

Abstract

QAnon has become a prominent domestic security threat in recent years due to the involvement of its supporters in violent terrorist and criminal acts. Numerous QAnon supporters participated in the 2021 U.S. Capitol Storming and the 2022 Freedom Convoys in Canada, committing criminal violent and non-violent acts. When analysing these events, researchers have observed that numerous QAnon supporters have been influenced by religious and spiritual beliefs, emphasising the importance of QAnon's religious dimensions and their impact on individuals' radicalisation. However, academics have not explored such religious dimensions by drawing upon the body of literature from the field of religious studies, thus overlooking core facets of QAnon's religious dimensions. By conducting an empirically driven research based on the collection and analysis of QAnon religious imagery downloaded from QAnon-related Telegram channels, this dissertation aims to analyse QAnon's religious dimensions and hypothesise about the potential impact of religious extremism on its affiliates' propensity to violence. The visual analysis conducted by applying both semiotics and hermeneutics to QAnon religious imagery shows that QAnon can be labelled as a Christian extremist movement that shares commonalities with the religious phenomena of Christian Identity and Liberation Theology. Extremist Christian theology can enhance radicalisation of QAnon supporters by legitimising and justifying the use of violence to achieve religious and socio-political objectives.