

PREVENTING

Managing the Exit of Incarcerated Violent Extremists in the Community Handbook

PI: Erin Kearns (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



With a goal of minimizing both recidivism in general and reengagement with violent extremism, the researchers' main objective is to develop a handbook that will be shared with relevant stakeholders involved with the federal and local criminal justice systems.

Barriers to Family Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) of Mobilization Behaviors

PI: Karyn Sporer (University of Maine)



This project focuses on family members of violent extremists and the role that they can play in targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP), as well as how DHS and other TVTP entities can leverage community partnerships to help prevent violent extremism. The researchers contribute to existing knowledge through in-depth interviews with family members, and will use these results for research briefs, academic manuscripts, presentations, and training modules for the federal government.

Reintegrating the Returning Families of Foreign Terrorism Fighters – Grant from S&T

PI: Austin Doctor (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project identifies and promotes best practices for reintegrating foreign terrorist fighter families back into their home countries.

Public Safety and Violence Prevention Evaluations – BOA Task Order from S&T

PI: Sam Hunter (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project creates materials outlining best practices for prevention and intervention using lessons from the United Kingdom, law enforcement, and assessment of emerging and insider threats.

Public Safety Violence Prevention – BOA Task Order from S&T

PI: Matt Allen (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project will evaluate DHS-funded local prevention programs that try to help communities, nonprofits, and other institutions prevent targeted violence and terrorism. The research team will also create tools to assist with future evaluation activities.

UNDERSTANDING

Understanding Malevolent Creativity and Malign Application of Emerging Technology: How AI, the Metaverse, and Gaming Intersect

PIs: Sam Hunter (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Joel Elson (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Scarlett Miller (Pennsylvania State University)



This project explores how emerging technologies could be used by extremists, focusing primarily on artificial intelligence (AI) and extended/mixed reality in the *metaverse*. The research team, made up of experts in psychology, technology, engineering, and design, aims to understand how these technologies shape terrorists' creative thinking.

Ideological Influence and Radicalization in Online Microblog Platforms

PI: Matthew Jensen (University of Oklahoma)



This project explores online messaging strategies and how they may be used to either promote or counter extremist rhetoric. The research team is examining messaging strategies on publicly accessible platforms like Twitter to understand how extremist groups build an audience among "neutral" observers.

Workshop and Report on Research Challenges in Combating Terrorist Use of Explosives in the United States – BOA Task Order from CISA OBP

PI: Austin Doctor (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project will identify priorities for countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) through applied scientific efforts amid an ever-changing and dynamic threat environment.

Understanding Threats to Public Officials

PI: Pete Simi (Chapman University)



This project will enhance the understanding of a broader trend in the United States towards polarization and normalization of threats of violence. The research team will collect data on U.S. federal cases of threats targeting public officials and seek to evaluate the level of support for political violence among the U.S. public.

How Organizational Dynamics in a Multi-Actor Environment Shape Terrorist Threats and CT Responses

PIs: Martha Crenshaw (Stanford University), Kaitlyn Robinson (Rice University)



This effectiveness of counter-extremism and counterterrorism policies can depend on understanding the characteristics of adversarial organizations – their leadership structure, relations with a local community, choice of tactics and targets, and origin story. It’s also vital to know how groups interact with each other. This research project describes a host of violent extremist organizations and maps their activities across the globe in a new website, reports, and journal articles.

Screening for Insider Threats in U.S. Law Enforcement: A National Representative Sample of Department Policies & Practices – Grant from S&T

PI: Erin Kearns (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



The main objective is to better understand current policies and procedures to screen for and identify insider threats in the law enforcement hiring process and among active officers.

How Organizational Psychology Can Contribute to a Deeper Understanding of the Evolving DVE Landscape

PI: Sam Hunter (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project will apply industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology to the emerging domestic extremism landscape, aiming to understand how people are drawn to and operate within extremist groups in the U.S.

Understanding the Link between the Recruitment and Operational Behavior of Terrorist Organizations

PI: Evan Perkoski (University of Connecticut)



This research project aims to enhance our knowledge of terrorist organizations’ recruitment tactics and how those tactics affect a group’s violent behavior. Characteristics of recruits will be compared against group capabilities.

Examining the Functional Relationship between Violent Extremist Ideologies and Conspiracy Theories

PI: Paul Gill (University College London)



This project examines the prevalence of conspiracy theories within the United States, their connection to violent extremism, and how they evolve over the course of a presidential election cycle. It will also explore the linguistic strategies used to normalize conspiracy theories on social media.

Non-Terrorism Charges for Domestic Terrorism Investigations

PI: Seamus Hughes (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project is focused on tracking terrorism investigations that result in non-terrorism related charges. It seeks to better understand the ways the U.S. justice system uses non-terrorism related charges to prosecute ideologically motivated violent extremism, highlighting how prosecutorial decisions affect policy and resource allocation for intelligence and law enforcement.

