



**The author(s) shown below used Federal funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice to prepare the following resource:**

**Document Title:** Transnational Crimes among Somali-Americans: Convergences of Radicalization and Trafficking

**Author(s):** Stevan Weine, Edna Erez, Chloe Polutnik

**Document Number:** 252135

**Date Received:** May 2019

**Award Number:** 2013-ZA-BX-0008

**This resource has not been published by the U.S. Department of Justice. This resource is being made publically available through the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service.**

**Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.**

Transnational Crimes among Somali-Americans:  
Convergences of Radicalization and Trafficking

Stevan Weine, Edna Erez, and Chloe Polutnik

This project was supported by Award No. 2013-ZA-BX-0008, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	Page 4
Acknowledgements.....	Page 7
Introduction.....	Page 8
Background.....	Page 10
Purpose and Methodology.....	Page 17
Results.....	Page 19
Conclusions.....	Page 61
Recommendations.....	Page 64
References.....	Page 66

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethnic minorities and recent migrants to the United States, like their American-born counterparts, can become involved in crimes, including multiple types of transnational crimes. Criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations need to respond in ways that are cognizant of this possibility, and establish suitable response practices that consider the specific contextual circumstances. Yet there are no models which adequately explain how to understand the risks for multiple crime types and the practices to prevent them based on empirical evidence from those communities. To address this concern, a model of convergent risks and practices for multiple transnational crimes is needed. A convergent model is concerned with how both risks and practices associated with different types of transnational crimes can interact with and impact one another, either favorably or adversely.

In recent years there have been investigations, arrests, and trials concerning violent extremism and trafficking in persons involving a small number of Somali-Americans in several U.S. cities. The trafficking in persons trials resulted in acquittals and the violent extremism trials resulted in several convictions. As acquittals indicate legal innocence and do not necessarily address factual guilt, the possible occurrence of these transnational crimes or their extent is likely to remain unknown. Yet, the dynamics of what has transpired following the criminal justice system's response, the immigrant communities' perceptions of the events, and the role and manner that the criminal justice system responds to presumed legal violations by immigrant community members, are critical for public policy design, as detailed in this report.

This study aimed to build scientific knowledge on the emergence and trajectories of the co-occurrence of alleged violent extremism and trafficking in persons in Somali-American communities to generate better understanding of the possible convergence issues involved and how this knowledge could inform prevention. This was a three-year, multi-site, mixed methods study informed by push and pull theory.

The key research questions for this study were: 1) In a disadvantaged refugee and immigrant community, how are violent extremism and trafficking in persons similar or different with respect to pathways and risks? 2) In a disadvantaged refugee and immigrant community, how are criminal justice practices in response to violent extremism and trafficking in persons similar or different, and how do they interact with one another? 3) Which common or differentiated community practices should criminal justice agencies and community partners use to best respond to violent extremism and trafficking in persons in disadvantaged refugee and immigrant communities?

Data collection involved review of public sources on the possible involvement of Somali-American in these crimes, and ethnographic interviews of young adults, parents, community leaders and service providers in three American cities which are home to large Somali communities: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Columbus, and Nashville.

To date there have been no convictions or new charges for trafficking in persons among Somali-Americans. At the time of our data collection, when some charges were still standing, many community members questioned or dismissed the idea that trafficking in persons happened, but

still discussed the circumstances of and perspectives upon allegations of involvement. Therefore, in this report we will refer to *previously alleged* involvement in trafficking in persons, without any implication that there is known trafficking in persons in the Somali-American community. Nonetheless, we share the widely held belief that trafficking in persons occurs in many U.S. communities, and that it is often highly difficult to prosecute (NIJ, 2016). Thus it is a relevant concern for Somali-Americans, as for any other U.S. community.

The data suggest that transnational crimes such as violent extremism and trafficking in persons both appear to involve common and selective risks and practices, which can be explained via a convergent risks and practices model that is informed by push and pull theory. The convergent risks and practices model consists of common push and pull factors, violent extremism selective push and pull factors, trafficking in persons selective push and pull factors, as well as common negative convergent practices and recommended convergent practices.

Regarding risks, the model described common push factors (financial hardship; generation gap and weak family support; youth-adult transition; balancing multiple identities; unaddressed mental health needs; insular community; lack of opportunities; gang involvement) and common pull factors (sense of belonging; peer networks; deceptive practices).

Regarding violent extremism (VE), the model described selective push factors (male identity and superiority; grievances against Somalis and Muslims; beliefs that the threat of VE is negligible; stereotyping of Somalis and Muslims; media stigmatization) and selective pull factors (internet use and exposure; empowerment; extremist ideology; organizations promoting violent extremism; social media).

Regarding previously alleged trafficking in persons, the model described selective push factors (female inequality; lack of protection for female victims) and selective pull factors (financial rewards, criminal history and records; sex industry and persons who want to buy sex; drug and alcohol procurement).

This empirical model, and the push and pull factors it identified, are based upon qualitative data. Future research should examine and validate this model using survey methods and quantitative analysis.

The negative convergence of risks and practices occurs when the risks and community and/or law enforcement practices combine in ways that contribute to negative outcomes. The model identified three overall negative convergent practices (compounded multifaceted victimization and miscommunication; weak collective efficacy; limited and securitized relationship with law enforcement).

Lastly, recommended convergent practices should help to ameliorate risks, and lead to positive outcomes. The model identified several recommended convergent practices (build effective and sustainable generalized prevention programming; strengthen law enforcement and community relations; increase programmatic emphasis on community's needs; stop discriminatory practices) which were incorporated into our final recommendations.

Overall, practitioners and policymakers from communities, law enforcement, and other government agencies may not be aware of, or underestimate, the convergence of risks and practices for different crime types, including transnational crimes. This may allow for, intentionally or unintentionally, negative convergent practices which do not solve and can potentially worsen the problems at hand. Alternatively, they should recognize important areas of recommended convergence that would offer opportunities for strengthening criminal justice and community policies, programs, and practices.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank the Somali-American community members and law enforcement representatives in Minneapolis, Columbus, and Nashville who helped with referrals, advice, and insightful comments on various aspects of the project, including the final report and its findings.

We would also like to thank students from the University of Maryland, Sarala Prabhu, Ryan Garfinkel, Samuel Koralnik, for their assistance with analyzing the qualitative data and report writing.



## INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 2007, several Somali-Americans from Minnesota began traveling to Somalia to join the Al Shabaab terrorist organization and after 2012 several others travelled to join ISIS (Elliott, 2009).

In 2008, police in Minneapolis-St. Paul began an investigation, after hearing concerns from leaders, elders, and parents from the Somali community in St. Paul, about young girls being trafficked. Allegedly, local Somali young persons, who were thought to be gang members, shuttled Somali-American girls between Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, Columbus, Ohio, and Nashville, Tennessee. Allegedly, girls as young as 13 were forced to engage in sex acts so gang members could receive money, drugs, or liquor. In November 2010, the New York Times reported that a trafficking in persons ring among Somali-Americans had been disrupted by investigators (Eckholm, 2010).

What do these different crimes, including violent extremism and trafficking in persons, have to do with one another? How do community members explain the possibility of such crimes occurring in their midst?

These different crimes were being understood and dealt with very differently by law enforcement even within the very same communities and jurisdictions. Persons in uniform sang several different songs often to the same audience. How did community members, law enforcement practitioners, and policymakers make sense of all this?

Answers to these questions require attention to the phenomenon of the convergence of different risk factors and levels and the convergence of criminal justice and community responses to criminal activities, including transnational crimes. This study explores the commonalities of risk and protective factors for engagement in several types of transnational crimes.

The extant literature on convergence of transnational crimes focuses on convergence of threats on the global level, particularly the employment of similar methods (Shelley and Picarelli, 2005) or the use of fruits of crimes, such as weapon-, drug-, or human trafficking, and financial schemes to support, finance, or perpetrate (mostly international) terrorism (e.g. Erez, Weimann & Weisburd, 2011). Research has examined convergence on the organizational and operational levels, as well as over time – short- and long- term convergence (Picarelli, 2012; Miklaucic & Brewer, 2013). Prior research on convergence also examined the relationships between transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups, which may adopt similar methods, though for different ends (Picarelli, 2012). In some instances, terrorist and transnational organized crime groups have developed tight operational links and adopted each other's tactics.

Less attention has been given to risk and practice convergence of crimes on the national level, specifically, how risks for involvement in different crimes overlap, and how criminal justice responses to such crimes converge or diverge. Studying convergence of risks is important for theoretical and practical/policy reasons. Such studies can enhance our understanding of the correlates of seemingly different behaviors, or the commonalities in vulnerability to involvement in such crimes, allowing to formulate an empirically based “grand theory” of involvement in transnational crimes. On a practical level, such research may assist formal and informal social

control agencies, particularly law enforcement, in responding to different types of crimes in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner, conserving resources, and avoiding negative or contradictory practices. The latter may result from lack of understanding of, or familiarity with, common underlying risks for involvement in these crimes.

Specifically, understanding the convergence of risks and practices may assist law enforcement agencies in better responding to crimes and their aftermath. For instance, it is important to understand whether convergence reflects similar processes or outcomes, such as recruiters for both terrorist organizations and trafficking rings devising and employing same or similar strategies to prey upon the vulnerabilities of young persons; whether similarities exist in the manner by which members of immigrant communities react to recruitment for transnational crimes and their consequences, or in the obstacles that community members face in cooperating with law enforcement; or the difficulties that community advocates encounter in their efforts to prevent or address crimes; or how to overcome impediments to forming productive partnerships between criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations. The latter have the potential for strengthening the protective resources in communities that could mitigate against these crimes. Understanding of and familiarity with immigrant communities' characteristics, including their structures, values, rituals, perceptions, cultural and social practices, may help law enforcement agencies engage in productive ways with refugee and immigrant communities. In sum, the convergence of different criminal activities and criminal justice practices, especially involving transnational crimes, warrants scholarly research that would produce implications for policies and programs.

Convergence of crime types is commonly seen in various communities, whether immigrant, non-immigrant, or mixed. Research has long established that specialization in crime is rare, that offenders often switch between crimes, and that the criminal activity selected at a particular point in time is affected by a range of considerations, including individual characteristics and needs, opportunities that present themselves, and interactions between these two factors (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1986; Kempf-Leonard, 1987).

It is therefore important to address these issues in immigrant or refugee communities that face unique risks, may possibly be involved in low-base rate crimes such as violent extremism and trafficking in persons, and experience law enforcement practices that may be problematic or perceived as such. The purpose of this study was to build a model that would identify the common risks and underlying problems and improve law enforcement practices in response to them.

## BACKGROUND

### **Somali-American Diaspora**

Thirty years of war in Somalia led to an estimated 1 million Somalis being forcibly displaced, large numbers of whom were resettled in European Union countries, Australia, Canada, and the United States (Kusow & Bjork, 2007; Horst, 2006; Farah, Muchie, & Gundel, 2007).

A large number of Somalis arrived in the U.S. in the 1990s to 2000s and they settled first in Minneapolis-St. Paul, which became the city with the largest Somali population. Other cities that absorbed Somali refugees and currently have sizable Somali populations include Columbus, OH, Seattle, WA, San Diego, CA, and Nashville, TN.

The vast majority of Somali-Americans are law-abiding citizens, and Somali-Americans excel in all walks of life. However, they have been beset by various difficulties including prior exposure to personal trauma, displacement and living in poverty, prolonged stay and transitional living in refugee camps outside their home country in Kenya and elsewhere, being raised in broken families and/or with single mothers, exposure to an excess of war images, and experiencing discrimination (Jaranson et al., 2004; Robertson et al. 2006).

Somali society is tribal, and tribal rivalry has played an important role in the country's history of conflict and wars. Somalis are socially organized around clans that are patrilineal and often divided into sub-clans. Membership in a clan is connected to Somali politics. While the move to the U.S. has attenuated the importance of tribal and clan membership, occasionally conflict in U.S. Somali communities erupts along these lines.

Somali-American youth have been referred to as "Generation 1.5" (Leet-Otley, 2012; Vu & Walters, 2013; Weine & Ahmed, 2016). Most were born in a war-torn country, raised in refugee camps in Kenya, and then settled in impoverished and ghettoized U.S. communities, where they watched the war in Somalia or its aftermath on YouTube or television. Though they were too young to directly experience the war, most have lost family members and heard talk about the war from others.

Table 1 displays estimates of select socio-demographic indicators of the Somali-American communities in the three cities included in this study: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Columbus, and Nashville. At the present, Minnesota has the largest population of Somali-Americans outside of East Africa, approximately 60,000, Columbus, the second site has about 45,000, and Nashville, the third site, has about 8,000, with continual new arrivals. The three cities are connected to one another by air and road travel routes frequented by Somalis.

**Table 1. Estimated Demographics of Three Diaspora Cities**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota</b>	<b>Columbus, Ohio</b>	<b>Nashville, Tennessee</b>
Population (approx.)	50,000- 70,000	38,000- 45,000	3,500- 8,000

Somali Malls	3	6	1
Somali Community Organizations	17	3	0
Mosques	43	9	4

### **The Somali Community in Minneapolis-St. Paul<sup>1</sup>**

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, many Somalis live in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood in a low-income housing development known as the Towers. Most Minnesota Somalis arrived via secondary migration, choosing to move to Minnesota after living for a time in their initial refugee placement state, which means that they are not eligible for federal funding for housing, education, job development, and social services (Weine, et al., 2011; Weine, Levin, Hakizimana, Danweigh, 2011). According to the most recent data from 2008, the unemployment rate among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul was 17%, the median income \$14,367, and the poverty level 42% (Kasper et al., 2009; City of Minneapolis, 2009).

The discourse in academia on Somali-Americans has typically focused on their vulnerabilities (Weine, et al., 2010). A large epidemiological survey conducted in Minneapolis-St. Paul in 2004 found that 37% of Somali women and 25% of Somali men had been tortured and that torture survivors reported significantly more symptoms of PTSD and more physical and psychological problems (Jaranson et al., 2004). Another study in Minneapolis-St. Paul found that nearly half of Somali mothers were torture survivors; more than a quarter had no formal education; and 70% were single parents (Robertson et al. 2006).

Other research conducted in the Somali-American community in Minneapolis-St. Paul has described unsafe neighborhoods (Hirsi, 2009a) and problems with civic engagement (Dickson, 2011). The latter reported that, “the deepest problem among Somali communities in Minnesota might be ‘the hollowing out of their civic spirit’” (Dickinson, p. 114). Nderu (2005) described a pattern of “peripheral support” of Somali children by their parents, which included fathers not being as involved as mothers, calling for better efforts to bridge the cultural gap between families and schools. Ailitolppa-Nitamo (2004) reported on the challenges faced by parents who were illiterate, uneducated, and unemployed, which led them to be more isolated from mainstream society. Robillos (2001, p. 18) reported on the particular needs of male adolescents who, “especially expressed the desire for a place to socialize, play sports, or have fun after school.” Somali mothers expressed concern about their youth getting into conflict with others after school, reporting that: “taunting and fights occur ‘when they come home. That’s when they tease them’” (McBrien, 2010, p. 82). However, these mothers did not necessarily understand English well enough to know what the conflicts were about.

---

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that much of the research on Somalis in the U.S. has been conducted in Minneapolis-- the largest community of Somalis in the U.S, but it is likely that many of the cultural and social attributes identified in this city also characterize Somalis in other diaspora communities, including those residing in the other two communities included in this study -- Columbus and Nashville.

Studies have also described the strengths of the Somali-American community. These include: a strong sense of community identity; the establishment of Somali Schools or *dugsis*; resistance to American racism; and support for children and their education (Kapteigns and Arman, 2008). In Minneapolis, Somalis are greatly integrated into the political, economic, and social life of their community. Community members have been elected to local elective offices, including Abdi Warsame who was elected to the Minneapolis City Council in 2013 (Minneapolis City Council, 2017) and Ilhan Omar, who was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2016, making her the first Somali-American legislator (Xaykaothao, 2016). Many Somali-Americans on the Minneapolis police force. Minneapolis is home to Somali malls and entrepreneurial businesses, including the Riverside mall and Karmel mall, the largest collection of Somali businesses in the U.S. with 175 clothing shops, henna shops, and restaurants (Belz, 2015). Additionally, there are Somali community based organizations, like the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota focused on workforce development, recreational activities, cultural programming, the Somali Action Alliance Education Fund focused on leadership development programs like civic engagement and voting rights and responsibilities, as well as Ka Joog, whose purpose is community programming for Somali youth and their family.

Since at least 2005, some Somali-Americans in Minneapolis were reported to be members of and participated in criminal gang activities (Mone, 2011). Somali-Americans are noted to be members of gangs which are involved in drug and weapons trafficking, human trafficking, credit card fraud, prostitution, violent crime, cell phone and gun store burglaries. Somali gangs include the Somali Outlaws, the Somali Mafia, and the Lady Outlaws. They are present in many cities including San Diego and Seattle where some have reported that they are involved in cross-border smuggling. Somali gangs are unique in that they are not based on a certain geographical area or turf, but ethnicity (i.e. being Somali) is an important criterion for membership. Criminal acts are often done in a wide geographic area that stretches across state lines and their mobility has made them difficult to track. Somali gangs have engaged in witness tampering and intimidation, causing an ongoing threat to successful prosecutions. Somali Americans from this community were also involved in and convicted for violent extremism. These events, and community reactions to them, are documented in this report.

### **The Somali Community in Columbus**

The Somali community in Columbus, Ohio is one of the largest Somali communities in the U.S. Somalis began arriving in Columbus in the early 1990s and the majority arrived by the early 2000s. The Somali community continues to receive refugees and family members of persons who resettled in Columbus. The majority of the Somalis in Ohio live with families that average around 8 members. Many are related by blood or marriage (some of the men who resettled have had four wives upon arrival). Almost all are Muslim, close to half of them have become citizens, and over half are eligible to become citizens. About a quarter of the community speak English, particularly the younger generation. Many young adults attend college and many high school seniors plan to do so (Ohio Department of Public Safety, date unknown; Somali Community Association, 2018).

The Somalis in Ohio have established various businesses; some are professionals, and the majority work in services or unskilled labor. A recent report on the Somali community in the

U.S. suggests that overall, Somalis have a higher labor force participation than the average (see Dyssegaard Kallick and Mathema, 2016). Most of the Somalis live in one area in North Columbus, in apartment buildings or private homes. On the west side of the city there is sub-tribe of Somalis -- the Somali Bantu. They are the descendants of various Bantu ethnic groups that were captured from Southeast Africa and sold into slavery in Somalia (and other regions of Africa) as part of the 19th century Arab slave trade. The Somali Bantu have their own communal organizations, separated from the larger Somali community of Northern Columbus. The larger Somali community is the focus of the current study.

Although Columbus is a popular place to settle for Somalis and other immigrants, they face many challenges in acquiring the basics needed for successful settlement and integration. These challenges include housing, employment, education, healthcare, language skills, and legal services. The Somali Community Organization in Columbus, which was founded in 1996, and other community organizations that emerged later, including SomaliCAN and Center for Somali Women offer services or assistance to the Somali community. These services address issues such as immigration and citizenship, housing, after-school and youth leadership development programs, senior citizen services, community advocacy, public safety awareness, healthcare, interpretation and translation services, ESL classes and family literacy, educational opportunities for adults and children, job training, and summer activities for youth.

