



TSAS
canadian network for research on
terrorism, security and society

Government Partner Research Priorities

(updated 7 December 2018)

The use of technology – by both sides

1. What are some innovative tools and methods the security and intelligence community can use to counter a wide range of threats from disinformation to foreign influence in the electoral process to ensure the integrity of Canadian institutions?
2. What accountability gaps are generated in the Canadian intelligence community by changing technologies and bulk collection of intelligence, and how do we resolve them?
3. What are the opportunities and challenges presented by new technologies (such as the blockchain), and their exploitation by violent extremists, and what are the opportunities and challenges posed by the adoption of these technologies in counter-terrorism, countering terrorist financing, and law enforcement?
4. What innovative digital forensics and interception techniques can the security and intelligence community adopt to enhance the ability of evidence collection?

Characteristics of particular groups

5. What are the similarities and differences between indigenous (First Nation land claims and sovereignty political protests) & right wing anti-government movements (I.e. Freeman on the Land - Sovereigns)
6. How do AQ- inspired Islamist terrorists view being charged, convicted, and incarcerated?
7. What does the existing literature tell us about the nexus between gangs and radicalized groups? Are they blurring together in prisons or communities (in Canada or globally)? Is there evidence of coerced recruitment or religious conversion? What can we learn about how to support resiliency among offenders and community members?
8. What are the similarities and differences in recruitment methods, tactics, targeted populations or persons between convicted organized crime group members and terrorist / violent extremist group members in the prison setting?

Metrics and Evaluation

9. How do we measure performance and evaluate programs and policies related to (a) radicalization to violence? (b) prison-based interventions, measures and programs aimed at disengagement from violent extremism?
10. How should we measure accountability of intelligence review bodies like SIRC / NSICOP?
11. What are the most effective ways to evaluate terrorism prevention and intervention programs and activities? Interview-based qualitative evaluations relying on practitioner participation can be difficult to implement due to the time pressures on the practitioners. Where can we innovate in qualitative and quantitative methods to assess outcomes, including any unintended effects, of these activities?
12. How available and effective are resources and programs offered by settlement service organizations at building resilience to extremism among newcomer populations?
13. How effective is radicalization/Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Awareness Training for correctional staff (e.g. courses, programs, booklets, pamphlets, indicators and guidelines, etc.)?

Accountability

14. What are the accountability gaps in the Canadian intelligence oversight community, and how do we mitigate them?
15. What are the potentially conflicting role of religious service providers (i.e. chaplains, imams) in correctional settings as facilitators of rehabilitation and reform vs. security observers (and associated service reporting requirements)? How are these navigated?

Gender and Diversity

16. What are some innovative tools that address the way that terrorists use the internet as a tool for recruitment, training, propaganda, and financing, often by exploiting the different ways men and women can be targeted online, by investigating the gender-based strategies of terrorist groups?
17. How can we control for gender bias in counter-terrorism, or how can we use a gendered lens to analyse counter-terrorism? How do we implement GBA+ in counter-terrorism policy?
18. What is the role of diversity (or lack thereof) in police forces and law enforcement in building trust and confidence among racialized newcomer communities?
19. What is the role of intersectional identities (e.g. women, immigrant, racialized, Muslim) on the vulnerability of groups to extremism and radicalization?
20. What are the advantages (ie reform and coping) and disadvantages (ie potential for radicalization or groupthink) of prison-based offender faith worship?

21. Can models for understanding religious conversion be applied to offenders within a correctional setting (both Provincial/Territorial and Federal)?

Public Perceptions of Security & Intelligence Institutions

22. What are public perceptions and expectations of accountability bodies such as SIRC/NSICOP?
23. What are public expectations of the intelligence community on issues such as surveillance, 5G, quantum, data analytics, and lawful access?
24. What is the impact on society of prosecuting terrorism as non-terrorism (ie as murder, or by using other crimes as a way of prosecuting terrorism – the ‘Al Capone’ method), particularly for communities who may particularly want to see prosecution *as* terrorism?

Public Safety & Security

25. How do we best mitigate risks associated with soft targets (public spaces that may be vulnerable to attacks)?
26. How do we analyse existing data on soft targets?
27. How and when does everyday violence elevate to radicalized violence or hate crimes?
28. How (well) do multi-agency partnerships between the criminal justice system and Public Safety work to manage and re-integrate convicted terrorists and violent extremists into the community?
29. What are the predominant narratives of radical ideological groups in Canada, and what are some effective counter-narratives specific to the Canadian context?
30. After release, what are the rates and characteristics of the continued engagement with radical beliefs and activities vs. desistance from those beliefs and activities among offenders radicalized during their period of incarceration?

Emerging Terrorist Threats

31. To what extent is terrorist online media (e.g. propaganda, discussion boards, social media presence, etc.) impacted by news of CBRN-related attacks? Is there a noticeable impact on interest by terrorist groups or their supporters?
32. Is there an interest among domestic right-wing extremist/anti-government groups to use CBRN materials (e.g. mailing powder, hoaxes, etc.)?
33. What level of interest is there among terrorist groups for conducting CBRN attacks? Is there any interest to conduct CBRN attacks against Canadian targets (domestic or foreign)?

34. Is there an emerging terrorist threat in the realm of environment? Either from radicalized environmentalists, or from other extremist groups making environmental destruction a goal of their action?
35. Do the political pre-conditions for the sorts of severe social fractures that have allowed the rise of right-wing extremist violence other countries exist in Canada?

Diplomacy & Global Politics

36. What is the state of anti-terrorism debates at the UN, and how can Canada best protect its interests there? How do we preserve the gains we have made in preserving human rights while combatting terrorism in global diplomatic forums?
37. What are the implications of living next to a socially fractured USA for Canada, and Canadian policies on PVE, CVE and counter-terrorism?
38. What are the similarities and difference between Canadian – US policy on the management of federally convicted terrorist offenders?

Law and Prosecution

39. How do we increase the number of prosecutions of terrorist crimes?
40. How do we manage the intelligence-to-evidence challenge in a new legal & oversight regime?

Public-Private Partnerships

41. What are the prospects and track-record of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in PVE, CVE, and counter-terrorism?

Societal Effects and Resilience

42. How do extremist right-wing discourses shape the framing and content of media narratives about immigrants and immigration?
43. How do the types, geographical spread and incidences of hate crimes have an impact on the sense of belonging and vulnerability of newcomer populations?
44. What can existing literature tell us about the development of healthy personal identities from a variety of different fields/domains, and how varies theories apply to those with both criminogenic and ideological needs?
45. How do we build resilience to radicalized discourses in newcomer communities?