

UNVEILING THE UIC APPROACH: TOWARDS A NOVEL FRAMEWORK FOR RETHINKING THE DEFINITION AND IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORISM

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Abstract - This study explores a novel approach to defining terrorism, and evaluating its potential contributions and limitations. The objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept by analyzing its key features, motivations, and impact. The study proposes a new definition of terrorism that accounts for the complex and evolving nature of this phenomenon, building on the conceptual framework proposed by Prof. Alex Schmid and Prof. Ben Saul. By examining the key features, motivations, and effects of terrorism, the research seeks to offer a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the concept that can inform policy and practice. This innovative approach to defining terrorism will be evaluated in light of existing literature and empirical evidence, to advance the discourse on this critical issue. The findings of this research present a new definition of terrorism based on the UIC approach. The UIC approach has three basic components: (1) Understanding Terrorism, (2) Interests of Actors, and (3) Counterterrorism Policy & Implications. A comprehensive definition of terrorism will be provided using the approach introduced in the article.

Keywords: Counterterrorism; definition; terrorism; terrorist; UIC approach; violence

INTRODUCTION

The question of whether it is possible to arrive at a satisfactory definition of terrorism has been a recurring topic of debate in scholarly circles. Despite numerous attempts to define terrorism, a universally agreed-upon definition remains a persistent challenge in the field. This is largely due to the complex and multifaceted nature of the concept, which has been defined in various ways by different individuals, organizations, and governments. However, the most commonly accepted definition of terrorism is the deliberate use of violence or the threat of violence against non-combatant targets to create fear, intimidate, or coerce a government, organization, or society for political, ideological, or religious purposes. Political violence is considered the root cause of issues such as terrorism and violent conflicts worldwide (Esmailzadeh, 2020, p.347). It is important to note that not all acts of violence or political protest can be considered terrorism, and the classification of an act as terrorism often involves a subjective assessment of the perpetrator's motivations and intentions.

Alex Schmid (1984, pp.119-158) collected 109 different definitions of terrorism, indicating the difficulty of finding a universally accepted definition. Later, he stated that he could not offer a true or correct definition of terrorism and that terrorism is an abstract phenomenon for which there can be no essence that can be discovered or described. He further commented that authors have spilled almost as much ink as the actors of terrorism have spilled blood (Schmid and Jongman, 1988, p.xiii). Indeed, to date, academic standpoints remain highly diverse. When it comes to defining terrorism, some, like Walter Laqueur, seem to forgo analysis in favor of platitudes, believing that "all specific definitions of terrorism have their shortcomings simply because reality is always richer (or more complicated) than any generalization" (Laqueur, 1987, 145). For instance, Martha Crenshaw and others argue that a clear and precise definition of terrorism is necessary for effective policy-making and analysis (Crenshaw, 2011).

Despite these debates, it is widely acknowledged that terrorism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can take many different forms, from state-sponsored terrorism to lone-wolf



attacks. Understanding and effectively combating terrorism requires not only a clear definition but also a nuanced understanding of the various political, social, and economic factors that contribute to its emergence and persistence.

At least one reason for the disparity of definitions stems from the variety of objectives people have in defining terrorism. Lawyers urgently require definitions to prosecute and sanction 'terrorists', distinguishing terrorism in precise legal terms from other forms of crime. Social scientists aim to describe this phenomenon in a way that will enhance our sociological and psychological understanding of it and enable us to face this modern challenge more successfully (Waldron, 2004: 6). Heads of state and politicians often adopt definitions that serve their national, political, or ideological agendas. Naturally, they usually define terrorism as a form of violence carried out exclusively by non-state groups. As Primoratz (2004, p. xi) puts it: "Nobody applies the word to oneself or one's actions, nor that one has sympathy with or whose activities one supports" (Primoratz, 2004, p. xi).

Certainly, understanding the different ways of approaching the problem of defining terrorism is crucial for any fruitful discussion on this topic. Some common approaches include analyzing the historical context of terrorism, examining the psychology of fear and terror, comparing terrorism to other forms of political violence, focusing on the specific acts committed by terrorists, or examining the individuals who engage in such actions. These approaches offer unique insights into the phenomenon of terrorism and help to provide a more nuanced understanding of its complexities.

Schmid clarified the various aspects of defining terrorism in a recent study. He identified five basic approaches to defining terrorism, which are: 1) By focusing on the history of terrorism; 2) By focusing on the psychology of 'terror'; 3) By focusing on forms of political violence other than terrorist violence; 4) By focusing on the terrorist act; and 5) By focusing on the terrorist (Schmid, 2023, p.4). Undoubtedly, the 'politicization of terrorism' has adversely affected the established definitions of this term.

In this scientific article, I aim to provide a clear and comprehensive definition of terrorism. In contrast to broad and ambiguous definitions, which are often politically motivated and designed to excuse certain forms of terrorism, I advocate for a restrictive and critical definition that sets terrorism apart from other forms of political violence.

Through a thorough analysis of existing definitions, I have identified the core characteristics that define terrorism as a deliberate and violent strategy aimed at non-combatants and civilian objectives. This strategy disregards the principles of civilian immunity and discrimination in just war theory and is intended to create widespread fear to achieve political goals. While some minor differences exist among strict and critical definitions, they all share the common feature of isolating terrorism as a specific action category, regardless of its agent or cause. By focusing on the objectionable traits of terrorism, critical definitions acknowledge the derogatory nature of the term and avoid any suggestion of justifiability.

