
Reviewed by Alex P. Schmid

As most of those interested in terrorism and counter-terrorism find themselves unable to absorb the thousands of new papers, reports, articles, book chapters and monographs that become available every year, there has been a growing demand for handbooks on these subjects, driven by the hope that they would separate wheat from chaff. Recent handbooks include *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, edited by Erica Chenoweth et al (Oxford: OUP, 2019, 795 pp.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Counterterrorism Policy*, edited by Scott N. Romaniuk et al (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 1098 pp.), and *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, edited by Andrew Silke (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019, 694 pp.). The most recent addition is the *Handbook of Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Post 9/11* by two Australia-based (D.M. Jones & C. Ungerer) and two UK-based editors (P. Schulte & M.L.R. Smith), published in December 2019. One third of the authors are associated with London’s King's College while one fifth are from various Australian universities. Some of the contributors (e.g. Rajan Basra, Michele Groppi, Annamaria Kiss and Gina Vale) are promising newcomers to the field of terrorism studies while others (e.g. William Rosenau, Seamus Hughes and Andrew T.H. Tan) are old hands. The volume contains 13 chapters in Part I, focusing on general themes, and 18 chapters in Part II, focusing on regional and country studies, plus one introductory and two concluding chapters.

The editors admit that the contributors to this volume cannot “....resolve any of the extant theoretical, definitional and practical policy dilemmas that they highlight”. Rather, they seek to “....outline the various directions in which informed scholarship and research is advancing” (p.9). This book addresses relatively underexplored topics like ‘Counter-terrorism with Chinese characteristics’ (chapter 28 by Rosita Dellios) and ‘Future war, AI, drones, terrorism and counterterror’ (chapter 34 by Paul Schulte), but is largely silent on new developments in Africa (except for John Maska’s ‘A tale of two strategies: the enduring African legacies of Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb – chapter 21). Latin America also receives scant attention, except for Markus-Michael Müller’s chapter 30 ‘Terrorism and insurgency in post-9/11Latin America’. South Asia also has only one chapter (Prem Mahadevan’s chapter 26 ‘South Asia: from terrorism to radicalism’). There is, however, another chapter (chap. 27) on Southeast Asia from the hand of Andrew T.H. Tan. On the other hand, there is plenty of attention for the communicative aspects of terrorism: Tim Stevens has a chapter (chap. 4) on ‘Strategic cyberterrorism: problems of ends, ways and means’, while Jonathan R. Woodier and Andreas Zingerle focus in chapter 6 on ‘The Internet and cybersecurity: taking the virtual fight to cybercrime and cyberwarfare’. Joshua Rovner addresses his chapter 9 on ‘Intelligence in the age of Twitter’, while Jonathan R. Woodier is the author of ‘The media and terror: undermining information asymmetry’ (chapter 8).

The authors of this volume represent mainstream, and mostly realist, perspectives on terrorism rather than the critical terrorism studies school. About the latter, two of the four editors of the volume, D. M. Jones and M.L.R. Smith, in chapter 10, titled ‘Critical theory and terrorism’, note that ‘...critical terrorism studies requires no research into the history, ideology, or strategic thinking of transnational non-state actors like al-Qaeda or its regional affiliates. Instead, critical engagement is a euphemism for an assault on the Australian, British and US government responses to terrorism....’ (p.117). This is not to say that the editors themselves are not critical in their own way about US and UK government responses to terrorism after 9/11. Indeed, in their introductory chapter 1, they take issue with “...the incoherence that characterized the Western response to 9/11” (p.1). They also refer to “[t]he intellectual confusion surrounding how to think about what the events of 9/11 signified....” (p.1).
However, in their attempt to cut through the Gordian knot of existing confusions, in one of the final chapters (chapt. 33 - ‘Strategy and terrorism: discourse and analysis’), M.L.R. Smith and David Martin Jones come up with a dozen items some of which are themselves, at least to this reviewer, debatable or confusing: “1. Terrorism is not hard to define; 2. Terrorism is not an independent social reality; 3. Terrorism has no causes; 4. Terrorism can only be a practice (a tactic); 5. Terrorism is a rational tool of policy; 6. Terrorism is not indicative of behavioural or mental problems; 7. Terrorism is not a coherent means of applying moral judgment; 8. Terrorism does not possess any intrinsic link with non-state actors; 9. Terrorism is not a weapon of the weak; 10. There are no such things as terrorist organizations; 11. The notion of a ‘terrorist’ is equally erroneous; 12. One person's terrorist is not another person’s freedom fighter” (pp. 409-411). The editors try to make their case for these propositions in some detail which, however, cannot be reproduced here in the framework of a book review.

All in all, this *Handbook of Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Post 9/11* is a welcome addition to existing efforts to survey the field of (counter-)terrorism studies. No university library should be without it.

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