The community organizations commonly function in cooperation with various state, city and local government agencies and NGOs that assist immigrants (such as Community Refugee and Immigrant Services [CRIS] -- an NGO and refugee resettlement agency in Columbus, Ohio), as well as law enforcement to strengthen the self-sufficiency of their members, better understanding of U.S. way of life, rules, regulations and rights, issues of health, safety and security, and generally assistance in smooth integration and adaptation. Living mostly in one geographical area, its members, particularly youth, are to some extent insulated from outside influences, although exposure can occur in schools or other public places that youth frequent. Informal social control through association with the community is an effective protective factor in Columbus, compared to Somali communities that are more geographically dispersed or in proximity to high crime areas.

Culturally, the Somalis are an oral community, and frequent social gatherings where exchanges about what members are doing contribute to informal social control. The interviewees in this study often distinguished the Columbus Somali community from other Somali communities in the U.S., particularly Minneapolis, describing the Columbus community as more integrated, less exposed to “bad” external influences, and with members who are conservative, law abiding, loyal citizens. Although there were a few cases of youth entanglement with the law, they were minimal, and considered exceptional and uncharacteristic of the community and its youth. In terms of participation in terrorism related violations, the only known cases of Somalis involved in such activities in Columbus include a person who was convicted for planning to blow up the Polaris shopping mall (Murphy, 2007), a young Somali who is currently being charged with providing material assistance to ISIS following a trip to Syria (Grossman, 2015), and on November 28, 2016, an Ohio State University (OSU) student, Abdul Ali Arsan, age 20, who drove a car into pedestrians walking on OSU grounds and then leapt out and stabbed other in the area, totaling 11 injured victims. Arsan was in his first semester at Ohio State University. Arsan had expressed grievances to the student newspaper about being concerned about where to pray

and being stigmatized as a Muslim and before the attack, he posted on Facebook, ““I am sick and tired of seeing [Muslims] killed & tortured EVERYWHERE. I can’t take it anymore. America!” He had become inspired by ISIS and Anwar al Awlaki, a radical imam and lecturer (Grinberg, Prokupecz, & Yan, 2016).

This Somali student was shot and killed by a university police officer. In all cases, the community reacted in surprise, disbelief, and shock about the incident, reaffirming their allegiance to the U.S. and in some instances disputing the charges as misguided or resulting from misunderstanding.

To engage youth in constructive leisure time and to keep them off the street, the Somali community raises money and solicits donations from Somali businesses and other concerned community members. It organizes programs for youth that address leadership, sports, and various educational or cultural activities, including summer programs.

### **The Somali Community in Nashville**

During the 1990s, Nashville had an active faith-based refugee resettlement effort. Most of the Somali refugees in the Nashville area arrived through the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. The refugees were placed by resettlement agencies like Catholic Charities and World Relief. Currently there are approximately 3,000 Somalis who reside in Nashville metro area and metro schools counted 760 students who use Somali as their first language (Gonzalez, 2015).

Somalis in Nashville work as cab drivers, truck drivers, and other small business owners. There are Somali strip malls that have Somali stores, coffee shops, and restaurants.

At the time of this report, there was no Somali community center or Somali-specific organization. The Somali Community Center of Nashville (SCCN) was founded by Somalis in 1999. In 2002, its Executive Director was charged with and sentenced in 2006 to 2-years probation after grant funds were diverted away from the center’s programs to a Somali mosque. In 2009, SCCN became the Center for Refugees and Immigrants of Tennessee (CRIT) serving all immigrants and refugees. In the summer of 2016, CRIT dissolved.

### **Understanding Risks for Violent Extremism and Trafficking in Persons**

Research on risks for various transnational crimes is not uniform in its quantity or methodology. Whereas the risks for being trafficked (i.e. becoming victims) is relatively extensive, there is less research on the facilitators of trafficking. The risks for violent extremism are also not well established based upon evidence, although recent research has begun to address both risk and protective factors (e.g. National Institute of Justice, 2015) as well as narratives of those at risk who chose not to become radicalized and/or be involved in violent extremism (Joose et al., 2015)

Radicalization theory, and trafficking victimization, and to an extent, becoming traffickers, often rely upon push and pull theory (Denooux and Carter, 2009). Push factors are understood as the social, economic, and cultural conditions impacting upon individuals, or a whole community, that prompt individuals to move or take certain steps toward an objective or goal. Pull factors are the positive characteristics that attract or motivate individuals to travel or reach a certain goal, or are used by recruiters and their proxies to depict desirable conditions or outcomes

associated with membership in violent extremist organization. These may include empowerment, belonging, heroism, companionship, love, and money (and as discussed below, are present in some form and for different reasons in trafficking cases.)

In a prior ethnographic study of Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Weine and Ahmed characterized the multilevel risk and protective factors that mitigated for or against involvement in violent extremism (2012). This study was based on opportunity structure theory and resilience theory which looked at how risks for involvement in crime were embedded in the community. It identified a total of 37 risks factors and 43 protective resources. These results were organized into the DOVE model (Diminishing opportunities for violent extremism). This model explained how multiple risk factors combined to create opportunities for entering into violent extremism, and how protective resources could stop, delay, or diminish such opportunities. The DOVE model claims that prevention programming should be directed at three major risk levels: 1) diminishing youth's unaccountable times and unobserved spaces; 2) diminishing the perceived social legitimacy of violent extremism, and; 3) diminishing the potential for contact with terrorist recruiters or associates.

The risks for being trafficked have also largely been understood from the perspective of push and pull theory (Jones, Engstrom, Hilliard, & Diaz, 2007; Wheaton, Schauer, & Galli, 2010). This theory is largely used to explain migration, whether legal or illegal, domestic or international. It identifies push factors in the origination or sending location that would make a person want to consider leaving and moving elsewhere. Push factors may be economic (e.g. poverty/lack of opportunities), social (e.g. isolation,) and political (e.g. war). The theory also identifies pull factors in the destination location, which from a victim perspective are favorable answers to the unfavorable push factors. Pull factors, such as promise of employment, wages, acceptance, and other perceived opportunities, would make a person want to consider travelling there.

Generally speaking, the factors underlying the recent growth in human trafficking are multifaceted and rooted in globalization (Dominelli, 2010). Countries involved are classified as primarily origination, transit, and destination nations. An intertwined set of "push and pull" factors creates a milieu that is conducive to trafficking. Push factors exist in nations where trafficking tends to originate (Bales, 2012) and include factors such as poverty, political instability, gender-based violence, and other structural dynamics that encourage people to seek alternatives in other nations. Pull factors emanate from destination nations (Vijayarasa, 2012), and often include media-propagated images of wealth and prosperity in Western nations, perceived opportunities for gainful employment, and other imagined benefits offered by destination countries. When it comes to trafficking, the U.S. is largely a destination nation, but when it comes to violent extremism, it is largely a sending nation.

This milieu of push and pull factors is exploited by traffickers to recruit victims (UNODC, 2012). Trafficking in persons research has also identified various vulnerabilities associated with trafficking in persons. Thus transnational criminal syndicates typically prey on vulnerable persons, including females -- girls and women are less empowered or able to protect themselves, and have higher unemployment or fewer economic opportunities (Siskin & Wyler, 2013), children and youth (e.g. Reid, 2012), poor (e.g. Kelly, 2004), orphaned, without legal guardians, including throwaway or runaway youth (e.g. Hughes & Roche, 1999), and persons who are illiterate (Aghatise, 2004), innumerate (Beyrer, 2001), physically or mentally disabled (U.S.



Department of State, 2012), socially isolated (Okonofua, Ogbomwan, Alutu, Kufre, & Eghosa, 2004), victims of prior sexual abuse (Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Grace, 2009), members of minority groups, whether based on ethnicity, religion, race, or national origin (Gjermeni et al., 2008), or immigrants/ refugees fleeing wars or natural disasters (UNODC, 2012). Individuals with such vulnerabilities or risk factors, who are commonly unfamiliar with the destination country customs and laws, are easier to recruit, control, and exploit. Traffickers use a variety of methods to recruit victims (Siskin & Wyler, 2013), which often include deceptive practices. These include promises for highly remunerative or glamorous employment, modeling or domestic work opportunities, study abroad programs, participation in beauty contests, and marriage services. These recruitment methods are often closely integrated with legal businesses (for example, tourism, agriculture, hotel and airline operations, and leisure and entertainment businesses). The intertwined nature of legitimate and illicit practices also complicates efforts to detect trafficking in persons.

### **Research Questions**

The initial key research questions for this study were:

- 1) In a disadvantaged refugee and immigrant community, how are violent extremism and trafficking in persons similar or different with respect to pathways and risks?
- 2) In a disadvantaged refugee and immigrant community, how are criminal justice practices in response to violent extremism and trafficking in persons similar or different, and how do they interact with one another?
- 3) Which common or differentiated community practices should criminal justice agencies and community partners use to best respond to violent extremism and trafficking in persons in disadvantaged refugee and immigrant communities?

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

**Goal.** This study aimed to build scientific knowledge on the emergence and trajectories of the co-occurrence of violent extremism and trafficking in persons in the Somali-American community to better understand the convergence issues involved and how this knowledge could inform evidence-based prevention and intervention programs.

**Research Design.** This was a three-year, multi-site, and mixed methods study that examined the convergence of transnational crimes and law enforcement responses in three Somali-American communities. Data collection involved review of public sources and ethnographic interviews in three American cities which are home to large Somali-American communities: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Columbus, and Nashville.

**Methods.** Aim 1 was addressed through case study analytical methods examining all known cases of violent extremism and trafficking in persons. Aim 2 was addressed through individual and group interviews with 40 persons in each of these three communities. The methods are further described below.

**Case Study.** Case study research is valuable in developing and refining concepts by examining cases in their natural settings, while multiple case studies (e.g. different cities, different crime types) enable the researchers to relate differences in contexts to constants in processes and outcomes (Crowe et al., 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989; Hamel et al., 1993). The data collected included media communication such as newspaper articles, TV clips, and other open source materials, archival examination of court files, NGOs case files, and searches using appropriate engines.

**Minimally Structured Interviews.** Minimally structured interviews are discussions with the informants that begin with a small number of introductory questions (Sandelowski, 2014). The conversation proceeds in whichever direction allows the informant to speak most meaningfully to the research questions with concrete and personal details. The interviewer has a list of domains in mind that they want the person to speak to, and if they do not speak to these topics, the interviewer asks them. These domains include: 1) personal history; 2) risks for violent extremism or trafficking in persons; 3) protective resources against violent extremism or trafficking in persons; 4) responses of community-based organizations and government agencies to these crimes; 5) prevention practices. (See attached minimally structured interview guide).

All interviews were conducted in English or the native language of participants (which involved translation provided by the resident ethnographer or another person versed in both languages). One UIC ethnographer was present during the interview; however, if the participant did not speak English, during the interview, the resident ethnographer from the Somali community was present to provide interpretation.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour and were audiotaped. We interviewed a total of 116 persons in three U.S. cities (40 in Minneapolis; 40 in Columbus; 36 in Nashville) who were either 1) young adults (ages 18 to 30) (n=39); 2) parents of young adults (n=21); 3) service providers who work with the community, community leaders, or activists (n=30); 4) criminal

justice practitioners (n=26).<sup>2</sup> We only enrolled persons who were able to give informed consent. Individuals with psychotic or serious developmental disorders were excluded from the study because of the likelihood that they would not be able to adequately participate.

**Analysis and Report Writing.** The investigators used the data gathered to conduct qualitative analyses using Atlas/ti software and a grounded theory approach (Friese, 2014; Charmaz, 2014) that included: 1) narrative descriptions (e.g. of different prevention strategies); 2) content categories elaborating the range of phenomena observed in a given analytic domain (e.g. the perceptions of risk and practices); 3) theoretical statements (e.g. understanding the relationship between risk for violent extremism and trafficking in persons); and 4) interpretive accounts (e.g. of how law enforcement can best partner with community-based organizations to achieve prevention of either violent extremism or trafficking in persons). These were incorporated into this final report as well as research briefs and publications in preparation.

---

<sup>2</sup> In Columbus, 9 young adults were oversampled instead of interviewing parents and in Nashville only 6 law enforcement officers were interviewed.

## RESULTS

This section reports on the results which include: 1) a case study analysis of incidents of violent extremism among Somali-Americans to both Al-Shabaab and ISIS including a focus on both risks and practices; 2) a case study analysis of previously alleged trafficking in persons among Somali-Americans including a focus on both risks and practices; 3) a convergent risks and practices model which consists of common push and pull factors, trafficking in persons selective push and pull factors, violent extremism selective push and pull factors, negative convergent practices, and recommended convergent practices.

### INCIDENTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AMONG SOMALI-AMERICANS

Since 2007, there have been 23 documented cases of Somali-Americans traveling abroad or attempting to travel abroad to join Al Shabaab and 16 cases of Somali-Americans traveling abroad or attempting to travel abroad to join ISIS at the time of this report.

To put this in the context of other foreign fighters in the U.S., Table 2 indicates that Minnesota is the state with the highest proportion of foreign fighters. Among U.S. foreign fighters, ISIS is the #1 organization (23%) and Al Shabaab the #3 organization (14%) where foreign fighters aspired to join, although all travelers did not successfully arrive in the conflict zone (START, 2016).

**Table 2. Foreign Fighters by State**

State	Number (n=153)
<i>Minnesota</i>	<i>n= 39 (25%)</i>
<b>New York</b>	<i>n= 30 (19%)</i>
<b>Virginia</b>	<i>n= 16 (19%)</i>
<b>California</b>	<i>n= 15 (9%)</i>
<b>North Carolina</b>	<i>n= 11 (7%)</i>
<b>Illinois</b>	<i>n= 9 (5%)</i>
<i>Ohio</i>	<i>n= 8 (5%)</i>
<b>Texas</b>	<i>n= 8 (5%)</i>
<b>Florida</b>	<i>n= 6 (3%)</i>
<b>Oregon</b>	<i>n= 6 (3%)</i>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<i>n= 5 (3%)</i>

Between late 2007 and Autumn 2008, at least 18 Somali-American adolescent boys and young men living in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area secretly left their homes and flew to Somalia to join training camps run by the Al Shabaab organization (see Table 3) (Yuen & Aslanian, 2013). These 18 adolescent boys and young men left in the first two waves, with the second wave being a little younger and more academic than the first. This second wave included Burhan Hassan, a 17-year-old A-student and senior at Roosevelt High School, as well as other high school and university students. After the first two waves, 5 more Somali young men left to join Al Shabaab. Presenting nationalistic and ideological reasons to travel to Somalia to fight, or capitalizing on the youths' experiences of alienation and discrimination, the recruiters convinced youth from in

and around a mosque to join, and organized and paid for their travel without their parents' knowledge. Many parents had encouraged their youth to attend mosque because it was regarded as a refuge from streets and a protection against gang involvement. When parents spoke to law enforcement and the media, they were apparently threatened by some mosque leadership and community members, some of whom were believed to be advocates for Al-Shabaab (Wereschagin, 2015).

**Table 3. Somali-Americans Joining Al-Shabaab from 2007-2012**

<b>Violent Extremism (n=23 who fled to Somali a to join Al Shabaab)</b>	
<b>First Wave (late 2007)</b>	
	Reported dead
	Dead, suicide bomber
Khalid Abshir (recruiter) Ahmed Ali Omar	Indicted in terror charges, believed to be at large in Somalia
Abdifatah Yuduf Isse Salah Osman Ahmed	Pleaded guilty to one count of providing material support to terrorists, sentenced to 3 years in prison
Kamal Said Hassan	Pleaded guilty to providing material support to terrorist and to a foreign terrorist organization, sentenced to 10 years in prison
<b>Second Wave (2008)</b>	
	Reported dead
	Indicted on terrorism charges, believed to be at large
Mahamud Said Omar (recruiter)	Convicted on five terror-related charges, sentenced to 20 years in prison
<b>Third Wave (2009)</b>	
	Dead, suicide bomber
Cabdulaahi Ahmed Faarax Abdiweli Yassin Issue (recruiter)	Indicted on terrorism charges, believed to be at large in Somalia
<b>Fourth Wave (2012)</b>	
Omar Ali Farah	Believed to be at large

Sixteen known cases of Somalis attempted or succeeded in joining ISIS. This included 9 Somali-American men from Minneapolis who were arrested by the FBI for attempting to join ISIS between May 2014 and December 2015. This is represented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Somali-Americans Joining/Attempting to Join ISIS 2013-2015**

Violent Extremism (n= 16 who attempted/fled to Syria to join ISIS)	
<b>2013</b>	
	Believed dead
<b>2014</b>	
	Pleaded guilty
Abdi Nur (recruiter) Yusra Ismail Mohamed Amiin Ali Roble	At large
Hanad Abdullahi Mohallim Mohamud Mohamed Mohamud Yusuf Jama	Believed dead
<b>2015</b>	
	Pleaded guilty
Abdirahman Yasin Daud Mohamed Abdihamid Farah	Declared guilty

\*the dates correspond to when they attempted or succeeded in leaving the U.S.

In late 2014, the FBI convinced a friend of the group to work as a paid informant--, a tactic commonly used by law enforcement in combating crime and counter-terrorism. The informant, Abdirahman Bashir, also wanted to join ISIS and had clout within the group because four of his cousins had previously left the country to fight in Syria. However, Bashir had become hesitant about joining ISIS after one of his cousins was killed in Syria in an airstrike. Bashir was paid over one hundred thousand dollars for his work as an informant (Laughland, 2016; Murphy, 2016).

For four months at the beginning of 2015, Bashir recorded his friends discussing propaganda videos depicting torture and murder, and discussions of their plot to buy fake passports to exit the U.S. via the southern border with Mexico and then travel to Syria to join ISIS (Laughland, 2016). This plot was part of a sting operation with an undercover FBI operative in San-Diego who was supposed to sell them fake passports which would be used to travel to Syria. Bashir recorded multiple hours of conversation between himself and his friends conspiring to join ISIS. These recordings were the backbone of the evidence presented against the defendants, and what ultimately led to their convictions (Johnson, 2016).

Of the nine people convicted, six (Hanad Mustafe Musse, Zacharia Yusuf Abdurahman, Adnan Farah, Abdullahi Yusuf, Hamza Ahmed, and Abdirizak Warsame) pleaded guilty between February 2015 and April 2016. Three (Guled Omar, Abdirahman Daud, Mohamed Farah) went to trial. They were found guilty on all counts in June 2016.

The accused stated during the trial in May 2016 that they were radicalized online by watching videos of Anwar al-Awlaki and ISIS beheadings. During the trial, some of the defendants claimed that the reason they were going to Syria was to protect the innocent Muslims being slaughtered by the Assad regime and its forces (McKelvey, 2016). They were informed that pleading would lead to 15 years in jail whereas going to trial and being convicted could result in a life in prison sentence.

Senior U.S. District Judge Michael J. Davis ordered the defendants who pled guilty to have a risk assessment conducted by Daniel Koehler, the director of the German Institute on Radicalization and Deradicalization Studies, as part of a “Terrorism Disengagement and Deradicalization Program.” Koehler testified in September 2016 on the results of the risk assessments. These assessments were used to help the judge make a sentencing decision in November 2016. Koehler rated Abdullahi Yusuf as low-to-medium risk; Adnan Farah, Zacharia Abdurahman, and Hamza Ahmed as medium-to-high risk; and Abdirizak Warsame and Hanand Musse as high risk.

In November 2016, these young men were sentenced as summarized below.

