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# Knowledge, the Great Challenge to Deal with Terrorism

Conocimiento, el gran desafío para enfrentarse al terrorismo

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**ABSTRACT:** Terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism are great challenges in these times of uncertainty. This paper analyses the need to improve the knowledge to provide a solid foundation for the design of effective security Counter-Terrorism strategies. Broad definitions of stakeholders are considered (including universities, think-tanks, the intelligence community, media, communities, and minorities and citizens), together with the integration of methods and techniques of analysis drawn from the social sciences and intelligence techniques. It proposes new approaches to generate knowledge through the integration of critical perspectives allowing an improved decision-making process that must be followed by continuous evaluations.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge, terrorism, evidence-based policing, decision-making, Counter-Terrorism

**RESUMEN:** El terrorismo, la radicalización y el extremismo violento son grandes desafíos de estos tiempos de incertidumbre. Este artículo analiza la necesidad de mejorar el conocimiento con el fin de proporcionar una base sólida para el diseño de estrategias antiterroristas efectivas. Se tienen en cuenta diversas propuestas que incluyen las Universidades, think-tanks, la comunidad de inteligencia, los medios de comunicación, así como las minorías y los ciudadanos, con el fin de integrar los métodos y técnicas de análisis procedentes de las Ciencias Sociales y de técnicas de Inteligencia. El artículo propone nuevas aproximaciones para generar conocimiento a través de la integración de perspectivas críticas que permiten un proceso de toma de decisiones mejorado, que debe ir acompañado de evaluaciones continuas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Conocimiento, Terrorismo, Investigación policial basada en evidencias, Toma de decisiones, Antiterrorismo.

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#### COUNTER-TERRORISM DECISION-MAKING

In January 2016, EUROPOL admitted in an announcement that Europe is under the most significant threat of the past ten years, and it presented a new series of measures where the creation of a European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) stands out.

The terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on November 13th, 2015 and where 130 people were murdered, have led the international community and the States to adopt new measures. Just like it has happened in 2015 in order to confront the foreign fighters phenomenon. This is, again, evidence of the reactivity of the antiterrorist measures, which are adopted, in many occasions, after impact attacks.

The September 11 attacks were a turning point that led the most important States to elaborate national security strategies and improve the coordination of domestic antiterrorist structures.

An international EU legislative career in Counter-Terrorism was first considered after the 9/11 attacks. In the European Union, the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and in London in 2005 were the driving force for the adoption of new antiterrorist policies. The new Centre has been configured as an opportunity to develop a true strategy.

All urgency to deal with terrorism comes once its effects are felt. Jihadist terrorism, al-Qaeda, individual terrorism, ISIS, foreign fighters, homegrown terrorism, and every “new phenomenon” seem to swallow all of the previous problems and start to be the focus. The problem arises when this tendency to act “following the news” comes from the field of research and legislation, and the decision-makers. Sometimes, new measures are a result of rush and social fear, and not clear strategic decisions, with future perspectives.

New measures are added to the old ones, many of which cannot be understood in isolation. This fact hinders their development, inspires little trust on the security forces from different countries, which need certain minimum guarantees in order to perform their duties, and minimise the damage inflicted on the fundamental rights of citizens. Security is becoming the main focus, when it should only be a mean to ensure the exercise of civil rights and liberties.

In fact, there is no monitoring, nor a regular evaluation of the actions that are being developed. Moreover, the implementation of the measures for each country is individual and the effects, costs and benefits are measured -at its best- in local terms.

#### RESEARCH ON TERRORISM. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The September 11 attacks multiplied the efforts and increased the budget for the study and investigation on terrorism. Previous studies are key to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the different fields of knowledge and offer a much more specific body of knowledge, but did not anticipate phenomena or provided solutions for the existing problems. According to Schmid and Jongman (as cited in Horgan, 1997), “perhaps as much as 80 per cent of the literature is not research-based in any rigorous sense”.

Evaluating Counter-Terrorism (CT) is a way to discover what is being studied and the fields where greater effort is needed, building bridges between the world of ideas and knowledge, and the world of decision-making. Evidence-based Counter-Terrorism policy is widely understood as a historical search for usable and relevant knowledge generated through rational scientific methods to help address and solve terrorism-related problems, “*to produce knowledge required for fine-tuning programs and constructing guidelines and tool-kits for dealing with known problems*” (Head, 2008:2).

On the other hand, studies on the future of Counter-Terrorism have generally consisted on projections of the present, lacking a methodological basis. Bakker (2012) analysed the future evolution of this phenomenon in 60 surveys conducted by well-known institutions and experts. Most of them lack a methodological basis; in general, they do not even mention possible dynamics of change that would allow the establishment of indicators to monitor the evolution of the phenomenon. In the best case scenario, these surveys are a goodwill gesture based on personal opinions, and intuition built on experience or trend forecasting. This opinion about the study of the future in academic papers is not different if we analyse official documents, strategies, plans or actions. Foresight is a field of study that should be applied in the evaluation CT policies, in order to prevent the future effects and impacts of the measures we plan to adopt.

In the study and investigation about terrorism it is possible to identify four key variables. The first one refers to the problems inherent in the terrorism study, since it constitutes a complex and specific phenomenon. The second variable is focused on the contents of the studies, the subjects with which they have either dealt or not, and the prevalence of specific approaches. The third one would refer to the potential inefficiencies for the creation and exploitation of information due to failures in the existing channels, especially relating to the search of synergies between the academic world and the security professionals. Finally, in order to evaluate a piece of knowledge (even if its origins are the academic world, a think-tank, the security forces or the intelligence services), it is necessary to establish some criteria that permit to determine its utility; especially in regards to its possibility to support the decision-making process in antiterrorist policies.

