personal benefit, passed laws that barred former Baath regime members from seeking office, and made key political appointments without parliamentary consent.¹⁹⁶ Actions like these compounded the existing sectarian tension, especially among the Sunni minority.

¹⁹⁴ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 41.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 42, 54.

In 2011, the withdrawal of U.S. forces prompted ISI to embark on a violent campaign that claimed the lives of thousands of Iraqi citizens.¹⁹⁷ This campaign of sectarian violence hit a breaking point in 2013 when the Iraqi government began to violently repress Sunni protests.¹⁹⁸ This violence quickly escalated into a sectarian civil war and during this war, ISI merged with factions of the *al-Nusra Front* from Syria.¹⁹⁹ This deadly force rebranded itself as ISIS and al-Baghdadi declared himself Caliph in July of the following year.²⁰⁰

Some scholars argue that the U.S. shares some responsibility for the formation of ISIS. Atwan argues that many Iraqis viewed the U.S. as crusaders rather than liberators prior the invasion and occupation of Iraq.²⁰¹ The U.S. also backed a Shia government and al-Maliki's regime. Additionally, the Abu Ghraib scandal and other reports of detainee mistreatment contributed to growing resentment toward the U.S. and its allies. Some scholars also argue that the U.S.' premature departure left Iraq in the hands of incompetent leadership.²⁰² The weak Iraqi government enabled insurgent groups to gain a foothold in the country and provided them with an environment in which they could ferment and manifest themselves into what we now know as ISIS. Once in the country, these groups were able to broker alliances with local Sunni tribes and Baathists.²⁰³ These alliances allowed the group to establish, at the very least, an outward appearance of legitimacy among the Sunni population. More so than the Maliki government had been able to accomplish.

ISIS has gained territory and expanded its influence since declaring itself a Caliphate in 2014. According to the BBC, "at its peak, some 10 million people were

¹⁹⁷ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 55.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 55–56.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 56.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 41–42.

²⁰² Ibid., 55.

²⁰³ Ibid., 57.

living in territory under IS control.”²⁰⁴ Recently, however, ISIS held territory is contracting in Iraq and Syria. In January of 2016, ISIS controlled 30,100 square miles of territory in Iraq and Syria, but as of December of 2016, that territory had receded to 23,300 square miles.²⁰⁵ Despite losing territory, ISIS’ influence has grown and the group is suspected to be operational in at least eighteen countries.²⁰⁶ As of 2015, forty-three jihadi groups have either pledged allegiance or support to ISIS.²⁰⁷ In Afghanistan for example, ISIS is flourishing because it established partnerships with other militant groups.²⁰⁸ According to the Department of Defense, ISIS-K or the ISIS-Khorasan, “continues to draw its members from disaffected TTP fighters, former Afghan *Taliban*, and other militants who believe that associating with or pledging allegiance to ISIS-K will further their interests.”²⁰⁹ Additionally, Zahid states that “there are reports of fighters from varied nationalities joining the ranks, including militants from Pakistan, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, and Central Asian Neighbors.”²¹⁰ Each of these countries contains groups that have pledged allegiance or support for ISIS.²¹¹ This allowed ISIS to advance “militarily into areas where it once had a weak presence” and allowed the group to strengthen “its forces in core regions.”²¹²

²⁰⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Islamic State and the Crisis in Iraq and Syria in Maps,” BBC, April 28, 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-27838034>.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ IntelCenter, “Islamic State’s 43 Global Affiliates Interactive World Map,” IntelCenter, accessed June 24, 2017, <https://intelcenter.com/maps/is-affiliates-map.html#gs.1BCDEcQ>.

²⁰⁸ Noor Zahid, “Can Flourishing Islamic State be Stopped in Afghanistan?,” VOA, June 23, 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/can-flourishing-islamic-state-be-stopped-in-afghanistan/3913716.html>.

²⁰⁹ United States Department of Defense, “Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan,” United States Department of Defense, June 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Enhancing-Security-and-Stability-in-Afghanistan-June-2017.pdf>, 23.

²¹⁰ Zahid, “Can Flourishing Islamic State be Stopped in Afghanistan?”

²¹¹ IntelCenter, “Islamic State’s 43 Global Affiliates Interactive World Map.”

²¹² Zahid, “Can Flourishing Islamic State be Stopped in Afghanistan?”

B. THE POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OF ISIS

There is debate over ISIS' overall objectives. Brown argues that ISIS is not an international terrorist organization or a group of fanatics, but a sectarian insurgency whose members join for material incentives and to avoid becoming victims of the group.²¹³ Former President Barack Obama argues that ISIS is not Islamic or a state, but a terrorist organization that exploits sectarian conflict for the purpose of expanding territory and that "it has no vision other than the slaughter of all who stand in its way."²¹⁴ Wood, however, argues that despite objective opinions, "the reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. *Very* Islamic" and that its fundamental, literal interpretation of the faith shapes its objectives—ultimately to bring about the apocalypse.²¹⁵ Lister argues that ISIS intends to establish a global caliphate through global war.²¹⁶ He states that "it aims to replace existing, man-made borders, to overcome what it sees as the Shiite 'crescent' that has emerged across the Middle East, to take its war—Islam's war—to Europe and America, and ultimately to lead Muslims toward an apocalyptic battle against the 'disbelievers.'"²¹⁷

Despite objective contestation, general political objectives can be distilled from these arguments. Most notably, ISIS seeks to firmly establish a regional caliphate and to eventually expand that caliphate on a global scale. It intends to do so by imposing al-Zarqawi's ideological legacy vis á vis eighteenth century Wahhabism, which strictly adheres to Sharia in its literal form.²¹⁸ ISIS employs different strategies for achieving its

²¹³ Cody McClain Brown, "Mobilizing the Caliphate: ISIS and the Conflict in Iraq and Syria," *Croatian Political Science Review* 52, no. 4–5 (2015): 203–209, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1798418034/>.

²¹⁴ Barack Obama, "Transcript: President Obama's Speech on Combating ISIS and Terrorism," CNN, updated September 10, 2014, accessed May 6, 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/10/politics/transcript-obama-syria-isis-speech/index.html?hpt=po_c1.

²¹⁵ Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, accessed 2 May, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

²¹⁶ Tim Lister, "What Does ISIS Really Want?," CNN, updated December 11, 2015, accessed May 6, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/11/middleeast/isis-syria-iraq-caliphate/>.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants."

objectives based on the context and scale of the targeted population. Regionally, it relies on kinetic military actions to expand territory, seeks to recruit local followers, and engage in statecraft activities such as building schools, establishing a currency, resource allocation, and establishing financial independence.²¹⁹ Globally, it aims to radicalize and recruit foreign fighters and to coordinate and inspire attacks. ISIS' use of social media is crucial for achieving both regional and global objectives.

C. SOCIAL MEDIA OBJECTIVES OF ISIS

Identifying the purpose for ISIS using social media is less nebulous and contentious than identifying the group's intent and political objectives, but there is still some debate over the details. For example, NSA Director Admiral Rogers argues that ISIS' main effort in the cyber domain consists of propaganda, recruiting, radicalization, and fundraising.²²⁰ However, ISIS has become less dependent on social media for fundraising. Alexander and Alexander state that "as the group has gained control of more territory, it has been able to sustain its operations through a combination of oil revenues, extortion, border tolls, bank seizures, and granary sales, among others."²²¹ Furthermore, they argue that ISIS' social media strategy intends to "radicalize and recruit prospective followers...propagate its message, intimidate its adversaries, and undertake strategic communications."²²² This strategy falls in line with getting the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations, but it goes slightly beyond those categorical constraints. It not only gets the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations—it calls individuals to action, and propaganda is key to its social media strategy.²²³ To put this into perspective, the following section will examine how ISIS'

²¹⁹ Alexander and Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders*, 40, 64–66, 65–69.

²²⁰ United States Senate, "Statement of Admiral Michael S. Rogers Commander United States Cyber Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," Senate Armed Services Committee, April 5, 2016, 4, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rogers_04-05-16.pdf.

²²¹ Alexander and Alexander, *The Islamic State: Combatting the Caliphate Without Borders*, 62.

²²² *Ibid.*, 55.

²²³ James P. Farwell, "The Media Strategy of ISIS," *Global Politics and Strategy* 56, no. 6 (2014), 52, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.985436>.

social media strategy uses propaganda to propagate its message, intimidate its adversaries, and how it calls individuals to action.

D. ISIS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

ISIS openly promulgates its propaganda on social media. This strategy is a departure from how *al-Qaeda* originally used the Internet to covertly “share ideology, information, plans, and correspondence.”²²⁴ *Al-Qaeda* did eventually migrate its activities to social media in 2011, but the group has yet to achieve the social media presence of ISIS.²²⁵ Koerner argues that ISIS “encourages adherents to operate on the Internet’s most public networks, having determined that it’s worth sacrificing secrecy in exchange for publicity.”²²⁶ A sentiment shared by Atwan, who states that the “Islamic state and its supporters use the Internet and social networking platforms in a brazen, overt way, marketing their ‘brand’ and disseminating their material via mainstream networks.”²²⁷ This openness makes it easier for potential followers to access ISIS related material and expands the group’s reach. Consequently, it also makes it easier for governments to target the group, but the benefits outweigh the cost.²²⁸ Koerner argues that, “on the most pragmatic level, social media has lowered the bar of entry for recruits—the curious have no problem finding the Islamic State’s propaganda in numerous languages, and they can easily connect with intermediaries who will facilitate their travels to the caliphate.”²²⁹ Overall, this strategy is low-risk for ISIS and its would-be followers. Only a small fraction of those engaged in ISIS related activity are detained

²²⁴ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 15.

²²⁵ Jytte Klausen, “Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, no. 1 (2014), 3, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2014.974948>.

²²⁶ Brendan I. Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War,” *Wired*, April 2016, accessed June 22, 2017, <https://www.wired.com/2016/03/isis-winning-social-media-war-heres-beat/>.