**Table 5. Sentencing of Somalis from ISIS Trial**

Violent Extremism Case Sentencing (n=9)	
	Zacharia Abdurahman- 10 years prison
	Adnan Farah- 10 years prison
	Hanand Musse- 10 years prison
	Hamza Ahmed- 15 years prison
	Abdirahman Daud- 30 years prison
	Mohamed Farah- 30 years prison
	Guled Omar- 35 years prison

***The Case of Abdirizak Mohamed Warsame.*** One of the men who pleaded guilty was Abdirizak Warsame. He moved to the United States when he was 10 months old, the second of eight children along with his parents, who came to this country to flee the civil war in Somalia. He grew up like other Americans. In a *60 Minutes* interview, he explained, “I really didn’t feel fortunate because I never knew what it was like to not have school. I never knew what it was like to, you know, be exiled out of your own country and war everywhere. I didn’t know what feeling was like. So I feel like I grew up like any other kid in America” (McCandless, 2016).

In high school he was a member of a group, Poet Nation, and he used poetry as a way to express himself. In one of his videos on YouTube, he rapped about violence after his friend was shot, saying “he doesn’t preach violence, and gives much love to the projects” (Forliti, 2016).

After high school, Warsame attended community college and worked as a baggage handler and for a de-icing company at the airport. He was surrounded by supportive family members. His mother was a community advocate, who voiced her opinions about radical influences among Somali youth at community meetings, warning the community to stop the denial, talk to the kids, and work with FBI. She was aware of the friends her son associated with, and out of concerns, sent Abdirizak Warsame to spend time living with his father in Chicago in 2014 (Forliti, 2016). Abdirizak Warsame’s uncle, Mohamed Farah, is the executive director of Ka Joog, an organization in Minneapolis that serves youth through educational and art programming (Lissarrague, 2016a).

Even being surrounded by positive influences, with a supportive family and the opportunity to attend college, Abdirizak Warsame became involved with a group of friends who began recruiting and encouraging each other to join ISIS. In his testimony, Warsame stated that he was drawn to listening to lectures on the internet (including Anwar Al-Awlaki) and watching videos of beheading and believed it was his duty to fight for and help Muslims who were being oppressed (Forliti, 2016).

Beginning in March 2014, he began meeting with these friends who discussed traveling to Syria to join ISIS. He helped others in the group pay for passports and encouraged them to go to Syria. He applied for his own passport in April 2014 but was denied the passport due to insufficient supporting documentation. In December 2015, Abdirizak Warsame was arrested for providing material support to a terrorist organization. He pleaded guilty and cooperated with the government. On November 14, 2016, he was sentenced to 30 months in jail with 20 years of supervised release (Connor, 2016).

### **Community Concerns Regarding Arrests and Trial**

Members of Somali-American communities have expressed several major concerns about the arrests and the trial.

***Entrapment and manipulation by informant.*** Somali community members accused the FBI and Abdirahman Bashir, the paid informant, of entrapment. Many argued that the FBI encouraged and manipulated the otherwise innocent young men to take up the cause of extremism (Maruf and Mahamud, 2016) They noted that the informant and former friend was paid more than \$100,000 for aiding federal authorities. A brother of one of the men charged in the case told reporters, “the case against his brother amounted to “entrapment” and, “They set him up for failure” (Jordan and Kesling, 2015). Somali students protested outside the courthouse, and one told reporters, “They are students, just like us. Our brothers are not involved, this is entrapment” (Usborne, 2015). Abdirahman Bashir testified, “A lot of the community members would say: ‘This guy is after us.’ Even some of my family members would tell their kids to stay away from me.” (Laughland, 2016).

***Friends testified against each other.*** Community members noted that the defense doubted the credibility of the members of the group who pleaded guilty and testified for the government



against the three who went to trial. Bruce Nestor, who represented Daud, explained during cross-examination that, “Warsame took a plea deal to avoid a second charge of conspiracy to murder outside the United States, which carries a life sentence.” (Lissarrague, 2016a). This led to further tensions within the community and arguments broke out during the trial. The mother of Abdirizak Warsame, one of the cooperating witnesses for the government, was told her son was a spy for testifying against his own friends. She told a newspaper since her son pleaded guilty, she stopped going to Somali malls, “I feel emotional. I feel terrible. I don’t deserve this. Why is someone bullying me because my son testified? This is America. This isn’t back home” (Yuen, Ibrahim, Xayaothao, 2016).

***Suspicion and mistrust among community members and FBI.*** Somali community members expressed concerns about the FBI’s actions and alleged that their actions have heightened mistrust within the community. Kamal Hassan, the founder of the Somali Human Rights Commission, a local nonprofit, stated, “When the government pits our youth against each other, bribes some or intimidates some into testifying against each other, that exacerbates the mistrust in the community” (Tolan, 2016). These suspicions made Somalis less likely to confide in one another or trust government officials.

***The jury comprised of “outsiders” from Somali community.*** There was additional push-back from the Somali-American community because the jury which ruled on the case was composed of all white individuals. One juror stated to the defense attorney, “looking around, the potential jury is steeped in whiteness” (Lissarrague, 2016b). Mothers of the defendants had stated they wished the jury had some diversity. A community advocate who served as a spokesperson for some of the defendants’ families explained, “in the interest of fairness, “we must have a diverse jury”” (Montemayer, 2016). This further exacerbated feelings of separation and isolation from the mainstream American community and the justice system. Consequently, the community members have reported disappointment that they had no say in the sentencing of those from their own community.

***Lack of warning signs of radicalization.*** There were also concerns among the community about what could be done to prevent recruitment since several of the young men who radicalized appeared to be integrated and conforming; they were active in their community, went to school, and had jobs. The mother of Daud told reporters, “she didn’t think her son was going to Syria, he was studying to be a dentist’s assistant at community college, and was working full time to help the family financially....she said she saw no sign of his having turned against the country that had become the family’s home. She had no inkling of anything of the kind.” (Usborne, 2015). Abdirizak Warsame, who pleaded guilty and testified against his friends at trial, was surrounded by family who are actively involved in preventing radicalization. His mother has worked with the U.S. Attorney’s office and FBI to speak out against and prevent youth radicalization.

***Community members lack of knowledge about the U.S. criminal justice system.*** Some community members reported that they had limited understanding of how the U.S. criminal justice system works, specifically trial courts. They did not understand the differences between criminal and noncriminal behaviors and how these young men could be arrested without reaching Syria or committing a crime. One community activist reacted to the verdict by telling a reporter, “For him [Judge Davis] to convict those boys to 30 years when he knows they didn’t do anything – they were just thinking about it. We need to rally for justice because people like

[Judge] Davis and the system he protects don't serve justice and they never will." (Aby-Keirstead, 2016).

## **PREVIOUSLY ALLEGED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AMONG SOMALI-AMERICANS**

Thirty people were indicted in November 2010 on charges of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of children by force, fraud, or coercion and other charges related to the sex trafficking.

The original trafficking in persons indictment alleged that multiple defendants were involved in or were associated with the Somali Outlaws and the Somali Mafia gangs (Aslanian & Yuen, 2010). Members and associates of these gangs allegedly transported Somali-American and African-American females from Minneapolis to Columbus and Nashville for the purpose of having the females engage in sex acts for money and other items of value, including drugs and alcohol.

Two of the women, known as Jane Doe 2 and Jane Doe 5, were given supportive care and testified in federal court. During the trial, which was held in Nashville beginning in April 2012, Jane Doe 2 (from Minneapolis) and Jane Doe 5 (from Nashville) were key witnesses.

The arrests began after Jane Doe 2's parents reported her as a runaway in Minneapolis. She was found in Nashville during a Nashville Metro Police traffic stop. Three of the men were arrested for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Jane Doe 2 testified that she was used as a prostitute by gang members starting at the age of 12. She testified that her parents tried to get her away from gang influences by moving to a different Minneapolis suburb and to a new school. She described being taken to several apartments in suburban Minneapolis to have sex with other Somali men for money, sometimes as little as \$40 or for marijuana and alcohol. She explained that the gang members described these sex acts as "missions." She also described one of the gang members as her boyfriend, but stated that he would tell her to have sex with other men. She also testified that they used her for sex to raise money for the trip from Minneapolis to Nashville, where she was driven around and had sex in alleyways with at least ten men. On this trip, Jane Doe 2 accompanied five men to Nashville where they were arrested in April 2009.

In April 2012, nine of the defendants went to trial. The trial lasted three weeks and after five days of deliberation six defendants were acquitted of all charges and three were convicted of some of the charges. In December 2012, the three who were initially convicted were acquitted by District Judge William Haynes because he found that the prosecution had charged a single conspiracy but had instead presented evidence of multiple conspiracies. The government appealed these acquittals.

On March 2, 2016, a U.S. appeals court opinion affirmed Judge William Hayne's December 2012 ruling to overturn the convictions of the three, agreeing with Hayne's reasoning that the government did not prove the men were part of a single, overarching conspiracy.

On March 8, 2016, following the Sixth Circuit’s opinions, the United States moved to dismiss all outstanding charges against the remaining defendants in *United States v. Adan, et al.* (Zamora, 2016; M.D. Tenn. Case No. 3:10-cr-000260).

On March 10, 2016, the order was granted and all remaining charges for all 16 defendants were dismissed. In summary, the original indictment charged 30 defendants, of which 18 never went to trial, 9 went to trial, out of which 6 were acquitted by the jury, and 3 were found guilty by jury but later overruled and acquitted.

### **Trafficking in Persons Victims**

***The Case of Jane Doe 2.*** Jane Doe 2 was born in a refugee camp in Kenya after her family fled the civil war in Somalia. Her family immigrated to the United States in 1996. Her mother falsely claimed that she was younger than her actual age and was born in September 1994, making her two years old when she arrived in the United States. Her family raised her in a conservative Muslim household, but she became an Americanized teenager and stopped wearing a headscarf when in the sixth or seventh grade. She was given the nickname “Double D” when she was in seventh grade for being beautiful and curvaceous. She was reported as a runaway multiple times between November 3, 2006 and May 8, 2007.

Jane Doe 2 reported that the trafficking allegedly began in 7<sup>th</sup> grade when four boys drove her to a public park where she performed oral sex because they told her she was attractive, and they were in a gang. She testified that she did “missions” where she would engage in sexual acts for money. In May 2007, she was taken to Rochester, Minnesota to perform sex acts. She was arrested as a runaway after police found her in a car with five Somali boys during a routine traffic stop. At the time, she told police they had gone to rob a liquor store and she held the gun they had with them. After this traffic stop, she was ordered to go to a juvenile detention center for two weeks due to her constant running away. After that incident, her parents also moved the family to a neighboring suburb of Minneapolis where she was enrolled in a new school to get her away from the Somali Mafia and Somali Outlaws, according to her testimony. Her parents took her phone away, but she secretly remained in contact with these boys via her sister’s cell phone and social media. In February 2009, while in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, her parents gave her cell phone back. She began dating a man named Hollywood who was 18 or 19 years old and a member of the Somali Outlaw gang, who she met through one of the boys in 2007. In April 2009, Jane Doe 2 accompanied five boys, including Hollywood, on a car trip from Minneapolis to Nashville without informing her parents, who reported her missing. The Minneapolis police tracked her cell phone to Nashville. When they were stopped in Nashville, she told the police that Hollywood was her boyfriend and she had come with them on the trip willingly, that she had sex with several people over the preceding few days because she was upset with Hollywood for ignoring her. She also said they had come to Nashville to steal car parts to repair a car (U.S. v. Idris Fahra, et al., 2016).

### **Previously Alleged Trafficking in Persons Facilitators**

***The Case of the Omar brothers.*** Most of the previously alleged facilitators were Somali-Americans, many of whom came to the United States as refugees. Most were members of three Somali gangs (the Somali Outlaws, Somali Mafia, and the Lady Outlaws). As of 2010, most of these defendants were boys aged 17 to 21 years old, attending school and living with their

parents (U.S. v. Idris Fahra, et al., 2016). Three of the previously alleged facilitators were the Omar brothers; Liban, Abdifatah, and Mohamed. These young men never went to trial and were never sentenced (Ritter, 2016).

Liban Omar had convictions for assault and possession of a firearm, as well as stolen credit cards and an unprosecuted burglary case of a Nashville business. His credit card was used to pay for a hotel room for Jane Doe 2 and other defendants two days before they were arrested in Nashville. Before the case was overturned, Liban had been incarcerated in pretrial detention for 48 months.

Abdifatah Omar had no involvement with any of the Jane Does. The indictment listed criminal acts the defendants committed, in addition to the trafficking conspiracy. According to the indictment, in 2010, he was involved with a group who used stolen credit cards to make purchases at department stores and restaurants in Columbus, Ohio. He had a list of other crimes in the indictment, including a laptop computer with hundreds of stolen credit card numbers was found in his possession, he was alleged to have burglarized a Nashville business in 2006, and made a key to a stolen car that he and other defendants used. He was released in 2012 and was under supervision. All charges against him were dismissed after the Sixth Circuit dismissed all outstanding charges against the remaining defendants on March 8, 2016.

Mohamed Omar was indicted in the same 2006 Nashville business burglary as his brothers. He was linked to some of the other defendants by a series of phone conversations recorded when others were in jail. He had been at the restaurant and present at the traffic stop where Jane Doe 2 was tracked by the police. He was released in 2013, the appellate court disagreed with the judge's decision, and he was placed back in jail a year later. In January 2016 he was released again after having spent 47 months total in prison.

### **Community Concerns**

During this trial, multiple issues emerged which were of concern to Somali-American community members. They included the following:

***Immigration status.*** Jane Doe 2 and her family came to the United States to escape war like other Somali refugee families. It was revealed that Jane Doe 2's family had created a false family structure to make their immigration to the United States easier. DNA evidence and testimony showed that their claimed family structure included incorrect ages of the children, false birth order of the children, and false information on their biological father. The falsified birth certificate used to facilitate the family's immigration resulted in the mother claiming Jane Doe 2 was born in September 1994, which would make Jane Doe 2 only 15 at the time of the trafficking in persons arrest. However, evidence and later testimony revealed that Jane Doe 2 was likely four years older, and not a minor. For the trial, this created the need to prove whether she was a minor or adult; if a person is under the age of 18, then according to the federal law about trafficking in person (The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and its periodical amendments) force, fraud, or coercion is not required to find a person guilty for trafficking in persons.

***Untrustworthy and contradictory witnesses.*** Community members reported issues with the prosecution's two primary witnesses, Jane Doe 2 and Jane Doe 5. Both of these women repeatedly contradicted their own testimony and were deemed unworthy of belief by the federal

appeals court. Jane Doe 2 was a habitual runaway, who had history with the police and had been incarcerated briefly in juvenile detention. She testified that she was brought to Nashville for trafficking in persons but also stated that she was never forced or threatened to have sex. The other witness, Jane Doe 5, had been diagnosed with a mental illness and was off her psychiatric medications during the trial. She did not know what day or month it was, misidentified or could not identify many defendants, and contradicted herself on major issues, including whether she did or did not have sex for money.

***Lead investigator fabricated evidence.*** The community members reported concern about the police having made up evidence. In 2016, Saint Paul Officer and FBI sex-trafficking task force member, was found to have met with Jane Doe 2 at her school multiple times, even after the girl's parents objected. The officer was also found to exaggerate or fabricate important aspects of the story during the course of the investigation. There were inconsistencies found between the officer's final reports that frequently referred to sex for money while that assertion was not included in her handwritten notes. Jane Doe 2 also testified on cross-examination that the officer had misstated facts in the reports. The Sixth Circuit's opinion found that this officer, "produced a story in which Jane Doe 2 was not a troubled runaway or a juvenile delinquent, but was instead an innocent child taken in by a Somali gang who used her for sex, either as a prostitute or for free sex with gang members" (Barchenger, 2016; U.S. v. Idris Fahra, et al., 2016).

***Mistrust among community members and criminal justice system.*** The community members expressed their concern about the criminal justice system regarding the trafficking case. One community member explained, "Pretty much the American system, what it does, it goes - women says, so and so, it's automatic, you are going to get arrested. Basically, they are pretty much going with the girls." Another young adult explained, "So the human trafficking came as a surprise...As for the kids that I knew, about five of them, six of them, I wouldn't say they would be the human traffickers and I don't think they're interested in human trafficking, so I think there is a lot of bullshit to be honest." Another young adult argued, "I really feel like it was bogus. Because I knew some of the guys who were together, we went to school together; we went to Quran studies together where we learn about our religion and stuff. I think it was all just some sort of set up."

***Difficulty proving single trafficking in persons conspiracy charge.*** Although the lead agent, Jane Doe 2 the main victim and witness, and most of the defendants were from Minnesota, the federal prosecutor in Minnesota did not prosecute this case. Instead, it was prosecuted in Tennessee, and many of the lawyers for the defendants felt this was an overreach for the Nashville U.S. Attorney to try to prosecute this as a wide-reaching trafficking in persons ring that operated from Minneapolis to Columbus to Nashville. All the evidence showed that Jane Doe 5 was not connected to Jane Doe 2 in any way. These two key witnesses had never met, were never at the same location, and their stories did not intersect. The only piece of evidence that connected Jane Does 2 and 5 were recorded telephone calls made separately to each of the Jane Does by certain defendants while in jail in Nashville, making these calls the only evidence that could prove the prosecution's single, all-encompassing conspiracy.

***Somali defendants were jailed for over four years without a trial.*** Community members expressed concerns that of the 30 originally indicted, 18 never went to trial and many spent multiple years in pre-trial detention. One man, Haji Salad, spent 4.5 years in prison and told the

Twin Cities local news, “In the middle of the night, I wake up and I just walk around, just making sure that I’m not in that cell block or I’m not in that jail anymore.” (Rosenthal, 2016). Another defendant, Hamdi Ali Osman, was arrested and imprisoned, was released to home monitoring, and later had her home monitoring revoked and was re-imprisoned as a pretrial detainee. She spent 4 years in prison and 2 years under home monitoring without ever going to trial (Gottfried, 2016). Somali-American community members viewed this as an example of injustice and discrimination towards Somalis. It seriously undermined their trust in law enforcement and the U.S. government.

***Concern about level of mental health knowledge and care for Jane Does during trial.***

Community members expressed concern about the credibility of the testimony of Jane Doe 5 due to her mental health issues. According to the Sixth Circuit opinion, Jane Doe 5 had been diagnosed as “insane” and off her medication at trial (U.S. v. Idris Fahra, et al., 2016). She didn’t know the day or month, misidentified or could not identify defendants, and contradicted herself during the trial. One of the service providers who worked with Jane Doe 5 explained during an interview, “They came across hard, I mean that was part of what the defense attorneys did was well you basically have all these mental health issues, so you don’t know what you are talking about, and may be making all the stuff up, why do we believe you?... I slipped a note to the attorney and said, can we bring in a mental health expert who has been working with trafficking differently to educate this courtroom, on what the issues are for one of the victims? And she agreed and we brought her all the way up from Atlanta, and at that point the judge ruled it was too late in the proceedings and we couldn’t use it.”

**Table 6. Trafficking in Persons (30 indicted and 30 acquitted)**

Trafficking in Persons Case Sentencing (n= 30)	
3 persons	Indicted, tried, judge dismissed trafficking charges
6 persons	Indicted, tried, acquitted by jury
3 persons	

**Table 7. Previously Alleged Victims of Trafficking in Persons Case**

Trafficking Victim	City	Background
Jane Doe 2	Minneapolis, MN	Runaway Juvenile Offender Falsified birthdate, may not have been a minor
Jane Doe 5	Nashville, TN	History of mental illness Was not taking medication properly during trial
Jane Doe 2 and Jane Doe 5 had no previous contact. The conspiracy to link Jane Doe 2 and Jane Doe 5 failed because of the inability of Jane Doe 5 to testify due to mental illness.		