### *Terrorism as a field of research*

The academic input and institutional research are following the news and trends (Blanco and Cohen, 2014). Each new phenomenon removes previously identified problems from the first line of analysis, becoming the only centre of importance and interest. For example, the debate about nationals leaving to become foreign fighters in conflict regions, displaces the one about what is happening in European cities with second and third generation immigrants; just as the strength of the Islamic State removes focus from the still-existing Al Qaeda.

The lack of holistic views and prospective studies -including other inputs, stakeholders and methodologies- means that there does not exist a strategic vision in the study of the terrorist phenomenon. It is impossible to have a strategic vision without a holistic approach and a long-term analysis (Blanco and Cohen, 2014). The importance of this dimension is also reflected in the difficulty that stems from not having the *big picture*. For this purpose, there are two requirements. The first one is the increase in synergies with other professionals - such as intelligence analysts - from which quality evaluation criteria, independence of the analysis, evolution of the sources, and the credibility of the information can be taken. The second requirement is the need for knowledge on how to develop a logical and systematic management of information.

The academic perspectives have an excess of "political correctness" (Sinai, 2005). The challenge is not only to promote, as noted, the contribution of multiple disciplines on the same approach, but also to generate creative processes that allow for the study of non-existing scenarios or to leave rigid and formal frameworks or anachronistic orientations. Some authors criticise the contribution of novel authors and they propose some restrictions on their acceptance (Stampnitzky, 2010; Gordon, 2005). We believe, however, that the contributions of young people and experts from different specialities outside the particular

subject can result in a qualitative improvement in the volume and diversity of the existing literature, a variety of approaches, experiences and creativity (understood as the capacity to cope with different future scenarios in an ingenious way). It would not make sense to deny the utility of certain studies in the field of security, in particular terrorism, such as the recently published *"The New Digital Age"*, by Schmidt and Cohen (CEO of Google and Director of Google Ideas, respectively), or contributions from journalists, covering conflicts or wars, or with access to primary and direct sources, like "Manhunt" (2012), by Peter Bergen.

We have a growing problem with inconsistent and discriminate attention paid to very specific geographic regions or specific groups or phenomena (Schmid, 2013). In Western societies, there is often little appreciation of the culture and vision of countries in other regions. This situation causes an excess of cultural bias.

Recently, Michael German (2015) noted that one of the reasons why Counter-Terrorism policies were not successful was because the studies that are being developed are wrong. This hypothesis, linking the two variables, is difficult to prove when, in general terms, there are no models of knowledge management developed by governments to integrate all the production and analysis on terrorism, and no models to integrate it in the decision-making process. On the contrary, governments frequently tend to consult experts that are either linked or related to the executive power in question, or analysis from trustworthy research centres or think-tanks, that might even be funded by these governments. Another source of bias, which directly affects the literary production, are politicians (Schmid, 2013).

In recent years, literature has provided studies that fall under the heading of "Critical studies on Terrorism" with interesting contributions by authors such as Boyle (2008), Taylor (2014), Sageman (2014) or Schmid (2014), among others. In our opinion, these discussions generate opposition without trying to reconcile different viewpoints, and also contribute to highlight challenges that must be addressed, as well as opportunities over the settlement thereof.

Finally, several factors affect the research on terrorism. We study this phenomenon in isolation without considering the relationships with other related phenomena: organised crime, political violence, insurgencies, or guerrilla actions. Terrorist acts are random events. There is not a continuous set of data as it happens with other criminal activities. Therefore, there are several limitations when it comes to establishing patterns and getting to conclusions.

Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism are difficult to evaluate. It is dangerous and maybe even impossible to adopt a cost-benefit approach, because it follows other parameters on national security decision-making, it can increase social fear, and it suffers the subjective perception of security and zero social tolerance to terrorist events. Deterrence, a key factor in Counter-Terrorism, is difficult to measure. Evidence-based policing needs to measure the effects of concrete policies, but sometimes a mix of factors, variables or random circumstances causes the effects. So, it is difficult to measure direct and individual effects of the majority of Counter-Terrorism measures.

Security concerns make it sometimes impossible to develop randomized controlled experiments (Laycock, 2012) by using a control group (i.e. diplomats in fortified embassies, diplomats in non-protected embassies).

With these issues in mind, we believe the needs that must be addressed can be grouped into four evidence-based policing needs:

- The absence of a framework. Freese (2014) makes an interesting approach in *"Evidence-Based Counterterrorism Framework"*, where she points out two stages: the first one is the scientific research, trying to answer questions (what, how, and why); the

second stage entails evaluative research, focusing on resources, processes and outcomes. However, there is a lack of more holistic frameworks.

- The lack of applied research. Lum, Kennedy and Shirley (2006) selected 354 studies that seemed to evaluate Counter-Terrorism programs or interventions and, after locating 20,000 written pieces on terrorism such as books, articles, reports, dissertations, and policy briefs, they concluded that only 7 among them were scientific evaluations of a Counter-Terrorism program.
- The development of methodologies to do it. It is not easy to apply a methodology and to know the effectiveness of a measure. Usually, several measures are implemented at the same time, what makes it difficult to individualize the effects of each one.
- A continuous assessment of each step taken, allowing the evaluation of the whole processes, but also every part of the research independently.

### *The content of the studies on terrorism*

The concept of “radicalisation” has been widely used in terrorism studies, especially during the last decade, and in Counter-Terrorism policy-making (Kundnani, 2012). Nowadays, “radicalisation” and “extremism” are the main international topics concerning terrorism studies and Counter-Terrorism policies.

