

# Understanding American Muslim Converts in The Contexts of Society and Security



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## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

- This is a 3-year, interdisciplinary research collaboration to build and analyze a large dataset of the religious experiences of Muslim converts in the United States, and to explore how and where religious conversion intersects with radicalization.
- It is funded by the Minerva Research Initiative (<http://minerva.dtic.mil>).

## THE PROBLEM

- For reasons that are currently unknown, Muslim converts play a disproportionate role in violent extremism. Converts are statistically overrepresented in violent extremism and are in fact many times more likely to radicalize than people “born” Muslim.

## OUR RESEARCH

- Throughout 2016, we will collect and analyze ethnographic and statistical survey data on approximately 250 Muslim converts in the general population of United States.
- Beginning in 2017, using the same surveys and interviews, we will interview Muslim converts serving prisons sentences for terrorism-related offences.
- We will also collect archival data on these individuals from a number of secondary sources, such as media accounts and court documents to reconstruct their conversion experiences.
- To these data we will apply a range of analytical approaches and compare the conversion processes of participants to understand the range of causes and processes of Islamic conversion and convert radicalization.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Our project seeks to reduce suspicion and prejudice surrounding converts by offering evidence-based understanding of the causes and processes of Islamic conversion and in doing so, improving public knowledge.
- We will also build a predictive statistical model to help understand convert radicalization.

## PROJECT TEAM

- Professor John Horgan (PI): Georgia State University
- Dr. Scott Flower (Co-PI): Global Centre of Research and Engagement (GCORE)
- Mr. Scott Kleinmann: Georgia State University
- Dr. David Malet: University of Melbourne
- Dr. Gentry White: Queensland University of Technology