Additionally, this article aims to identify a new approach to overcome the challenge of defining terrorism by drawing on the scientific experiences of other thinkers and scientists who have attempted to define terrorism. This new approach will be introduced and named the 'UIC Approach'. The UIC approach, which stands for Understanding Terrorism, Interests of Actors, and Counterterrorism Policy & Implications, is a framework developed to analyze and address the complex issue of terrorism. This approach recognizes the importance of understanding the motivations and interests of the various actors involved in terrorism, including both the terrorists themselves and the states or other entities targeted by terrorism. Furthermore, the UIC approach acknowledges the significance of developing effective counterterrorism policies that consider the broader implications of such policies for both security and human rights.

1. Theoretical Framework

In this article, I present two noteworthy initiatives that aim to address the issue of defining terrorism. Within the domain of legal scholarship, Ben Saul, Director of the Sydney Centre for International Law, has authored a seminal volume providing an authoritative account of the international legal definition of terrorism. He conducted a comprehensive review of prevailing international and regional treaty



law, customary international law, as well as human rights and humanitarian law. He meticulously analyzed their contents, extracted fundamental similarities, and delineated the parameters of a definition that accurately reflects the existing consensus in international law regarding the illegitimacy of terrorism. He identified the constituent elements of such a definition, including proscribed means and methods, prohibited aims and objectives, the potential threat to international security, the straightforward textual interpretation of creating terror or instilling extreme fear, and potential exceptions. These informed the creation of a comprehensive legal definition of terrorism (Ben Saul, 2006). Based on his analysis of international law, Ben Saul defined terrorism deductively as follows: (1) "Any serious, violent, criminal act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury, or to endanger life, including by acts against the property; (2) Where committed outside an armed conflict; (3) For a political, ideological, religious, or ethnic purpose; (4) Where intended to create extreme fear in a person, group, or the general public; (5) Advocacy, protest, dissent, or industrial action which is not intended to cause death, serious bodily harm, or serious risk to public health or safety does not constitute a terrorist act." (Saul, 2019, 46). Upon deriving a general and inclusive legal definition of terrorism, Ben Saul observed that noted: "Such a definition embodies the international community's core normative judgments about the wrongfulness of terrorism while minimizing interference in the existing law governing violence in armed conflicts. It also neatly correlates with some of the most common characteristics found in the 1983 study of 109 definitions of terrorism." (Saul, 2006, p.66). Ben Saul's reference to a comprehensive study comprising 109 definitions of terrorism pertains to the initial endeavor by Professor Alex Schmid to develop a widely accepted and scientifically grounded definition of terrorism.

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From 1983 to 2007, Professor Alex Schmid conducted a series of questionnaires among leading researchers in the field of terrorism studies to elicit their perceptions and understanding of terrorism. In 1984, Schmid identified 22 fundamental components that were present to varying degrees in the surveyed definitions of terrorism. Following further consultation with experts in the field of terrorism



studies, Schmid ultimately arrived at the Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism in 2011, which incorporates 12 of the original 22 elements (Schmid, 2011, pp.73-77). Here is the revised version of the academic consensus definition of terrorism in a condensed form, as of 2011:

“Terrorism refers, on the one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear-generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties; Terrorism as a tactic is employed in three main contexts: (i) illegal state repression; (ii) propagandistic agitation by non-state actors in times of peace or outside zones of conflict; and (iii) as an illicit tactic of irregular warfare employed by the state- and non-state actors.”

Schmid provided an insightful answer to the question of 'How to Define Terrorism?' by presenting five different approaches that have been used to reach a definition of terrorism.

The revised academic consensus definition of terrorism, which represents a significant degree of agreement among social scientists, and Professor Saul's definition, which reflects a significant degree of normative agreement in international law, both share common elements. This overlap reinforces the authority and credibility of both definitions, but it does not confer significant definitional power.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous papers exist that attempt to define terrorism. In most of these, the argument typically unfolds as follows:

- We do not have an agreed-upon definition of terrorism.
- This lack of consensus presents a problem.
- The paper then proposes a definition or suggests ideas for reaching one.

In other words, the mainstream debate on the definition of terrorism presumes that terrorism: (1) has not been defined, (2) should be defined, and (3) can be defined (Ramsay, 2015, p.212).

A useful definition differentiates one concept from others. Creating a "definition" in the social sciences involves determining the content and meaning of a concept using the same language employed in everyday speech. This contrasts with the situation in some of the more exact sciences, where mathematical formulas and equations replace common language. A definition is essentially an equation: a new, unknown, or poorly understood term is defined by a combination of at least two well-known, well-understood terms. If there is only one term on each side of the equation, we are discussing a synonym or a translated term, not a definition. How many elements are necessary for a good definition? Two elements—for example, terrorism = political violence—will not suffice, while 22 different elements, as found in Schmid's 1984 analysis of over 100 different definitions, appear excessive (Schmid, 2023, p.3).