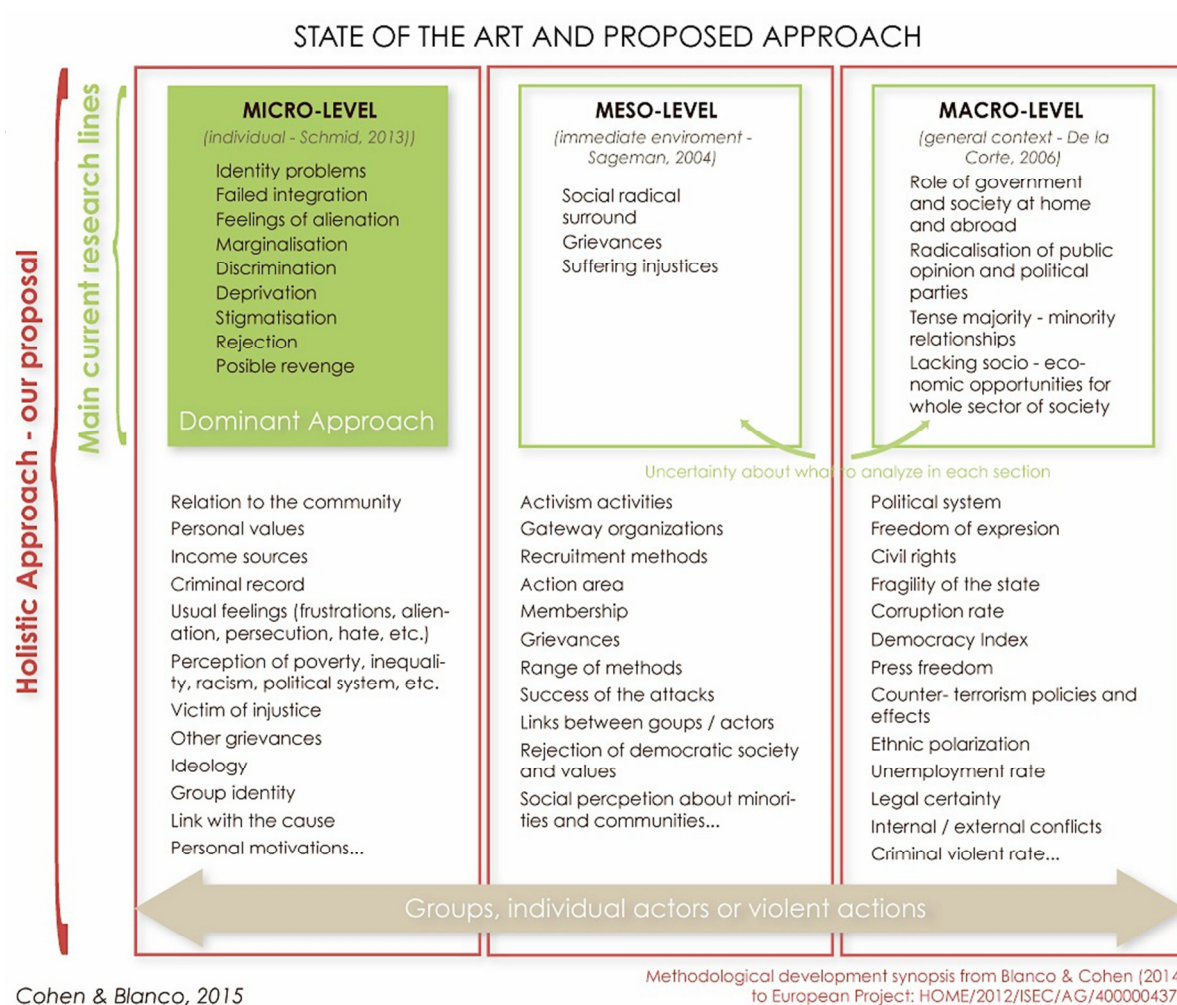
Indeed, there is a need to know if the current main Counter-Terrorism frame is a direct consequence of a lack of knowledge, or a lack –or neglect- of interest instead. It is known that extremism and beliefs could play an essential role in recruitment, but the way in which it turns into terrorist actions remains an unanswered question. Despite the boom in literature on radicalisation, Schmid (2013) highlights both the low contribution of empirical studies on the subject and the almost complete focus in radicalisation and de-radicalisation in the jihadist phenomenon.

A literature review of studies shows that there is no single path to terrorism, nor there is a single terrorist profile (Graaf and Kessels, 2011; Spaaij, 2012; Nesser, 2006; Cohen, 2015). Even when ideology is treated as a core element in multiple studies, it can only be understood as a predisposing factor to violence (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2011).

Such conclusions have made us reflect on how successful it is to approach terrorism studies on separate components of radicalism and extremism from an individual approach. Authors like Kundnani (2012, 2015) deny that the ability to use the micro approach can justify policies that can be a legitimate way to “*the use of particular types of violence for a particular political actor (either a social movement or a state)*” (Kundnani, 2015).

These definitions are mainly focused on religious beliefs and psychological factors, avoiding the examination of political or social factors. According to Schmid (2013), research on radicalisation should look for roots beyond this micro-level, improving the focus on the meso (social environment, and the analysis of groups) and macro levels. A macro-level analysis of terrorism can explain general factors that may contribute to understand the phenomenon, a kind of “environmental scanning” (Cohen and Blanco, 2014; Lia, 2005) (see figure No. 1). However, the micro-level, what makes someone engage in violence, is unpredictable (Githens-Mazer and Lambert, 2010).

Figure 1: State of the Art and Proposed Approach (Cohen &amp; Blanco, 2015)



On the contrary, there are variables which are becoming more and more relevant when explaining terrorist dynamics, such as the importance of the role of the proximal environment of the subject, or the use of social networks (Cohen, 2014). Jackson et al. already pointed out in 2009 a series of milestone articles that, far from focusing on criticism and deconstruction, advocate for the articulation of a credible alternative and, in our opinion, a holistic approach.

