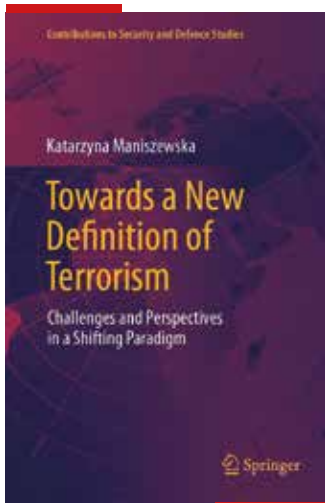


Katarzyna Maniszewska, Towards a New Definition of Terrorism: Challenges and Perspectives in a Shifting Paradigm¹

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Katarzyna Maniszewska's book *Towards a New Definition of Terrorism: Challenges and Perspectives in a Shifting Paradigm* results from research on the complex and evolving nature of terrorism. The author looked at the challenges of defining and countering this phenomenon in the context of a shifting paradigm, with a peculiar focus on state-sponsored terrorism. She posed two hypotheses concerning, firstly, the need to define a new legal framework to adapt the law to the changing nature of terrorism, including the aforementioned

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state-sponsored terrorism, and, secondly, the possibility of developing patterns useful in combating terrorism based on the analysis of the history of the phenomenon.

The author used several research methods: literature review, case studies and interviews with experts in various fields. However, it should be noted that she did not explicitly state the criteria she used to select these experts. Instead she described in detail the interview procedure, the analysis of which provides interesting conclusions on the contemporary perception of the terrorist threat and the multifaceted approach to defining the phenomenon of terrorism.

In the literature review, the author used a precise and reviewable selection of sources, citing both scientific papers and legal acts (e.g. European Union directives) and reports from organisations such as Institute for Economics and Peace (it publishes the Global Terrorism Index, among others) or the RAND Corporation². The researcher referred to publications by people representing two different schools of terrorism research. Representatives of the school of research known as orthodox terrorism studies include Brian M. Jenkins, Walter Laqueur, Audrey K. Cronin, Martha Crenshaw, Bruce Hoffman, Albert J. Jongman, Robert A. Pape, David C. Rapoport, Marc Sageman i Alex P. Schmid. The critical terrorism studies approach, on the other hand, is represented by, among others: Priya Dixit, Conor Gearty, Aleksandra Gasztold, Jeroen Gunning, Richard Jackson, Gilles Kepel, Marie Breen Smyth and Jacob L. Stump.

The author also cited the results of her previous research, focusing in particular on the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion, RAF) in Germany. The inclusion of this part of the researcher's achievements highlighted her extensive knowledge and long-term commitment to considering the terrorist threat and thus gave the publication a unique dimension. Another noteworthy aspect is the inclusion of other Polish research. In doing so, the book considers perspectives that may not be widely known in English-speaking academia. Considering the above, it should be emphasised that the literature review in Katarzyna Maniszewska's book is extensive and diverse, covering a wide range of sources and perspectives.

² Founded in 1948, it is an American think-tank and independent non-profit research organisation. Provides research and analyses in the fields of security, health, education, sustainable development. Quoted after: <https://www.rand.org/about.html> [accessed: 13 VIII 2024] – editor's note.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The introduction outlined the research objectives, questions and hypotheses. In it, the author emphasised the need for new legal frameworks that take into account the changing paradigm of terrorism and the importance of analysing historical patterns in order to disseminate knowledge about possible new strategies for counter-terrorism. The chapter also provides detailed information on the research methodology, its schedule and limitations.

In the second chapter, entitled *One Man's Terrorist*, the researcher referred to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's famous speech to the UN General Assembly in 1974. The issues of definitional ambiguity around the phenomenon of terrorism are related to the relativity of its perception, indicated in the speech, reflected in the statement: *One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter*. In this chapter the researcher discussed the definitional problems related to the term "terrorism", by reviewing its definitions used in academia, international institutions and legal systems of selected countries. She also analysed the relationship between the media and terrorism. She highlighted that terrorist groups, in order to achieve their goals of intimidating governments and populations of countries, must use the mass media to report on their activities. In this context, she pointed to the need for the media to draw up internal codes of ethics, such as those of the BBC or the international guidelines of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and apply them to the coverage of terrorist incidents.

In chapter three, entitled *Shifting Paradigm of Terrorism*, the author focused on the stages in the development of terrorism and pointed to parallels between the modus operandi of contemporary terrorists and modus operandi of perpetrators active in 20th century. She used the RAF as a case study to illustrate the evolution of the terrorist group, the way in which states support its activities and to show the similarities between historical and contemporary terrorist tactics. This chapter also discusses the question of whether the Russian Federation should be recognised as a state sponsor of terrorism in relation to its actions in Ukraine (such a decision was taken by the European Parliament in November 2022).