## **Conclusions**

The case studies demonstrate that several Somali-Americans in the three cities examined may have been involved in either violent extremism or trafficking in persons. Convictions were not attained for trafficking in persons due to evidential reasons, although it appears likely that the act of moving females from city to city did occur. The case studies also highlight the problems both with the criminal justice system's responses to the alleged crimes, and with the ways that law enforcement practices were perceived by the community.

## **A CONVERGENT RISKS AND PRACTICES MODEL**

Applying a grounded theory approach to analyze the interview data, a model of convergent risks and practices was constructed, informed by push and pull theory. Risk is conceived as the presence of pull and push factors; the former drive a person to take a certain action; the latter attract a person to a certain activity or outcome. Overall, this model suggests that both violent extremism and trafficking in persons could involve common and selective risks and practices, which can be explained via a convergent risks and practices model.

A convergent risks and practices model consists of common push and pull factors, trafficking in persons selective push and pull factors, violent extremism selective push and pull factors, negative convergent practices, and recommended convergent practices. This model is represented in Figure 1 and its components are summarized in the narrative below.

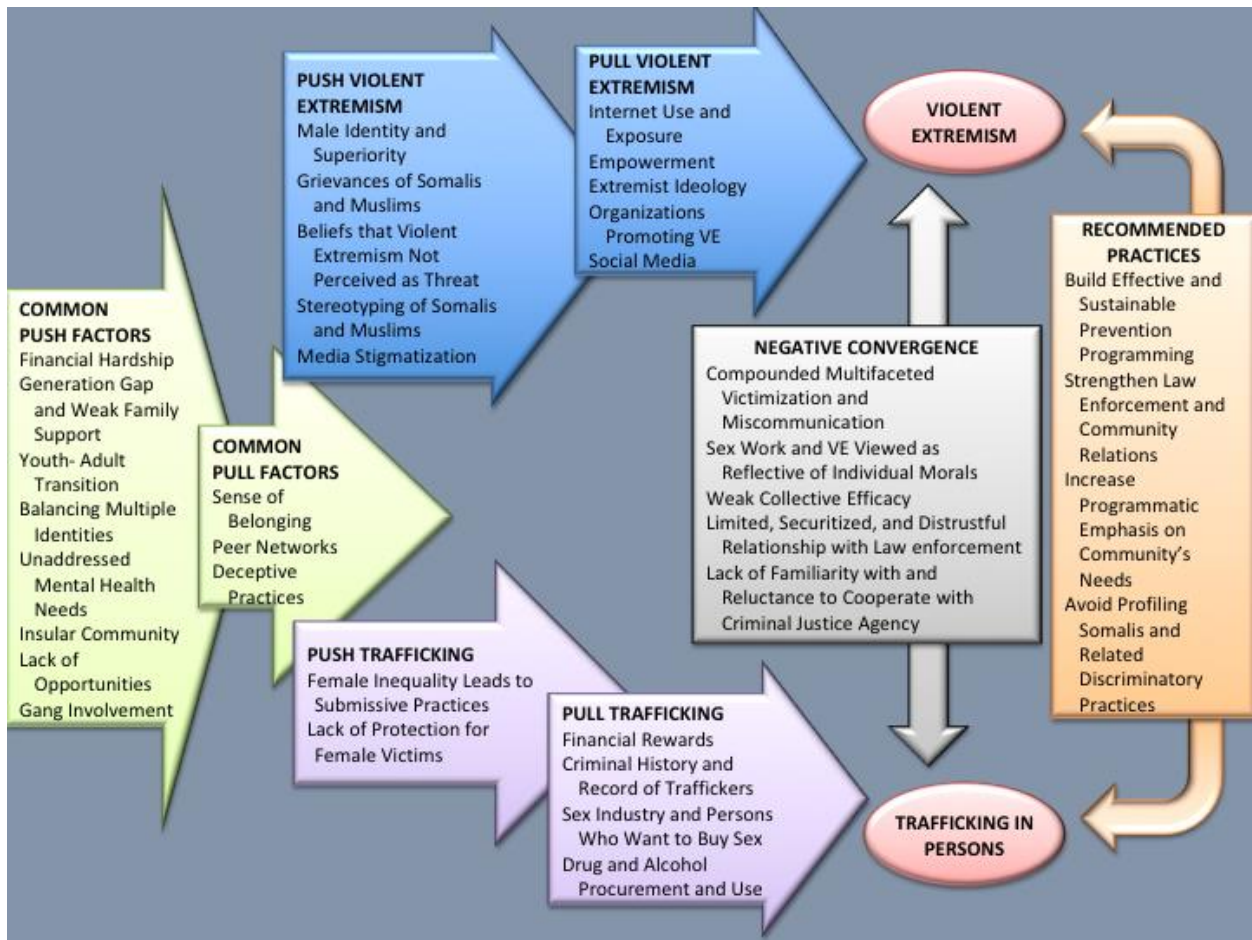
As the analysis of the interviewees' narratives demonstrates, the same risk factors may lead to multiple problems and adverse outcomes.

As noted in the executive summary and below, the model is based on data collected while the charges about trafficking in persons were pending, and before the alleged defendants in these cases were acquitted. The model is thus based on the data collected from research participants who may have assumed that the violation occurred. The assumption that trafficking in persons is relevant for any U.S. community including the Somali-American community is likewise tenable.



**Figure 1. Convergent Risks and Practices Model**

The model is represented in Figure 1 and is represented in tables 10-14. The tables identify individual, family, community, and societal levels risks.



## Common Push Factors

### Financial Hardship

Somali-American community members reported that unemployment and financial hardship put added pressure on individuals and families, making them vulnerable to temptations that promised money and a better life. Community members reported that people who were, “frustrated in their life because of unemployment or not working or not going to school that person is it is easy to attract them” to either violent extremism or trafficking in persons.

Many Somali-American parents, who had little skills and knowledge of English, had to work multiple low-wage jobs to provide for their family. As noted above, financial needs and immediate survival became priorities for parents, resulting in little time spent with their children. One community member noted about Somali-American youth, “the fact that like their parents just didn’t have the time to look after them because their parents were more concerned with -- I need to provide for my family. I need to put a roof over my family’s head. I don’t have time to constantly make sure that my kid is doing well.”

### Generation Gap and Weak Family Support

Somali-American youth reported experiencing limited family support. Their parents lacked the knowledge necessary to guide and assist them, including learning the English language, awareness of American values and way of life, the risks children confronted in school or in public places, or the way they spent their time outside the home. Consequently, Somali-American youth did not feel they could get support from, nor relate to their parents, or others in the older generation, and this made them more likely to go to their peers for support. Community members noted, “that’s the biggest major issue, they don’t have at all, they don’t consult, they don’t go to parent if they have problem, some of them they do, actually 40-50% they don’t but the other 50% either they go to a friend or they keep will quiet or hide, they don’t have anybody they can share with.”

The high proportion of Somali-American families with a single parent household, most of whom were headed by women, also contributed to family instability and inevitable neglect of children. Community members reported, “from what I am seeing in Somali families, it is just that some, it is just that there are a whole lot of moms are just going around, raising their kids by themselves and some of them are still married, they are married, they are not divorced mothers, there are still look like they head the household.” A community member who researched Somali youth explained, “a majority of the pool of people that I interviewed didn’t have any father present in their lives.”

Growing up in the U.S. with parents who were recent immigrants, Somali-American youth experienced a generational divide, and consequently poor relationships with their parents. Community members reported, “the kids and their mums don’t understand each other and they are like you don’t understand me because you know they never lived here and lived in Somalia and gained a different perspective.” Another community member stated, “at the family level, what can be improved is connection between the parents and the children. There is a huge gap.”

The generation gap, combined with working parents' lack of time to attend to their children's needs, caused parents to be unaware of their children's activities or whereabouts during many hours of the day or night. Somali-Americans reported that parents were not aware of what their children were doing and becoming exposed to and were not able to effectively combat negative influences that could lead to gang involvement, violent extremism, and trafficking in persons. One interviewee spoke about his personal experience with his brother where his "parents weren't aware of his [brother's] actions. They didn't know what he was doing outside of the house." Another community member put it, "imagine you have six children, or seven or eight, so you go to work like three o'clock, 3:00 p.m. and then you are going to come back one o'clock at night, and you have no clue what's taking place at home."

### **Youth-Adult Transition and Lack of Male Role Models**

The transition from childhood to adulthood can be difficult for some youth, but particularly so for those who grow up as refugees. The interviews indicated that these youth experienced lack of guidance by parents, who were unfamiliar with the American way of life, and were unaware of the risks that their children faced outside the home. Lack of guidance and supervision was especially an issue for those who grew up in a single parent home, most commonly with their mother. However, youth and young adults living in intact families experienced these challenges as well-- they commonly had parents who were busy making ends meet, with little time to dedicate to their children and attend to their needs. Thus, Somali-Americans reported that many youth had fathers who were "out of the house and on the road 24/7," and this left children having to, "go to school, get homework, and neither father nor mother can help with homework." This limited involvement had a negative impact, according to one community advocate "because in order for the child to have a positive development, the father needs to be around that child all the time, showing them some type of motivation or that energy of being positive and strong." Another community advocate explained, "What is missing in the majority of young Somali men's lives, and for me, was fatherhood, like a role model, a mentor."

Somali-American community members reported that the role and status of fatherhood among Somalis has changed in the U.S. and children, especially boys, need someone to look up to and provide guidance in making the right decisions. Community members stated, "boys need their dad's involvement, that is whom they emulate who they see as their role model. They are going to jail, most of the younger generation obviously boys, the young youth that are going in there and I feel like their fathers need to be there more often, the fathers need to be the role models for them, distract them from the outside world, it is fathers, who take them to the park, play some kind of sport with them, educate them, show them your values." Another community member explained, "The role of fatherhood changes when you come to the U.S. Back home the father is the dominant figure, he makes all the decisions, he is the controlling individual of the family, the tribe, the village...then you come here and not only can mothers become active, but then they also [become independent] because back home they need someone to support them. Here you have the state that will support you in most cases and for your basic necessities, so the father is no longer needed."

Interviewees noted that a religious leaders' guidance was also missing in the lives of many youth. Some Somali-American youth did not feel comfortable in the mosque or with its leadership. One young community leader noted that, "there was a general disconnection that exists in Islamic centers and among Muslims. Because a lot of our teachers and a lot of our

Imams grew up back home and the mosques aren't the environment where I feel myself at the mosque...the Imam and them are completely in two different worlds. The Imam doesn't speak English and the Imam doesn't know the latest fashion or music or you know what's out there. It makes it really difficult."

Somali-Americans reported that experiencing such challenges of youth to adult transition could make youth more impressionable, vulnerable, and malleable regarding recruitment for violent extremism and trafficking in persons. As such, youth were easy to influence and were targeted by recruiters, "If they're less than 30, and from 18 or 17 there's a time frame they actually are susceptible." Another community member stated, "...they always targeted the susceptible people who become easily influenced...so we need to cover up things, to empower the community itself, like you know, the youth organizations to empower and help them."

Interviewees explained that youth who felt they were reaching dead ends in their life, or were not reaching their full potential, were at particular risk for recruitment to violent extremism and/or trafficking in persons. Community members related that a youth who thinks, "He's got the gift, the talent, and then maybe he's going in the wrong direction. And then his friends, he's got no support like that, he can't focus what he wants to be. If you have no support maybe you feel like, 'Hey, this the only way I can live.'" Many interviewees felt that the community was not acting effectively enough to support these youths and guide them away from these paths.

### **Balancing Multiple Identities**

Somali-Americans in the U.S. experienced several different identities, and attempts to navigate them have caused youth stress and difficulties. Somali-Americans, particularly those who came to the U.S. at a young age, or were born in this country, reported experiencing strain, and at times conflict between trying to assimilate into American culture and spending time with their American peers, while also maintaining their Somali culture and living up to parental expectations. Community members stated, "Parents expect you to keep your culture, while the American education system and way of life forces you to assimilate. Many [youth] have difficulties adjusting to new way of life while facing cultural barriers that seem hard to overcome. As a result of identity crisis and frequent challenges, many youth lose hope and start making poor choices." A young adult community leader expressed, "Yes, so an identity crisis happens because you go to school and you're American, and then you come home you're Somali, and then you go to mosque and you're Muslim, and then you go back. You know some of these kids live in North Minneapolis so now you're also African American. It's just that so many things happening at once." Further, some interviewees noted an identity strain related to Somali-American youth being defined or perceived as Black/African-American but not necessarily fitting into, or accepted by, this group either.

### **Unaddressed Mental Health Needs**

Somali-Americans reported that many community members suffered trauma and other adversities as a consequence of their refugee experiences, leading to unresolved mental health issues. Community members talked about the impact of the civil war, "people facing difficulties and hardship during the civil war. They lost family members; they became destitute when it comes to economics. They've been in refugee camps. They have lost their personalities, they lost their culture, like when you become a refugee and you become hopeless, you are no longer the person that you used to be. It's a bad thing and that's what's taking place out there."

Yet, mental health concerns in many ethnic communities, including the Somali-American, are associated with stigma, and tend to be suppressed or ignored. Persons who exhibited symptoms could be negatively labelled and rejected. The stigma associated with mental health problems led to reluctance to seek mental health services. Somali-Americans reported that most community members would be unwilling to seek mental health services, thereby revealing their mental health issues. A community member reported that “there’s a lot of stuff that my community, they don’t like to bring out the issues on the table. They keep it inside.”

Somali-Americans also reported that within their community, mental health issues were sometimes associated with the potential for criminal activity and radicalization. Community members stated that youth with mental health issues may be more vulnerable to recruitment, “they can have depression, anxiety, addictions, if mom rejected them and then the gang accepts them.” Because youth with such problems were linked with the potential for social failure, the community tended to exclude them.

Further, many interviewees noticed that Somali-Americans did not believe mental health problems existed, nor did they subscribe to the possibility that mental health treatment could help. In the words of one interviewee, “it is just something that Americans made up or believe in.” Community members reported that even if mental health services were widely accepted, because of the general lack of knowledge around them, people “wouldn’t know how to look for resources... and stuff like that.” A community member reported that some Somali-Americans “do not do really well with emotional stuff so like if he heard about like, ‘Oh I am feeling depressed’ or he would be like, ‘You do have a house, you have food like you are fine, what are you talking about?’” As long as life was better in the U.S. than in Somalia, community members seemed to remain willfully ignorant to those at risk and write persons off as being weak.

The interviews also demonstrated some Somali-Americans’ misunderstandings of women’s abuse and its harmful mental health impact on women and children. A community advocate explained, “The definition of abuse is different in Somalia versus the U.S. Physical abuse is the same, if someone gets hit, but in Somalia there is no term for mental, emotional, verbal, financial abuse. They don’t understand that those are all forms of controlling someone. So emotional abuse is not seen as an issue, only physical abuse.” Lacking a full understanding of violence against women, its mental health consequences, and the fact that such abuse was criminalized in the U.S., the community did not work towards preventing these issues. Police officers relayed how in responding to complaints of wife battering in Somali-American households, the abusive men tried to prevent them from talking to the women, demanding instead that the officer talk to the man of the house.

### **Insular Community**

Like many immigrant and refugee communities, the Somali-American community tended to be insular. Somali-Americans reported that their community tended to avoid interactions with mainstream Americans. Some community members suggested this tendency to look inward occurred because “they believe nobody cares about them. And they have no relationship with the rest of the [outside] community, because they have language barriers, they need to learn the language. They have cultural barriers.” Interviewees also thought that lack of educational attainment in the U.S. exacerbated this tendency: “If you do not have education, you don’t feel

confident enough to go to other people and talk to them, get to know them, so even though we are not in Somalia we can live within this circle of communities.”

This sense of being outsiders made Somali-Americans feel like they could not fit into the surrounding society. This alienation and lack of integration into American mainstream society, according to the interviewees, could even cause some to turn to criminal or extremist activity. A community member stated, “I think what causes radicalization is low integration into the community at large...I think it’s great that you are in the masjid every single day and that you’re praying and you fast, but in the masjid 24 x7 you are ignorant.”

Feeling as outsiders, and not part of American society, Somali-Americans felt more comfortable keeping issues within their community rather than getting law enforcement involved. They preferred to maintain the structure and customs of Somali society in their home country, with community members noting that within “the community, in general, there is still the thing of tribalism” which places emphasis on solving problems internally and being a self-reliant community. One community advocate provided an example of members avoiding outside help to problems and preference for their internal resolution, “Another issue not talked about in the community is domestic abuse. Women don’t want to come forward. They keep it at home. The issue is solved by elders instead of going to the police.”

### **Lack of Opportunities**

Somali-American youth endured disadvantages and lack of opportunities due to deficiencies resulting from being first or second generation immigrants or refugees, including lack of language skills, fitting into the American educational system, or adapting to its criteria of competence. Somali-Americans reported that youth who had trouble learning English were at greater risk of dropping out of school and becoming susceptible to negative influences. Community members relayed that “the education system is not based on their education level, not based on what they know, only based on age. Then there is a teenager, who can’t speak English, fails out of school, loses interests and goes and joins a gang.”

Parents who were not familiar with the system or knew the language, often felt frustrated that they could not help or guide their children. Somali-Americans reported that many parents had trouble understanding English and did not always understand the messages schools/teachers conveyed to them, for example by their children, allowing the power dynamic within families to be overturned. Community members relayed the helplessness and frustration that many parents experienced in light of these inadequacies. In the words of one interviewee, “Some people for example, who had high permanent jobs and they lose their jobs, they come here, they have to live on assistance and aid. So that parent, when they’re raising their kids they come to a country they don’t know anything about.”

Somali-American youth who encountered problems in succeeding at school, coupled with the inability to receive help and guidance at home, often ended up dropping out of school. Their limited English and lack of educational credentials meant that they had to get low level dead-end jobs, or worse yet, became susceptible to involvement in criminal activities of all sorts. A community member stated, “Kids who have social failures include those who fail in high school, do not work, are not on the same level as others. Their good peers will not accept them, and then

they can get radicalized. Such kids can have depression, anxiety, addictions if mom rejected them and then the gang accepts them.” A parent expressed concerns, “the boys who are dropping out for the things we’re talking about earlier, they’re not getting the credits, they’re not grasping it, and they’re dropping out and she’s concerned that they are on the street and then that’s where the whole gang issue is forming.”

The economic hardships Somali-Americans encountered meant living in areas with low cost rental housing, which were often characterized by crime and violence. Somali-Americans reported that being exposed to gangs, violence, and poverty from a young age influenced youth perceptions of American social norms, making the joining of gangs or taking part in criminal activity an acceptable activity. One interviewee noted, “Once he goes outside to see what was going on...he can go outside and – get violence, drug involvements all the other stuff... One of my friends has been put down in a gang before he was going towards the place. He told me come with him. I told him, no, because I knew I had to go do something else. I think there was a basketball game moment, I said, no, I’m going to watch his basketball. Next morning when he came back to me, he was already in the gang.”