²²⁷ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 15.

²²⁸ Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War.”

²²⁹ Ibid.

and prosecuted.²³⁰ ISIS' promulgation of propaganda on social media is not only open, it is also highly decentralized.

The promulgation of ISIS propaganda on social media is highly decentralized. Propaganda is typically generated by the group itself. Atwan states that "most Islamic State commanders and recruits are tech-savvy" and that modern technology allows the "Islamic State's professional media teams to produce the slick and gruesome high-definition videos and glossy online magazines for which they have become infamous."²³¹ Once the propaganda is developed, it is distributed by followers and sympathizers or crowdsourced. Koerner argues that the content would "not be so widely distributed via so many different channels were it not for the group's willingness to crowdsource a great deal of its propaganda chores to total strangers."²³² A 2015 study by Vidino and Hughes demonstrates this decentralized structure on Twitter. They found that "some accounts (the 'nodes') are the generators of primary content, some (the 'amplifiers') just retweet material, others (the 'shout-outs') promote newly created accounts of suspended users."²³³ The decentralized structure enables ISIS to reach a large audience with little risk or effort. Klausen argues that "cross-posting and re-tweeting content on social media by volunteers is a low-cost means of dissemination to wide audiences."²³⁴

1. Intimidation of Adversaries

ISIS disseminates violent propaganda via social media to intimidate its adversaries. As Farwell argues, "images of gore, beheadings, and executions are intended to intimidate opponents."²³⁵ This pertains to ISIS' adversaries both local and abroad.

²³⁰ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 15.

²³¹ Ibid., 15–16.

²³² Koerner, "Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War."

²³³ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, "ISIS in America: Retweets to Raqqa," George Washington University, December, 2015, <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/extremism.gwu.edu/files/downloads/ISIS%20in%20America%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>, ix.

²³⁴ Klausen, "Tweeting the Jihad," 3.

²³⁵ Farwell, "The Media Strategy of ISIS," 50.

Klausen argues that “social media have proven highly effective as a messaging tool and also as a terrorism medium for intimidating local populations, the ‘near enemy,’ in the insurgency zone and provoking outsized fear far away from the war zone.”²³⁶ He states that “across the Middle East, phones have become the most commonly used instrument for obtaining reliable news. In this context, ISIL’s broadcast of Twitter feeds of executions and crucifixions carried out in Aleppo and Deir Hafer turned social media into a tool of offensive psychological warfare and battlefield tactics.”²³⁷ The atrocities depicted in such videos have incited such fear in Iraqi and Syrian forces, that in some instances, the forces have chosen to flee rather than fight.²³⁸ For the cause abroad, “Islamic State propaganda, was crafted not just to stir the hearts of potential recruits but also to boost the organization’s ghastly brand—to reinforce Westerner’s perception of the Islamic State and its devotees as ruthless beyond comprehension.”²³⁹ There are many examples of this such as the beheading of U.S. journalist James Foley and the immolation of a Jordanian Air Force pilot.²⁴⁰ The group also manages to spread violent propaganda in a creative manner on social media. For example, in 2014, the group used hashtags to link English Premier League clubs (English Football) violent material. Milmo reports that ISIS operated Twitter accounts “used #MUFC, #WHUFC, #LFC and #THFC, among others, on tweets promoting vile ‘public relations’ material showing atrocities and beheadings committed by the extremist group’s fighters in Syria and Iraq” during the World Cup.²⁴¹ This violent imagery, however, has a dual purpose. Miller and Mekhennet

²³⁶ Klausen, “Tweeting the Jihad,” 4.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

²³⁸ Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War.”

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Chelsea J. Carter, “Video Shows ISIS Beheading U.S. Journalist James Foley,” CNN, updated August 20, 2014, accessed June 27, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/19/world/meast/isis-james-foley/index.html>; CBS News, “Jordanian Pilot’s ‘Obscene’ Burning Death by ISIS Sparks Outrage in Mideast,” February 4, 2015, accessed June 22, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/jordanian-pilots-obscene-burning-death-by-isis-sparks-outrage-in-mideast/>.

²⁴¹ Cahal Milmo, “Iraq Crisis Exclusive: Isis Jihadists Using World Cup and Premier League Hashtags to Promote Extremist Propaganda on Twitter,” *Independent*, June 22, 2014, accessed June 28, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-crisis-exclusive-isis-jihadists-using-world-cup-and-premier-league-hashtags-to-promote-9555167.html>.

suggest that “the beheadings, immolations and other spectacles are employed both to menace Western adversaries and to appeal to disenfranchised Muslim males weighting a leap into the Islamist fray.”²⁴² Some of this intimidation propaganda finds its way into the news media.

Traditionally, terrorist organizations relied on news media to bring their message to a wide audience. However, it can be argued that ISIS’ use of social media may be changing the relationship between news organizations and terrorist groups. There is some disagreement between the significance of the Internet and traditional mainstream media in general. Nacos argues that the Internet allows terrorist organizations to circumvent mainstream media, but the Internet has yet to replace mainstream media.²⁴³ She contends that “the mainstream news media remain indispensable for terrorist propaganda because conventional news outlets tend to alert the general public to the most sensational features and developments in terrorists’ mass self-communication via Internet sites and social media networking.”²⁴⁴ However, Klausen, after studying ISIS’ social media strategy, argues that social media has drastically changed the relationship between mainstream media and terrorist organizations.²⁴⁵ He suggests that social media “has eliminated the terrorists’ dependency on mainstream media, reversing the relationship by making mainstream media dependent on the *jihadist*-run social media.”²⁴⁶ The truth perhaps lies somewhere between these arguments. The current relationship between ISIS and the news media could be considered symbiotic; coverage in the mainstream news media can provide intimidation propaganda with credence and news organizations have a presence across media platforms including social media and the Internet. This relationship, however, may provide terrorist organizations with an advantage in the future as news

²⁴² Greg Miller and Souad Mekhennet, “Inside the Surreal World of the Islamic State’s Propaganda Machine,” *The Washington Post*, November 20, 2015, accessed June 28, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/inside-the-islamic-states-propaganda-machine/2015/11/20/051e997a-8ce6-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html?utm_term=.5e0b31b4dd90.

²⁴³ Nacos, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, 36.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Klausen, “Tweeting the Jihad,” 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

consumers migrate to social media and the Internet for news rather than more traditional news mediums such as radio or television.

2. A Call to Action

The dissemination of propaganda on social media provides ISIS with the opportunity to recruit and radicalize prospective followers on a mass scale. Klausen, for example, argues that, “Twitter is used for purposes of recruitment and indoctrination, as well as to build a transnational community of violent extremism.”²⁴⁷ The recruitment of foreign fighters provides benefits on the battlefield and the radicalization of individuals establishes a transnational community of violent extremism.²⁴⁸ Overall, it can be argued that ISIS uses its propaganda on social media to call individuals to action on behalf of the group.

The imagery ISIS uses in propaganda for recruitment and radicalization on social media differs from the propaganda it uses to intimidate adversaries. It may, however, still use violent imagery. Farwell suggests that ISIS’ use of propaganda on social media has “allowed the group to distribute powerful, emotional images. Some of these, consistent with its message of inevitable victory, depict members as fearsome warriors. Such Images can be used to build support among fellow travelers and recruit new members.”²⁴⁹ Some of this propaganda imagery depicts violence. Originally, much of the video propaganda generated by ISIS depicted the group exacting Sharia sanctioned punishment on individuals vis á vis al-Zarqawi’s violent repertoire.²⁵⁰ Such punishments involve *Tazeer*, which is “‘naming and shaming’ with a view to reforming the individual’s behavior” and *Hudd*, which typically applies to “‘intentional’ crimes such as murder, theft, and adultery—includes beheading, amputation of limbs, and stoning to death.”²⁵¹ The latter are the punishments typically inflicted on adversaries. ISIS

²⁴⁷ Klausen, “Tweeting the Jihad,” 17.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Farwell, “The Media Strategy of ISIS,” 50.

²⁵⁰ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 48.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

propaganda, however, is not always violent—or even mostly violent. Koerner argues that “the Islamic State grabs headlines with execution videos, but those gruesome clips make up only a small percentage of the organization’s total media output.”²⁵²

The majority of the propaganda distributed by ISIS on social media is intended to stoke a sense of group legitimacy and humanity among adherents and prospective followers. Much of it is comprised of “literature and videos that emphasize its alleged utopian aspects, particularly the freedom from any trace of religious persecution.”²⁵³ This type of propaganda aims to provide ISIS with a sense of legitimacy and humanity. Koerner states that “only a fraction of the Islamic State’s online output depicts the kind of sadism for which the group is notorious: far more common are portrayals of public-works projects, economic development, and military triumphs, frequently aimed at specific Muslim enclaves throughout the world.”²⁵⁴ For example, Miller and Mekhennet report that these videos may depict such things as “the construction of public markets, smiling religious police on neighborhood patrols and residents leisurely fishing on the banks of the Euphrates.”²⁵⁵ Atwan provides another example, stating that “a jolly home life is portrayed via Instagram images, where fighters play with fluffy kittens, and jihadist poster girls proudly display the dishes they have created.”²⁵⁶ Koerner argues that content like this “is meant to convince prospective recruits of the veracity of the organization’s core narrative: that its empire is both stable and inexorably growing.”²⁵⁷ Exposure to propaganda on social media, however, is not the only reason why individuals are recruited and radicalized.

ISIS’ social media campaign is not the sole reason individuals are being radicalized and recruited, but it may be acting as a medium to facilitate the sharing of common sociological traits or acting as an echo chamber. Former FBI Director James

²⁵² Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War.”

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Miller and Mekhennet, “Inside the Surreal World of the Islamic State’s Propaganda Machine.”

²⁵⁶ Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, 20.

²⁵⁷ Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War.”