As an example of the existing knowledge gaps, in a number of cases only individual factors and extremism are taken into consideration as predictors of behaviour. There are several fields of analysis and research with insufficient contributions. This lack of knowledge does not allow for the designing of effective policies to face the real dimension of the threat (see examples on figure No. 2).

Figure 2: Some research fields needed and the importance of taking the different levels in account (Cohen & Blanco, 2015)

	Individual	Meso	Macro
The origin, evolution and effects of the terrorist narratives in Western countries and societies.			x
The ideological consequences of terrorist and Counter-Terrorism discourse.		x	x
The way in which Counter-Terrorism policies feedback into different ways of political violence.	x	x	x
Other ways in which terrorism is materialised (culture, politics, law, institutional...) and how they reinforce each other.		x	x
Drivers and effects of terrorism in non-Western countries.		x	x
The presence of terrorism and violent culture in societies and citizens (Gunning year).		x	x
The influence of the same terrorist discourse in different countries, cultures and societies	x	x	x
The way to integrate different voices, a broad set of stakeholders usually ignored by security policies.	x	x	x
The evaluation of Counter-Terrorism specific effects on communities, minorities, civil rights, different countries, social trust, social fear, academic research, international system, or legal framework.	x	x	x
The role of post armed conflicts management in societies.			x
Lessons learned. Success and failure in Counter-Terrorism.	x	x	x
The effects of post-modernity and globalisation on terrorist behaviours.	x	x	x
Patterns of violent radicals, non-violent radicals and control groups of non-radicals.	x	x	x
Factors that lead a member of a terrorist group from a role to another one inside it (Horgan and Taylor year).	x	x	
Differences, root causes and consequences of terrorism in different geographic regions.		x	x
Gender perspectives on the terrorism phenomenon in different cultures.	x	x	x
The way in which social trends influence the evolution of the terrorist threat.		x	x
Vulnerability, as a target or facilitator, in countries with democratic or transitional processes.			x



The list of “unknowns” about terrorism, radicalisation and extremism is long (Schmid, 2013; De La Corte, 2015). The existing knowledge has two characteristics: on the one hand, we find knowledge focused on matters in style because of their media impact, with proliferation of studies that deal with the same matters; on the other hand, it exists a wide -but really divided- knowledge, depending on the field of specialization of the authors. Nevertheless, there are no models for the integration of a knowledge which contributes to understand the *big picture*.

### *Building bridges between academics and security professionals.*

Decision-makers on antiterrorist policies need to have both the best knowledge and intelligence. Several gaps appear between government and knowledge institutions.

In the first place, the objectives of the knowledge world and the ones of the public decision-making are very different. The former is focused on the training and the investigation, while the latter focuses on the response to the social needs. This difference of objectives leads to a clear differentiation between their cultures, as well as to a gap between the world of ideas and research and the world of decisions and action.

This situation implies a new breach regarding the proactivity necessity, between static Academia and research and dynamic decision-making actors. Policy makers act quickly with limited staff resources and often multiple tasks to attend. Researchers have time and the possibility of allocating researchers with exclusive dedication to each topic. Law-enforcement agencies and intelligence services have data; they can explain what is happening, but not the causes. Academia has time and methodologies, but they do not have access to data.

Finally, as a common matter, we notice a lack of abilities and incentives, especially in the security public sector for the development of applied research and to use it.

In short, it still exists a lack of channels that allow generating and sharing utile information between two institutions. This situation needs to be solved by establishing new channels of communication, cooperating with universities, encouraging experts to participate in work teams, hiring academics in police corps, developing internships in police organisms for postgraduate students or by collaborating in investigation projects with public funds.

### *Evaluating the research on terrorism*

In the intelligence field, Clark (2013) states that intelligence products are usually evaluated looking backwards: “did the assessment fit with how things turned out?”. But the perception of analytic success or failure is influenced by many factors (luck, external developments, political pressures). Clark proposes “evaluation approaches based on measuring the product against some type of standard” (e.g. Intelligence Community Directive No. 203, June 21, 2007), sometimes widely used in other disciplines, such as journalism or documentation sciences:

- Clarity. The customer understands the document and the forces involved, and it is clear enough to be used.
- Credibility. The results make sense.
- Plausibility. The results are consistent with what we know about the world and its future development.
- Relevance. The research affects the achievement of the mission established.

- Urgency. The research evaluates if actions are required.
- Comparative advantage. The research provides a basis for decision-making (compared with other sources).
- Technical quality. The research is based on methodology or techniques.

Focusing on the quality of the knowledge and intelligence, and the knowledge available for the decision-maker, we propose a quality framework in order to analyse specific pieces of information: a research, a survey, an analysis, a paper and an intelligence product.

Figure 3: Quality Framework (Cohen & Blanco, 2015)

**QUALITY FRAMEWORK ON TERRORISM RESEARCH**

GOALS	ADDED VALUE	ARGUMENTATION	FORMAT
Focused clearly	Show a new contribution	Confiable information & SOURCES (corroborated & open access to future research)	Unambiguously
Avoid generalities	Provide the necessary context	Unprejudiced	Logical sequence
Identify results frame (temporal & geographic)	Avoid critics of others authors / researchs without solutions	Free of ideological or personal bias	Concise
What if?	Research limits identification	Critical judgement with data accompanied	Without redundancies
Relevant & usability	Anticipate critics questions & answers	Taking into account the different stakeholders	Balance between the main goals and their presentation
Description of selected methodology	Sinergies creation	Go out political correctness	Graphic or visual material
Show opportunities	Future focus	Alternative explications and / or implications	Break the old patterns
Results verification process (temporal & geographic frame)	Use of dystopias in the explication or implication section	Record conflicting data or disruptive ideas	Cohen & Blanco, 2015
	Ooze creativity		

ESSENTIAL	APPROPRIATED
DESIRED	BONUS TRACK

Visual form adapted from DIA Intelligence Quality Framework

### A NEW FRAME: A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR A HOLISTIC THREAT

#### *Redefining the roots of wisdom*

The aim of the proposed model is to allow the policy maker to have access to the best knowledge available, as well as to the best intelligence about terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism; because this is the only way to design effective strategies and plans, and to adopt tactic and operational actions. A strategic vision and a holistic approach help build the *big picture*, a global and structured representation of the phenomena that we must study.