### **Gang Involvement**

Community members, primarily in Minneapolis-St. Paul, agreed that gang involvement was the most serious threat Somali-American youth faced. Community members expressed their concern over losing youth to street gangs. One law enforcement officer explained how the risks for youth are ranked by the Somali-American community, “the community feels that cracking down on gangs is a good thing. Gang violence was the #4 problem of the community. Comparatively, radicalization wasn’t in the top 10. Trafficking not at all.” Another law enforcement officer explained, “In three years, I’ve never had someone come to me and say ‘I think my son’s being recruited.’ They’ll say, my son’s misbehaving, he’s hanging out with gangs, he’s drinking, he’s not coming home. So it’s like every other American, they think their son is heading down a dark path for gangs, not necessarily terrorist recruitment.” Another law enforcement officer stated, “There are 4- 5 different Somali gangs in the Minneapolis area. Most of the homicides that are gang related are retaliation. Their Somali gangs are no different than other gangs anywhere else.”

Interviewees in Columbus felt that gang activity was more common in Minneapolis because the Somali-American community in Columbus resided in one area, and the presence of Somali-American neighbors helped provide informal social control for the young generation, resulting in fewer opportunities for Somali-American youth to be exposed to outside negative influences, such as drug or gang activities. In Minneapolis, on the other hand, the community was dispersed throughout the city or lived in high rise buildings with non-Somali neighbors, providing youth numerous opportunities to be exposed to or interact with negative elements, and learning their devious ways and criminal activities.

The threat that gang involvement posed for youth could not be overstated. Community members in Minneapolis voiced their concern that dropouts and gang members may be more vulnerable and drawn to further criminal actions, like violent extremism or trafficking in persons. A community advocate explained in the newspaper, “Somali gangs realized they needed to generate a steady income. The crimes alleged in the indictment illustrate that at least some might have turned to sex trafficking and credit card fraud as a way to make money.” (Mone, 2011). A

law enforcement officer described Somali gang criminal activity: “they’re usually doing like credit card fraud or some other type of fraud.”

## **Common Pull Factors**

### **Sense of Belonging**

Somali-Americans reported that trying to achieve a sense of belonging was a major factor in radicalization as well as gang membership. One community member stated, “It is an alienated boy’s desperate yearning for identity and importance... they’re just street boys who want to belong somewhere.” Regarding violent extremism, a community member explained, “you’re faced with a lot of feelings of isolation, sometimes of not belonging...people are searching for some sort of sense of meaning and a lot of times that may come from radical sources online.” Regarding involvement in gangs, one law enforcement described it as wanting to belong to the American culture, “a lot of parents that don’t speak English, put kids into American public schools and are trying to keep them very religious, very structured, but they’re seeing what’s on TV and the kids want that. And then they continue to, I don’t know, they group together and then they start committing crimes.”

The yearning of Somali-American youth for a sense of belonging has been exploited by recruiters. Somali-Americans reported that those recruiting their youths to violent extremism or trafficking in persons would pick up on vulnerable and insecure youth and manipulate them. The manipulation strategy relied on building trust between the two individuals that gradually escalated and separated the youth even further from their family and community. One community member explained, “radical people take advantage of the insecurities...the certain vulnerability of a certain person who is vulnerable, who is insecure, and they feed them the agenda.”

### **Peer Networks**

Somali-Americans reported a complicated relationship between vulnerable youth and peer pressure. Peers may be able to prevent friends from radicalizing or getting involved in gangs and criminal activity, but in some cases, it was peers who introduced their closest friends to dangerous ideology or to endorse illegal activities. In the Somali community in Minneapolis, a group of close friends watched ISIS videos together and traveled or attempted to travel to Syria. During the change of plea hearing for Abdirizak Warsame, he testified, “One of my good friends Abdi Nur came up with an idea and he wanted to go to ISIS and so we talked about possible ways of going.” Adnan Farah, who also pleaded guilty to providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization, when asked who convinced him that going to Syria and dying was in God’s way, explained, “a lot of hype went in there...like hyping each other like friends hype each other up.” In the context of trafficking, the role of peer pressure was likewise pronounced. Somali peer networks in Minneapolis and Nashville were used to allegedly transport Jane Doe 2 across state lines. When one community member was asked about why he thought some youth in the community get jobs and others might get pulled into crime, he responded, “usually what drives people to do that is more like influence, you have maybe one person who is just acting in bad ways, and one of the other persons eventually will have some influence over some other



people and he would pull that ways to that side.” Another community member explained, “Sometimes, it’s like the group, the influence, peer pressure is one of the issues. Two months ago, there was this teenager, he was in a bad group... He was so innocent, he was a handsome child. I saw in the news, he was 19 and he used to skip school...He ended up in jail and he died.”

### **Deceptive Practices**

Deceptive practices were employed in the recruitment of persons for both radicalization to violence and trafficking in person, although for different purposes and involving different parties. In the case of trafficking, deception and false promises were employed by the traffickers to recruit girls for sex work, thereby victimizing them. Service providers who worked with the Somali-American community reported that girls were recruited for sex trafficking by deceit and manipulation that centered primarily on promises for companionship, but also material benefits. One explained, “This one, since it’s gang related, had the dynamics that we find with gang related trafficking, a girl who was brought in very young, thought she had a boyfriend in the gang and was supposed to have sex with everyone in the gang as sort of an initiation and then moving into trafficking.” Another service provider said that, “the most common [type of luring girls for the purpose of sex trafficking] we see is what we call boyfriending, somebody comes along, sells a dream, acts like they love a girl and they’re going to live happily ever after and then things go sour.”

In the radicalization case, deception was employed to recruit fighters who will join the cause. Some Somali-American interviewees believed that recruiters brainwashed the Somali-American youth, using deception and false promises regarding the benefits of joining their organization and participating in extreme violence. One community member stated, “I think like they brainwash them. They tell them things that are not true. They think they are helping the world by trying to eliminate people.” The persons who were recruited through such deceptive practices were also viewed as victims. One community member described the Somalis who joined Al Shabaab as follows: “I don’t think they’re terrorists. I think they are victims. I think they are brainwashed. Probably don’t know what they’re doing until they actually start doing it. By that time, they’re fully brainwashed.”

**Table 10. Common Push and Pull Factors Between VE and Trafficking in Persons**

Common Factors	Sub Categories	Individual Factors
<b>PUSH</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL &amp; FAMILY LEVELS</b>	
	<b>Financial Hardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment and financial hardship</li> <li>• Parents working multiple low wage jobs</li> </ul>
	<b>Generation Gap and Weak Family Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents unable to provide help or guidance</li> <li>• Reliance on friends over parents on difficult issues</li> <li>• Limited involvement of fathers in parenting</li> <li>• Many single parent households</li> <li>• Generational divide between parents and youth</li> <li>• Parents are unaware of children’s activities</li> </ul>
	<b>Youth-Adult Transition and Lack of Male Role Models</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited adult guidance and support</li> <li>• Disconnect between youth and religious leaders</li> <li>• Youth malleability</li> <li>• Unrealized individual potential</li> <li>• Lack of male role model</li> </ul>
	<b>Balancing Multiple Identities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges balancing Somali, Muslim, and American identities</li> </ul>
	<b>COMMUNITY LEVEL</b>	
	<b>Unaddressed Mental Health Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stigma towards persons with mental illness</li> <li>• Community reluctance to seek mental health services</li> <li>• Community lack of knowledge and awareness of mental health problems/care</li> <li>• Community lack of knowledge of domestic and emotional abuse</li> <li>• Mental health problems due to experience as a refugee</li> </ul>
	<b>Insular Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somali-Americans had a tendency to stay within their community</li> <li>• Desire to resolve issues within the community as opposed to going outside or involving law enforcement</li> <li>• Individuals do not feel a sense of belonging within the Somali-American community</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low English proficiency among youth</li> <li>• Low English proficiency among adults</li> <li>• Dropping out of school</li> <li>• Living in low income neighborhoods</li> </ul>
	<b>Gang Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gang related violence threatens community</li> <li>• Gang involvement leads to other crimes</li> </ul>

<b>PULL</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL &amp; FAMILY LEVELS</b>	
	<b>Sense of Belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a sense of belonging</li> <li>• Preying upon insecurities</li> </ul>
	<b>Peer Networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associating with gang members</li> <li>• Peer pressure to radicalize</li> </ul>
	<b>Deceptive Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luring of girls with promise of companionship</li> <li>• Individuals are lied to by recruiters</li> </ul>

## **Violent Extremism Push Factors**

### **Male Identity and Superiority**

The need to travel to fight and help fellow Somali-Americans or Muslims was seen as a duty of men that enhanced youths’ sense of manhood. Somali-Americans reported that males were more susceptible than females to the call of radicalization. There was more concern for the well-being of the male children of the community because they were more likely to heed the call to radicalization, “I guess it’s like extremists who like talk to little kids or younger boys, I think it’s mostly boys, younger boys and make them think like that they’re doing something good for their religion, and then mess with their minds and make them -- they make them think that they’re doing something good.” Abdi Warsame, who pleaded guilty to providing material support to ISIS, stated during the trial, “At the time, I felt like it was a duty to go and help innocent people in Iraq and Syria at the time because of the oppression that was going on there and so I felt it was something I had to do.”

The need to express prevailing beliefs in the Somali-American community about male superiority and the need to prove it was another factor driving youth toward violent extremism. Somali-Americans reported that there still was a large amount of gender stereotyping within the Somali diaspora, whereby males were seen as being potentially more violent but also faultless. A service provider who worked with the Somali community explained, “There seems to be a freedom I think to run rampant beyond what I see in some other communities because of that – there seems to be an image that males can do no wrong, so there’s support, there’s the strong pressure I mentioned not to speak up to anyone outside the community about anything that’s going on. So there’s just a ripe Petri dish if you will, for growing the kind of violence and for crime of all sorts.”

### **Grievances of Somalis and Muslims**

American foreign policy in Muslim countries has been viewed as a source of grievances, and consequently radicalization, for many Muslims, including Somali-Americans. Some members of the Somali-American community reported having strong negative feelings about U.S. foreign policy towards Somalis and Muslims. One community member said, “Radicalization happens because of grievances, when a person has a grievance against either the United States or other issues they have a grievance. So they are actually susceptible to be radicalized and because they feel they have been wronged ... sometimes by policies of the government of United States and other people of the United States. For the government, people may see the television; they see for instance what is happening in, particularly happened in Somalia because of Ethiopian

invasion in 2006, what president Bush actually gave them the green light to invade Somalia. That actually angered a lot of youth, and a lot of them to be susceptible to actually to defend their homeland, original homeland.” Some expressed beliefs in conspiracy theories against Sunni Muslims, and felt the U.S. was complicit. For instance, a community member stated in regard to Somalis who attempted to join ISIS, “they [youth] assume that actually the United States government is keeping quiet to the radicals of Shia and Iran to actually kill Sunnis. And that’s bad policy, that’s what the radicals are influencing the kids. They say look, this is a crusade against the Sunnis, so we have to defend ourselves. That’s the creation of ISIS.”

Another grievance addressed local law enforcement practices in handling members of the Somali-American community. Somali-American interviewees reported being profiled by local law enforcement. Some experienced “double jeopardy”, being targeted for being both Black and/or Muslim. A young adult community member explained, “I got to say that the criminal justice system is messed up. The criminal justice system is very, very bad, because it’s like it created, you could say that is targeting black male. So these things, these guys who these Somali males, I don’t know about Somali females, but the Somali males when they are going out, when they’re in the city joining these gangs, they are sensing they are target for the criminal justice system.” A community member who ran a Somali daycare explained a conversation she had with the owner of the daycare building, “he said ‘these centers were raided because they found A, B, C so why are you afraid?’ And I said, ‘Because I understand they found A, B, C, but what do they all have in common, they are Somali. So If I do A, B, C, even unintentionally, just because I’m Somali, I’m already a target.’”

A major concern and related grievance was raised against the FBI and its investigatory practices. Somali-Americans reported that they were wary of cooperating with the FBI because they felt as if they were perceived as a fifth column within society or even terrorists, when they just want to be law abiding Americans. One community member summed up the relationship with the FBI by saying, “The FBI thinks that we are bad people. We are not bad people.” Another community member stated, “The community has not showed any cooperation with the organizations like FBI because they’re suspicious, they think like the FBI or those organizations like Spain are against them.”

### **Beliefs that the Threat of Violent Extremism (VE) is Negligible Compared to Other Problems**

The attention garnered by violent extremism issues, compared to other problems of the Somali-American community, were a major concern to members of the community. Somali-Americans reported that they did not feel as if violent extremism was the most pressing matter in the community; some had denied that it’s a problem whereas others saw it as a comparatively small issue, compared to issues like gang violence. One community member stated, “I feel that radicalization should not be as worried about as much as gangs is. For example, gang violence is the biggest problem within America.” Another community member discussed the denial of radicalization as a threat, “A lot of people who are against CVE are saying, ‘hey, we don’t even have this issue.’ But we do have the issue so I think acknowledgement that we have the issue is really important.” Another community member stated, “The community has not been able to process the issue of a young person wearing a bomb and blowing himself up. It is a new phenomenon that is very strange to us. So, the community was in denial in the past about it. This cannot be us. We cannot be affected by this.”

With prevailing perceptions that violent extremism was not a sufficiently significant threat, there was little understanding of, and preparation for, ways to address it, or mobilize the community to prevent it. Somali-Americans reported that there was limited knowledge about how youth were being radicalized in the Somali-American community and how to prevent violent extremism. At a community meeting, a mother of one of the young men who pleaded guilty for providing material support to ISIS stated, “I need you guys to wake up and to tell your child, 'Who's recruiting you?' Ask what happened. 'Who talked to you when you lived in this house? Who's mentoring you?'” (Xaykaothao, 2015). Another community member explained, “So parents are concerned about recruitment by informants as well as recruitment by real terrorists.”

Recruiters' ability to manipulate vulnerable youth who had limited Islamic literacy was viewed as a major factor in recruitment for violent extremism. Somali-Americans reported that recruiters exploited the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of their prey and this manifested itself best when the target had limited knowledge of Islam. The radicalizers could feed these innocent youths their distorted version of Islam without opposition. One community member stated, “I think the groups that are most radicalized, where people are attacking or trying to catch the attention of, is the kids that are not educated. The kids that don't know much about their religion. Then they can come to them tell them, 'hey you are made by god for this reason you can get this, you can get this, you end up in heaven.' But if we teach them at a young, at an age they can be able to think themselves what's good and what's bad.” Another community member explained about recruiters influencing those who were not familiar with the religion's tenets or meanings, “we all went to Islamic school and we were all taught the Koran but we don't know all the meanings of it. So they just believe them when they tell them it's the Koran. Nobody would lie on the Koran. So we automatically assume it's the truth.”

In light of mosques playing a role in recruitment of youth for VE, some community members expressed concerns about Imams and the activities that go on in their places of worship. Somali-Americans reported on mosques becoming suspect as a place for possible radicalization. “We in the Somali-American Muslim community hold Imams in high regard, and trust them blindly with everything, including our children, since they are the leaders of our faith- a faith of peace, a faith that stands for submission to God... We never thought we could be hurt by the very institution that we trusted with our children. When we realized that our children were recruited and lured away from us into the burning country that we had fled from while they were in their infancy, we would never have thought that possibly to have existed.” Others did not view the Imams or the mosque as responsible for recruitment, but put the blame on those who come to pray. In the words of one interviewee, “Mosques are like bus stations. People come and go; they visit different mosques; there is no membership in mosques. There is no congregation but people attend different mosques. They donate to whichever mosque they happen to be in for Friday prayer. The Imam is like the driver of the bus. Therefore, if someone talked in the mosque to someone who got him radicalized it is not the mosque's (or the Imam's) fault.”

### **Stereotyping of Somalis and Muslims**

Societal tendency to stereotype and homogenize ethnic or religious minorities was identified as a problem affecting the Somali-American community. Somali-Americans felt they were unfairly blamed for the actions of other Muslims. One community member stated, “basically like on the news daily here some type of attack happens; some terrorist attack. Then they will say, 'Oh, it's

a Muslim attack.’ They just argue that all Muslims are the same as those ones. I feel like we shouldn’t even be here in America because basically we’re not on... because they blame everything on Muslims. I’m a proud American citizen to be here. I’ve work hard. I’ve work, I pay my taxes. I’m just being a regular citizen. But whenever something bad happens, it’s blamed on us. All of us. Not just who did it.”

### **Media Stigmatization**

The role of the media in stigmatizing the Somali-American community was another major concern expressed by community members. Interviewees believed that violent extremism was presented as a threat by the media that was making it out to be worse than it actually was. One community member related, “I believe the worry about radicalization, in a sense, to me, is over-hyped.” A young adult community member stated, “The media is just another way of making rich people richer, giving out false information and making one thing look like -- pretty much like it’s like a drop of water and they are putting it into the whole water, they are diluting everybody and that one person who is bad, the one group is bad, so therefore everybody else is bad.”

The media was also viewed as a major source of misinformation and inaccurate representations of Somali-Americans and the general Muslim American community. Further, some interviewees claimed that the media had legitimized the threat of extremism and radicalization in Muslim communities in the eyes of many Americans. One community member stated, “Some people maybe from Middle East, they do some bad stuff and media will say, the Muslims did this, and the Americans get obsessed with it and they go and arrest Muslims.” A young adult community member explained, “When the right-wing fundamentalist does a shooting, whether it’s Colorado, or whether it’s the church shooting, it’s automatically mentally ill. They’re not terrorists... I feel that’s part of the media. It’s not really law enforcement pushing that agenda, but it’s the media.” Another community member stated, “The media is spreading false narratives that Islam is the problem.”

## **Violent Extremism Pull Factors**

### **Internet Use and Exposure**

The exposure to the internet and websites that focused on problems of Muslims in conflict areas around the world compelled some Somali-American youth to do something and act on behalf of their “brothers.” Some Somali-Americans reported that their youth were high users of the internet and could gather information from the internet on Somalia, Syria, Islam, and foreign terror groups. A community member explained, “Some youth that do not know the religion want to learn...but instead of learning it from a person like an imam or a person that knows the religion or a scholar, they will go to their own internet website. They search up things and then they fall into all these false narratives.” Another community member stated, “It can start from curiosity, yeah let me Google this. Like probably there will be a kid out there one day that is curious about ISIS. You hear so much now in the news, so much, you are bent to Google it, what is ISIS? What does that mean? What does it stand for? Oh, Islamic Extremists, let me look at what do they do and things like that.”

### **Empowerment**

Violent extremism was viewed by the Somali-American community as a source of empowerment for some youth who felt vulnerable, weak, or powerless. It could provide those disadvantaged youth meanings and made life seem worthwhile. Somali-Americans reported they believed that the youth were drawn to radicalization to feel as if they had the power to influence their own lives; they were fed a narrative by recruiters which told them that they were capable of making an impact. One community member related, “They watch videos on YouTube on extremists preaching and they really were – ‘Wow, I wish I could do that, or I wish I could be a part of that’ and that caused them to go in that direction.” Interviewees felt that youth become empowered by buying into the extremist narrative. One community member stated, “Another reason is power, power and respect maybe. They want to feel like they are the authority. They call the shots and they’re in control.” A young adult community leader explained, “Kids who become radicalized are looking for something bigger than themselves. They want to belong. They are looking for meaning, because when you see your own people constantly dying back home in war and all of this stuff that’s going bad, that’s going on, and then you’re here and you just feel like you know, you can’t do anything about it.”

Somali-Americans reported that some young men wanted to be a savior or hero who was larger than life: “I think they were influenced by just trying to make a change or trying to be a hero. They were influenced to be a hero. They probably saw the YouTube videos and they wanted to be the hero of the day and they wanted to be talked about. So, I feel like that was what was going through their head. They wanted to prove something.”