Comey argues that “with the widespread horizontal distribution of social media, terrorists can identify vulnerable individuals of all ages in the United States—spot, assess, recruit, and radicalize—either to travel or to conduct a homeland attack.”²⁵⁸ Though “cases of web-driven, individual radicalization have increased in frequency with the rise of ISIS,” many of these vulnerable individuals are indoctrinated before being exposed to propaganda.²⁵⁹ In many cases, ISIS propaganda may be reinforcing beliefs already held by would be adherents. Vidino and Hughes state that “individual ISIS sympathizers did not begin their radicalization trajectories alone in front of a computer screen, but rather via face-to-face interactions through preexisting social contacts who already embraced jihadist ideology.”²⁶⁰ These relationships may be cultivated through a myriad of possibilities such as Mosques or student organizations.²⁶¹ They argue that “over time, these individuals tend to form a cluster: a small informal group of like-minded individuals whose internal dynamics reinforce the beliefs of its members.”²⁶² These clusters, they argue, are the typical consumers of ISIS’ radical propaganda.²⁶³ Once formed, these clusters facilitate the sharing and reinforcement of the propaganda’s narrative.

Regardless of how it occurs, clusters or individual initiative, ISIS’ primary motive on social media is to call individuals into action on behalf of the group. Koerner states that “in the U.S., the group’s message has found a foothold among people who map their own idiosyncratic struggles and grievances, real or imagined, onto the Islamic State Ideology. These half-cocked jihadists, while rare, come from all walks of American life, creating a new kind of domestic threat—one that is small in scale but fiendishly difficult

²⁵⁸ James B. Comey, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence, and the Challenges of Going Dark*, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, July 8, 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/counterterrorism-counterintelligence-and-the-challenges-of-going-dark>.

²⁵⁹ Vidino and Hughes, “ISIS in America: Retweets to Raqqa,” 26.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

to counter.”²⁶⁴ This threat takes different forms. According to Vidino and Hughes, “ISIS’s ability to directly and constantly reach Americans through social media has manifested itself in a number of ways: 1) triggering or advancing their radicalization process; 2) helping them mobilize to leave for Syria to join the group; and 3) inciting them to carry out attacks in America.”²⁶⁵ This call to action initiative may be why ISIS is regarded as such a significant threat within the United States; it intimidates the population in ways that their violent propaganda cannot—it creates suspicion and uncertainty among the population.

E. SUMMARY

ISIS is a radical revolutionary movement that uses violent tactics to drastically alter or replace existing institutions. The movement’s political objectives shape its social media objectives. Politically, the movement seeks to firmly establish a regional caliphate and to expand that caliphate on a global scale. To achieve this global caliphate, ISIS aims to radicalize and recruit foreign fighters and to coordinate and inspire attacks. ISIS’ use of social media supports its political objectives. The movement uses social media to disseminate propaganda in support of intimidating adversaries, recruiting prospective followers, and radicalizing individuals. The decentralized promulgation of propaganda allows the group to propagate its message with minimal effort on its behalf and with little risk to the group itself. Current surveillance policy is intended to provide the intelligence community with legal guidelines for confronting this complex threat. The decentralized nature of ISIS’ social media presence poses many challenges for the intelligence community. Casting wide surveillance nets could certainly aid the intelligence community in breaking up ISIS’ networks, foil potential attacks, and restrict the flow of foreign fighters, but it could also lead to unintended consequences as well.

²⁶⁴ Koerner, “Why ISIS is Winning the Social Media War.”

²⁶⁵ Vidino and Hughes, “ISIS in America: Retweets to Raqqa,” 19.

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IV. BLACK LIVES MATTER: SOCIAL REFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The decentralized nature of global terror organizations and their social media presence pose security threats to the U.S. providing the intelligence community with many challenges. Surveillance provides the intelligence community with a tool combat those challenges and thwart potential attacks. However, history demonstrates that casting wide surveillance nets can have a negative impact on the domestic public and on local social movements which are elements of democratic processes. BLM is a reformist social movement which uses social media in a way similar to ISIS, but for distinctly different reasons in support of different political objectives. BLM is a reformist movement that aims to bring change into existing political and social institutions to achieve political objectives. This chapter examines the origins of BLM and identifies its political and social media objectives to provide an overview of the group's social media strategy.

A. THE ORIGINS OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

The beginnings of BLM can be traced back to a 2013 Facebook post by Alicia Garza, an African American activist and former “executive director of the San Francisco-based advocacy organization People Organized to Win Employment Rights.”²⁶⁶ On July 13, 2013, Garza, her husband, and two organizer friends were following the trial of George Zimmerman, who was on trial for the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, at a bar in Oakland, California.²⁶⁷ Following the announcement of Zimmerman's acquittal, Garza became overwhelmed with the complacency on social media in response to the absence of a conviction.²⁶⁸ In response to the acquittal, she “composed a love note to black people on Facebook, urging them to come together to ensure ‘that black lives

²⁶⁶ Jamilah King, “#BlackLivesMatter: How Three Friends Turned a Spontaneous Facebook Post into a Global Phenomenon,” *The California Sunday Magazine*, accessed July 1, 2017, <https://stories.californiasunday.com/2015-03-01/black-lives-matter/>.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

matter.”²⁶⁹ She concluded the post with this: “‘Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.’”²⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Garza’s friend and anti-incarceration activist, Patrisse Cullors, also following the trial, saw Garza’s post on Facebook, was moved by it, and “decided to hashtag her sentiments ‘#blacklivesmatter.’”²⁷¹ According to King, Cullors “began hashtagging the phrase onto the walls of close friends and allies, some of whom also began using it. Before long, she and Garza were on the phone commiserating, and, by the next day, Cullors wrote on Garza’s wall with a proposition” to mobilize.²⁷²

Later, Garza and Cullors contacted a mutual friend, activist and “director of an immigrant-rights group in New York called Black Alliance for Just Immigration” Opal Tometi, and got her involved with the effort.²⁷³ Garza states that her, Cullors, and Tometi “created the infrastructure for this movement project—moving the hashtag from social media to the streets.”²⁷⁴ The group “began by setting up Tumblr and Twitter accounts and encouraging supporters to share stories of why #blacklivesmatter” and “brought the slogan into their work as organizers.”²⁷⁵ However, the turning point for BLM came when protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri following the trial of police officer Darren Wilson for the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown in 2014.²⁷⁶

Protesters became violent, vandalized local businesses, and clashed with law enforcement following the grand jury’s decision not to indict Darren Wilson for the

²⁶⁹ Jessica Guynn, “Meet the Woman Who Coined #BlackLivesMatter,” *USA Today*, updated March 4, 2015, accessed July 1, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/03/04/alicia-garza-black-lives-matter/24341593/>.

²⁷⁰ King, “#BlackLivesMatter: How Three Friends Turned a Spontaneous Facebook Post into a Global Phenomenon.”

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement,” Black Lives Matter, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>.

²⁷⁵ King, “#BlackLivesMatter: How Three Friends Turned a Spontaneous Facebook Post into a Global Phenomenon.”

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

shooting death of Michael Brown on November 25, 2014.²⁷⁷ According to Swaine, Lewis, and Roberts, residents claim that Brown's shooting enflamed the historical tension between Ferguson's majority African American population and the predominantly white Ferguson Police Department.²⁷⁸ Grievances held by residents were largely confirmed in the DOJ report, *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*, the following year. The DOJ found that, in Ferguson, "African Americans account for 85% of vehicle stops, 90% of citations, and 93% of arrests made by the FPD officers, despite comprising only 67% of Ferguson's population."²⁷⁹ This is one example of many predatory practices outlined in the report used by the police, courts, and city officials in Ferguson against African American residents in Ferguson.²⁸⁰

Among the protesters in Ferguson were BLM founders Garza, Cullors, and Tometi. Garza was in the city to provide training for local organizers and was shocked to see and hear the Black Lives Matter slogan being used in demonstrations which she did not organize.²⁸¹ According to King, "Cullors and Tometi soon joined her via a Black Lives Matter freedom ride that Cullors organized with Brooklyn-based activist Darnell L. Moore" which consisted of "600 black people from more than 18 different cities, traveling via bus and van and car to join the protests in Ferguson."²⁸² Additionally, on November 24, 2014, the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag hit its peak use on Twitter at nearly 200,000 mentions, surpassing the previous frequency of use set after the police shooting

²⁷⁷ Jon Swaine, Paul Lewis, and Dan Roberts, "Grand Jury Decline to Charge Darren Wilson for Killing Michael Brown," *The Guardian*, November 25, 2014, accessed July 2, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/ferguson-police-darren-wilson-michael-brown-no-charges>.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, *Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department*, United States Department of Justice, March 4, 2015, https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf, 4.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 2–5.

²⁸¹ King, "#BlackLivesMatter: How Three Friends Turned a Spontaneous Facebook Post into a Global Phenomenon."

²⁸² Ibid.

of Tamir Rice.²⁸³ The demonstrations in Ferguson propelled #BlackLivesMatter from a social media hashtag, moderately used among like-minded activists, to a rallying cry for racial injustice thrusting the group into the mainstream.

B. THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter is a decentralized, horizontally led network. According to BLM founder Cullors, “we didn’t start a movement. We started a network.”²⁸⁴ She states that the project created by her, Garza, and Tometi, “is now the Black Lives Matter National Network with over 30 chapters both stateside and internationally.”²⁸⁵ The Locate a Chapter page on the Black Lives Matter website provides locations and a means to contact chapters throughout the country as well as in Toronto, Canada.²⁸⁶ These chapters are nodes in a decentralized, horizontally led network. Cobb states that “Garza, Cullors, and Tometi advocate a horizontal ethic of organizing, which favors democratic inclusion at the grass roots level. Black Lives Matter emerged as a modern extension of Ella Baker’s thinking—a preference for ten thousand candles rather than a single spotlight.”²⁸⁷ The BLM website provides additional reasons for its leadership structure. The website states that “a movement with a singular leader or a few visible leaders is vulnerable, because those leaders can be easily identified, harassed, and killed, as was the case with Dr. King. By having a leaderful movement, BLM addresses many of these concerns.”²⁸⁸ Additionally, the website indicates that “BLM is composed of many local

²⁸³ Monica Anderson and Paul Hitlin, “The Hashtag #BlackLivesMatter Emerges: Social Activism on Twitter,” Pew Research Center, August 15, 2016, accessed July 2, 2017, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/08/15/the-hashtag-blacklivesmatter-emerges-social-activism-on-twitter/>.