In addition to the orthodox debate surrounding the definition of terrorism, two critical perspectives are worth noting. The first argues that the concept of terrorism is fundamentally flawed and should be discarded entirely. Advocates of this position assert that terrorism is ultimately a social construct, and its pejorative connotations render it an unhelpful analytical tool. Rather than being a clear-cut phenomenon, terrorism is often used as a label by those in power to mobilize public opinion against the violence they disapprove of. This perspective suggests that the term should be abandoned in favor of more nuanced language that better captures the complexities of political violence. The second perspective, often associated with "critical terrorism studies," agrees with many of the criticisms directed at the orthodox approach to defining terrorism. However, it contends that the problem lies less in the inherent flaws of the term as an analytical category and more in its inconsistent and double-standard application. While most definitions of terrorism recognize that it can be employed by various actors, including states, the field of terrorism studies has disproportionately focused on non-state actors, creating an unfair and misleading impression that terrorism is solely associated with these groups.

Currently, there is no universally recognized or widely accepted definition of "terrorism" that establishes a set of agreed-upon characteristics which any proposed new definition of "terrorism"



must follow to be considered canonical, correct, and complete. However, different approaches and efforts to define terrorism do exist.

There are, however, alternatives to simply accepting definitions as either embodying the essential characteristics of a phenomenon or merely serving as compendia of the range of meanings associated with a concept within a language community. Definitions can also serve prescriptive purposes, in the sense that they can be advanced as recommendations for how a concept ought to be understood. The prescriptive force of the definition derives, in part, from its capacity to order relevant phenomena in illuminating and fruitful ways. Successful prescriptive definitions must satisfy a minimum level of descriptive empirical adequacy, reflecting a significant degree of current usage. However, they may also depart from current usage in ways required, for example, by a concern for greater theoretical coherence. A prescriptive definition may be judged successful to the extent that it achieves a reflective equilibrium that selectively conserves important features of current common usage while also providing novel perspectives that reshape and illuminate our understanding of the relevant phenomena.

In 2011, a revised academic consensus definition of terrorism was proposed by Alex P. Schmid. This definition has gained wide acceptance and is often used in academic and policy circles. According to this definition, terrorism refers to a two-fold concept:

Terrorism is a doctrine or belief that advocates the use of fear-inducing, coercive political violence as a means of achieving particular political goals.

Terrorism is also a conspiratorial practice of direct violent action that is intentionally designed to generate fear, using calculated and demonstrative tactics that disregard legal and moral restraints. Such violence primarily targets civilians and non-combatants and aims to achieve propaganda and psychological effects on various audiences and parties involved in the conflict.

Schmid's definition highlights the importance of both the ideological and strategic dimensions of terrorism, emphasizing the use of violence to intimidate and create fear among civilians and non-combatants.

Esmailzadeh (2023) presents an insightful analysis in the book "Defining Terrorism: Debates, Challenges, and Opportunities." By organizing the book into eight distinct sections, the author effectively navigates through the complex landscape of terrorism and its definition. The book's multidisciplinary approach provides readers with a rich understanding of terrorism, encompassing historical, psychological, political, and contextual dimensions. Through meticulous examination, Esmailzadeh elucidates the challenges and nuances associated with defining terrorism, offering valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. By highlighting the evolving nature of terrorism and the diverse characteristics attributed to it, the book contributes to the ongoing scholarly discourse on terrorism, ultimately aiming to facilitate the development of more effective counter-terrorism measures and policies.

Huff and Kertzer (2017) argue that their focus on public opinion is not intended to resolve debates about what should or should not be considered terrorism, but rather to explore the central role that public opinion plays in understanding terrorism. They investigate how members of the general public understand the term "terrorism." Their research is part of a growing body of social science studies that use experimental methods to unpack people's common beliefs about political concepts.

Rapoport (2022) proposed his definition of terrorism, stating that it is a form of violence employed for religious or political objectives that disregard the accepted moral norms limiting the use of violence. According to his definition, both governments and non-state actors, such as rebels, may engage in terrorism. Rapoport argues that when rebels use violence to achieve political or religious ends without being constrained by military rules governing violence, they can be considered terrorists. Rapoport's definition emphasizes the non-state actor aspect of terrorism but acknowledges that governments can also engage in terrorism.

Timothy Shanahan (2010) challenges the traditional belief that terrorism is always morally wrong, advocating instead for a more nuanced evaluation of the ethics of specific acts of terrorism. In his article, Shanahan provides a survey of existing definitions of terrorism and identifies criteria for a more comprehensive definition. Based on these criteria, he proposes a new definition of terrorism



that emphasizes the intention to harm innocent people, rather than the political or ideological motivations behind the act. By using this definition, Shanahan argues that it is possible to evaluate the morality of specific acts of terrorism on a case-by-case basis, rather than using a blanket condemnation of all acts labeled as terrorism. Overall, Shanahan's article offers a valuable contribution to the literature on terrorism and provides a useful framework for future research on the ethical implications of terrorism (Shanahan 2010, 177).

Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, and Breen-Smyth (2011) are among the founding members who introduced the critical dimension to the study of terrorism. They argue that it is necessary to define terrorism and retain the term as an analytical concept. Jackson and his colleagues draw their argumentation from two subsets of writers belonging to an emergent school in the field of terrorism scholarship—critical studies. They caution that a consistent delineation of malevolent violence will be helpful across political divides, by avoiding double standards that manifest in associating terrorist violence more often with non-state entities than with states, which equally commit repression to elicit submission of populations. Another subset of critical authors, such as Gilbert Ramsay (2015), Dominic Bryan, Liam Kelly, and Sara Templer (2011), strongly advocate abandoning the concept, arguing that it is indefinable and hence indefensible, or that it has already been sufficiently explained. A similar notional strain can be witnessed among renderings by some of the foremost writers in the field, like Walter Laqueur, who at one time despaired from defining terrorism, had remarked that it is neither possible to do so nor worthwhile to attempt (Feyyaz, 2019, 311).

