



SACRED SOLDIERS

Identifying the Cause(s) of Muslim Violent Extremism:
Developing a theoretical framework for a credible intervention programme.



1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim violent extremism is on the rise. The 7/7 tube bombings in London devastated the nation's capital. A series of terrorist attacks have followed, conducted primarily by Muslims purporting to act in the name of Islam. One of the most notorious attacks occurred on the streets of Woolwich. Similarly 11 men from Birmingham were recently convicted of planning to blow up the Birmingham Bull Ring.



2. EXISTING RESEARCH

Muslim violent extremism has been attributed to a lack of credible Islamic understanding. However the plethora of theologically charged radical Muslim rhetoric suggests otherwise. Political narrative and Muslim identity crises have also been attributed. Others have argued 'persuasion' is utilised to secure and increase participant membership. Despite these varied opinions, the causes remain largely unknown.



3. CURRENT SOLUTIONS

Operation Contest

'The Channel Project'. Intervention programme to curb violent extremism at its earliest stages.

Problems

Effectiveness, Credibility, Ambiguity, Perception.



4. MY RESEARCH

- Examines violent extremist narrative.
- Identifies theological points within the narrative.
- Establishes points of theological convergence.
- Establishes the influence of theology in self sacrifice.
- Introduces a cognitive behavioural aspect to ascertain the impact of theological stimuli on the decision making process with a view to developing a credible intervention programme.



5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS & APPROACH

1. What are the theological points in extremist Muslim narrative?
2. How does the theology influence cognitive behaviour?

- How?**
- Analysis of violent extremist narrative & speeches.
 - Ethnographic study.
 - Unstructured interviews with convicted UK terror suspects.



6. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Save lives.
- Inform governmental counter terrorism policy.
- Development of counter terrorism intervention programmes.
- Promote social cohesion.
- Reduce anti Muslim hate crime following a terrorist incident.



REFERENCES

Al-Qardawi, 1991. *Between Rejection and Extremism*. USA: International Institute of Islamic Thought.
 Croft, S. M. C., 2010. The evolution of threat narratives in the age of terror: understanding terrorist threats in Britain. *Journal of International Affairs*, 86(4), pp. 821-835.
 Wiktorowicz, Q., 2005. *Radical Islam rising in the West*. Oxford: Rowman & Litterfield Publishers Inc.