²⁸⁴ Patrisse Khan-Cullors, “We Didn’t Start a Movement. We Started a Network,” Medium, February 22, 2016, accessed July 2, 2017, <https://medium.com/@patrissemariecullorsbrignac/we-didn-t-start-a-movement-we-started-a-network-90f9b5717668>.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Black Lives Matter, “Locate a Chapter,” accessed July 2, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/find-chapters/>.

²⁸⁷ Jelani Cobb, “The Matter of Black Lives,” *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2016, accessed July 2, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed>.

²⁸⁸ Black Lives Matter, “11 Major Misconceptions About the Black Lives Matter Movement,” accessed July 2, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/11-major-misconceptions-about-the-black-lives-matter-movement/>.

leaders and many local organizations, including Black Youth Project 100, the Dream Defenders, the Organization for Black Struggle, Hands Up United, Millennial Activists United, and the Black Lives Matter national network.”²⁸⁹ However, for a chapter to be established, its organizers must follow certain criteria.

BLM chapters are given autonomy, but must adhere to the organization’s guiding principles in order to be formally associated with the Black Lives Matter National Network. Cobb states that chapters “vary in structure and emphasis, and operate with a great deal of latitude, particularly when it comes to choosing what ‘actions’ to stage.”²⁹⁰ However, prospective chapters are rigorously screened by a coordinator within the network and must adhere to the organization’s guiding principles once active.²⁹¹ BLM’s guiding principles cover many contemporary social justice issues such as LGBTQ rights, ageism, and feminism from a “Black” perspective.²⁹² The principles also encourage diversity, community support, and promote an overall sense of inclusion.²⁹³ However, the decentralized, horizontal nature of BLM may be creating schisms within the group despite the mandatory prescribed adherence to the guiding principles.

The latitude and autonomy given to chapters may be causing divergence within the movement. BLM is skeptical of political affiliations and avoids them to maintain autonomy; however, some segments of the movement want greater interaction with political institutions and desire to converse with, rather than confront, political elites.²⁹⁴ However, other organizers want to take a more radical, revolutionary path not solely based on race.²⁹⁵ Rickford states that “leftists within and beyond Black Lives Matter have urged the movement to confront its ideological contradictions (including relatively

²⁸⁹ Black Lives Matter, “11 Major Misconceptions About the Black Lives Matter Movement.”

²⁹⁰ Cobb, “The Matter of Black Lives.”

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles,” accessed July 1, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Russell Rickford, “Black Lives Matter: Toward a Modern Practice of Mass Struggle,” *New Labor Forum* 25, no. 1, (2016): 39, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1095796015620171>.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

ambiguous stances on electoral politics and the principle of class struggle), disavowing any trace of collaboration with the ruling class and identifying capitalism itself—and not merely white supremacy—as the enemy.”²⁹⁶ Additionally, he argues that “questions of gender and sexuality appear to have generated the most significant fissures within Black Lives Matter” and that “some supporters continue to frame the struggle in terms of a putatively masculine prerogative of self-defense.”²⁹⁷ However, the political differences within the network have not led to the formation of full-fledged factions.²⁹⁸

C. THE POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

The political objectives of Black Lives Matter are connected to the overall social objectives of the movement. The movement is transparent and specific about its intentions, but its objectives remain broad. According to the organization’s website, “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ contribution to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”²⁹⁹ To that end, the overall scope of BLM is greater than grievances regarding law enforcement and the criminal justice system. As previously discussed, BLM’s guiding principles cover many contemporary social justice issues such as LGBTQ rights, ageism, and feminism from a “Black” perspective.³⁰⁰ Harris suggests that “the focus of Black Lives Matter—on policing in black and brown communities, on dismantling mass incarceration—is also being articulated less as a demand for specific civil or political rights, and more as a broader claim for ‘black humanity.’”³⁰¹ The objectives outlined in the guiding principles could also fall under the broader category of

²⁹⁶ Rickford, “Black Lives Matter: Toward a Modern Practice of Mass Struggle,” 39.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles,” accessed July 1, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Fredrick C. Harris, “The Next Civil Rights Movement?,” *Dissent*, accessed July 4, 2017, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/black-lives-matter-new-civil-rights-movement-fredrick-harris>.

promoting “black humanity”; however, grievances against law enforcement are what shape BLM’s most visible political objectives.³⁰²

Black Lives Matter’s political objectives were mostly shaped by the group’s grievances against law enforcement. The earliest form of these political objectives can be traced back to 2014, following the Ferguson protests. In November 2014, Ferguson activists were invited to meet with President Obama to discuss grievances against law enforcement practices and police brutality.³⁰³ According to Wellington, the activists “presented Obama with a list of demands, including: 1) requiring the federal government to use its powers to prosecute police officers that kill or abuse citizens; 2) appointing independent prosecutors to handle cases involving police officers; and 3) establishing independent review boards to handle cases of police misconduct.”³⁰⁴ The following year, these three demands were developed into specific policy recommendations.

Black Lives Matter’s most formal declaration of political objectives is outlined in the Campaign Zero plan. The plan was developed by a policy focused group within the BLM network called Campaign Zero.³⁰⁵ The 10-point plan contains many policy recommendations for law enforcement reform on the federal, state, and local levels.³⁰⁶ Policy recommendations include ending for-profit and broken windows policing; implementing greater community oversight; putting limits on the use of force; requiring the independent investigation and prosecution of police officers suspected of wrongdoing; greater community representation among the rank and file within police departments; the wearing of body cameras by police officers; enhanced training for police officers; the demilitarization of police departments; and fair union contracts which would

³⁰² Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles,” Harris, “The Next Civil Rights Movement?”

³⁰³ Darryl Lorenzo Wellington, “The Power of Black Lives Matter, *The Crisis* 122, no.1 (2015): 22, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1667040587/>.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Clare Foran, “A Year of Black Lives Matter,” *The Atlantic*, December 31, 2015, accessed July 6, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/black-lives-matter/421839/>.

³⁰⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation, “Black Lives Matter’s Activists Outline Policy Goals,” BBC, August 21, 2015, accessed July 6, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34023751>.

allow for better accountability of police misconduct.³⁰⁷ In many instances, police departments across the country already implement policies similar to those proposed by Campaign Zero.³⁰⁸ Balko argues that, because of this, “it makes it more difficult for police groups to portray those proposals as ‘anti-cop.’ But it also makes it easier to pitch those ideas to policymakers and the public.”³⁰⁹ Another BLM affiliate, The Movement for Black Lives, has also listed demands involving reparations, economic justice, greater political access, and criminal justice reform; however, the movement has yet to release policy recommendations as concrete, constructive, and detailed as Campaign Zero.³¹⁰

Subsequently, the roll out of the Campaign Zero plan may have had some success. In 2015, for example, the U.S. Justice Department provided over \$23 million for law enforcement body camera pilot program in 32 states.³¹¹ Overall, the movement has other successes in support of political objectives as well. Stephen, for example, argues that the BLM network as a whole has “helped secure the removal of the Confederate flag from the South Carolina capitol” and “it helped pressure the federal government to investigate police practices in Ferguson and Baltimore.”³¹² Additionally, the trend toward institutional change has picked up momentum. According to Ross and Lowery, “activists say the movement’s efforts have entered a new phase—one more focused on policy than

³⁰⁷ Campaign Zero, “We Can End Police Violence in America,” accessed July 5, 2017, <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision>.

³⁰⁸ Radley Balko, “The Black Lives Matter Policy Agenda is Practical, Thoughtful—and Urgent,” *The Washington Post*, August 25, 2015, accessed July 6, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-watch/wp/2015/08/25/the-black-lives-matter-policy-agenda-is-practical-thoughtful-and-urgent/?utm_term=.2edf9385471e.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ The Movement for Black Lives, “Platform,” accessed July 15, 2017, <https://policy.m4bl.org>.

³¹¹ United States Department of Justice, “Justice Department Awards Over \$23 Million in Funding for Body Worn Camera Pilot Program to Support Law Enforcement Agencies in 32 States,” United States Department of Justice, September 21, 2015, accessed July 6, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-awards-over-23-million-funding-body-worn-camera-pilot-program-support-law>.

³¹² Bijan Stephen, “Get Up, Stand Up: Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power,” *Wired*, November 2015, accessed July 9, 2017, <https://www.wired.com/2015/10/how-black-lives-matter-uses-social-media-to-fight-the-power/>.

protest—prompted by the election of President Donald Trump.”³¹³ Protests, however, remain important for BLM achieving political objectives.

Black Lives Matter has engaged in sustained, collective action since the 2014 Ferguson protests. The movement’s direct action tactics consist of “disruptive protest tactics such as street marches, die-ins, bridge and tunnel blockades, and intense publicity campaigns.”³¹⁴ For example, the movement disrupted multiple campaign rallies and speaking events held by 2016 presidential candidates throughout the campaign season.³¹⁵ Another example of this is when BLM protestors blocked traffic on the 405 freeway on July, 11, 2016.³¹⁶ The movement’s repertoire consists of disruptive protest tactics and it implements these tactics in a non-violent manner. BLM’s guiding principles demonstrate the reasoning behind adhering to a non-violent repertoire. The guiding principles state that the movement is “committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people.”³¹⁷ Additionally, the guiding principles state that BLM is “committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.”³¹⁸ BLM’s tactics have proven effective for the movement. The movement has received substantial media attention due to its disruptive demonstrations such as marches and blockades. Additionally, the disruptive tactics used during the presidential campaigns, in some cases, resulted in meetings between protests organizers and presidential candidates.³¹⁹

³¹³ Janell Ross and Wesley Lowery, “Black Lives Matter Shifts from Protests to Policy Under Trump,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 7, 2017, accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-black-lives-matter-trump-20170504-story.html>.

