

The changing modes and frames of contemporary counter-terrorism: policies, practices and institutions of prevention

Convenors:

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The modes and frames of counter-terrorism have evolved significantly in the last decades, at domestic levels but also globally. Traditional counter-terrorism measures, often reactive and police-based, have in many countries been complemented by preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) measures that seek to anticipate and prevent political violence, rather than acting after or during its occurrence.

This so-called preventive turn has thus broadened the scope of counter-terrorism and reframed the prevention of terrorist violence into the task of an increasing number of societal and institutional actors. In other words, the turn towards P/CVE has led to an ever-widening of the space in which counter-terrorism operates. This widened scope of counter-terrorism has raised questions about the efficacy and legitimacy of preventive counter-terrorism and about the implications of involving an increasing number of professions into the prevention of political violence.

In this workshop, we want to foster a cross-disciplinary discussion around preventive counter-terrorism in contemporary society, its origins, its modes of practice and its actors as well as theoretical frameworks through which we can better understand the recent developments. We are looking for contributions covering a wide range of theoretical perspectives and disciplines. For example, contributions could focus on empirical studies of counter-terrorism practices; theorisations of prevention, preemption or anticipation; the productive effects of preventive counter-terrorism; cross-country comparisons on the implementation and/or politics of prevention; the global changing of security logics; or the production of threats and risks. We also encourage future-looking contributions that seek to examine emerging fields of counter-terrorism, such as right-wing extremism and online extremist communities.

This workshop welcomes contributions which address – but are not limited to - the following questions:

- How has counter-terrorism changed over time? How significant and how far-reaching is the preventive turn?
- How do preventive counter-terrorism politics differ and travel across time and space?
- What are the potential gaps between the provisions contemplated in P/CVE policy and their implementation?
- What are the advantages and limitations of a “whole of society” approach to security?
- Do P/CVE measures differ in their effectiveness towards different groups and across the ideological spectrum?
- Considering the ever-expanding space of counter-terrorism, where are its limits? When does P/CVE stop being counter-terrorism and start being another kind of policy (e.g. civic education/social policy)?
- How does the move to preventive counter-terrorism relate to overall security agendas at a domestic or regional level?
- Given the critiques of the epistemological and ontological foundations of certain counter-terrorism politics, should current counter-terrorism paradigms be reformed or substituted?