Abstract

This thesis presents a preliminary explorative study on resilience against radicalization within the U.S. military, aiming to contribute to the knowledge base for policies, training programs, and interventions. The decline in research on this topic post-9/11 is juxtaposed with the acute threat of domestic violent extremism highlighted by the Capitol insurrection in January 2021.

Drawing on social theories and psychological approaches, the research explores risk and protective factors associated with military service. The data is collected through two in-depth interviews with former U.S. military personnel. The dual-method analysis, combining deductive and inductive reasoning, provides a comprehensive understanding of resilience mechanisms and strategies employed by ex-military personnel taking into account limitations, ethical considerations.

Empirical findings highlight the impact of deployment, the importance of military bonds, and the challenges of transitioning to civilian life. Cognitive rigidity, isolation, loss of benefits, and reverse cultural shock emerge as potential contributors to radicalization. The study emphasizes the critical role of community support and cognitive adaptability in fostering resilience against radicalization.

The thesis underscores the need for a nuanced exploration of risk and protective factors specifically tailored to the military context. Also, it advocates for further multidisciplinary research, focusing on the specifics of military experiences and proposing actionable recommendations for policy and training improvements.

Keywords