³¹⁴ Harris, “The Next Civil Rights Movement?”

³¹⁵ Kira Lerner, “Why Disrupting Political Events is an Essential Tactic for Black Lives Matter,” ThinkProgress.org, August 13, 2015, accessed July 6, 2017, <https://thinkprogress.org/why-disrupting-political-events-is-an-essential-tactic-for-black-lives-matter-3b5a1855e46d>.

³¹⁶ Matt Hamilton, “Protesters with Black Lives Matter Shut Down 405 Freeway in Inglewood,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2016, accessed July, 6, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-protest-inglewood-20160710-snap-story.html>.

³¹⁷ Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles.”

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Lerner, “Why Disrupting Political Events is an Essential Tactic for Black Lives Matter.”

However, BLM demonstrations have occasionally become violent despite the movement's adherence to a non-violent repertoire.

Black Lives Matter's demonstrations have occasionally taken a violent turn. For example, disruptive protests transformed into riots in Baltimore, Maryland in 2015 and Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2016.³²⁰ However, this does not necessarily make BLM responsible for the promotion or encouragement of violence. The escalation to violence, in both instances, was attributed to smaller groups of demonstrators or individuals. Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, the Mayor of Baltimore, claims that, aside from a few small groups and individuals, the protests in the city were almost entirely peaceful.³²¹ Additionally, Perkins reports that demonstrations in Milwaukee escalated due to disgruntled individuals, who had no intention of making a political statement, lashing out and being destructive.³²² The shooting of police officers in Dallas, Texas, on July 7, 2016, is another example of how demonstrations have become violent in the past. During the protest, a lone gunman named Micah Johnson opened fire on police officers, killing five and injuring seven.³²³ Johnson was not directly affiliated with BLM, but he considered himself a sympathizer.³²⁴ In response to the shooting, BLM published this statement the following day, "Black activists have raised the call for an end to violence, not an escalation of it. Yesterday's attack was the result of the actions of a lone gunman. To assign the actions of one person to an entire movement is dangerous and irresponsible.

³²⁰ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Crowds Scatter as Baltimore Curfew Takes Hold," *The New York Times*, April 28, 2015, accessed July 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/29/us/baltimore-riots.html>; Jaweed Kaleem and Matt Pearce, "Riots in Milwaukee After Police Shooting: 'The People are Fed Up,'" *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 2016, accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-milwaukee-unrest-20160814-snap-story.html>.

³²¹ Miguel Marquez and Steve Almasy, "Freddie Gray Death: Protesters Damage Cars; 12 Arrested," CNN, updated April 25, 2015, accessed July 8, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/25/us/baltimore-freddie-gray-protest/index.html>.

³²² Susan Perkins, "Quora Question: Were the Riots in Milwaukee Justified?," *Newsweek*, August 20, 2016, accessed July 8, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/quora-question-what-went-wrong-milwaukee-491242>.

³²³ Manny Fernandez, Richard Perez-Pena and Jonah Engel Bromwich, "Five Dallas Officers Were Killed as Payback, Police Chief Says," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2016, accessed July 8, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/09/us/dallas-police-shooting.html>.

³²⁴ Ibid.

We continue our efforts to bring about a better world for all of us.”³²⁵ Demonstrations involving BLM have escalated to violence; however, it does not appear that the movement has directed the violence nor has it condoned the violent outcomes. Furthermore, the use of violence is incompatible with BLM’s guiding principles and would likely damage the movement’s ability achieve political objectives and make allies within political institutions. Consequently, the movement’s disruptive tactics and the occasional violent escalation of demonstrations is a point of contention among critics and potential allies alike.

Black Lives Matter protest tactics and demonstrations, which have occasionally escalated to violence, have consequently garnered the group criticism from opponents and potential allies. Critics object to the group’s tactics and, in some instances, claim that BLM is exacerbating the problem. Sebastian states that “Martin Luther King Jr.’s niece, Alveda King, called BLM’s methods inappropriate” and that, former Governor of Arkansas, “Mike Huckabee said the civil rights leader would be ‘appalled’ by BLM’s strategy: to address racial injustice, ‘you don’t do it by magnifying the problems.’”³²⁶ Some critics have accused the group of inciting violence against police. According to Lerner, Texas Senator Ted Cruz told ThinkProgress that BLM activists “are ‘literally suggesting and embracing and celebrating the murder of police officers.’”³²⁷ Potential BLM allies have also criticized the group. Blake argues that, “‘traditional’ civil rights leaders have also given BLM a mixed reception.”³²⁸ He reports that “the Rev. Andy Young, a close aide to King recently called BLM protesters ‘unlovable little brats’ but

³²⁵ Black Lives Matter, “The Black Lives Matter Network Advocates for Dignity, Justice, and Respect,” July 8, 2016, accessed July 8, 2017, <http://blacklivesmatter.com/the-black-lives-matter-network-advocates-for-dignity-justice-and-respect/>.

³²⁶ Simone Sebastian, “Don’t Criticize Black Lives Matter for Provoking Violence. The Civil Rights Movement Did, Too,” *The Washington Post*, October 1, 2015, accessed July 4, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/10/01/dont-criticize-black-lives-matter-for-provoking-violence-the-civil-rights-movement-did-too/?utm_term=.326bbf7ccf79.

³²⁷ Kira Lerner, “Cruz: Black Lives Matter is ‘Literally Suggesting and Embracing and Celebrating the Murder of Police,’” ThinkProgress.org, October 14, 2015, accessed July 8, 2017, <https://thinkprogress.org/cruz-black-lives-matter-is-literally-suggesting-and-embracing-and-celebrating-the-murder-of-police-6ebbce11126>.

³²⁸ John Blake, “Is Black Lives Matter Blowing it?,” CNN, August 2, 2016, accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/29/us/black-lives-matter-blowing-it/index.html>.

later apologized” and that “Rev. Al Sharpton criticized BLM protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, for not voting to change their city government. But the NAACP has adopted some of BLM’s rhetoric and even helped local BLM leaders organize.”³²⁹ Sebastian, perhaps best captures the overall argument against the groups tactics. She states that “many Americans, weaned on tales of how 20th-century civil rights leaders used nonviolent resistance, criticize today’s advocates for ‘extreme’ tactics and accuse them of inciting violence.”³³⁰ There is a reoccurring theme among critics regarding BLM; the group’s tactics are often contrasted against those of the civil rights movement, but the two movements share many similarities.

Black Lives Matter’s demonstration tactics are similar to those used by the civil rights movement in the twentieth century. The civil rights movement was focused on ending segregation, whereas BLM has assumed the overall objective of promoting black humanity. Organizationally, the civil rights movement was hierarchal and centralized; BLM is a decentralized network comprised of many leaders and associated groups. However, the groups do share some similarities. Sebastian argues that “Black Lives Matter has more in common with the civil rights movement than we’d like to acknowledge. It fights the same injustices and encounters the same resistance. The truth is, if you oppose Black Lives Matter’s tactics, you would have abhorred King’s.”³³¹ Violence, and in some cases death, were common during civil rights movement demonstrations and Dr. King intentionally put the movement in harm’s way to make the movement’s agenda unavoidable to the public.³³² Also, BLM uses disruptive protest tactics and non-violent direct action, such as sit-ins, marches, and freedom rides, as the civil rights movement did in the twentieth century.³³³ Additionally, Sebastian states that

³²⁹ Blake, “Is Black Lives Matter Blowing it?”

³³⁰ Simone Sebastian, “Don’t Criticize Black Lives Matter for Provoking Violence. The Civil Rights Movement Did, Too.”

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Emilye Crosby, “Civil Rights Movement Tactics,” Civil Rights Teaching, accessed July 8, 2017, <https://www.civilrightsteaching.org/documents-based-lesson-background-2/?rq=civil%20rights%20movement%20tactics>.

“both have been opposed by more than half of Americans, both have needed violent confrontations to attract national media attention, and both have been criticized for their combative tactics.”³³⁴ BLM’s disruptive tactics have, as the civil rights movement had, been effective; they provide the movement with national attention and brought the movement’s grievances into the mainstream. However, BLM’s use of social media helped make mass mobilization and demonstrations possible. According to Wellington, “leaders of the protests ubiquitously say the swift escalation of a nationwide Black Lives Matter movement would not have been possible without social media.”³³⁵

There are distinct differences between the political objectives of BLM and ISIS. BLM is a reformative social movement which uses non-violent collective action in an effort to achieve its political objectives within existing political and social institutions in accordance with U.S. Constitutional Law. Conversely, ISIS is a radical and revolutionary social movement which uses violent coercion, influenced by sectarian and fundamentalist religious ideology, to impose the group’s political objectives on populations in an effort to overthrow existing political and social institutions. The political objectives of BLM are distinctly different than ISIS’ political objectives; however, in both instances, each movement’s political objectives shape the social media objectives.

D. SOCIAL MEDIA OBJECTIVES OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Live’s Matter’s political objectives reflect in the movement’s social media objectives. The movement’s main political objective, as Harris argues, is the promotion of black humanity.³³⁶ Criminal justice reform is the primary focus within the broader category of black humanity, but the movement also promotes many other African American social justice issues which are outlined in the movement’s guiding principles.³³⁷ However, despite the overall objective of black humanity, the centerpiece

³³⁴ Sebastian, “Don’t Criticize Black Lives Matter for Provoking Violence. The Civil Rights Movement Did, Too.”

³³⁵ Wellington, “The Power of Black Lives Matter.”

³³⁶ Harris, “The Next Civil Rights Movement?”

