Actors and Narratives

Disciplinary Expertise

The team spans two main disciplines – political science and psychology
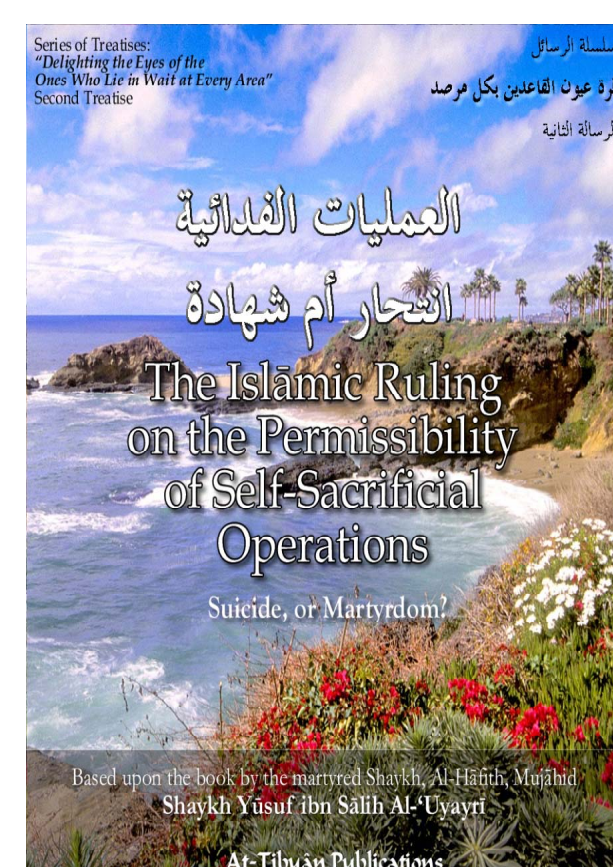
Key themes
- Ideological Variance and Cultures of Violence
- Risk Assessment including Criminal and Psychological Pathways to Extremism
- Innovation and Creativity in Clandestine Political Groups
- Icons and Symbols in Extremism
- The Emotional Appeal of Extremist Narratives

Cerwyn Moore

Analysing the emotional appeal of extremist narratives
- Analysis of the ways in which extremist groups deploy narrative.
- Assessment of the emotional appeal – particularly in leadership statements – of extremism.
- Preliminary analysis of hostile actors and networks (foreign fighter networks in Syria and Iraq; State Threats such as Russia).
- The research will be of use to practitioners dealing with online extremism and foreign fighter networks. The analysis may also be of use to those dealing with state threats.

The Team

Cerwyn Moore – PI
Monica Lloyd – Co-I
Derek Averre – Co-I
Mark Youngman – Doctoral Researcher
Chris Barry – Doctoral Researcher
Paul Grasby – Honorary Professor
Outputs include: academic articles, reports and video interviews.

Monica Lloyd

Risk assessment including criminogenic and psychological pathways to extremism
- Deepening knowledge of the tools and approaches to Risk Assessment through the analysis of data. The research will help to validate tools and understand the application of effective measures.
- Analysis of mental health issues and extremism.
- Analysis criminal pathways into extremism.
- The research will be of use to frontline professionals involved in assessing risk and those involved in preventative CT measures. It will also help validate methods for assessing psychological and criminological variables.

Innovation and creativity in clandestine networks
- Analysis of variables that influence the adoption of innovation in the use of a particular method.
- Assessment of the ways in which changed security environments may result in innovation adoption.
- The research will be of use to practitioners seeking to influence and disrupt networks and those involved in analysis of lone-actors. The research will provide a synthesis of existing work, the validation of methods to assess innovation, and the analysis of new data.

Mark Youngman

Ideological variance and cultures of violence
- Analysis of foreign-language (Russian) leadership statements and communiques.
- Analysis of ideological change over-time.
- Analysis of video and audio addresses in context.
- This will help validate methods of analysis of foreign-language sources. The research will also be of use for those seeking to understand online and offline extremism, how core core narrative is interpreted in light of the conflict in Syria, and Russian-speaking extremism more generally.

Chris Barry

How do extremist groups and movements deploy symbols and communicate messages?
- Creation of a database of extremist images.
- Analysis of the significance of symbols, icons and motifs.
- Assessing the communicative messaging and reception of particular images and symbols.
- The research will help validate a method for assessing icons and symbols. It will also help those seeking to establish trust in both offline and online settings, those seeking to uncover or disrupt covert messaging, and the database will help support those working in active investigations.