### **Extremist Ideology**

The availability of, and easy access to, extremist ideology, particularly on the internet, was a major factor in the recruitment of youth for violent extremism. Somali-Americans reported that extremist ideology was taking root in vulnerable individuals when they were searching for religion. Abdirizak Warsame explained during trial, “I used to listen to Anwar al-Awlaki a lot and I used to listen to a lot of his lectures. And I didn’t really know much about Islam and so when I started learning about, you know, Islam and starting learning about the history of Islam, I

wouldn't necessarily listen, or read books about it, but I would go listen to lectures by Anwar al-Awlaki and I started to, that's how I started to learn more about the religion." He later explained, "At the time what I was attracted to was being able to go to war and fight and bring back the caliphate... Caliphate in Islam means... it meant, you know, Islam would take over the world and, you know, Muslims would no longer be oppressed all around the world." Interviewees noted that it was hard for parents to know whether their children accessed extremist websites because they did not know how to navigate the internet or even use a computer, leaving their children free to use the internet and be exposed to such influences.

Somali-Americans noted that the extremist ideology that was corrupting Somali-American youth originated outside of the Somali community. One community member blamed the Middle East in general, "the problem comes from the Middle East. In Middle East like people live you know those religious groups who live in Middle East are influencing the other people like Somalis." Another community member said, "This is the Wahhabi mission which comes from Middle East especially Arab peninsula long time ago, and always the poor, the poor people can get trapped always. You see what happen in our country when we get fight we will get the civil war. They took advantage, they brought something they call Madrasa or Islamic Charity, but there is a big thing behind this, they are pursuing their own agenda. That's why right now, our country my original country is no longer have a government. We are struggling 24/7...but here in America we have the system and we have the security and we have still some kids in Minneapolis to join the Al-Shabaab."

### **Organizations Promoting Violent Extremism.**

The role of terrorist organizations in the spread of violent extremism was also a concern. Somali-Americans emphasized the threat that extremist organizations like Al-Shabaab and ISIS posed to their community, regardless of being targeted by recruiters. One community member related that, "a lot of Somali went there to fight against the Ethiopian invasion. That created actually a lot of Somalis youngsters, especially in Ohio, the temptation to go." A law enforcement officer stated, "Those who made it to ISIS are folk heroes. A. Nur. They become the model. The young people look up to them."

### **Social Media**

Ease of access to unfiltered information found on social media was also viewed as a major factor contributing to radicalization and violent extremism. Somali-Americans reported that easy access to social media allows for youth to be exposed to extreme ideas that could seem convincing. These biased or distorted radical viewpoints often went unchallenged, while more moderate viewpoints were not available. One community member said, "... I feel like the social media, like I said, you can literally search the internet for anything and that can really make you – that can open your third eye because you know what's going on in Somalia and Iraq and everywhere you go."

Recruitment through the internet was not uncommon, according to interviewees. Somali-Americans reported that there were many possible reasons for becoming radicalized, but the notion of internet radicalization had become popular. One community member stated that, "the only way is internet," and that it was impossible for them to have been radicalized to join ISIS only through the mosque. During the change of plea hearing, Warsame explained the role of the internet influencing their radicalization; "One of the reasons was we were always watching



propaganda videos on YouTube....we'd been watching propaganda videos for some times and we decided it was a time to not only talk, but to put it into some action.”

**Table 11. Violent Extremism Push and Pull Factors**

Violent Extremism	Sub Categories	Factors
<b>PUSH</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL &amp; FAMILY LEVELS</b>	
	<b>Male Identity and Superiority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being an Ideologically vulnerable male susceptible to brainwashing</li> <li>• Sense of Somali male superiority</li> </ul>
	<b>COMMUNITY LEVEL</b>	
	<b>Grievances of Somalis and Muslims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling blamed for the violent actions of other Muslims</li> <li>• Targeted by local law enforcement</li> <li>• Fear of entrapment by FBI</li> </ul>
	<b>Beliefs that the Threat of Violent Extremism is Negligible Compared to Other Problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many do not view violent extremism as a threat</li> <li>• Limited knowledge of recruiting techniques</li> <li>• Limited Islamic literacy</li> <li>• Doubt regarding Imams in the wake of Al Shabaab recruitment</li> </ul>
	<b>SOCIETAL LEVEL</b>	
	<b>Stereotyping of Somalis and Muslims</b>  <b>Media Stigmatization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotyping of Somalis</li> <li>• Media overhyping violent extremism</li> <li>• Negative portrayal of Somali-Americans by the media</li> </ul>
<b>PULL</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL &amp; FAMILY LEVELS</b>	
	<b>Internet Use and Exposure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting information from the internet</li> </ul>
	<b>Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowerment through extremism</li> <li>• Desire to be a hero</li> </ul>
	<b>COMMUNITY LEVEL</b>	
	<b>Extremist Ideology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside extremist ideology permeating Somali Community</li> </ul>
	<b>Organizations Promoting Violent Extremism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of joining Al Shabaab</li> <li>• Propaganda directed at English speakers</li> </ul>
	<b>SOCIETAL LEVEL</b>	
<b>Social Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of access to unfiltered information</li> <li>• Recruitment through the internet</li> </ul>	

## Trafficking in Persons Push Factors

As noted previously, in terms of the specific incidents of trafficking in persons that were reviewed by the court and later acquitted, many Somali-Americans reported that they believed that the trafficking in persons ring was fabricated. Some interviewees who knew the male facilitators did not think they could be traffickers. One young adult explained, “These guys never even seen the girl or if they’ve seen her...they thought she was crazy like all other girls.” Others emphasized that there was not enough evidence other than Jane Does’ testimony, which many also believed was contrived to protect herself. The cousin of one of the alleged trafficking facilitators explained in a newspaper article, “In my culture, you can’t say, ‘This is what I wanted. I want to have sex. I want to do this. NO! So she [Jane Doe] played the victim, ‘I was raped.’ Because she doesn’t want to bring that shame upon her family. And I understand that, but now 29 people’s lives are on stake for that” (Alsatian, 2010).

Although no Somali-Americans charged with trafficking in persons were ever convicted, the findings of push and pull factors related to trafficking in persons were based upon research participants’ explanations of the circumstances of and perspectives upon allegations of involvement. Although we do not claim that there is known trafficking in persons in the Somali-American community, we believe the findings are relevant in the sense that trafficking in persons is a crime that occurs in many U.S. communities, although it is highly difficult to prosecute.

### Female Inequality Leads to Submissive Practices

Somali-Americans, like other patriarchal communities, renders women at a lower social status, making it more likely that they will submit to sexual practices, such as engaging in premarital or extramarital sexual relations with men. Somali-American interviewees expressed that female gender roles and cultural norms made young women more at risk to be pushed into trafficking if they deviated from expected gender norms. One Somali community member reported, “Yeah, I would say it’s that because I guess they’re more strict on girls, and they don’t give girls as much freedom as boys.”

Women who challenged cultural norms regarding female submission, including those who were victims of sexual assault or domestic violence, were not likely to seek help or reveal the violation for fear of losing face in the community. Somali-Americans reported that many community members did not acknowledge domestic violence, and did not involve law enforcement. A Somali female community member recounted, “I’ve seen women who have gotten abused after the fact that it happened, coming together and having the conversation of what to do next. They will not turn their husband or the guy who physically abused them over. They won’t...They’ll call the father and the tribe chief and this other tribe chief and people will come. The family who is wrong will be required to give money. These conversations will happen and they’re required to apologize. It’s too much humiliation that goes on that you don’t need the court system.” Another female community member described, “Women don’t want to come forward, keep it at home. The issue is solved by the elders instead of going to the police... Usually women won’t get help outside of community, won’t say anything, until after a few times.”

In some cases, women engaged in sex work at the demand of their husbands, in order to make ends meet. Some Somali-Americans and providers reported that some adult Somali-American women resorted to prostitution and sex for money in order to bring in more money and be able to

support their family. One service provider described stories she heard from a victim of trafficking, “she said that there was pressure usually from the husband to make money by engaging in sexual activities for pay, but I also think just in general this is a continuum we see, you have some kind of child abuse and trauma, they end up being trafficked at a young age, and then eventually it’s like that’s who you are, and will end up self-prostituting.”

Girls who rebelled against communal gender related rules may be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Somali-Americans reported that runaways were therefore especially at risk for being victims of trafficking in persons. One community member said, “The problem is number one thing men, you know when a runaway girl like that and she’s young, maybe she’s a runaway girl like you could say she’s young, maybe 16.” This point is confirmed by Dahir Jibreel from the Somali Justice Advocacy Center who noted that “the attitude of any normal Somali family is that if their young girl leaves home or runs away, they think she’s guilty, and there’s not a lot of sympathy, other than the parental feeling” (Aslanian, 2010).

Somali-Americans reported that there was resistance among community members to involve law enforcement because of the stigma and shame of victims involved in trafficking in persons. From the law enforcement perspective, they did not know how to approach the issue in the community when they were not welcome. As a law enforcement officer explained, “The girls did not complain, and the families denied that such an event happened.” The Somalis told the police that they (the police) do not understand Somali culture and “it was clear that we were not welcome.”

### **Lack of Protection for Female Victims**

Somali-Americans reported that in the Somali community, there was stigma and shaming of victims involved in the previously alleged trafficking in persons case, which was supported by the analysis of media materials. The community did not offer any support to the girls and ostracized them from the community. A service provider whose organization worked with some young Somalis, but not with the Jane Does in this case, explained in an MPR News article, “The ladies that we've worked with are young. About 17. What they've told us is it's very hard to talk about the issue of prostitution overall...We have tried to help them to get back into the community. Some of them have wanted to and some of them haven't, because of the stigma or labelling that they would have to endure.” (Aslanian, 2010). In the same article, a Somali community advocate stated, “Prostitution is taboo among many communities of color, so the Somali population would be no exception. The young Jane Does will face huge challenges getting their lives back together” (Aslanian, 2010). Parental help for sex trafficking victims was also not forthcoming. Somali-Americans reported that in their community there was no family support or empathy for trafficked victims. As a community member stated to MPR News, “the girls feel like they can't return home because of the cultural stigma associated with prostitution. Islam forbids sex outside of marriage, and some girls feel that their parents might punish them... If some guy messes around with them, that is not only harming the girl but it's harming the whole family and the whole tribe.”

Somali-Americans further reported that women who were sexually abused were less likely to receive support from the community and were more likely to be ostracized and shamed. One community member described, “I guess it depends on the family, if you want to have law enforcement to it. But some families, they don't want law enforcement. Other families will just

rather not talk about it because of shame or whatnot.” A law enforcement officer who worked on the trafficking case explained, “In a case like this where a lot of it was definitely based on the victim's account of what happened and so what we could collaborate what needs to happen. So the victim's family took a beating as a lot of times whether it's a sexual assault case or it's abusive and they can talk – I'm sure they were taking a beating on it and that's one way for the defense to create the reasonable doubt is to attack the victim so that there is a lot of acting going on in the courtroom, outside the courtroom, in the community.”

## **Trafficking in Persons Pull Factors**

### **Financial Rewards**

A main pull factor in trafficking, according to interviews, was the easy money it produced for its facilitators. Somali-Americans and law enforcement reported that they believed that the reasons gang members became involved in trafficking in persons was for financial gains. One law enforcement officer who worked on the trafficking in persons case explained, “These guys were out to make money, and they're to get themselves, get themselves a better life. It was a gang culture and the why they breed the gangs is because they will be picked on by the other Americanized crews.” A community member discussed her belief on why trafficking occurred, “It's like probably an easy way to make money for them. It's like getting another illegal thing; it's probably easy way to get cash.”

### **Criminal History and Record of the Traffickers**

The involvement of some Somali-Americans in trafficking was a particular expression of their general involvement in crime and violence, evidenced by their criminal record. Somali-Americans and law enforcement reported that some of the previously alleged trafficking facilitators had a history of criminality. A law enforcement officer who worked on the trafficking case described the men involved in the case, “they group together and they start committing crimes. And so it has nothing to do with that they're Somalis except that they're committing crimes and they just happened to be Somali...It's not race based, it's not religious based. It's crime based.” One service provider proclaimed, “If you know them like your brother or friend you know what this person is capable of, you know their history. Maybe if they got a bad history of treating women badly or abusing women, they might be more likely to do something like that, other than somebody who respects his girlfriend or his wife or whatever the case is, but somebody that sees women as objects or sees women as less than him, they might be more likely to do something like that.”

### **Sex Industry and Persons Who Want to Buy Sex**

The existence of a market for sex, and the presence of persons interested in buying it, was another pull factor. Somali-Americans reported that there were some people in the community who were willing to buy sex. The testimony of Jane Doe 2 also stated that the gang members recruited customers (who were mostly other gang members or their friends) for money or drugs and alcohol. One law enforcement officer explained, “The first case involved a Somali ring of men who recruited Somali girls and rented (traded) them to truck drivers; they would give the drivers the girl and tell them to return her in a week, when they return to Columbus.”

**Drug and Alcohol Procurement and Use**

Somali-Americans reported that drug and alcohol use was one way for some Somali youth to feel more American. One community member described, “Much of the crime of Somali youth is because they think that certain illegal activities like smoking or using drugs means ‘being American’. Because Somalis live in poor areas that were also crime ridden they learn it from their environment.” Others explained drug use as a pathway for Somali youth to become involved with gang activity. One community member detailed, “Being exposed to drug and alcohol usage can lead to gang involvement, I feel like they have a friend that does it and then they’ll try it ... and they’ll just starting to get addicted to drugs and they’ll join gangs and they’ll just follow in their friends’ footsteps.” Allegedly, the sex services of trafficking victim Jane Doe 2 comprised the payment for the drugs and alcohol that gang members received, connecting drugs/alcohol use and gang membership with trafficking in persons.

**Table 12. Trafficking in Persons Push and Pull Factors**

Trafficking in Persons	Sub Categories	Factors
<b>PUSH</b>		
<b>PULL</b>		

## **Negative Convergence Factors**

### **Compounded Multifaceted Victimization and Miscommunication**

Somali-American community members experienced multiple forms of mistreatment and victimization. Interviewees reported that youth faced discrimination both due to being Black and Muslim. One community member reported, “If you are Somali, you are black and you are a Muslim, which is like the worst combination in the United States ever. So you already have a problem with the cops, when the name is Muslim and your color is black and so if you think about that and the way the cops treat Christian blacks or just any people of color in the United States that is already a cause for concern right there.”

Somali-Americans reported that as Muslims, they get blamed as a community for the extremist acts of certain lone individuals. A community member stated, “Basically like on the news daily here like some type of attack happens; some terrorist attack. Then they will say, ‘Oh, it’s a Muslim attack.’ They just argue that all Muslims are the same as those ones. I feel like we shouldn’t even be here in America because basically we’re not on... because they blame everything on Muslims. I’m a proud American citizen to be here. I’ve work hard. I’ve work, I pay my taxes. I’m just being a regular citizen. But whenever something bad happens, it’s blamed on us. All of us. Not just who did it.”

Somali-Americans who were victims of crimes but did not report crimes or did not cooperate with law enforcement were later blamed for not doing so. One community member said, “The problem with the police is that they double victimize. The community is already victims of violence, then law enforcement blames the victims for not speaking up.” One police officer stated, “When the police are called, the person who calls expects the police to solve the issue without any input from the caller. The Somalis do not understand how police work in the U.S. is conducted, or that without receiving details from the complainants the police cannot proceed with the investigation. The Somalis expect the police to figure out on their own the issue/problem, without any input from the ones who call the police. The police on their part wonder why one who has called the police would refuse to help or cooperate in the investigation, and this misunderstanding reinforces mutual negative views of the police and the Somalis.” A community member stated, “There has been so much victim/community blaming by law enforcement,” and, “The number of shootings is not equivalent to the number of arrests and number of convictions. Law enforcement thinks that it’s the community’s fault that there are less arrests because the community doesn’t talk, doesn’t give information.”

### **Sex Work and Violent Extremism Were Viewed as Reflective of Individual Morals**

Somali-Americans reported that in the community sex work was viewed as a moral issue and those who get involved were considered to be lacking a strong moral character. One community member said, “If your name is out there and attached to being a prostitute, there’s a lot of shame and people will come at your morals, and people won’t consider you the same as you were before.” Related to this is the view that, “If the girl gets raped the girl gets blamed.” Violent extremism was likewise viewed by community members as unacceptable, as being ungrateful for the country that had accepted the Somalis as refugees. Community members stated that such involvement is a total rejection of American society by a few bad individuals, and that the majority of Somali-American want to integrate be trouble-free law abiding citizens.

### **Weak Collective Efficacy**

Somali-Americans reported that there were insufficient community programs and resources for Somali youth, especially those at risk for dropping out of school. A community member stated, “Local and state governments were not doing anything to make resources and programs available to the youth.” The community reported a scarcity of youth after-school and mentoring programs which left openings for some youth community members to engage in risky activities. A service provider added, “The current economic situation also adds to the problem, since jobs are not available for youth.”

Somali-Americans reported that many community members did not feel like there was anything the community could do to improve their situation. A community service provider characterized this prevailing feeling as “frustration resulting from a lack of opportunity for meaningful employment, poor quality schools, failed public services, incompetent parents, inattentive churches and mosques and discrimination, real or perceived, from the wider community.” This was compounded by the belief that the government “hasn’t done anything at all about helping the community.” Understandably, some Somali-Americans felt neglected and as if they were being cut off from the broader American community. A community member noted that it is disheartening when the government has the “resources to actually provide after school activities, create centers for the Somalis... [and] They haven't done all that.”

Somali-Americans reported that the Somali community has not had adequate representation in either federal, state, or local governments and consequently has not had as much ‘buy in’ to the American democratic system as other groups. One community member said, “It would be nice if we had more public figures of Somalis that were into the branches, whether it was the – into the House of Representatives for Ohio that represent the Somali community. So, we could fix the problem. We don’t have a spokesman, a true spokesman.” In addition, this meant there was not a figure within government for Somalis to look to for inspiration for others to get into or work with the government. Somali-American were suspicious of any government supported activities that did not include Somali representatives, including research. Some community members felt their views, interests, or problems were not accurately described, explained, or understood, exacerbating their sense of marginalization, and viewing resultant decisions, findings, or outcomes not reflective of their “true” strengths, problems, and needs, thus unhelpful at best, and harmful or discriminatory at worst.

### **Limited, Securitized, and Distrustful Relationship with Law Enforcement**

Somali-Americans reported that they often regarded the police as ineffective in resolving crimes in their community. While issues around reporting crime or failure to cooperate with investigations intersected with this perception, it was clear that law enforcement and community relations were degraded and not founded upon mutual trust and efficacy to resolve criminal activity. One community member recalled attending a community meeting with multiple law enforcement agencies attending and reporting to the community about an ongoing investigation. When one agency briefed the community about the gang presence the interviewee recalled, “cops that were there for this area were like, ‘What? We only know about three of them. There’s five of them?’ And I was just like, okay. ‘Well, you guys don’t talk to each other.’”

