

50 Un- and Under-researched Topics in the Field of (Counter-) Terrorism Studies

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Introduction

The *Terrorism Research Initiative* seeks to stimulate individual and collaborative research on terrorism and other forms of political violence that threatening human security. While some topics are ‘fashionable’ and obtain an extraordinary amount of attention (e.g. CBRN threats, radicalization, suicide terrorism, jihadist terrorism) other (sub-) topics are un- or under-researched.

In order to stimulate research, TRI presents this list of 50 un- and under-researched topics. Any individual or research group wishing to tackle one or another of these topics, is encouraged to register that with the research data bank of the Center for Terrorism and Counterterrorism of Leiden University’s The Hague Campus where an online inventory of ongoing and completed research is maintained. Check the website: <http://www.terrorismdata.leiden.edu/>

1. Terrorist audiences and their responses: cross-national and longitudinal comparisons of public opinion surveys regarding support of, and opposition to. terrorism;
 2. Measuring and evaluating counter-terrorism policies: methodologies and techniques;
 3. Unwanted and unexpected side- and boomerang (blowback) effects of counter-terrorism: ways to recognize and minimize them;
 4. Is there a disconnect between academic research on terrorism and the counter-terrorist intelligence community's knowledge (and knowledge requirements) regarding terrorism?;
 5. Review of national terrorism prevention programs and policies in a comparative perspective;
 6. De-mobilisation of guerrilla and terrorist groups: best practices and lessons learned;
 7. Non-violent popular revolt and Salafist Jihadism: competing paradigms for political change in the Islamic world;
 8. Conspiracy theories related to (counter-) terrorism: is there a need for countering them?
 9. Warning the public: responsible crisis communications prior, during and after terrorist attacks - lessons learned and best practices;
 10. Strengthening public resilience against terrorism: policies of individual states (e.g. Israel, Colombia, USA);
 11. New strategies for identifying and countering extremist ideologies on the Internet;
 12. Countering terrorism: is it possible to limit the role of government and strengthen the role of civil society?;
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13. Civil society and (counter-) terrorism: the role of NGOs in terrorism and counter-terrorism;
 14. Immigration, diasporas and terrorism: misperceptions, alleged and proven links;
 15. The responses of human rights organizations to human rights violations by terrorist groups.
 16. Counter-terrorism within the frameworks of human rights and humanitarian law requirements: upholding or updating international law standards?
 17. The UN CT strategy [GA Res. 60/288 (2006)]: where does the international community stand with its implementation?
 18. Terrorism and the Media, Terrorism and the Internet: cross-impacts and what can be done about them while upholding freedom of speech and expression?
 - 19.. Freedom of speech vs. incitement to terrorism: the response of the courts;
 20. Prevention of terrorism by intelligence and security services vs. prosecution and punishment of terrorists by law enforcement: dilemmas and solutions;
 21. The prosecution of terrorists in international comparison: national arrest, trial and conviction records compared;
 22. The grievances of terrorists: should they be taken seriously or are they just pretexts and justifications for violence?
 23. The terrorism - organized crime nexus: new insights and developments
 24. The delayed impact of the 2008 economic crisis on terrorism, political violence, armed conflict and non-violent protests;
 25. The rehabilitation of terrorists vs. the rehabilitation of common criminals in prison: recidivism records compared;
 26. Prisons: new ways of preventing and countering radicalization of prisoners and advancing rehabilitation of convicted offenders;
 27. Countering radicalisation and violent extremism in schools and religious institutions: evaluating existing programs;
 28. The shrinking space of citizen privacy: thinking about safeguards to prevent the development of surveillance societies in the name of counter-terrorism;
 29. Islamophobia and Antisemitism compared: between rhetorical weapons and legitimate grievances;
 30. Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Buddhists under attack for their faith: a quantitative comparison in the post-Cold War period – claims vs. facts;
 31. Differentiating between terrorism, other forms of political violence and human rights
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- violations: towards a more balanced approach to assessing armed conflict and repression;
32. Analyzing terrorist statements and internal writings: looking for cues regarding the expected utility of terrorism in terrorist thinking;
 33. Measuring the actual effectiveness of terrorism: findings from empirical research on the tactical and strategic outcomes of uses of terrorism;
 34. State human rights violations in response to terrorism – how widespread, how serious?;
 35. Kidnapping for ransom: the consequences of paying ransom and of refusals to pay.
 36. The messaging policies of Al-Qaeda, its affiliates and media jihadists:
analyzing communiqués and threat statements systematically
 37. Careers of ex-terrorists and their role in countering terrorism;
 38. Terrorists released from prison: subsequent careers;
 39. The targeting logic of terrorist attacks;
 40. The trajectory of terrorist campaigns in comparative perspective;
 41. The role of victim associations in court cases against terrorists;
 42. Websites associated with terrorist groups: an overview;
 43. Failed, foiled and completed attacks by Al-Qaeda, AQ affiliates and individual (would-be) associates: a consolidated overview;
 44. New legislation on terrorism: inventory, comparison and impact;
 45. The lethality of terrorism in comparison with criminal homicides, victimization by natural disasters, specific diseases, etc.: towards a realistic ranking of human risks;
 46. Pakistan: regional and global implications of potential state failure/collapse;
 47. Afghanistan: endgame scenarios and their regional and global implications;
 48. The Arab Awakening and its possible implications for terrorism and international counter-terrorism cooperation;
 49. Terrorist groups and political parties - same goals, different tactics: between cooperation and rivalry;
 50. The future of terrorism: regional trends, new developments, likely scenarios and worst (CBRN) cases.