

Sacred Soldiers

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Abstract:

Muslim violent extremism has claimed the lives of countless individuals. The phenomenon has spread across the world and seems only to be gathering pace.

The cause(s) of Muslim violent extremism have been the subject of much research. As a result, programmes to counteract this radical threat and safeguard communities from the risk of mass violence have been developed and applied. One would argue this has been done so on a seemingly trial and error basis; as the repercussions of current intervention programmes have only sought to stigmatise and isolate Muslim communities.

This study seeks to understand the cause(s) of Muslim violent extremism by conducting a narrative analysis of the rhetoric employed by violent extremists. The purpose is to identify theological arguments of radical recruiters and isolate points of convergence across different extremist groups. In order to do so speeches of influential terrorist leaders will be analysed. Convicted UK terror suspects will also be interviewed in order to identify similarities in narrative. Theological aspects of respective narratives will then be subject to understanding their potential impact upon cognitive behaviour and if theological stimuli influences individual actions.

The research findings will contribute towards developing a theoretical framework for a credible intervention programme.