The approach of the holistic model that we propose (Blanco and Cohen, 2014), integrates at least five individual models: a new intelligence process, the decision-making process, the

“connecting the dots” model of RAND Corporation (2005), the evidence-based policing, and the foresight.

First of all, we propose a new intelligence process with the support of modern information technologies, which modify and eliminate the classical cycle of intelligence. This process is not based on a lineal and continuous cycle, but on the use of different tools like scanning, monitoring, classifying and evaluating, integrating, analysing, disseminating and visualising the information, which are not sequential stages. This process begins with the identification of intelligence requirements, answering the question “what for” (Treverton, 2006).

When making atypical observations, the “dots”, could be the first step in an intelligence process. These observations could be originated in the knowledge of rare events, or changes in classical patterns of terrorism. Once a possible “dot” has been identified, we propose the use of the Atypical Signal Analysis and Processing (ASAP) concept developed by the RAND National Security Research Division (NSRD).

There are multiple stakeholders that could help create the best knowledge and intelligence in order to take actions, design strategies, or make plans. In this case, the word “stakeholder” is used in two ways: the different actors affected by decisions or policies, and the actors that could affect or determine the decisions or actions. In order to achieve the best decision-making and evaluation process, all groups should be taken into consideration, from think tanks and the academia to citizens, media or the smallest interest groups, among others.

The ideal type of analysis should pursue the integration of every applicable methodology through a holistic time-based perspective. From a methodological point of view, the ideal type of analysis would start from the scientific method and social sciences, incorporating the structured techniques of the intelligence analysis, and even including Big Data or the studies of the future. But we must consider that we must face time and resources restrictions.

It is important to overcome classical models in the decision-making process, such as the rational model of decision-making. Policy makers are not always completely rational, so we must consider the use of incremental models (Lindblom, 1959), or less rational models like the *multiple stream approach* (Kingdon, 1984). These models should be completed with new visions -still under construction- based on networks or theories about public policy in an uncertain world (Manski, 2013).

As we shape the future through the decisions we make everyday, expectations about the future introduce causal factors and determine our current decisions. However, our past (experiences, education) influences our present too. Consequently, we can state that these three dimensions overlap. The model introduces considerations about non-linearity of time, path dependency and multi-causality.

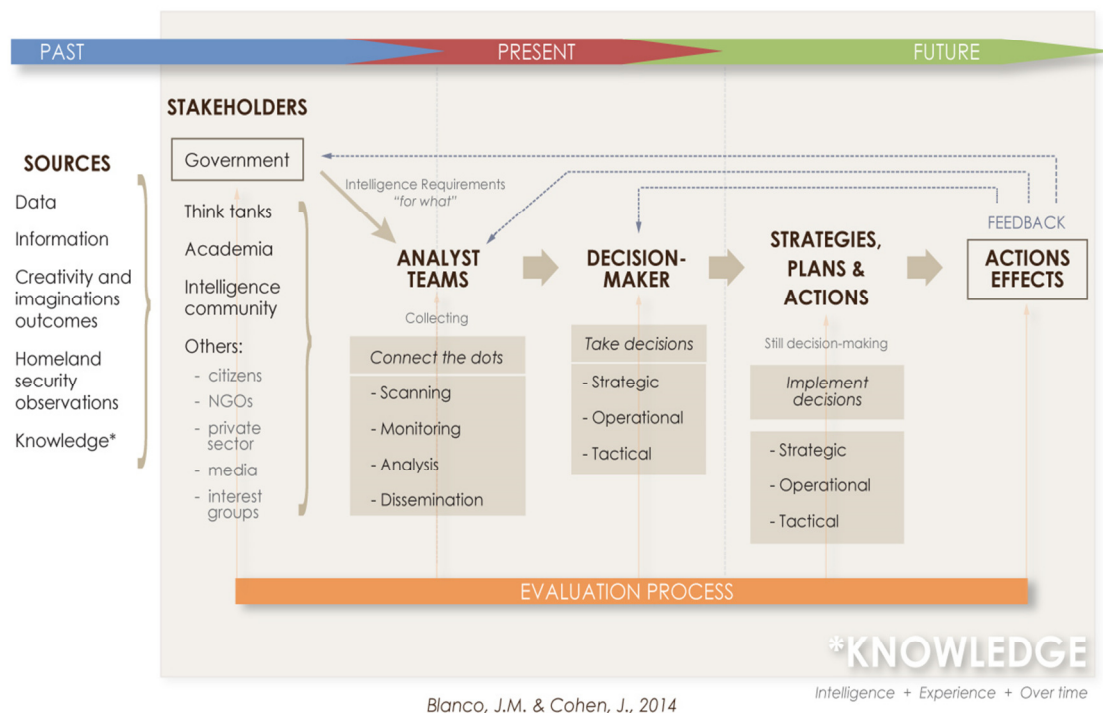
As the model regards strategic and operational aspects, the use of global systems and models would allow supporting early warning systems, where the starting point would be using methodologies such as Environmental Scanning and Horizon Scanning.

The model incorporates the theory of evidence-based policing, evaluating different processes: the requirements or needs of intelligence, the intelligence process developed by analysts and their managers, the decision-making process, and the effects of the CT strategies (efficiency, costs, impacts on citizens and other non-desired effects).