Jackson and PISOIU (2012) provide a comprehensive overview of various perspectives on the topic of terrorism. The book is divided into four parts, covering the historical and conceptual foundations of terrorism, the causes and motivations behind it, responses to terrorism, and broader issues related to the phenomenon. The authors engage in lively debates on key issues related to terrorism, examining a range of perspectives, including those that view terrorism as a form of political violence and those that see it as a religious or ideological struggle. Jack Gibbs (1989), Richard English (2016), and John Horgan (2005) advocate for maintaining a delicate balance between the mainstream and critical traditions of defining terrorism. Although they oppose abandoning the concept, they stress the importance of conceptual compatibility with complex human behavior and the need for clear, honest, and careful usage. This perspective is implicitly rooted in pragmatism, which is reflected in analogous propositions such as Jeffrey Simon's view that definitional issues are important for the academic treatment of terrorism but are of lesser relevance to policymaking. Rather than focusing on arriving at a consensual definition of terrorism, the emphasis is placed on practical strategies for governments and international bodies to effectively combat terrorism as a tactic.

Walzer's understanding of terrorism in *Just and Unjust Wars* forms the classic example of a stringent definition and has become the term of reference for practically every discussion of terrorism. According to Walzer, "terrorism" (as distinct from guerrilla warfare and political assassination) is a particular form of political violence: it is the intentional random murder of defenseless non-combatants, many of whom are innocent even by the assailants' standards (e.g., infants, children, the elderly and infirm, and foreign nationals), with the intent of spreading fear of mortal danger amidst a civilian population as a strategy designed to advance political ends (Walzer, 1977, pp.197-203). Objections to Walzer's definition, which emphasizes the random or indiscriminate choice of victims because terrorists choose their targets rationally, build a straw man only to be knocked down by this artificial objection. As both Primoratz and Coady explain almost unnecessarily, "random" or "indiscriminate" in this type of definition does not stand for "irrational" or arbitrary. Instead, these terms refer to a particular lack of discrimination between combatants and civilians, enshrined in just war theory, alongside a disregard for the particular identity of the victim (Meisels, 200, p.334).

The article "Defining International Terrorism: A Pragmatic Approach" by Thomas BADEY (2010) addresses the lack of a commonly accepted definition of international terrorism despite decades of scholarly and inter-governmental discourse. BADEY identifies two broad categories of existing definitions: academic and political. Academic definitions tend to be overly complicated and designed for statistical modeling, while governmental definitions tend to be ambiguous to allow for politically



convenient interpretations. Badey argues for a more functional definition of terrorism based on primary characteristics that distinguish international terrorism from other types of violence. Muhammad Feyyaz (2019) believes that the debate over what constitutes terrorism spans a wide, diverse, and largely competing body of intellectual strands. In particular, the lack of consensus on the need (or lack thereof) for a universally acceptable definition characterizes the discursive dynamics of the definitional subfield. Conversely, there is a persistent tendency to embrace methodologies, such as case study frameworks, that can prove to be more helpful in conceptualizing terrorism. By contextualizing terrorist violence in Pakistan as a case study, this article demonstrates that an objective definition of terrorism is conceivable if the phenomenon is understood contextually and as part of communication processes.

3. HOW CAN 'TERRORISM' BE DEFINED USING THE UIC APPROACH?

Undoubtedly, terrorism is an important player in the international arena today (Esmailzadeh, 2023, p.55), and defining terrorism has been a challenge for policymakers and scholars alike. Nonetheless, attempts to define terrorism typically revolve around the deliberate use of violence or the threat of violence against non-combatant targets to create fear, intimidate, or coerce a government, organization, or society for political, ideological, or religious purposes. The lack of a universally accepted definition of terrorism has complicated the development of effective counterterrorism policies. While some scholars define terrorism as the use of violence to achieve political objectives, others argue that terrorism can also involve non-violent activities. Moreover, some states have used terrorism as a tool of statecraft, which further complicates the definition of terrorism.

This lack of consensus on what constitutes terrorism has significant implications for counterterrorism policy. Without a clear definition, it is difficult for policymakers to determine what activities should be classified as terrorism and what activities should not. This can lead to the overbroad application of counterterrorism measures, such as surveillance and detention, which can infringe on civil liberties and human rights.

Furthermore, the lack of a clear definition of terrorism can hinder international cooperation on counterterrorism. Different states may have different definitions of terrorism, which can make it difficult to coordinate efforts to combat terrorism. For example, some states may view certain groups as terrorists, while others may view those same groups as legitimate political actors.

