

# A Roadmap for Research

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In the area of radicalisation and political violence, sweeping generalisations are no longer acceptable. New analytical tools and behavioral models of radicalisation and political violence have to be developed in order to enhance public policy. We need to better integrate information in order to ensure appropriate and timely access for researchers, policy makers and the public. And we have to provide educational programs which train the next generation of scholars and analysts.

Of special importance is the so-called 'life cycle' of individual terrorists and terrorist groups. A program of investigation needs to be aimed at better understanding its various components: the radicalisation and recruitment processes; the trajectory into violence; organisational and operational processes of terrorist groups; the conditions that may lead to the termination of individual participation in the terrorist group; and the eventual dissolution or destruction of terrorist groups.

Knowledge gained in these investigations can be used to generate analytical tools and best practices to assist policy makers in achieving the goals of awareness, anticipation, prevention, and detection of violent activities. Understanding these aspects will also provide the required background for investigations of the effects of radicalisation and political violence on individuals and societies.

Historical analysis, for example, can tell us what the record of modern terrorism means for the durability of contemporary Islamist terrorism. It may also help us to understand how terrorist groups achieve political control of states, and it will enable us to identify critical variables which contribute to the evolution of the temporal waves of terrorist groups.

Likewise, a specialised team of computer scientists, linguists and social and political scientists can analyse the empirical and theoretical roots of terrorism. They could also attempt to reconcile and collate different public data sets on international terrorism. Such data, coupled with modeling and simulation that uses unique and advanced game theoretic techniques, can then be used to predict where terrorism is likely to originate, where it is likely to occur and potentially how it might end.

The analysis of the motivations of individuals who join terrorist groups, on the other hand, can best be carried out in conjunction with field studies to investigate how and why individuals join specific terrorist organisations. Doing so will tell us about the methods and efficacy of terrorist propaganda, and how groups exploit education to propagate terrorist ideology and recruit new members.

There are ten specific issues that need intense study:

1. The impact of globalisation, education, economic, and political factors;
2. The impact of the media;
3. Characterisation and analysis of sociological functions affecting the group and its members;
4. Communication within and across radical networks;
5. Analysis of gate-keeping dynamics and multi-network membership roles;
6. Sensitivities and dependencies of networks to contextual and historical variables;
7. Understanding interactions with supporters, constituencies, target groups, and general populations;
8. Analysis of network topology stemming from the modes of formation of these networks;
9. How radical leaders generate ideas and make decisions establishing loyalty, trust, and ultimately, action;
10. The role of feeder groups in radicalising supporters and participants in terror and study the transition of terrorists from membership in the group to acts of violence.

Members of the *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Terrorism* (ICSR) have collaborated in developing this research agenda. Indeed, we believe that only an international as well as multidisciplinary team of leading experts (such as those represented in ICSR) will be able to realise this important agenda.