Current and Emerging Malign Use of Geospatial Technologies to Threaten Critical Infrastructure and Crowded Targets

PI: Austin Doctor (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project explores how increasingly accessible geospatial technology can be employed by terrorists to launch attacks against critical infrastructure and crowded targets. The interdisciplinary research team seeks to provide a forecast for how these technologies could be used so that authorities can better respond to emerging threats.

INNOVATING

Innovation in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention: Developing and Testing an Intelligent Chatbot to Help Individuals Identify Threats and Improve Tips Reporting – Grant from CP3



PIs: Joel Elson (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Erin Kearns (University of Nebraska at Omaha)

The goal of this project is to improve the tips reporting process to minimize breakdowns in actions required to prevent terrorism and targeted violence. The proposed innovation project will create and test a chatbot for tips reporting that can be used either as a stand-alone tool or be integrated into existing tips reporting platforms.

Assessing the Benefits of Simulations and War Games for Homeland Security Enterprise Workforce Development



PI: David Schanzer (Duke University)

This project seeks to improve workforce development for the homeland security enterprise through the development, deployment, and evaluation of homeland security-focused strategic simulations.

Anticipating Terrorist Technology Adoption to Secure the Homeland (ATTASH)



PI: Gary Ackerman (SUNY University at Albany)

Using the latest threat assessment methods, this project seeks to understand what emerging technologies extremist groups may start using.

Understanding the Transition from Political Discourse to Election-Motivated Violent Extremism



PI: Adan Vela (University of Central Florida)

Using a combination of interviews with election officials and sentiment analysis of social media sites, this project intends to understand where the tipping point from election-related discourse to election-motivated violence occurs.

STRENGTHENING

Psychological Trauma in Terrorism Research

PI: Matthew Crayne (SUNY University at Albany)



This project seeks to identify the types of psychological trauma that terrorism researchers experience and determine how widespread trauma is among the workforce. It also seeks to identify risk factors and explain the impact of trauma on performance and retention.

The Needs of the Counterterrorism Workforce and the Utility of Existing Datasets

PI: Michael Logan (Kennesaw State University)



The project will draw from the academic literature and information collected from counterterrorism analysts to identify the most up-to-date datasets that the Department of Homeland Security can provide its counterterrorism workforce. Additionally, the project will administer a “needs and barriers” survey to counterterrorism analysts to capture information on data-related limitations, needs, and best practices for using the data for mission need.

Building Capacity in HSE-Focused Business Analysis Application

PI: Erin Bass (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



In this project, researchers leverage UNO’s business school curriculum to develop student-centered projects that address real-time, real-world challenges for the Department of Homeland Security. Researchers are partnering with DHS practitioners in project-based courses in the MBA and Data Analytics programs. Additionally, the research team has developed a homeland security-focused Business Analytics Graduate Certificate to work on DHS end-user challenges as part of the course curriculum.

Building Capacity at Minority Serving Institutions

PIs: Eric Frost (San Diego State University), Lance Larson (San Diego State University)



This project is focused on educating the future national security workforce through San Diego State University’s Graduate Program in Homeland Security. It will create clear transitions to DHS through course content, coursework, and workshops. This year, the project will specifically focus on the fentanyl and synthetic drug epidemic, with coursework examining how the problem intersects with terrorism and targeted violence.

Vicarious Trauma in Counterterrorism Practitioners

PIs: Joseph Young (American University),
Daisy Muibu (National Defense University)



This project will develop a baseline understanding of how practitioners are affected by exposure to violence and will outline the implications this may have on the homeland security workforce.

Threat Assessment and Management Teamwork: Collaborative Capabilities, Barriers, and Resourcing Needs

PI: Tin Nguyen (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



This project will explore how to get interdisciplinary teams across various sectors to work most effectively together.

International Academic Partnerships for Science and Security

PIs: Gina Ligon (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Stacey Conchie
(Lancaster University)



This project will build an international knowledge exchange program to enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange between the U.S., U.K., and other international partners through a seminar series, an annual meeting, and an online magazine, plus the creation of Ph.D. scholarships and internship placements.

Providing Resilience to Individuals Examining Difficult Content for Their Work – Efficacy of Peer Support Programming

PIs: Joseph Young (American University)
Daisy Muibu



This study will conduct a systematic review of the literature on peer support programs that exist for law enforcement and the counterterrorism workforce to understand their effectiveness for working professionals.

NTER Office Initiatives

PI: Andrea Walker (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



NTER seeks the help of NCITE to evaluate the effectiveness of the Master Trainer Program and offer recommendations for enhancing outcomes for Certified Master Trainers. This project will assess the effectiveness of the Master Trainer Program and provide recommendations for future training and evaluation. Additionally, it will support NTER's efforts to develop knowledge about Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management program setup and implementation.