In light of these challenges, there have been calls for the development of a universal definition of terrorism that can be widely accepted. However, reaching a consensus on such a definition is likely to be difficult, given the complexity and political sensitivity of the issue. In the meantime, policymakers must work to strike a balance between protecting national security and respecting civil liberties and human rights. As a result, defining terrorism is a complex and challenging task that has eluded a consensus definition. The ongoing discourse over what constitutes terrorism continues to involve a vast, diverse, and often contentious range of intellectual perspectives, each characterized by distinct emphases and persuasions. As a result, scholars have posed numerous questions and offered various attempts at answering them in pursuit of a comprehensive, universal, and replicable definition of terrorism. Despite these efforts, the elusive nature of terrorism and the multitude of factors that shape its interpretation have made the task of defining it an ongoing and evolving process. Furthermore, Schmid and Ben Saul provide valuable insights into defining terrorism. As mentioned, Schmid proposed five approaches to defining terrorism, offering valuable insights into the complex nature of the concept. The historical approach examines the common features of terrorism throughout history, while the psychological approach emphasizes the fear and terror that terrorism seeks to instill in the target population. Another approach considers other forms of political violence besides terrorism, while yet another centers on the specific act of terrorism itself. The fifth approach focuses on the motivations and goals of the terrorist. These different approaches underscore the challenges in arriving at a precise and universally accepted definition of terrorism. However, by considering these approaches, we can gain a deeper understanding of terrorism and identify strategies for prevention and response (Schmid, 2023, pp.4-16).



Also, Ben Saul's deductive definition of terrorism consists of five components. First, terrorism involves a serious and violent criminal act that intends to cause death or serious bodily injury, or to endanger life, including acts against property. Second, the act is committed outside an armed conflict. Third, it is perpetrated for a political, ideological, religious, or ethnic purpose. Fourth, the act is intended to create extreme fear in a person, group, or the general public, and has the potential to seriously intimidate a population or part of a population or to unduly compel a government or an international organization to act or refrain from acting. Finally, advocacy, protest, dissent, or industrial action that is not intended to cause death, serious bodily harm, or serious risk to public health or safety does not constitute a terrorist act, thus acknowledging the importance of distinguishing between legitimate forms of activism and terrorism.

Therefore, based on the theoretical framework of the article and using the opinions of Schmid and Ben Saul, the following table can be summarized, which introduces the approaches to reach a specific definition of terrorism.

Table (1). The approaches to reach a specific definition of terrorism

Approach/Component	Explanation
Historical approach	examines the common features of terrorism throughout history
Psychological approach	emphasizes the fear and terror that terrorism seeks to instill in the target population
An approach that considers other forms of political violence	considers other types of political violence besides terrorism
An approach that focuses on the specific act of terrorism itself	Focus on terrorist act characteristics: serious, violent, criminal, fatal.
An approach that centers on the motivations and goals of the terrorist	focuses on the underlying reasons and objectives of the terrorist.
The location-focused approach	Where the act is committed outside an armed conflict.
The purpose-focused approach	Serious violent acts for political/ideological/religious purposes & fear/intimidation
The exclusion-focused approach	Legitimation activism is not terrorism; no harm to people or safety

Previous research has highlighted the existence of various approaches to defining terrorism. However, there is still a need for a more comprehensive and nuanced approach that takes into account the complexities and evolving nature of terrorism in today's world.

To address this need, this article proposes a new approach to defining terrorism called the UIC approach, which stands for Understanding Terrorism, Interests of Actors, and Counterterrorism Policy & Implications. The UIC approach aims to provide a comprehensive framework that considers the diverse motivations, goals, and strategies of actors involved in terrorism and the broader implications of counterterrorism policies for both security and human rights.

It is important to note that the proposed UIC approach is not meant to exclude or disregard other existing approaches to defining terrorism. Rather, it offers a new perspective that considers additional, contemporary components in the definition of terrorism. By taking into account these newer dimensions, the UIC approach presents a nuanced framework that can complement and enhance our understanding of terrorism in today's world.

By adopting a multifaceted approach that encompasses multiple dimensions of terrorism, the UIC framework offers valuable insights and tools for policymakers, analysts, and scholars seeking to understand and address the challenges posed by terrorism. In particular, the UIC approach emphasizes the importance of balancing security concerns with the need to protect human rights and prevent the unintended consequences of counterterrorism policies



3-1. The first basic component in the UIC approach is 'Understanding Terrorism'

The UIC approach is a new framework for defining terrorism and consists of three fundamental components. The first component, 'Understanding Terrorism,' serves as the cornerstone of the UIC approach and acts as a comprehensive tool to assess the diverse aspects of terrorism. The study of terrorism must begin with an understanding of the phenomenon itself, its causes, and its implications for society (Ganor, 2002, p.4). According to Rapoport, understanding terrorism is a critical component in developing effective counterterrorism policies, as it enables policymakers to identify the root causes of terrorism and devise strategies to address them. Additionally, the study of terrorism is complex and multifaceted, requiring researchers to draw on a range of disciplinary perspectives to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Schmid, 1983, p.183).

One of the key challenges in understanding terrorism is the constantly evolving nature of the threat, as terrorist groups adapt and change their tactics in response to shifting political and social contexts (Hoffman, 2006, p.62). As such, scholars and policymakers must remain vigilant and adaptable in their approach to counterterrorism efforts. Effective counterterrorism policies require not only a deep understanding of the root causes of terrorism but also the ability to anticipate and respond to new threats as they emerge. This demands ongoing research and analysis of terrorist groups and their tactics (Esmailzadeh, 2023, p.55), as well as the political and social environments in which they operate. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the potential unintended consequences of counterterrorism measures, such as civil liberties violations and radicalization.