³³⁷ Harris, “The Next Civil Rights Movement?,” Black Lives Matter, “Guiding Principles.”

to BLM's political objectives on social media involve criminal justice reform. BLM's use of social media promotes black humanity, and specifically criminal justice reform, in two primary ways. First, BLM uses propaganda on social media to get the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations. By doing so, the movement is able keep its political objectives relevant and, in combination with traditional demonstrations, maintain sustained collective action. Second, BLM uses social media to coordinate mass mobilization. The decentralized structure of the movement and its open use of social media provide BLM with access to a large audience and allow the movement to quickly and effectively stage demonstrations.

1. How Black Lives Matter Propagates its Message on Social Media

Black Lives Matter uses social media to propagate its political objectives to governments, populations, and news organizations. All three, at least in part, are social media consumers. This provides the movement with advantages and disadvantages. BLM directly propagates its message on social media; however, much of the movement's message is crowdsourced as well. This paradigm, consequently, is both beneficial and damaging for the movement. Crowdsourcing provides BLM's message with worldwide reach to governments, populations, and news organizations with little effort on behalf of organizers, and encourages mass participation, but it also takes the direct propagation of political objectives away from organizers. This inevitably makes BLM's message, as well as other movements or institutions using social media, subject to hijacking, which may distort the movement's political objectives. Vidino and Hughes provide a good example of how this may occur. They state that "on occasion, American ISIS supporters exploit hashtags related to U.S. policies and political movements. For example, some tried interjecting in the #BlackLivesMatter conversation in an attempt to bolster their support among African American Muslims and spread their propaganda to unsuspecting Americans of all backgrounds."³³⁸ BLM, however, also uses propaganda on social media to support its political objectives.

³³⁸ Vidino and Hughes, "ISIS in America: Retweets to Raqqa," 25.

Black Lives Matter uses propaganda to propagate political objectives on social media. Propaganda is typically thought of as deceptive and is often referenced in a negative context. Daugherty defines propaganda as “the systematic dissemination of specific doctrines, viewpoints, or messages to a chosen audience...employed to foster the acceptance, by the chosen target audience, of a particular policy position or opinion.”³³⁹ Additionally, propaganda exists on a spectrum ranging from the truth well-presented and argued to the complete distortion of the truth.³⁴⁰ Currently, propaganda on social media could be as important as traditional demonstrations because of social media’s ubiquity. In the case of BLM, social media propaganda and traditional demonstrations are symbiotic. Propaganda keeps BLM’s agenda relevant and encourages participation; demonstrations provide stories and imagery for propaganda. This feedback loop allows BLM to remain a social movement, in a state of sustained collective action and not disparate group engaged in contentious politics.

Black Lives Matter uses propaganda on social media to propagate its political objectives involving criminal justice reform. This helps keep Black Lives Matter’s political objectives relevant among governments, populations, and news organizations. The imagery used in BLM’s propaganda on social media is vital for keeping the political objective of criminal justice reform relevant. This argument, however, is not exclusive to BLM; Parker and McIlwain argue that “images and videos, distributed virally via social media, have energized protest movements all over the world.”³⁴¹ The axiom, a picture is worth a thousand words, certainly pertains to platforms such as Twitter, which only allows 280 characters, or Facebook, which provides text limits on newsfeeds, because imagery grabs the attention of the viewer with little effort on their part.

³³⁹ William J. Daugherty, *Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the President* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 72.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 72–77.

³⁴¹ Emily Parker and Charlton McIlwain, “#BlackLivesMatter and the Power and Limits of Social Media,” Medium, December 2, 2016, accessed June 22, 2017, <https://medium.com/@emilyparker/how-blacklivesmatter-resembles-activism-in-the-authoritarian-world-24d1200864f6>.

The imagery in Black Lives Matter's propaganda impacts populations, news organizations, and governments in many different ways. It encourages participation. For example, "activist Charlene Carruthers says that seeing something is different from just reading about it. She believes that seeing images like tanks and teargas [sic] motivated more people to go down to Ferguson."³⁴² The direct reporting from demonstrations with video or photographs, some cases in real-time, allows the movement to circumvent the news media and "push back against spurious media narratives with the force of a few thousand retweets."³⁴³ By doing so, it prevents what Parker and McIlwain refer to as erasure, or the momentary passing of an egregious event without adequate media coverage.³⁴⁴ According to Parker and McIlwain, "Black Lives Matter activist Ashley Yates explains: 'we started to use Twitter and Facebook and Instagram as a way to just get the word out, to contrast the stark mainstream media blackout that was occurring.'"³⁴⁵ Parker and McIlwain continue stating that "Yates says the media once relied on the police narrative, but not anymore. 'Social media has given people on the ground a voice and a validation as a trusted source.'"³⁴⁶ Additionally, "police violence against African Americans has also been captured on film; videos drew attention to the brutal deaths of Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Alfred Olango, Paul O'Neal, and Keith Lamont Scott."³⁴⁷ According to Harris, "the intense reporting on police brutality via social media...influences print and television coverage, which means that attention to such incidents has multiplied."³⁴⁸ He also argues that "images of police violence are helping put pressure on municipal police departments to address these issues."³⁴⁹ This imagery, photographs and video footage, of police violence and/or demonstrations is then branded with hashtags such as #BlackLivesMatter, #SayHerName, or #HandsUp by organizers,

³⁴² Parker and McIlwain, "#BlackLivesMatter and the Power and Limits of Social Media."

³⁴³ Stephen, "Get Up, Stand Up: Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power."

³⁴⁴ Parker and McIlwain, "#BlackLivesMatter and the Power and Limits of Social Media."

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Harris, "The Next Civil Rights Movement?"

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

followers, and other social media consumers and quickly put into mass circulation on social media. This keeps BLM's criminal justice political objectives relevant among governments, populations, and news organizations.

2. Coordinating Mass Mobilization

Black Lives Matter uses social media as a tool for coordinating mass mobilization. Stephen argues that “any large social movement is shaped by the technology available to it and tailors its goals, tactics, and rhetoric to the media of its time.”³⁵⁰ The civil rights movement of the twentieth century, for example, relied on telephones, meetings, and self-consciously depended on mass-media to propagate its message and coordinate protests.³⁵¹ In the context of BLM, Stephen argues that, “today’s African American civil rights organizers, by contrast, talk about the tools of mass communication all the time—because their media strategy sessions are largely open to everyone on the Internet.”³⁵² This open strategy, in contrast to online messaging services which movements can also use to coordinate demonstrations, provides BLM with an audience greater than a narrow, targeted population. As Stephen argues, “if you want to rapidly mobilize a bunch of people you know and don’t want the whole world clued in, you use SMS or WhatsApp. If you want to mobilize a ton of people you might not know and you do want the whole world to talk about it: Twitter.”³⁵³

The official Black Lives Matter network currently has 243,768 followers on Twitter and 283,830 followers on Facebook in addition to other chapter moderated pages and social media platforms.³⁵⁴ It could be assumed that many of these followers overlap across platforms, some social media followers may not be associated with the movement, and some of the movement’s followers may not even use social media. None-the-less, the

³⁵⁰ Stephen, “Get Up, Stand Up: Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power.”

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Black Lives Matter’s Twitter feed, accessed July 17, 2017, <https://twitter.com/Blklivesmatter?lang=en>; Black Lives Matter’s Facebook page, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/BlackLivesMatter/>.

openness of social media provides organizers with a large audience to coordinate mass mobilization. Since BLM is a decentralized network and its organizational paradigm translates to social media, organizers are able to call upon these followers and other social media consumers either in advance or on short notice. For example, in 2017, organizers planned and executed the *Sacred Resistance* demonstration to followers on social media weeks in advance.³⁵⁵ Organizers can also prompt followers to expeditiously take to the streets in response to an occurrence of police violence on short notice. BLM's strategy has been effective and consistent since the movement was established in 2014, resulting in over 1,030 protest actions.³⁵⁶

There are some similarities between BLM and ISIS and how the movements use social media to support political objectives. ISIS, like BLM, uses social media to get the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations. Both movements support political objectives by openly disseminating propaganda on social media in a decentralized manner. Additionally, both movements use social media to inspire current and prospective followers to act on behalf of the movement to advance political objectives. This is, however, where the similarities between the movements end. The movements use propaganda on social media for distinctly different reasons. ISIS uses propaganda on social media to intimidate adversaries, recruit prospective followers, and radicalize individuals. BLM, by contrast, uses propaganda on social media to encourage participation in demonstrations, keep its grievances relevant, and circumvent false news narratives about the movement and its political objectives.

The open, decentralized, dissemination of propaganda on social media also effect the movements differently. ISIS benefits from this method of propaganda dissemination because it has a profound impact on governments, populations, and news organizations with little risk to the movement and minimal effort on the movement's behalf. BLM, on the other hand, depends on maintaining integrity concerning its narrative and political

³⁵⁵ Black Lives Matter's Facebook page, accessed July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/BlackLivesMatter/photos/a.180522288785691.1073741827.180212755483311/742945929209988/?type=3&theater>.

³⁵⁶ Black Lives Matter, "11 Major Misconceptions About the Black Lives Matter Movement."

objectives in order to make changes within existing political and social institutions. Crowdsourcing on social media has provided BLM with considerable reach regarding its message, but has also made its message vulnerable to hijacking and distortion.

BLM and ISIS both use social media to call individuals to action, but for different purposes. The movements' political objectives directly correlate to what it expects of its followers. BLM uses social media to coordinate mass mobilization and organize demonstrations to non-violently support its political objectives in accordance with constitutional law. ISIS, conversely, uses social media to recruit foreign fighters and to inspire individual acts of violence. The movement intends to establish a transnational network of violence to support institutional breakdown within governments and to establish a global caliphate.

E. SUMMARY

BLM is a reformist movement that aims to bring change into existing institutions to achieve political objectives. The movement's political objectives shape its social media objectives. Politically, BLM's objectives revolve around a myriad of social justice issues which pertain to the African American community, but its most visible and focused effort is on criminal justice reform in general. BLM's use of social media supports its political objectives. The movement uses propaganda on social media to keep its political objectives relevant among governments, populations, and news organizations. It also uses social media to coordinate mass mobilization. The movement's use of social media, in conjunction with more traditional protest tactics, help keep it in a state sustained, collective action. BLM's social media strategy helps the movement progress toward reform within existing governmental and social institutions.