Feedback is crucial. We will point the relevance of the use of evaluation processes, but there are other informal processes, which are informal channels in the daily routine, useful to improve all the process and share information, new needs or requirements, problems, new

developments and ways of action. Therefore, feedback is a great tool for analysts, but also for decision-makers.

Figure 4: Holistic Process of CT Decision-Making (Blanco & Cohen, 2014)



*Inputs*

Knowledge is frequently considered to be based only on data and information, put in a context and orientated to a purpose.

In our model we propose that both imagination and creativity have to be inputs of the information system.

The 9/11 Commission Report stressed in a chapter devoted to prospective analysis (“Foresight and Hindsight”), that the lack of imagination was the major mistake that can be made when trying to prevent the terrorist attacks. According to the Report, “it is therefore crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination”. Richard Clark (National Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, NSC, 1997-2001) attributed his awareness on the possible use of airplanes as weapons more to Tom Clancy novels, rather than to warnings from the intelligence community.

Imagination is needed to identify attackers, discover vulnerabilities, think about new modus operandi in terrorist attacks, connect the dots (one of the key functions of intelligence analysis), preview scenarios, establish hypothesis to evaluate, suggest different alternatives, have different points of view, and develop new ways and new processes of analysis. Imagination is, unfortunately, a non-used source of information (Blanco and Cohen, 2014).

Finally, the experience as well as the previous knowledge generated by security experts (and also the one derived from knowledge management systems or from learnt lessons) and its observations must be a continuous input in the process, as they integrate tacit knowledge.

*Stakeholders. Nobody has the monopoly of knowledge*

We can state, without fear of contradiction that the State monopoly on security is over. Security is a shared responsibility among multiple actors. This statement, however, is compatible with the clear direction of the State on this matter, which must lead initiatives fighting threats such as terrorism and violent extremism.

In addition, there is not a monopoly on knowledge concerning these threats. Our societies, marked by extreme specialisation and the creation of silos of knowledge in companies, organisations or universities, face the challenge of ending “*the folly of those who think they have the wisdom*” that Napoleon marked. We should claim a greater role in the field of security for Lao Tzu, who noted that “*knowledge is not known, it is humility. To think that you know what you do not know, that's disease*”.

In short, the intelligence services and law enforcement agencies have the objective to strengthen their ties and connections with other actors in the systems, which collect, analyse and disseminate security knowledge.

The Universities contribute to understand and shape the world in which we live, and the future societies to come. They constitute a constant source of ideas and discussions, and they are centres for research and innovation. Their role goes beyond the training of young people for professional performance. Through collaboration, several research lines must be deepened, for example, in research areas such as evidence-based policing, called to assess and measure the efficiency of the developed policies against phenomena such as terrorism.

Think-tanks are centres of thought devoted to the production of ideas and recommendations about the world we live in. They promote the adoption of policies, provide spaces for dialogue and debate, and cater for largely political and security issues. The activity of think-tanks covers spaces and needs unresolved by Universities. Since they are less specialised than universities, they analyse issues closer to everyday life with a greater diversity of actors (e.g. economists, lawyers, sociologists, historians, security, and other professionals), thus, becoming amplified intelligence communities and generating a future-oriented knowledge.

The knowledge available to private security firms, corporate security departments, or companies providing technologies for information and security is essential to understand new specific criminal phenomena in certain sectors; cooperate and assist in crime prevention, and facilitate -in the latter case- technologies that support policing.

The process of empowerment of the individual is unstoppable due to the widespread access to information and the democratisation of knowledge. These capabilities are enhanced through collaborative networks, that are also enabled by social media. Such capabilities could be defined as individual empowerment networks that promote important initiatives and collective intelligence, exploited by the government and security institutions, and used, for example, by US agencies, such as the *Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA)* in collaborative projects *Forecasting Ace* (<http://forecastingace.com/>).

All of these different actors should collaborate with public foresight centres, documentation departments, and analysis centres. They all have common characteristics: knowledge workers and knowledge. They obtain, process and disseminate knowledge adapted to the aims pursued. The enhancement of knowledge networks between these centres is a valuable asset. It can be said that knowledge begets knowledge, which is the reason why there are often informal, transversal networks, and collaboration between these departments.

As Montesquieu noted, "*we must study hard to know little*". We should add that we must listen a lot to know more, something that Churchill defined as courage: "*courage is what it takes to stand up and speak*" but also what it takes to "*sit down and listen*".

#### *New (and old) paths to do the same things in a different way*

In policy-making, knowledge and intelligence are developed to be used. Treverton (2006) makes an important classification of attempts to address needs in intelligence, as well as how to meet each of them. He points out the need for tactical information, updates on the progress of validated indicators, pattern recognition, categorisation of emerging issues, implications of public policy, and the establishment of future scenarios.

The model that we propose has a clear objective: to get the best possible understanding about terrorism and violent extremism. We propose to use a combination of methodologies from social sciences and structured techniques of analysis used by intelligence services and law enforcement agencies, and to establish relations between strategic and operational intelligence. Data from different sources is a key element for the strategic planning, but good strategies are fundamental for the development of plans and actions related to fighting terrorism.

There are two other key elements that can be improved: the integration of intelligence and terrorism studies, and the study of the future in order to count on the necessary vision about trends, future developments and scenarios that could lead us to decide ways to avoid the worst of them.

In order to classify the methodologies and techniques used, we propose a temporal order, defining what can we get from the past, the present, and the future, and identifying ways to get it.

By analysing history, we can establish patterns, identify trends, and learn. The methodologies proposed are analysis of lessons learned, case studies, review of literature, best practices, bibliographies of the actors in the security system, and repositories.