Terrorism is a complex phenomenon that significantly impacts individuals, communities, and nations worldwide. Understanding terrorism is essential for identifying its causes, addressing its consequences, and preventing future acts of violence. Achieving a deep understanding of terrorism requires a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates historical, political, social, and psychological perspectives. Recognizing terrorism and its underlying factors is the first step in a cycle that can reveal the true interests of society, government, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. This process involves identifying the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and political grievances. By addressing these issues, societies can reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies and prevent individuals from joining terrorist groups.

Moreover, understanding terrorism can promote reconciliation and peace-building efforts. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, communities and nations often face the challenge of rebuilding trust and social cohesion. Understanding the underlying causes of terrorism and addressing them can facilitate the process of reconciliation and promote a more peaceful future. Overall, understanding terrorism is crucial for building resilient societies and preventing violent extremism. By recognizing the real interests of society, government, and people, we can move away from violence and extremism and promote a more peaceful and inclusive world.

Furthermore, understanding terrorism can offer insights into the needs and interests of the different actors involved in terrorism, including governmental, civil, and non-governmental organizations, by examining their functions and behaviors. For instance, an analysis of the government's response to terrorist incidents can reveal its policy priorities and its stance on issues such as human rights and security. Similarly, understanding the motivations and activities of non-governmental organizations working in conflict-affected areas can help identify the root causes of terrorism and inform strategies to prevent it. By gaining an accurate understanding of the needs and interests of different actors involved in terrorism, it is possible to develop more effective policies and interventions to address the underlying factors that contribute to violent extremism.

3-2. The second fundamental component in the UIC approach is the 'Interests of Actors'

The components of "Understanding Terrorism" and "Interests of Actors" are closely linked and can be utilized through role-playing and influence to address the issue of defining terrorism. A comprehensive understanding of terrorism, its root causes, and the interests and motivations of the different actors involved can inform the development of effective policies and interventions to prevent and counter-terrorism. Various actors play a role in defining terrorism, including: (i) terrorists; (ii) mass and social media; (iii) national governments; (iv) the United Nations; and (v)



academics (Schmid, 2023, p.4). Other actors, such as security organizations like counter-terrorism and intelligence agencies, also play an important role in defining terrorism through their actions and the knowledge they can create about terrorism among leaders, policymakers, and society. Security actors are committed to considering the global impact of their choices (Esmailzadeh Emamqoli & Tajari, 2017, p.1). Of course, civil institutions, societies, governments, and non-governmental organizations are interconnected and play crucial roles in addressing terrorism. For instance, civil institutions such as the media and academia can promote awareness and understanding of terrorism, while societies can contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Governments have a vital responsibility to ensure national security and prevent terrorism, but they must also respect human rights and address the underlying causes of terrorism, such as poverty, marginalization, and political grievances. Non-governmental organizations can provide critical support to communities affected by terrorism, by offering humanitarian assistance, promoting human rights, and advocating for peace. Effective collaboration and coordination among various actors are essential for addressing the issue of defining terrorism. Governments can collaborate with civil institutions and non-governmental organizations to develop policies and programs that promote dialogue, trust-building, and social cohesion. Such efforts can reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies and prevent individuals from joining terrorist groups. Civil institutions, societies, governments, and non-governmental organizations are interconnected and play a significant role in addressing this issue. By working together, these actors can promote peace, security, and human rights, building resilient societies that are less vulnerable to violent extremism. As a result of varying approaches to defining and interpreting issues and concepts, the lens through which we view such phenomena differs among actors (Esmailzadeh and Ahmadi, 2016, p.128).

Adopting policies that take into account the interests of different actors involved in terrorism can provide a suitable basis for effective counter-terrorism policies. Here are some strategies that could be useful in this regard:

Consultation and dialogue: Engaging with various stakeholders, including civil society groups, religious leaders, and community leaders, can help understand their perspectives on terrorism and their policy preferences. This can help identify common ground and develop policies that are inclusive and effective.

Incentives and disincentives: Policies that incentivize actors to support counter-terrorism efforts, such as financial or diplomatic rewards, can be effective in building coalitions and gaining support for policy initiatives. Simultaneously, policies that disincentivize actors from supporting terrorism, such as sanctions or legal action, can help deter terrorist activities.

Human rights and the rule of law: Policies that prioritize human rights and the rule of law can help build trust and legitimacy with different actors involved in terrorism. This can help reduce grievances and build support for counter-terrorism efforts.

Multi-sectoral approach: Adopting a multi-sectoral approach involving various government agencies and civil society groups can help identify the root causes of terrorism and develop effective policies that address these underlying issues. This can involve addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and political grievances.

Evidence-based approach: Evidence-based Policies, grounded in thorough data analysis and research, can help ensure that resources are targeted to the most effective interventions. This can involve researching the effectiveness of different policy approaches in various contexts to identify best practices and effective strategies for combating terrorism.

3-3. The third basic component of the UIC approach is the 'Counterterrorism Policy & Implications

Previous research in security and terrorism studies has demonstrated that the very definition of terrorism is a politically sensitive issue, subject to political twists and turns. Despite the increasing amounts of public resources spent on counterterrorism, an actual measure of outcomes from counterterrorism policies remains elusive (Strandh and Eklund, 2015, p.359). The lack of a consensus definition of terrorism poses a challenge for developing effective policies to combat it. One reason for this is that different actors involved in terrorism have various interests, which can influence how



they define terrorism. For instance, a government may define terrorism narrowly to exclude actions by state actors, while a group may define terrorism broadly to include actions against military targets. These different definitions can lead to diverse policies and strategies for addressing terrorism.