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V. CONCLUSION

Current events highlight the importance of studying the relationship between social movements, social media, and surveillance. A recently leaked FBI report from the agency's counterterrorism division, for example, identifies "Black Identity Extremists" as a violent, racially motivated, emerging threat in the United States.³⁵⁷ This suggests that the FBI may be investigating African American activists as it would a radical group like ISIS. In response, the ACLU filed a Freedom of Information Act request following the leak to determine the constitutionality of the report and whether or not African Americans are being racially profiled.³⁵⁸ ACLU attorney Nursrat Choudhury states, "the public deserves to know whether the labeling of so-called 'Black Identity Extremists' is the latest flawed example in the FBI's history of using threats—real or perceived—as an excuse to surveil Black people."³⁵⁹ The findings from this study may provide some insight into how the FBI came to this conclusion and what the implications may be if the agency is approaching reformist movements like it would a radical movement.

This chapter summarizes the research and findings from the comparative case study of ISIS and BLM and the application of current surveillance policy upon social movements, abroad and domestic. The first section provides a brief synopsis of Chapters I through IV. The second section revisits the research question and hypothesis. The third section discusses the implications of the research conducted in this study. The final section provides some recommendations based on the study's findings.

³⁵⁷ Jana Winter and Sharon Weinberger, "The FBI's New U.S. Terrorist Threat: 'Black Identity Extremists,'" *Foreign Policy*, October 6, 2017, accessed October 21, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/06/the-fbi-has-identified-a-new-domestic-terrorist-threat-and-its-black-identity-extremists/>.

³⁵⁸ Ali Breland, "ACLU Wants FBI Records on Activists Labeled 'Black Identity Extremists,'" *The Hill*, October 18, 2017, accessed October 21, 2017, <http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/356016-aclu-files-request-for-fbi-to-release-surveillance-documents-of>.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

A. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Chapter I provides the theoretical framework for this research on different types of social movements, their relationship with media, and the role national security plays in domestic social movements. It establishes BLM and ISIS as social movements: both have political objectives, exist within the realm of contentious politics, use sustained collective action to challenge powerful opponents, and ultimately function to achieve political ends. ISIS is a radical, revolutionary movement which uses violence to significantly alter or replace existing institutions. BLM is a domestic, reformative social movement which uses non-violent, sustained collective action to make changes within existing institutions. The literature also examines factors which contribute to movements transitioning from a repertoire of non-violent collective action to one of violence and extremism. It was determined that available political opportunities and state strength shape the outcomes of social movements. Additionally, the reviewed literature examines the relationship between media and social movements. It addresses how radical and non-radical movements use media to get the attention of the public and the different tactics movements may employ to create political opportunities. Finally, the reviewed literature discusses the relationship between national security and social movements, some strategies which may be employed to combat extremism, and how some domestic reformist movements in the U.S. have been surveilled by government agencies.

Chapter II examines electronic surveillance policy in the United States to determine whether or not policy designed for extraneous threats to the U.S. places groups in the domestic front at risk. The first section establishes the cyclical nature of U.S. intelligence policy and demonstrates how its attempts at targeting national security threats historically produced a negative impact on domestic groups engaged in a protest associated with the democratic system. The second section expanded on current policy, its reach, and some of its more controversial elements such as the USA PATRIOT Act. The third section provided a summary of current policy and examined how it permits the electronic surveillance of radical groups on social media and whether or not other groups in the domestic public are at risk. The final section expanded on current policy and

practices in a domestic political context to demonstrate how groups other than national security threats are at risk of having their democratic activities undermined.

The chapter illustrates that current domestic intelligence policy does not directly place segments of the domestic public at risk of unlawful surveillance or such activities; however, the use of unregulated private sector services by law enforcement and other government agencies to conduct surveillance on social media may be targeting domestic reformist movements. Services like SMMS can be valuable for identifying national security threats; however, some of these services have been marketed specifically as a tool which can be used against social movements. Moreover, some have argued that services such as SMMS cast wide surveillance nets which impact other groups and individuals in the population. What distinguishes the use of these services from historical instances of agencies casting wide surveillance nets is that they are not owned or operated by government agencies. As a result, private sector services, such as SMMS, are not subject to oversight, transparency, or legislation which may support or regulate it. The use of SMMS and similar services by government agencies could yield unintended consequences for groups engaged in democratic activities, such as social movements engaged in collective action.

Chapter III examines the origins of ISIS and identified its political and social media objectives to provide an overview of the group's social media strategy. The occupation and withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq contributed to the social and political conditions which allowed multiple militant groups to converge, flourish, and ultimately form ISIS. There is debate over ISIS' political objectives, but the general consensus as shown in this chapter, is that it seeks to establish a regional caliphate and to eventually expand that caliphate on a global scale. Regionally, it relies on kinetic military actions to expand territory, seeks to recruit local followers, and engage in statecraft activities. Globally, it aims to radicalize and recruit foreign fighters and to coordinate and inspire attacks. ISIS' use of social media is important for achieving both regional and global objectives. The movement's political objectives shape its social media objectives.

ISIS uses propaganda on social media to propagate its message, intimidate adversaries, and to call individuals to action. The group's social media strategy relies on

an open, decentralized network and crowdsourcing to propagate its message. It uses violent imagery in social media propaganda to intimidate its adversaries both regionally and globally. ISIS also uses propaganda on social media in an effort to recruit foreign fighters, radicalize individuals, and inspire attacks on adversaries. Some of this propaganda uses violent imagery to depict ISIS fighters as being fierce and powerful, but most of it is intended to promote group legitimacy and humanity among adherents and prospective followers. Overall, ISIS' social media strategy provides the group with a low-cost, low-risk, means of effectively pursuing its political objectives.

Chapter IV examines the origins of BLM and identifies its political and social objectives to provide an overview of the group's social media strategy. BLM was established by three African American activists following the 2014 acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting death of Travon Martin. The movement rose to prominence during the 2014 Ferguson, Missouri demonstrations following a grand jury's decision not to indict Darren Wilson for the shooting death of Michael Brown. BLM is a horizontally led, decentralized network with chapters located throughout the country. The movement's political objectives involve many African American social justice issues that involve black humanity; however, BLM's most visible political objectives involve grievances against law enforcement and criminal justice reform. BLM's political objectives shape its social media objectives.

BLM's social media strategy promotes its political objectives, specifically those involving criminal justice reform, in two primary ways. First, BLM uses propaganda on social media to get the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations. By doing so, the movement is able keep its political objectives relevant and in combination with traditional non-violent demonstrations, is able to maintain a state of sustained collective action. Second, BLM uses social media to coordinate mass mobilization. The decentralized structure of the movement and its open use of social media provide BLM with access to a large audience and allow the movement to quickly and effectively stage demonstrations. BLM's social media strategy, in combination with traditional protest tactics, allows the movement to work toward its political objectives and push for reform in existing social and political institutions through acceptable democratic processes.

B. FINDINGS

Research indicates that ISIS and BLM's use of social media is similar, but each movement uses the platform for distinctly different reasons. Both movements use social media to support political objectives, but with different outcomes in mind. BLM intends to make changes within existing social and political institutions, primarily concerning criminal justice reform, in accordance with U.S. Constitutional law. ISIS, by contrast, seeks to form a transnational network of violence in support of establishing a global caliphate. ISIS, like BLM, uses social media to get the attention of governments, populations, and news organizations to support their political objectives. Both movements support political objectives by openly disseminating propaganda on social media and rely on crowdsourcing from social media consumers. Additionally, both movements use social media to inspire current and prospective followers to act on behalf of each movement to advance political objectives. However, each movement aims to achieve different goals through their social media strategies.

ISIS and BLM use social media in a similar way, but for different purposes. Each movement's political objectives shape and define their social media objectives. BLM uses propaganda on social media to keep its political objectives and grievances relevant among governments, populations, and news organizations. It also uses social media to coordinate mass mobilization. The movement's use of social media, in conjunction with more traditional protest tactics, support the movement's political objectives of making reforms within existing social and political institutions. Conversely, ISIS uses social media to support regional and global political objectives which would lead to the overthrow or significant alteration of existing social and political institutions. It uses propaganda with violent imagery to intimidate adversaries, radicalize individuals, and to coordinate and inspire attacks. The group also uses propaganda to recruit prospective followers and foreign fighters.

The initial hypothesis states that both movements use social media to communicate with governments, populations, and news organizations, but their purpose is different; while one seeks to gain sympathizers within institutional structures, the other is seeking recruits to overthrow institutional structures. Therefore, their objectives shape

the relationship with media and, therefore, civil society. The hypothesis was validated. Both movements use social media as a tool to communicate with governments, populations, and news organizations; however, the movements' intent and political objectives shape their social media objectives and determine their relationship with civil society.

Each movement's social media propaganda strategy demonstrates how they interact with civil society. Both movements disseminate images of violence in propaganda, but for different reasons. ISIS uses violent propaganda, such as executions, to intimidate adversaries. BLM uses imagery of police violence to keep its political objectives related to criminal justice reform relevant, prevent the erasure of racial inequality and police violence in the news media, and to pressure police departments into changing policies. ISIS and BLM both use propaganda to inspire current and prospective followers to act on behalf of the movement to advance political objectives. ISIS uses a combination of violent and non-violent propaganda to radicalize individuals, inspire attacks on adversaries, and to recruit foreign fighters to support their regional military campaign. BLM uses propaganda to encourage sympathizers to participate in non-violent collective action in the form of demonstrations.