The analysis of the present makes us understand the variables that determine the phenomenon and the actors that have an impact over it, the protection and assurance of security, alert generation, and evaluation of policies and decisions. Among the methodologies for these purposes we note STEEP, SWOT, morphological analysis, structural analysis, cross-impact analysis, causal analysis, MICMAC, environmental scanning, indicators, MACTOR, creativity techniques, game theory, text analysis and news, interviews, profiles of groups or individuals, red-hat analysis, *what if*, social network analysis, check deception, evaluating information, timelines, concept maps, weak signals, early warning, critical judgments, or cost-benefit analysis.

In the long run, our goal is to predict, imagine, and shape the future we desire. We can use techniques of Big Data, trend analysis, econometrics, complex algorithms, expert systems, artificial intelligence, toolbox from Godet, visioning, futures Wheel, Delphi, analysis of competing hypotheses, backcasting, *what if*, scenarios, gaming, simulation, horizon scanning, or modelling.

Managing uncertainty is a problem. Manski (2013) notes that when policies are adopted there is very limited knowledge on the future effects of such actions. Therefore, it would be necessary to evaluate the impacts of the policies, as well as develop future knowledge about future scenarios.

### *Continuous evaluation to fight blindness*

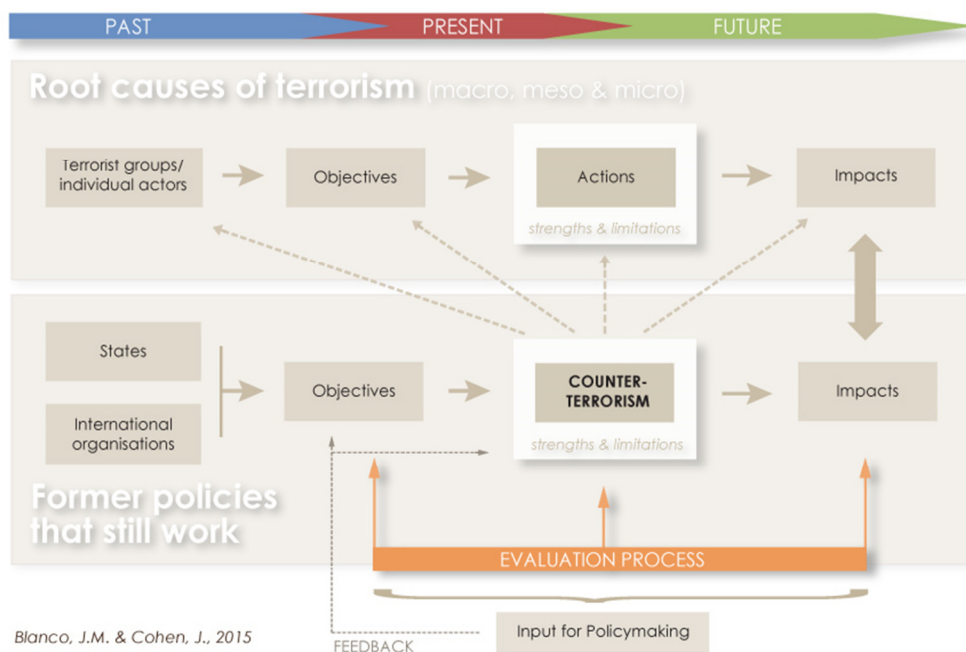
There is a great lack of evaluation models that allow us to judge the effects of policies with certainty.

The purpose of evidence-based policing should be to evaluate if Counter-Terrorism policies work and set the way in which we could measure them. However, our aim should be broader, as we should design a holistic model in order to assure that policy makers have the best knowledge and the best intelligence when they eventually take decisions on Counter-Terrorism.

Therefore, evaluating public policies on Counter-Terrorism is a continuous process that entails, at least, four key stages: the production of knowledge on terrorism by the stakeholders of the system, the intelligence process developed by analysts and their managers, the decision-making process, and the effects of the CT strategies. This process is led by different actors (universities, think-tanks, intelligence analysts, government civil servants, lobbying bodies, citizens' desires and needs, etc.), and aims, not only to know the effectiveness of them, but also to improve the future policy-making.

The model that we propose draws two clear horizontal lines of strategic action of the "terrorist actors" (states, groups or individuals) and "antiterrorist actors" (states and international organizations, mainly). Both lines allow a vertical comparison between their elements and the design of antiterrorist policies, which act over each and every indicated field.

Figure 5: Counter-Terrorism Decision-Making Evaluation (Blanco & Cohen, 2015)



There is no doubt that antiterrorist policies have to fight against the causes of terrorism; this is a complex matter because no clear consensus exists about them, nor a consensus about the concept of terrorism itself.

Secondly, antiterrorist policies are normally focused on the “terrorist actors” themselves (states, groups or individuals). It is necessary to develop an analysis of the characteristics of these groups, such as their ideology, leadership, hierarchy, members, funding, action area, the weapons they use, relations with other groups, modus operandi, support of groups and sympathizers, relations with other criminal typologies, shelters or training centres and ways of recruiting. Each of these elements offer, with a simple look at a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), a great variety of action lines to develop in order to counteract their objectives.

The “terrorist actors” have a series of objectives, among which the main one is to terrorize the population and generate fear, while searching to change the system towards their own interests. They attempt to spread fear, polarize the societies, produce the overreaction of the states to justify their actions, and obtain political grants.

On the contrary, and if we analyse the courses of action of the “antiterrorist actors”, we can state that they have a clear objective: to grant security in order to allow the free exercise of rights and freedoms. The antiterrorist policies have to pursue these objectives through the detection, prevention, detention and persecution of the possible attacks. Resilience is one of the values that all national security strategies point out, and it is defined as the capacity to react to an attack, ensuring the normal functioning of the system and the public services.

If we compare the objectives of “terrorist actors” with those of “antiterrorist actors”, we notice that there exists a clear asymmetry. Terrorists do not have a legal framework to obey; they do not submit to any rule, they have a wide range of parallel funding ways, they do not pay taxes, they do not have ethical criteria, they do not defend political or social values and they do not receive pressure from their citizens, the democratic political opposition or the media.