Some Somali-Americans reported that heavy handed law enforcement tactics had alienated the community and made them more resistant to work with law enforcement agencies. One community member stated,

“The Somali community, they are probably more like -- there is probably more cops in the area. Just like how the media portrays it -- violence and stuff. So it’s probably like more cops hang out in that area. They probably overreact to situations and stuff versus in Edina if someone got called for a robbery versus Minneapolis someone got called for a robbery. They would take the Minneapolis problem more seriously and as a threat versus Edina it’s basically a simple robbery or mugging. They would react more -- more violence is going to happen at Minneapolis versus Edina. Like their point of view is blocked...They have their ups and downs. They can control a situation, but they can sometimes take the situation overboard, unnecessary things.”

Somali-Americans reported that many in their community distrusted the FBI specifically, and federal law enforcement agencies in general, because of the treatment they had received by them in the past. Community members stated,

The FBI thinks that we are bad people. We are not bad people. Maybe they are bad because they terrorize the community. They treat us as like non--Americans. I don’t know how they think, but that is no good. We are not second class citizens, are we? Our religion makes us to be proud at all times. Really, we should be proud of our culture and religion. We are not terrorists; we are Muslims who want the same freedom and opportunities like other Americans. Our kids are being treated harshly to the extent that they get discouraged from engaging in social issues. Some even have doubts about the “American dream.” It is true that smart people continue to be misunderstood, and racism just makes it worse.

Somali-Americans expressed that some community members did not trust programming for countering violence extremism (CVE). One young adult community member stated, “how are we going to build community resilience? By you giving us money and then telling us, ‘oh law enforcement is going to work with community?’...this is not going to work, they’re going to make more people pissed off...I feel like they’re going about it the wrong way. I don’t have the solutions. I don’t have the answers, but I feel like it’s a longer process.” Another young adult explained, “When I heard CVE, like it was countering violent extremism, then they change it to, what was it? Building community resilience and I was like, excuse my French, but the first thing that came out of my mouth was bullshit.”

Somali-Americans reported that some community members felt that law enforcement was not there to protect them or to serve them but to target and persecute them. Some community members reported that with “law enforcement and the community there’s a big gap. People feel that law enforcement is against them for example, when you have a conversation with the members of the community they believe, they’re behind them, putting them under. When you go to the airport, people have been asked about the like your name is this, your name is Sahara, your name is Mohammed, all those kind of problems.”



### **Lack of Familiarity with and Reluctance to Cooperate with Criminal Justice Agencies**

The Somali-American community, like many immigrant communities, was insular and preferred to keep “dirty laundry” inside. Law violations and deviant behavior were not likely to be reported or disclosed to outsiders, particularly law enforcement. When issues of crime occurred, the tendency was to keep them within the community, and to resolve these issues internally, without involving the government. As a police officer reported, “When Somalis call the police for help, or ask the police to intervene as police, it is usually about fights between clans. I was never called to address an internal fight/issue, only issues between different clans.”

Limited Somali-American knowledge of and familiarity with the criminal justice system also contribute to preferences to turn inward, to resolve problems by resorting to traditional methods such as referrals to community elders. Somali-American community members showed little knowledge of the U.S. criminal justice system and assumed that it was rigged against them. Somali-Americans reported that “the criminal and justice system is very, very bad...it’s like it created, you could say that is targeting black male.” This was in part focused on the idea of mandatory minimum sentences and the view that Somalis are punished more severely for no apparent reason. Community members stated it was unjust and when it comes to sentencing, “they just start with two years, they start him for two year literally they didn’t really care; there was no empathy.”

The lack of trust, together with community insularity rendered cooperation of community members with law enforcement unacceptable. Thus, testifying by Somalis in court against other Somalis was discouraged and even penalized. Somali-Americans reported that retaliation against witnesses was a constant threat in the Somali-American community. This hindered criminal justice responses and community trust in the criminal justice system’s ability to protect them when they give information on criminal activity. Community members cited instances such as “There was a gentleman who saw a murder and provided information to the police and he was killed for stepping up.” They felt that “Retaliation is an issue.” This was also shown during the radicalization cases when those that cooperated with law enforcement against fellow community members were condemned.

The distrust coupled with the general insularity of the community made policing efforts in crime investigations difficult and frustrating. Police officers reported that the Somali-American community’s insular nature and distrust of authority made infiltrating criminal activity to build a criminal case more challenging. A Somali-American community member confirmed that “the Somali case presented a challenge to the police as they could not infiltrate the ring, and could not get any information from the group. The Somalis live in pockets, and the police could not find anyone who could penetrate the group without raising suspicion among the facilitators”

**Table 13. Negative Convergence Factors**

	Sub Categories	Factors
<b>Negative Convergence</b>	<b>Compounded Multifaceted Victimization and Miscommunication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Perceived discrimination due to racial and ethnic identity</li> <li>● Perceived social exclusion and discrimination because Muslims were regarded as linked to terrorism</li> <li>● Victims were blamed for not reporting crimes</li> </ul>
	<b>Sex Work and Violent Extremism Were Viewed as Reflective of Individual Morals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sex work and violent extremism were viewed through a moral lens</li> </ul>
	<b>Weak Collective Efficacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited services available to Somali youth</li> <li>● Sense of communal disempowerment</li> <li>● Inadequate Somali representations</li> <li>● Cultural stigma prevents female’s testimony</li> </ul>
	<b>Limited, Securitized, and Distrustful Relationship with Law Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community perception that law enforcement isn’t doing enough to address crime</li> <li>● Desire to resolve issues within community as opposed to going outside or involving law enforcement</li> <li>● Law enforcement overreacts to situations alienates the community</li> <li>● Distrust of federal law enforcement</li> <li>● Distrust of government-funded programming</li> <li>● Perception that law enforcement works against the community</li> </ul>
	<b>Reluctance to Cooperate with Criminal Justice Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited knowledge of criminal justice system</li> <li>● Witness intimidation for reporting and testifying</li> <li>● Challenges law enforcement face when investigating crime</li> </ul>

### **Recommended Practices by the Somali Community**

To build further on the aforementioned convergence model, we wanted to draw special attention to the practices that were recommended by the Somali community. Community generated solutions are especially important because they are based upon insider knowledge, are more likely to win community buy-in, and could be more implementable and impactful. The recommended practices mostly concerned violent radicalization and not trafficking in persons, as the latter was not considered a concern in their community, a view that was validated when the charges of trafficking in persons were dropped or dismissed.

## **Build Effective and Sustainable Prevention Programming**

***Address Upstream Factors to Prevent Radicalization.*** Somali-Americans believed that in order to prevent radicalization, as well as other threats, underlying risks, disadvantages, and social problems needed to be addressed. One community member explained, “in order to solve radicalization, there needs to be other priorities solved first that will help reduce radicalization. Talks about gang violence, unemployment, after school programs, mental health, lack of identity, lack of education. All of these issues mirror issues related to radicalization that need to be dealt with.” Another community member stated, “The community sees other things, other underlying causes as issues that need to be fixed before addressing radicalization. The way to solve is we need to do it the way we want and not the way others are driving us to do.”

***Programs Should Be Community Led.*** Somali-Americans reported that they needed community led initiatives that were based on an understanding of the community and its needs and grievances. A community member reported, “It should be led by the community and not by law enforcement. And you say if it was led by the community -- They’d have a better outcome-- people will be more open to listen to it the way that they won’t be if it was by law enforcement. Just because there’s too much mistrust and -- too much mistrust, misunderstanding.” Another community member stated, “it would be better if a Somali person tried to help the community than with law enforcement because they already don’t agree with the law.”

***Strengthen Prevention Programs.*** Somali-Americans reported that their communities had inadequate programs and resources focused on prevention. A service provider stated, “How are we doing in terms of prevention and intervention? Terribly. I don’t have the resources.” A community member noted, “The government did not pay attention to the preventable variables that contribute to radicalization.” No service provider or law enforcement agent reported any trafficking in persons prevention work with Somali-Americans. Another community member commented: “In traditional law enforcement, more money is spent on the responses to incidents than in prevention or mitigation effort, I believe that those efforts should be equalized. With the prevention and educational efforts being pursued by our outreach programs, we think the smart money is on the front end. If you can turn anger into understanding and violence into civic activism, there would be no necessity for response.”

***Education Can Work Against Radicalization.*** Somali-Americans reported that education was the strongest defense against radicalization. One parent related, “If I don’t get a chance to educate myself, at least my goal is to educate my kids...So there’s a lot of things of cultural first value, can help to prevent those doctrines[radicalization]. Because the best policy, the best tools you can prevent radicalization is to empower the community. Educate them, give them talks to understand, give them tools to consult, advise the youngsters, that’s the best policy, the best defense. Spending millions of dollars in drones will not prevent radicalization.”

***Support Mosques as a Space for Promoting Healthy Development.*** Somali-Americans reported that it was important to support mosques’ capacities to provide a safe space for children to grow and engage their peers in a productive manner under the care and guidance of religious figures. One community member stated, “The mosque is the most important and safest place in our community. It is the house of God and a safe place for the kids to be.” Another community related, “Yes, as kids goes, honestly they help kids a lot. They [the mosque] provide a lot of education, they give like what they call “adapt” means they teach the way of life, they teach how

to respect the parents, how to respect the...neighbors, how to respect anybody they associate with. So I have to say those religious groups are really taking part helping the kids to become more productive.” Although a few community members were concerned about the mosques as places where young people may be radicalized through contact and interactions with recruiters, being torn between fears of their children being on the street versus in the mosque, most considered the mosques as places where their children could positively develop, becoming productive, law abiding citizens who were guided by “correct” Islamic tenets.

***Strengthen Families.*** Somali-Americans reported that strengthening the family was one of the best ways to empower the community. A community member stated, “I think the basic most important thing, the best policy you can have in both ways whether radicalization or trafficking. The best way you can prevent is the effects of the family. The family unit is very, very vital. If there is no father and mother who are aware of the activity of the kids these kids will actually fall in the cracks and that’s where all this problem starts. So I think the best way that you can contain, curtail, stop, whatever word you want to use is to empower the families.”

### **Strengthen Law Enforcement and Community Relations**

***Improve Community Cooperation with Federal and Local Law Enforcement.*** Somali-Americans reported that by better cooperating with and sharing information with federal and local law enforcement, the Somali-American community can forge partnerships and keep the community safer. One community member described, “Work hand in hand with the law enforcement particularly FBI and the other agencies so we can share because you cannot do it alone. You need a collaboration between the community and the law enforcement and justice department so that they will be able to actually get a handle on the issue before it happens.” Another community member reported, “There is a need to build partnerships between communities, state, local, and national governments and schools to work together to give direction to youth before they fall into a trap.” Another called for recruiting more Somali officers into the police force. Law enforcement officers also thought that improved relations with the community would help in building trust and enhance community views of the police as their ally rather than enemy. They talked about efforts to participate in community festivals and make friendly visits social gatherings and communal activities to show appreciations for the community contribution to general communal life.

### **Increase Programmatic Emphasis on Community’s Needs**

***Go to the Source of the Problems which is Gangs.*** Somali-Americans reported that the gangs were responsible for many of the negative outcomes that occurred. One community member put it bluntly, “Gangs are the bottom line.” They linked gang presence to trafficking stating that “If you find solution for the gang... this trafficking will not happen.” Another reminded that “Most of the people that were set to go to Somalia or to Syria all happened to be former kids that came out of the gangs.” One community member said, “I feel that radicalization should not be as worried about as much as gangs is. For example, gang violence is the biggest problem within America.” Interviewees in the other sites that did not have pressing gang problems focused on the other issues discussed above, such as unemployment, education, and after school programs.

***Develop Community Organizations and Supports.*** Somali-Americans stated that working to strengthen the community would help prevent crime including violent extremism. One community member stated, “Empower the communities, create community centers, create a

place of worship that are actually reasonable, actually fair, and particularly the government in U.S. or state, they have to actually instead of spending a lot of money on surveillance and other electronic eavesdropping, that kind of stuff, instead of spending a lot of money they're supposed to spend money on the communities." Another member commented, "The U.S. Attorney has a good partnership with the community. He pays attention to the issues. He brings resources. He does it out of generosity." Community members reported the importance of connecting youth with elders and empowering women.

***Facilitate Economic Development.*** Somali-Americans emphasized that economic development was vital to community well-being as well as crime prevention. One community member stated: "The life means – meaning is you have to have a good family, good education, business security, country, food you know you have to have, if you don't have those things then why you live, you know what I mean. So millions people are living in a bad situation, the only way and the only thing that they can get is to – they know the God is always up there and they know the religion is what they believe, that's it and they become more radical." Community members called for "the government" to "open some other projects like youth programs not only sports activities, it can make them busy for we are creating a job or creating some other activities."

#### **Avoid Profiling Somalis and Related Discriminatory Practices**

***Avoid Targeting by Law Enforcement.*** Somali-Americans expressed that law enforcement needs to avoid profiling and unfairly treating their community. A community member stated, "let's say Somalian person was pulled over and you know, it was a minor traffic incident or something like that, will they be treated more harshly by the police officers just because they are Somalis? ... I think, yes there has been a lot of issues with the legal systems as regarding treating of Black people and Somali people." Another community member expressed that Somali young men are particularly targeted, "I see it as they're being targeted really, because I know a lot of people that just keep getting in trouble, so I would say they're being targeted... Like they'll see the are Somali, just like, I don't know -- just like the fact that the Somalian do things."

***Avoid Islamophobic Media Coverage.*** Somali-Americans felt that the media needs to stop perpetuating their negative portrayal through bias and Islamophobic reporting. One community member explained, "these Caucasians, you see them, they are not criminals...but you see the brown, they are terrorists and so forth. And that's prejudice on them possibly which is just wrong. So I don't care for the media." Another community member stated, "Right now in the news and the media, Muslims are known as terrorists." A young adult community member stated, "We don't need any more negativity because if you search Somalia at Google, you don't see beaches and positivity. You see terrorists - Al-Shabaab, pirates, piracy, failed state and that's kind of what we're trying to run away from as a community, and Americas that we want to be both positive, to show our businesses, to show our graduation rate, to show our aptitude for learning, and assimilating."

***Stop Implementing CVE Projects in the Somali-American Community.*** Somali-Americans felt that their community was being disproportionately targeted for violent extremism prevention programs. A community member explained, "There's a total 900 plus Americans that have joined ISIS or Al-Shabaab; 40 of those were Somali. So that percentage to me alone and where the root cause of CVE was created and I'm like, 'Why are we being magnified?' ...I feel like we're just kind of being put in the spotlight on us and we don't need any more negativity."

**Research Should Be Community Led.** Community members expressed their feelings that research that led to programming should be conducted by insiders rather than outsiders who don't know the community. A community leader stated, "I think what's truly essential to the CVE is research, first understanding this issue, and I don't mean to sound this way but I'm really tired of non-Muslims or non-Somalis doing this research because they don't know. Again it's the carry on of stereotypes. How do you speak about people, this group of people, without knowing this group of people, without being from this group of people?"

**Table 14. Recommended Practices by the Somali Community**

Recommended Practices by the Somali Community		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Address upstream factors to prevent</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSIONS

Ethnic minorities and recent migrants to the United States, like their American born counterparts, can become involved in crimes, including multiple types of transnational crimes. Criminal justice agencies and community-based organizations need to respond in ways that are cognizant of this possibility, and establish suitable response practices that consider the specific contextual circumstances. This study aimed to provide a model that addressed the risks for multiple crime types and the practices to best prevent them, based on empirical evidence from those communities. The convergent model of risks and practices for multiple transnational crimes presented in this report responds to the ways both risks and practices associated with different types of crimes interact with and impact one another, either favorably or adversely.

This three-year, multi-site, and mixed methods study, examined the convergence of crimes and criminal justice practices in three Somali-American communities. Data collection involved

review of public sources on involvement of Somali-American in crimes and ethnographic interviews of young adults, parents of young adults, and community leaders, activists, and service providers in three American cities which are home to large Somali communities: Minneapolis-St. Paul, Columbus, and Nashville. Law enforcement agents who work with the Somali-American community in these three cities were also interviewed. Recently there have been investigations, arrests, and trials concerning violent extremism and trafficking in persons involving some Somali-Americans in those cities.

We found that both violent extremism and trafficking in persons appear to involve common and selective risks and practices, which can be explained via a convergent risks and practices model informed by push and pull theory. The convergent risks and practices model consists of common push and pull factors, violent extremism selective push and pull factors, trafficking in persons selective push and pull factors, and common negative convergent practices and recommended convergent practices.

Regarding risks, the model described common push factors (financial hardship; generation gap and weak family support; youth-adult transition; balancing multiple identities; unaddressed mental health needs ; insular community; lack of opportunities; gang involvement) and common pull factors (sense of belonging; peer networks; deceptive practices).

Regarding violent extremism, the model described selective push factors (male identity and superiority; grievances against Somalis and Muslims; beliefs that the threat of VE is negligible; stereotyping of Somalis and Muslims; media stigmatization) and selective pull factors (internet use and exposure; empowerment; extremist ideology; organizations promoting violent extremism; social media).

Regarding previously alleged trafficking in persons, the model described selective push factors (female inequality; lack of protection for female victims) and selective pull factors (financial rewards, criminal history and records; sex industry and persons who want to buy sex; drug and alcohol procurement).

This empirical model, and the push and pull factors it identified, are based upon qualitative data. These findings should be further examined using survey methods and quantitative analysis.

Negative convergence of risks and practices is when risks and community and/or law enforcement practices combine in such a way as to contribute to negative outcomes. The model identified three overall negative convergent practices (compounded multifaceted victimization and miscommunication; weak collective efficacy; limited and securitized relationship with law enforcement).

Lastly, the report offers recommendations for convergent practices that can ameliorate risks and lead to positive outcomes. The model identified several convergent practices (build effective and sustainable prevention programming; strengthen law enforcement and community relations; increase programmatic emphasis on community's needs; stop discriminatory practices) which are incorporated into our final recommendations.

Overall, practitioners and policymakers from communities, law enforcement, and other government agencies should recognize the convergence of risks and practices for different crime types, including transnational crimes. The convergence recommendations listed below offer evidence-based suggestions for designing helpful programs and policies to replace the negative convergent practices identified in this study, practices which do not solve and can potentially worsen the problems at hand.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, we offer the following recommendations:

### **1. Recommendations to Strengthen Criminal Justice Policy and Programs:**

- a. Criminal justice professionals should avoid actions or excesses that violate individual's civil rights and liberties or which can be experienced as profiling an ethnic or religious minority. Any documented violations should be comprehensively addressed.
- b. The belief that there are evidence-based indicators of the risk for violent extremism or trafficking in persons is presently untenable and should be discarded. Community members or family members of youth and young adults should be educated about possible behavioral signs which could reflect early involvement in violent extremism or trafficking, or other illegal activities.
- c. Community-based programs that strengthen the support of victims and their families, including where indicated, mental health treatment, advocacy, and alternative sentencing should be established. Such programs should also address the overlap between offenders and victims in the cases in which such overlap can be identified, and adapt the response accordingly.
- d. Law enforcement and community partnership with ethnic and racial minority communities should be strengthened and expanded, using community policing approaches. Recruitment of members of the ethnic immigrant community to the local police force should be encouraged.
- e. Community leaders and members should be informed and educated about the U.S. criminal justice system, including police roles and mandates, the structure of the system, its procedures, principles of pre-trial release and detention, adjudication, sentencing, and appeals. Specific areas such as juvenile justice, domestic violence, child abuse, or trafficking should be included when relevant. Research on underlying risk factors should investigate both the lumping and splitting of risk factors (as well as protective factors) with respect to particular threats, including violent extremism and trafficking in persons, as well as other prevalent risks to youth well-being, such as involvement in criminal gangs.