This study argues that a movement's political objectives shape social media objectives and strategies. The use of social media by ISIS and BLM demonstrates how a decentralized network on social media can impact a movement and its political objectives. Radical, violent, revolutionary groups, such as ISIS, can benefit from decentralized networks and crowdsourcing on social media. This strategy provides a movement like ISIS with a low-cost, low-risk means of disseminating propaganda to support political objectives. A non-violent, reformative social movement, like BLM, also benefits from a decentralized network and crowdsourcing on social media because it extends the movement's reach to the public and allows the movement to mobilize protests quickly, but it may also damage the movement's political objectives and distort its message.

BLM's decentralized, open network on social media demonstrates how a reformist movement's political objectives and message are prone to being hijacked.

Chapter IV of this thesis provided an example of how ISIS hijacked a BLM hashtag to spread radical propaganda and target disenfranchised African Americans on social media. However, tactics like this are not limited to radical groups like ISIS. Recent reports indicate that state-sponsored Russian propaganda exploited BLM's message leading up to the 2016 presidential election through "Blacktivist" social media accounts.³⁶⁰ This effort was not intended to usurp the movement's leadership or push a particular political narrative; it was intended to exploit and exacerbate existing social and political tensions in the United States. O'Sullivan and Byers state that "Blacktivist accounts provide further evidence that Russian-linked social media accounts saw racial tensions as something to be exploited in order to achieve the broader Russian goal of dividing Americans and creating chaos in U.S. politics during a campaign in which race repeatedly became an issue."³⁶¹ Another recent report claims the same Russian social media networks used during the 2016 presidential election are being used to amplify right-wing extremism in the United States.³⁶²

The initial hypothesis also stated that the use of existing national security policy and strategy, designed for extraneous terrorist threats, on domestic non-violent movements will likely result in negative outcomes and unintended consequences at the domestic front was partially validated. Current domestic intelligence policy, regarding electronic surveillance, does not pose a risk to groups in the domestic public as it did in the past. First, U.S. intelligence legislation and criminal law prohibits the electronic surveillance of U.S. citizens without a judicial oversight and approval. Second, various agencies and branches of government provide oversight and approval for policy, procedures, programs, and practices used to conduct electronic surveillance. There are examples of unintentional data collection on U.S. citizens; however, no group within the

³⁶⁰ Donie O'Sullivan and Dylan Byers, "Exclusive: Fake Black Activist Accounts Linked to Russian Government," CNN, September 28, 2017, accessed October 1, 2017, <http://money.cnn.com/2017/09/28/media/blacktivist-russia-facebook-twitter/index.html>.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Isaac Arnsdorf, "Russian Propaganda Bots Have Helped Amplify Right-Wing Extremism Online After Charlottesville," *Pacific Standard*, August 23, 2017, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://psmag.com/news/russian-propaganda-and-right-wing-extremism-online>.

domestic public has been targeted by the federal government like other groups, such as the civil rights movement, were in the first half of the twentieth century. However, electronic surveillance is currently being conducted beyond the confines of domestic intelligence policy.

The government does not appear to be executing repressive surveillance policies against groups in the domestic population as it did in the first half of the twentieth century; however, government agencies are consumers of private-sector surveillance services, which groups within the domestic population may perceive as repressive or unlawful. Services, such as SMMS, conduct surveillance through open sources, but this may be considered a form of repression by groups legally participating in sustained collective action and encroach on civil liberties. Studies suggest that if participants in movements fear the consequences of surveillance, they may either go underground or cease their association with their movement.³⁶³ This can have a negative impact on society. Della Porta and Diani argue that some social movements “become institutionalized, turning themselves into political parties or interest groups; others become more radical and turn to violent forms of action; some turn commercial and involve themselves in the market; yet others turn inward, becoming similar to religious sects.”³⁶⁴ Additionally, Della Porta argues that “repressive and hard policing of protest results in a shrinking of mass movements, but a radicalization of smaller protest groups.”³⁶⁵ The state risks inhibiting social progress and, paradoxically, radicalizing reformist groups through surveillance as it may be perceived as a form of repression. This finding does not suggest BLM is on the verge of becoming a radical group. On the contrary, the BLM network appears to be solely focused on making changes within existing social and political institutions and intends to do so through non-violent means.

³⁶³ Amory Starr, et al., “The Impacts of State Surveillance on Political Assembly and Association: A Socio-Legal Analysis,” 267.

³⁶⁴ Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 161.

³⁶⁵ Della Porta, “Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protest,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framing*, 92.

However, social movement theory indicates that any movement facing repressive tactics and a lack of or diminished political opportunities is at risk for radicalization.

C. IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The scope of this research was limited to open source, unclassified information regarding the practices and methods used by the U.S. government and private-sector companies to conduct electronic surveillance, and it makes assumptions based on the available information. There is a possibility that electronic surveillance being conducted by these entities goes beyond the practices and methods discussed in this study. Research at a classified level may reveal information that could lead to more comprehensive recommendations regarding how the state could balance civil liberties and national security when conducting electronic surveillance on social media.

This study finds that radical and non-radical groups both benefit from open, decentralized networks on social media, but non-radical groups are prone to having their political message hijacked. Previous examples of how ISIS and the Russian government exploited BLM's political message demonstrates how non-movement actors may use a movement's network to capitalize on domestic social instability. However, efforts to shape public opinion on social media are occurring on a global scale. A 2017 study by Woolley and Howard finds that the manipulation of public opinion on social media is currently happening throughout the world.³⁶⁶ Further research is needed to determine if and how network exploitation on social media by non-movement actors has resulted in states using repressive practices on non-violent, reformist movements.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Surveillance efforts on social media should be based on a movement's political objectives. This case study demonstrates that political objectives shape a movement's social media objectives and its social media strategy. That strategy determines how the

³⁶⁶ Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard, "Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary," Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, accessed October 25, 2017, <http://compprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/06/Casestudies-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>, 3.

movement interacts with current and prospective followers and what its relationship is with civil society. However, evidence suggests that interactions on social media, even when seemingly genuine, are not always what they seem and may be intentionally deceptive. Government agencies would benefit from focusing surveillance efforts based on a movement's objectives for many reasons. First, it would help agencies avoid casting wide surveillance nets and mitigate the risk of infringing on citizens' civil liberties. Second, it would economically focus resources and assets on a specific target which overtly demonstrates its intent. If a movement has clearly defined violent or radical political objectives it is likely that group would use violence to support those political objectives.

Congress should draft and pass legislation that provides oversight, accountability, and transparency for private sector surveillance services if government agencies intend to use them. Private sector services can and may be more useful for supporting national security strategies and objectives concerning the cyber domain in the future. Unfortunately, technology often advances more rapidly than the legislature. Congress needs to do more to keep up with these technological advances and draft laws to regulate these services to ensure that civil liberties are not compromised for the sake of national security strategies and objectives. The U.S. government risks public backlash and distrust if agencies continue to use unregulated private sector services for electronic surveillance.

Social media providers are in a better position to control content on their platforms than the government and should do more to regulate radical and manipulative content. Government censorship of the Internet would be a constitutional and political disaster in the United States. Additionally, it would likely be ineffective. Social media providers already regulate content on platforms by having users agree to user agreements and terms of service while establishing accounts. This allows providers to censor content without violating rights. If the content being shared on the sites is in violation of that user agreement or the terms of service, the provider reserves the right to delete that content or suspend the account. The challenge, however, is identifying the sources of the content before it enters social media to begin with. Content can go viral quickly through crowdsourcing once on social media and banned users can simply open new accounts. A

good starting point may be to require users, at registration, to provide more information prior to establishing an account. This may help providers identify potential threats.

Public officials in the U.S. should choose their rhetoric carefully when criticizing domestic reformatory social movements. Criticism is fair in a free and open society, but making false accusations against movements and distorting political objectives may have a negative impact on the public's opinion of a movement. Chapter IV provides some examples of how critics, some of which hold public office, have erroneously distorted the political objectives of BLM and associated the group with violence and radicalism. Additionally, other elected officials, such as former Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke have categorized BLM as a hate group and asserted that the movement would eventually merge with ISIS.³⁶⁷ It is difficult to quantify the impact of this type of rhetoric, but one may conclude that it is having a negative impact on the public's opinion of the movement. For example, a White House petition was started in January 2017, to "Formally recognize black lives matter as a terrorist organization."³⁶⁸ The petition only received 906 signatures, far short of the 100,000 required for the federal government to address the grievance, but it cites Sheriff Clarke's rhetoric as the inspiration for the petition.³⁶⁹ Social movements depend on public support, allies and sympathizers, to make changes in social and political institutions. The erosion of a movement's public support could limit its political opportunities and may have other serious consequences. Many terrorist groups, for example, are the product of failed and unpopular social movements.³⁷⁰ Public officials may find it more productive to work with movements toward reform rather than fostering alterity in the domestic public. Otherwise, those officials may end up on the wrong side of history by inhibiting social progress.

³⁶⁷ Tom Kertscher, "Pro-Sheriff David Clarke Group Says Clarke Called Black Lives Matter Hate Group, Terrorist Movement," Politifact, April 17, 2017, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2017/apr/17/sheriff-david-clarke-us-senate/pro-sheriff-david-clarke-group-says-clarke-called/>.

³⁶⁸ White House, "Formally Recognize Black Lives Matter as a Terrorist Organization," January 22, 2017, accessed July 1, 2017, <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/formally-recognize-black-lives-matter-terrorist-organization>.

³⁶⁹ White House, "Formally Recognize Black Lives Matter as a Terrorist Organization."

³⁷⁰ Rinehart, *Volatile Social Movements and The Origins of Terrorism*, 1.

The National Intelligence Council's forecast that "advanced information technology will amplify difference over inequality, globalization, politics, and corruption, while perceived humiliation and injustice will spur protests and violent mobilization" is becoming more relevant with each passing day.³⁷¹ How nation states, individuals, and movements use this technology will likely present governments with greater security challenges in the future. Democratic nations need to approach these challenges carefully and thoughtfully to avoid inhibiting social progress, infringing on civil liberties, and undermining liberal-democratic values. Otherwise, those democracies may create the very threat set out to defend against.

³⁷¹ National Intelligence Council, "Global Trends: Paradox of Progress."

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