The challenge of developing effective policies to combat terrorism is further complicated by the fact that actors may have different interests in adopting specific policies. For example, a government may adopt policies that prioritize national security over civil liberties, while a civil society group may prioritize human rights over security concerns. These differing interests can lead to conflicts over policy choices and make it difficult to develop a consensus on the most effective policies to combat terrorism.

Overall, overcoming the challenge of defining terrorism and developing effective policies to combat it requires a multidisciplinary approach that takes into account the interests and perspectives of different actors involved in terrorism. By understanding these interests and perspectives, policymakers and other stakeholders can work towards developing policies that effectively address the root causes of terrorism and reduce the risk of terrorist attacks.

Overall, adopting policies that take into account the interests of different actors involved in terrorism can help to build support for counter-terrorism efforts and develop policies that are effective in addressing the root causes of terrorism. These strategies can be used to create a more comprehensive and effective approach to combating terrorism.

Today, a portion of terrorism studies aims to connect terrorism, internal security, crisis management, counterterrorism policy, and the interests of actors involved in the policy-making process. However, the focus of this broader take on the interface between terrorism and public institutions is different: confronting the challenge posed by terrorism requires the involvement of more actors and social interests. No single government or agency can successfully meet the challenge or prevent terrorism on its own, and therefore, also cannot carry the sole responsibility for prevention. Counterterrorism (Esmailzadeh, 2023, p. 55), at least in liberal democracies, meets with the much-discussed trajectory of democratic institutional change, often referred to as a movement from the government to governance (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). In this perspective, governments and their security agencies become partners and co-creators in negotiated processes of political adaptation and change. Governmental capacities in the field of counterterrorism are thus linked with broader agendas of crisis and disaster management.

Looking, for example, at how disaster and crisis management researchers conceptualize crisis theory makes the contours of this new approach more readily discernible. Particularly in crisis theory, there is the conceptualization of a crisis cycle, indicating and sorting out the different phases of any given crisis. Also, in this knowledge area, there are some differences in usage between different authors. Nevertheless, the most common way of analyzing a crisis is to describe the way it unfolds by way of four phases: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The focus of this literature is process-oriented. The four phases are analytically useful in identifying different functions, actors, and tasks in a crisis event. Importantly, the analytical interest is guided by situation and process rather than institutions and formal positions of decision-making power, which makes it reminiscent of the governance literature. The mitigation phase, however, represents policymaking in that it draws the analytical interest toward specific choices in planning, steering, and accountability. From this literature, we draw the element of mitigation in counterterrorism policy (Strandh and Eklund, 2015, pp.361-362).

The interests of actors involved in the definition of terrorism and their understanding of terrorism play a crucial role in shaping counter-terrorism policies. The involvement of multiple actors and social interests in the counterterrorism policy-making process can lead to the creation of policies that are more inclusive and effective. However, conflicting interests among actors may also lead to a lack of consensus and hinder the implementation of effective policies. Additionally, the understanding of terrorism and its root causes can also vary among different actors, leading to differing approaches to counterterrorism. Some actors may focus on addressing the underlying grievances and root causes of terrorism, while others may prioritize law enforcement and military responses. Thus, the interests



and perspectives of actors involved in the definition of terrorism and their understanding of terrorism can shape counter-terrorism policies in complex ways.

The examination of counterterrorism as a public policy field, encompassing the formulation, execution, and assessment of measures, necessitates a wider perspective that considers the broader context of political and institutional transformation. Counterterrorism policy refers to the measures taken by governments and other actors to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. These policies can involve a range of actions, such as law enforcement and intelligence efforts, military interventions, and diplomatic efforts to address the root causes of terrorism.

Several indicators can be used to evaluate and measure counter-terrorism policies and improve the recognition and understanding of terrorism. Some of the most important indicators include:

(1) Reduction in the number of terrorist incidents: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in preventing and reducing the number of terrorist attacks. By tracking the number of terrorist incidents over time, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify areas for improvement.

(2) Reduction in the number of casualties: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in protecting civilians from harm. By tracking the number of casualties caused by terrorist attacks, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify areas for improvement.

(3) Community engagement and trust-building: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in building trust and engagement with affected communities. By engaging with communities and addressing their concerns, it is possible to build trust and support for counter-terrorism policies, which can help to prevent and disrupt terrorist activities.

(4) Protection of human rights and the rule of law: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in protecting human rights and upholding the rule of law.

(5) Economic and social development: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in promoting economic and social development. By addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, it is possible to reduce the appeal of terrorism to vulnerable populations and prevent the emergence of new terrorist groups.

(6) Disruption of terrorist networks: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in dismantling terrorist networks and preventing their operations. By tracking the disruption of terrorist networks, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of policies and identify areas for improvement.

(7) International cooperation: This indicator measures the success of counter-terrorism policies in fostering international cooperation among governments and other actors. Effective collaboration and information sharing among countries can help to prevent and disrupt terrorist activities and enhance the overall effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies.

By using these indicators to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies, it is possible to gain a better understanding of terrorism and its underlying causes. This, in turn, can help policymakers and other stakeholders develop more effective strategies to address the root causes of terrorism and reduce the risk of terrorist attacks. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of counter-terrorism policies are essential for identifying areas for improvement and ensuring that resources are directed toward the most effective interventions.