### **2. Recommendations to Strengthen Community Practices:**

- a. Prevention programs should not be stand-alone programs for either violent extremism or trafficking in persons because they are likely to either be redundant, confusing, or stigmatizing to the communities being served, and are unlikely to achieve sufficient community buy-in to be sustainable.

- b. Community-based prevention programs should be built with an overall frame that is informed by a public health approach, and which includes general prevention and addresses both common and selected risks for violent extremism and trafficking in persons (Weine et al., 2016). These programs should also address other upstream prevalent risks to youth well-being, including other forms of targeted violence, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors and should seek to strengthen protective factors related to families, mosques, and other community groups and organizations.
- c. Social and economic opportunities among Somali-Americans and other adversely impacted ethnic and racial communities should be pursued and developed, so as to diminish the impact of push and pull factors towards violent extremism and trafficking in persons, as well as other prevalent risks to youth well-being
- d. Programmatic emphasis on gangs among ethnic and racial minority communities should be increased and expanded, including implementing proven gang related, violence prevention models
- e. Journalists and media outlets reporting on ethnic and religious minorities and crimes should report objectively, with fairness and balance, and be prudent in not providing knowingly or unwittingly negative portrayals of a group or community.
- f. Research on communities and possible involvement in or resilience to violent extremism and/or trafficking should have significant community collaboration.

## REFERENCES

- Aby-Keristead, M. (2016). Somali community and anti-war activists blast harsh sentences of Omar, Daud, and Farah. *Fight Back News*. Retrieved from <http://www.fightbacknews.org/2016/11/16/somali-community-and-anti-war-activists-blast-harsh-sentences-omar-daud-and-farah-0>
- Aghatise, E. (2004). Trafficking for prostitution in Italy possible effects of government proposals for legalization of brothels. *Violence against women*, 10(10), 1126-1155.
- Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. 2004. Somali Youth in the Context of Schooling in Metropolitan Helsinki: A Framework for Assessing Variability in Educational Performance. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30:81-106.
- Aslanian, S. (2010). Prostitution ring suspects argue for release. *The Current*. Retrieved from <http://www.thecurrent.org/feature/2010/11/10/somali-prostitution-fofo>
- Aslanian, S. and Yuen, L. (2010). Indictment: Somali gangs ran sex ring in 3 states. MPR News. Retrieved from <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2010/11/08/somali-prostitution-ring>
- Barchenger, S. (2016). Appeals court blazes Somali gang sex-trafficking case. *Tennessean*. Retrieved from <http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2016/03/03/appeals-court-blasts-somali-gang-sex-trafficking-case/81249316/>
- Belz, A. (2015). Women drive success of Somali mall in Minneapolis. *Star Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/women-drive-success-of-somali-mall-in-minneapolis/323386601/>
- Beyrer, C. (2001). Shan women and girls and the sex industry in Southeast Asia; political causes and human rights implications. *Social Science & Medicine*, 53(4), 543-550.
- Borum, R. (2011). Radicalization into violent extremism: A review of social science theories. *Journal of Strategic Security* , 4 (4) 7 -36 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.4.4.1>
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage.
- City of Minneapolis. 2009a. Cedar-Riverside Population - Minneapolis Neighborhood Profile.
- Clawson, H. J., Dutch, N., Solomon, A., & Grace, L. G. (2009). Human trafficking into and within the United States: A review of the literature. *Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, US Department of Human and Health Services*. Retrieved December, 25, 2009.

- Connor, T. (2016). Sentences in Minnesota ISIS case run from time served to 35 years. *NBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/sentences-minnesota-isis-case-run-time-served-35-years-n685011>
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC medical research methodology*, *11*(1), 100.
- Denoeux, C., and Carter, L. (2009). Guides to the drivers of violent extremism. USAID. Retrieved from [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pnadt978.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadt978.pdf)
- Dickson, Louise (2011) "Revival of the Civic Spirit: Contradictions in Somali-American Citizenship," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*: Vol. 11, Article 13. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.mcalester.edu/bildhaan/vol11/iss1/13>.
- Dyssegaard Kallick, D. and Mathema, Silva (2016) Refugee Integration in the United States. Center for American Progress, June. Accessed on November 21, 2016 at <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/15112912/refugeeintegration.pdf>
- Eckholm, E. (2010). Somalis in Twin Cities shaken by charges of sex trafficking. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/24/us/24gang.html>
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 352-550.
- Elliott, A. (2009). A call to Jihad, answered in America. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/us/12somalis.html>
- Erez, E., Weimann, G., & Weisburd, A. (2011). Jihad, Crime and the Internet: Content Analysis of Jihadist Forum Discussions. *Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice in fulfillment of requirements for Award*, (2006-IJ).
- Farah, A., Muchie, M., & Gundel, J. (2007). *Somalia*. Adonis & Abbey Publishers Limited.
- Forliti, A. (2016). Surrounded by positives, young Somali chose Islamic State. *Associated Press*. Retrieved from <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/5e567bc68a5847fc82d4f02ebd492f3e/surrounded-positives-young-somali-chose-islamic-state>
- Friese, S. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS. ti*. Sage.
- Gjermeni, E., Van Hook, M. P., Gjipali, S., Xhillari, L., Lungu, F., & Hazizi, A. (2008). Trafficking of children in Albania: Patterns of recruitment and reintegration. *Child abuse & neglect*, *32*(10), 941-948.

- Gonzalez, T. (2015). Nashville Somalis worry how to get money back home. *The Tennessean*. Retrieved from <http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2015/03/07/nashville-somalis-worry-wiring-money-back-home/24517503/>
- Gottfredson, M., & Hirschi, T. (1986). The true value of lambda would appear to be zero: An essay on career criminals, criminal careers, selective incapacitation, cohort studies, and related topics. *Criminology*, 24(2), 213-234.
- Gottfried, M. (2016). St. Paul, Cop sued for \$12M over discredited sex-trafficking case. Twin Cities Pioneer Press. Retrieved from <http://www.twincities.com/2016/04/07/st-paul-cop-sued-12-million-sex-trafficking-aquittal/>
- Grinberg, E, Prokupecz, S., Yan, H. (2016). Ohio State University: Attacker killed, 11 hospitalized after campus attack. *CNN*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/28/us/ohio-state-university-active-shooter/index.html>
- Grossman, A. (2015). Ohio man indicted on terror charges. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ohio-man-indicted-on-terror-charges-1429204856>
- Hamel, J. (with Dufour, S., & Fortin, D.). (1993). *Case study methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Hirsi, I. 2009a. "Cedar-Riverside Sees Drop in Assaults, Break-ins." *Minnesota Daily*, February 3.
- Horst, C. 2006. *Connected Lives. Somalis in Minneapolis: Family Responsibilities and the Migration Dreams of Relatives*. Geneva.
- Hughes, D. M., & Roche, C. (1999). Making the Harm Visible: Global Sexual Exploitation of Women and Girls Speaking Out and Providing... *Women's International Network News*, 25(3), 40-41.
- Jaranson, J. M., J. Butcher, L. Halcón, D.R. Johnson, C. Robertson, K. Savik, et al. 2004. Somali and Oromo Refugees: Correlates of Torture and Trauma History. *American Journal of Public Health* 94:591-598.
- Johnson, S. (2016). Somali-Minnesota terror recruitment: What I saw at the trial. *StarTribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/somali-minnesota-terror-recruitment-what-i-saw-at-the-trial/383038331/>
- Jones, L., Engstrom, D. W., Hilliard, T., & Diaz, M. (2007). Globalization and human trafficking. *J. Soc. & Soc. Welfare*, 34, 107.
- Joose, P., Bucerius S. M., and Sara K. Thompson S. K. (2015) Narratives and Counternarratives: Somali-Canadians on Recruitment as Foreign Fighters to Al-Shabaab. *British Journal of Criminology*, 55 (4), 811-832

- Jordan, M. and Kesling, B. (2015). Mother of ISIS recruit suspect voices shock, disbelief. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-somali-community-disbelief-and-outrage-at-terror-arrests-1429799826>
- Kaptejns, L. and A. Arman. 2008. Educating Immigrant Youth in the United States: An Exploration of the Somali Case. *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 4, 18-43.
- Kasper, E., P. Fleck, and L. Gardner. 2009. Engaging Somali Young Adults in Cedar-Riverside: Opportunities for Programming and Collaboration. Humphrey Institute, CHANCE Capstone.
- Kelly, L. (2004). The perils of inclusion and exclusion: International debates on the status of trafficked women as victims. *International Review of Victimology*, 11(1), 33-47.
- Kempf-Leonard, K. (1987) Specialization and the Criminal Career," *Criminology*, 25 (2), 399-420.
- Kusow, A.M. and S.R. Bjork. 2007. From Mogadishu to Dixon: The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context. Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc.
- Laughland, O. (2016). Somali Americans divided as FBI informant testifies against friends. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/27/somali-americans-trial-isis-fbi-informant-minneapolis>
- Leet-Otley, J.M. (2012). The spirit and strength of Somali youth in America. Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the graduate school of the University of Minnesota. Retrieved from [https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/144221/1/LeetOtley\\_umn\\_0130E\\_13348.pdf](https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/144221/1/LeetOtley_umn_0130E_13348.pdf)
- Lissarrague, J. (2016a). Day 13. Emotional day in court ends, prosecution expected to rest case Thursday. *KSTP-TV, ABC Eyewitness News*. Retrieved from <http://kstp.com/news/minnesota-terror-trial-islamic-state-warsame/4149202/>
- Lissarrague, J. (2016b). Jury seated in Minnesota terror trial; Opening statements planned Wednesday. *KSTP-TV, ABC Eyewitness News*. Retrieved from <http://kstp.com/news/minnesota-terror-trial-islamic-state/4133524/>
- Maruf, H., and Mahamud, A.H. (2016). 3 Somali-Americans guilty of conspiring to help IS. *Voice of America*. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/minnesota-just-three-somali-americans-verdict/3360748.html>
- McBrien, J.L. 2011. The Importance of Context: Vietnamese, Somali, and Iranian Refugee Mothers Discuss Their Resettled Lives and Involvement in Their Children's Education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 41.1:75-90.

- McCandless, B. (2016). Somali Americans: Searching for identity, finding ISIS. *60 Minutes*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/60-minutes-somali-americans-searching-for-identity-finding-isis/>
- McKelvey, T. (2016). Terrorism trial highlights US deradicalization effort. *BBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36336419>
- Miklaucic, N. and Brewer, J (2013) *Convergence: Illicit Networks and National Security in the Age of Globalization*. National Defense University Press  
<http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/convergence.pdf>
- Miklaucic, M., Brewer, J., & Stavridis, J. G. (2013). *Convergence: illicit networks and national security in the age of globalization*. Government Printing Office.
- Minneapolis City Council. (2017). City Council, Ward 6: About Abdi Warsame. Retrieved from <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ward6/about-warsame>
- Mone, J. (2011). As Somali gangs evolve, so does law enforcement. *USA Today*. Retrieved from [https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-06-Somali-gangs\\_N.htm#mainstory](https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-02-06-Somali-gangs_N.htm#mainstory)
- Montemayor, S. (2016). Jury selected in ISIL trial; opening statements to come Wednesday. *StarTribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/juror-bias-surfaces-again-in-day-two-of-prep-for-minnesota-isil-trial/378846641/>
- Murphy, J. (2007). Feds allege Ohio mall terror plot. *CBS News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/feds-allege-ohio-mall-terror-plot/>
- Murphy, S., (2016). Paid FBI informant takes the stand in terror trial. *CBS Minnesota*. Retrieved from <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2016/05/18/informant-testimony-terror-trial/>
- National Institute of Justice (2015) *Radicalization and Violent Extremism: Lessons Learned From Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.* Arlington, July 28-30, 2015, NCJ 249947
- National Institute of Justice (2016). Improving the investigation and prosecution of state and local human trafficking cases. Retrieved from <http://nij.gov/topics/crime/human-trafficking/pages/improving-investigation-and-prosecution-of-human-trafficking-cases.asp>
- Nderu, E. 2005. *Somali Families and Parent Involvement in Schools*. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA).

- Ohio Department of Public Safety. (date unknown). A guide to Somali culture: An educational initiative from the Community Engagement Office. Retrieved from <http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/hls0075.pdf>
- Okonofua, F. E., Ogbomwan, S. M., Alutu, A. N., Kufre, O., & Eghosa, A. (2004). Knowledge, attitudes and experiences of sex trafficking by young women in Benin City, South-South Nigeria. *Social science & medicine*, 59(6), 1315-1327.
- Picarelli, J. T. (2012) Osama bin Corleone? Vito the Jackal? Framing Threat Convergence Through an Examination of Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 24(2), 180-198.
- Reid, J. A. (2012). Exploratory review of route-specific, gendered, and age-graded dynamics of exploitation: Applying life course theory to victimization in sex trafficking in North America. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(3), 257-271.
- Ritter, E.J. (2016). Three Somali brothers from Middle Tennessee have served between two and four years in a federal jail. They have yet to face a jury: Sentenced without a trial. *Nashville Scene*. Retrieved from <http://www.nashvillescene.com/news/article/13062996/three-somali-brothers-from-middle-tennessee-have-served-between-two-and-four-years-in-a-federal-jail-they-have-yet-to-face-a-jury>
- Robertson, C. L., L. Halcon, K. Savik, D. Johnson, M. Spring, J. Butcher, J. Westermeyer, and J. Jaranson. 2006. Somali and Oromo Refugee Women: Trauma and Associated Factors. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 56: 577–587.
- Robillos, M. U. 2001. Somali Community Needs Assessment Project. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA).
- Rosenthal, J. (2016). Wrongly accused in sex-trafficking case sue St. Paul officers. *KSTP-TV, ABC News*. Retrieved from <http://kstp.com/news/wrongly-accused-sex-trafficking-case-sue-st-paul-officers/4133422/>
- Sandelowski, M. (2014). Unmixing Mixed-Methods Research. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 37(1), 3-8.
- Shelley, L.I. & Picarelli, J.T.(2005) Methods and motives: Exploring links between transnational organized crime and international terrorism. *Trends in Organized Crimes* 9: 52. doi:10.1007/s12117-005-1024-x
- Siskin, A., & Wyler, L. S. (2013). Trafficking in Persons: US policy and issues for Congress (CRS Report No. RL34317).
- Somali Community Association of Ohio. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.somaliohio.org/>



- START. (2016). Special edition: New data on foreign fighters. START, Report prepared for U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Office of University Programs and the National Institute of Justice, Department of Justice. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/news/special-edition-new-data-foreign-fighters>
- Tolan, C. (2016). What it's like when an ISIS investigation targets your friends and neighbors. *Fusion*. Retrieved from <http://fusion.net/what-its-like-when-an-isis-investigation-targets-your-f-1793856840/amp>
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2012). Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons: Tool 9.2 Addressing the root causes of trafficking. Retrieved from [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit-files/08-58296\\_tool\\_9-2.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit-files/08-58296_tool_9-2.pdf)
- United States of American Department of States. (2012). The 2012 Trafficking in persons report. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192587.pdf>
- U.S. v. Idris Fahra, et al. No. 13-5122, 13-6391, 13-6422, M.D. of Tennessee (6<sup>th</sup> Cir., 2016). Retrieved from <http://www.opn.ca6.uscourts.gov/opinions.pdf/16a0121n-06.pdf>
- Usborne, D. (2015). ISIS in US: Minneapolis's Somali community in shock following arrest of a group of its young men for attempting to fly to Syria. *Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/minneapolis-somali-community-in-shock-following-arrest-of-a-group-of-its-young-men-for-attempting-10199829.html>
- Vijayarasa, R. (2012, February). The Cinderella syndrome: Economic expectations, false hopes and the exploitation of trafficked Ukrainian women. In *Women's studies international forum* (Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 53-62). Pergamon.
- Vu, L and Walters, N. (2013). Preparing immigrant students in Minnesota for higher education. Minnesota Office of Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/PreparingImmigrantStudentsMN.pdf>
- Weine, S., Eisenman, D. P., Kinsler, J., Glik, D. C., & Polutnik, C. (2016). Addressing violent extremism as public health policy and practice. *Behavioral sciences of terrorism and political aggression*, 9(3), 208-221.
- Weine, S. M., Levin, E., Hakizimana, L., & Dahnweih, G. (2012). How prior social ecologies shape family resilience amongst refugees in US resettlement. In *The social ecology of resilience* (pp. 309-323). Springer New York.
- Weine, S, and Ahmed, O. (2012). "Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul," Final Report to Human Factors/Behavioral Sciences Division, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. College Park, MD: START.

- Wereschagin, M. (2015). Somali community in Minnesota confronts lure of Islamic radicals. *Trib Live*. Retrieved from <http://triblive.com/news/adminpage/8489172-74/somali-bihi-minneapolis>
- Wheaton, E. M., Schauer, E. J., & Galli, T. V. (2010). Economics of human trafficking. *International Migration*, 48(4), 114-141.
- Xaykaothao, D. (2015). Somali moms and dad gather to combat terror recruitment. *MPR News*. Retrieved from <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/10/16/somali-parents-terror-recruiting>
- Xaykaothao, D. (2016). Omar wins MN House seat; nation's first Somali-American lawmaker. *MPRNews*. Retrieved from <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/11/08/first-us-somali-lawmaker-ilhan-omar-elected-mn-house>
- Yuen, L., and Aslanian, S. (2013) Minnesota pipeline to al Shabaab. *MPR News*. Retrieved from [http://minnesota.publicradio.org/projects/ongoing/somali\\_timeline/](http://minnesota.publicradio.org/projects/ongoing/somali_timeline/)
- Yuen, L., Ibrahim, M., and Xaykaothao, D. (2016). Latest: ISIS trial in Minnesota. *MPR News*. Retrieved from <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/05/09/isis-trial-minnesota-updates>
- Zamora, K. (2016). Charges dismissed against remaining defendants in sex-trafficking case that led to St. Paul officer's sanctions. *StarTribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.startribune.com/charges-dismissed-against-remaining-defendants-in-multistate-sex-trafficking-case/371459101/>

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Stevan Weine, the PI, is a psychiatrist who conducts a program of research designed to understand and help refugees and migrants, with continuous federal funding as Principal Investigator since 1998. Over 80 manuscripts from Dr. Weine's program of research have been published or are in press. Dr. Weine's program of research has focused on building resilience to counter violent extremism among Somali-Americans because it is a priority public policy issue not being comprehensively investigated. Dr. Weine's research has also focused on sex workers and trafficking in Central Asia. The findings from that study lead directly to the current study's focus on understanding the role of community engagement and partnership in implementing the SIP.

Edna Erez, the co-PI, is Professor of Criminology, Law, and Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her areas of expertise include victimization of immigrant populations including battered immigrant women, sex trafficking victimization, and terrorism. Professor Erez received about two million dollars in grants from state and federal agencies in the U.S. and overseas, and has published over 100 scholarly articles, book chapters and reports. Dr. Erez is past editor of *Justice Quarterly*, and is currently co-editor of *International Review of Victimology*, and associate editor of *Violence and Victims*. She has served on multiple review panels of NIJ in the areas of violence against women, victims, radicalization, and comparative criminology.

Chloe Polutnik is a Research Coordinator in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She received an MPH with a global health concentration in the Community Health Sciences Division from the University of Illinois at Chicago in May 2012. Her work focuses on refugees and migrants, community resilience, prevention and intervention, radicalization, and HIV transmission. She has expertise in qualitative data collection and analysis, ethnography, scientific writing, and mixed methods.