“Terrorist actors” try to fulfil their objectives through different actions: attacks, kidnappings, illicit trafficking, communication, dissemination of videos and pictures, recruitment, funding, indoctrination, sending to conflict zones, etc. In many occasions, especially after an attack, this last factor is considered the main element of the antiterrorist attack, but it should not be the only one.

Terrorist impacts are those derived from the attacks, which can be counted through deaths or injured people, the material damages generated, or the insurance amounts. However, there are other impacts which are not usually considered: certain economic effects (displacement of the business activity or reduction of the GDP), the level of social terror (which, if it is the main objective of the terrorism, it should be the first antiterrorist objective and the indicator for the evaluation of the antiterrorist fight), the way in which the terrorist action determines the decision making of the states, the way it affects our system, values and ways of living, and even our own rights and freedoms.

We can define Counter-Terrorism as “the policies, operations and programs that the governments implement in order to fight terrorism” (Spencer, 2006: 180).

In order to evaluate the antiterrorist fight it is necessary to know this definition, as well as the different models existing (it is not the same in the United States than in Spain, in the United Kingdom than in France or Israel), the possible catalogue of existing measures, the different methodologies that have to be adopted for this purpose, and how to measure the impacts of terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. The antiterrorist measures of the countries



depend on a series of political and institutional factors (Foley, 2014) that determine them, and that in some way can even get to be limitative at the moment of adapting ourselves to the terrorist threat, that evolves and changes constantly. In contrast with that changing velocity, the states use slow bureaucratic systems for the adoption of measures.

Lee Jarvis (2015) proposes a framework known as “*The Three W’s of Counterterrorism*” for the design of antiterrorist policies. The first one (*Is it Warranted*) requires to value if it is necessary to adopt a new policy, as mechanisms may already exist, that only need to be strengthened. The second one (*Will it Work*) tries to determine the objective of a concrete antiterrorist measure, predict how it will work, analyse a priori its possible effects and know its impacts. The third one (*Is it Worth the Consequences*) tries to measure the effect and impacts, as well as the consequences, the ones that were sought and also those that are unintended.

Finally, the antiterrorist policies produce a wide range of impacts that must be measured. The impacts of the terrorist and the antiterrorist actions can be compared. The antiterrorist policies have to act against all the elements of the graphic that has been proposed as a model: causes, groups, objectives and actions. But we also have to value whether the adopted measures are contrary to the own objectives (for example, because they limit rights and freedoms, putting them at the service of security and not backwards) and to the values of our societies (when using procedures such as tortures, detentions without a trial, secret prisons), or if they generate unintended effects (they create a displacement effect in the modus operandi, they cause a change of the terrorist objectives, and are used to enhance the terrorist narrative or put other communities in the spotlight).

It is impossible to measure all of these impacts arithmetically (De Graaf, 2010), but there are several methodologies and models that could be applied. It implies a multidisciplinary effort (criminology, law, psychology, sociology, economy, philosophy, anthropology, education...). It is not possible to evaluate CT only with rationalist approaches (number of attacks, number of arrested people). They must be completed with constructivism (Spencer, 2006). We need to apply either quantitative and qualitative methodologies, or *laypersons discourse* (analysing in different mass media, blogs, forums, tweets, the use of adverbs, adjectives and verbs that are building our vision of this world) (Milliken, 1999, 2001), the “*performativity*” model from Beatrice De Graaf (2010), or introduce foresight in the model (each measure must be analysed with prospective methodology before its implementation, with the objectives pointed by Jarvis, and with methodologies like factor analysis, game of actors, cross impacts matrix, what if, trend analysis, wild cards or scenarios) (Blanco & Cohen, 2014).

Following this model, and Figure 2, we propose a “*6 Step by Step Evaluation Process*”, with the following stages (Blanco and Cohen, 2015):

1. Ensure that CT policies are facing terrorist actors (groups, states or individuals), terrorist objectives, terrorist actions (including financing and communication) and terrorist impacts, but especially, (although it is not usually taken into consideration), the root causes of terrorism, and the effects of previous CT policies. Sometimes CT policies are only oriented towards one of these factors, especially terrorist groups or individuals as a reaction to previous actions and attacks.
2. Establish criteria, methodologies and indicators to evaluate CT impacts.
3. Compare the impacts of terrorist actions with the impact of CT policies.
4. Carry out a critical analysis of each CT measure or, at least, packs of them, testing their need, effectiveness, efficiency and possible unwanted effects.

5. Confirm that the policies do not generate opposite effects to our goals or collide with our values.
6. Redefine CT policies, eliminating or changing former policies, and introducing a long-term vision before implementing new ones. Avoid overreaction and bad decisions taken in the past.

## CONCLUSION

In order to start addressing the great challenge that entails dealing with terrorism, first we need to have an appropriate definition of each phenomenon that composes the situation. An appreciation of the approaches used in terrorism is also requested. But this approach is not enough, because there is not a general consensus on terms such as terrorism, radicalisation, or extremism.

Counter-Terrorism decision-making needs the best knowledge and intelligence in order to design effective strategies and actions. Effectiveness of the Counter-Terrorism measures should be evaluated. For this purpose, the quality of knowledge and intelligence products must be improved, looking at the *big picture*. This implies integrating the existing fragmented terrorism production, identifying new fields that need additional research, and merging different approaches, methodologies and structured intelligence techniques.

Terrorism expands in a clear context of rapid change, greater complexity and genuine uncertainties. Uncertainty is a key characteristic of our societies, and it generates fears that must be managed by governments and security institutions. Critical thinking, large doses of imagination, creative foresight and horizon scanning methodologies are the pillars of the model we propose. A model that aims to facilitate the Counter-Terrorism decision-making process.

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