Overall, these indicators can help to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies and improve the recognition and understanding of terrorism. By tracking progress in these areas and identifying areas for improvement, it is possible to develop more effective policies and reduce the harm caused by terrorist activities.

Counter-terrorism policy is closely related to the understanding and recognition of terrorism because it seeks to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks, thereby reducing the harm caused by these activities. Through the implementation of effective counter-terrorism policies, it is possible to disrupt terrorist networks, prevent attacks, and protect civilians from harm.

By evaluating and measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of counter-terrorism policy and understanding its consequences, it is possible to improve the basic knowledge and understanding of terrorism. This can involve conducting research on the impact of counter-terrorism policies on



different populations and identifying best practices for preventing and responding to terrorist attacks. Additionally, understanding the consequences of counter-terrorism policies can help to ensure that they are implemented in a way that is consistent with human rights and the rule of law, which can help build trust and legitimacy with affected populations.

The evaluation and measurement of counter-terrorism policy and its consequences can play an important role in improving the understanding and recognition of terrorism. By implementing effective policies and understanding their impact, it is possible to reduce the harm caused by terrorist activities and address the underlying issues that lead to the emergence of terrorist groups and activities.

Counter-terrorism policy has traditionally focused on prevention measures taken by government institutions. However, recent literature on crisis management suggests a broader approach that emphasizes negotiation and governance, starting with mitigation and involving a wider range of stakeholders. Understanding terrorism as a crisis event is a relatively new concept in the field of crisis management. By combining these analytical concepts, we can better comprehend contemporary counter-terrorism policy and how it intersects with different actors and institutions. Policy problems, such as terrorism, are often intertwined with preconceived solutions, which are in turn linked with particular public institutions (Crenshaw, 2001). How an issue is defined determines which government institutions take responsibility and which other actors are involved.

CONCLUSION

The concept of terrorism remains central in contemporary society, necessitating a clear and concise definition to aid our moral understanding of this phenomenon. Attempts to avoid defining terrorism solely in terms of its target group, particularly non-combatants, are unhelpful and can obscure the true nature of the phenomenon, leading to a detachment from common usage and intuitions. Instead, terrorism can be understood as the intentional and indiscriminate killing of defenseless non-combatants to instill fear among a civilian population as a strategy to advance political ends. This basic understanding, while allowing for some variation and possessing vague edges, remains steadfast and cannot be deconstructed or obscured.

Defining terrorism in a strict sense does not imply political bias but rather acknowledges the need for a clear, concise, and widely understood definition. Those who advocate for a wide and inclusive definition may claim neutrality, but their approach can also have a political agenda. Therefore, terrorism should not be defined solely based on the agent, and it should not presuppose the unjustifiability of its practice under all circumstances. The question of possible justification should remain unsettled by the definition, and its moral evaluation should be based on other ethical and legal considerations.

Based on the introduction of the UIC approach and the analysis of its basic components, the following figure summarizes the discussion. As previously explained, the UIC approach consists of three main components, which have been examined and analyzed.

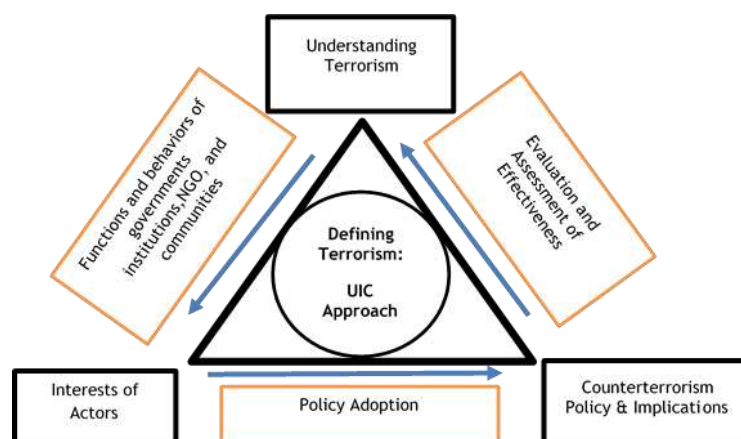


Figure (1). UIC Approach: New Approach to Defining Terrorism




The UIC approach presents a new method for defining terrorism, consisting of three interconnected components: Understanding Terrorism, Interests of Actors, and Counterterrorism Policy & Implications. These components form a connected and dynamic cycle, and the UIC approach can only be achieved when all three components have been completed. The approach aims to establish a comprehensive intellectual and scientific foundation for defining terrorism, providing a solid background in the subject matter. Its objective is to enhance our understanding of terrorism and enable us to articulate a clear and well-defined definition of the phenomenon, facilitating the development of effective policies and strategies for countering terrorism and mitigating its impact on society.

Building on the presented information, a comprehensive definition of terrorism can be formulated as follows: Terrorism is the intentional use of violence, perpetrated by either state or non-state actors, to achieve various goals. This violence is designed to instill extreme fear in a broad range of individuals, including civilians, law enforcement personnel, and combatants, and has far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate targets. Terrorist acts may be carried out by individuals or organizations influenced by existing terrorist movements or leaders, with emotional, cultural, moral, instrumental, religious, ideological, or criminal motives. Targets are often selected arbitrarily or for their symbolic value, with the immediate victims serving as message generators. The occurrence of terrorism can be affected by the counter-terrorism policies adopted by the actors involved and the type of interests they pursue.

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