The next chapter, entitled *Countering Terrorism: Key Challenges and Proposed Solutions*, was devoted to the most important challenges in the fight against international terrorism. In it, the author analysed the major obstacles to effective counter-terrorism, both at the national and international level, such as: the links between terrorism with organised crime (e.g. arms, drugs, people trafficking, people smuggling), the lack

of common definition of terrorism, its transnational nature, wars and armed conflicts, the imbalance between ensuring the security of citizens and guaranteeing the protection of their freedoms, human rights, privacy and the rule of law. She also discussed the potential trade-offs necessary in creating a widely accepted definition of terrorism, which could prove very helpful in developing common mechanisms to combat it.

In chapter five, entitled *Descriptive Matrix Proposal*, the researcher presented her own proposal for solution to help combat terrorism – a descriptive matrix to assess whether an act can be classified as terrorist. At the outset, she identified five *sine qua non* conditions. These include: intention, ideological motivation, illegality, psychological effect, and violence. If the act meets these conditions, further qualification of the act is carried out using a descriptive matrix. The matrix is made up of blocks containing the following indicators, which enable the act to be classified: number of victims, area of the perpetrator's action, nature of the action (ad hoc or systemic), type of perpetrator, illegality. It also contains corresponding descriptors that can be used in development of principles for responding to threats. The solution was tested in among others the Wagner Group, which the author classified as a terrorist organisation on the basis of an analysis of its activities carried out with the help of the described matrix.

Chapter six refers to interviews with 20 experts in the field of security studies, terrorism and international relations, including the most important contributors to the national discourse on terrorism, such as Bruce Hoffman, Gilles Kepel and Conor Gearty. The author chose to quote the experts' statements in full, which shows the reader a wide range of opinions on the definition of terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism and the challenges of combating it. The final interview was conducted with Chat GPT, a large AI language model, which cognitively was the right decision given the prospects of using artificial intelligence in national and international security systems.

In the seventh and final chapter, the author included the conclusions of the research and expressed her belief that it confirmed her hypotheses. From both a cognitive and a utilitarian point of view, new legal frameworks are needed, which should reflect the changing paradigm and not ignore state-sponsored terrorism. In addition, the analysis of the development of terrorism on the basis of historical events has helped to establish patterns that may prove useful in the future in the fight against this phenomenon.

In concluding the thesis, the author emphasised the need to develop a new approach to defining terrorism and the potential of the descriptive matrix as a tool to assist in this task. She pointed out that the proposed matrix is only the starting point for further work on the final version, developed through broad academic consensus and international cooperation.

The reviewed publication offers a comprehensive analysis of the challenges of defining and combating terrorism, but there are a few areas where broader explication could have enriched it. The author has focused primarily on case studies from Europe and the Middle East, with only some references to Africa and Asia. A more global approach, including more examples from Latin America, South Asia and other regions, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse manifestations of terrorism worldwide.

In addition, it should be noted that the descriptive matrix is an innovative and potentially useful tool. Thus, the ways and methods of its use will be extremely interesting, as not all of them have been included in the publication. For example, one could consider how the matrix will be used by different stakeholders in their tasks, such as law enforcement, policy makers, and scientists, and what are the potential challenges and limitations associated with its application in real-world scenarios?

The publication also refers to the potential use of artificial intelligence in increasing the effectiveness of counteracting terrorism. A deeper critical reflection on this issue, particularly in terms of the ethical implications of using this tool, including in surveillance, profiling and other counter-terrorism methods, in national and international security systems, would allow for a balanced discussion of the benefits and risks of using this technology.

In conclusion, the book of Katarzyna Maniszewska, *Towards a New Definition of Terrorism: Challenges and Perspectives in a Shifting Paradigm* is a comprehensive analysis of the changing nature of terrorism and the challenges of defining and countering it. The mixed methodological approach used in the book, combining historical analysis, interviews with experts and the innovative proposal for a descriptive matrix, represents a valuable contribution to the field of terrorism studies. The author's emphasis on the need for a new legal framework, the establishment of international cooperation and a deeper understanding of the root causes of terrorism provides guidance on the direction of future research and policy development to counter and combat this phenomenon. The reviewed

publication is a milestone in terrorism research, but does not exhaust the subject. It therefore remains to be hoped that the author will continue her inquiries related to this issue.

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