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Dossiê: O dia que mudou o mundo?  
O 11 de Setembro 20 anos depois

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**9/11 and the emergence of Critical Terrorism Studies: main debates,  
theoretical advancements, and ways forwards**

***9/11 e a criação dos Estudos Críticos do Terrorismo: debates principais, avanços teóricos  
e linhas de investigação futuras***

***El 11-S y la creación de los Estudios Críticos de Terrorismo: debates principales, avances  
teóricos y líneas de investigación futuras***

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**ABSTRACT:** The attacks of 11 September 2001 have profoundly impacted the field of terrorism studies. In this article we aim to trace, in particular, the impact of this date on the establishment of critical terrorism studies (CTS) as a school of thought. Such an endeavour aims to create an ‘umbrella-term’ to gather scholars from diverse backgrounds, in an attempt to provide a counter-narrative to the dominant, mainstream understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism. CTS scholarship offers alternative approaches to state-centred, ahistorical, and ‘problem-solving’ standpoints, which have been at the origin of numerous atrocities committed, for example, under

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the Global War on Terror banner. This article explores the key debates stirred by CTS scholarship over the years, its recent advancements, and existing gaps.

Keywords: Critical Terrorism Studies. 9/11. Global War on Terror. Terrorism. Counter-terrorism.

**RESUMO:** Os ataques de 11 de setembro de 2001 tiveram um impacto profundo no campo dos estudos do terrorismo. Neste artigo pretendemos traçar, em particular, o impacto desta data no estabelecimento dos Estudos Críticos do Terrorismo (ECT) como escola de pensamento. Tal esforço visa criar um “termo abrangente” para reunir acadêmicos de diversas origens, numa tentativa de fornecer uma contra narrativa para a compreensão dominante do terrorismo e do contraterrorismo. A literatura dos ECT oferece abordagens alternativas para pontos de vista centrados no estado, a-históricos e de “solução de problemas”, que estão na origem de inúmeras atrocidades cometidas, por exemplo, sob a bandeira da Guerra Global ao Terror. Este artigo explora os principais debates estimulados pela literatura dos CTS ao longo dos anos, os seus avanços mais recentes e as lacunas existentes.

Palavras-chave: Estudos Críticos de Terrorismo. 9/11. Guerra Global ao Terror. Terrorismo. Contraterrorismo.

**RESUMEN:** Los atentados del 11-S han tenido un impacto profundo en el campo de los Estudios de Terrorismo. Nuestro objetivo, en este artículo, es ilustrar el impacto de esta fecha en el establecimiento de los Estudios Críticos de Terrorismo (CTS) como escuela de pensamiento. Este campo representa un esfuerzo para crear una contra-narrativa a las maneras dominante y mainstream de entender el terrorismo y el contra-terrorismo. La literatura CTS ofrece enfoques alternativos a los puntos de vista estado-céntricos, ahistóricos y “problem-solving”, al origen de las numerosas atrocidades llevadas a cabo, por ejemplo, en la Guerra Global contra el Terror. Este artículo explora los debates claves promovidos por la literatura CTS a lo largo de los años, sus logros más recientes, y sus lagunas.

Palabras clave: Estudios Críticos de Terrorismo. 9/11. Guerra Global contra el Terrorismo. Terrorismo. Antiterrorismo.

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## Introduction

Critical terrorism studies (CTS) emerged in rupture with the so-called mainstream terrorism studies (MST), which some see as a subfield of security studies (Schmid and Jongman 1988), while others defend as a field of study in itself (Reinares 2012). MST contain a large amount of the terrorism research produced since the establishment of terrorism as a field of study during the 1960s and 1970s, which was motivated by the combination of the rise of anti-colonial movements and wars, and by the conflicts promoted by the Cold War bipolar rivalry then installed around the globe (Jackson et al. 2011). MST have been organized since their conception around Western states' interests, raising a set of issues that range from definitional to methodological and implying various limitations which can be seen at both analytical and normative level. According to Lee Jarvis (2009), the analytical level is related to the fact that terrorism is seen through essentialist lenses that consider it as an objective reality, neglecting contextual factors (e.g., social, political, historical), and how it is constructed. The normative level is related to the fact that terrorism studies are based on a "problem-solving pursuit" approach and show, above all, concerns with generating "policy-relevant research" (Jarvis 2009, 14–15). Consequently, CTS criticizes MTS for being focused on developing counter-terrorist proposals rather than "gaining a social science understanding of the phenomenon" (Della Porta 2013, 12). In addition, they contend that MTS tend to engage in a discourse that delegitimizes the use of political violence by opposition groups against the state while legitimizing the violence perpetrated by the state to enforce its political will (Franks 2009). Thus, as contended by Roger Mac Ginty (2013, 219), the MST community is "stuck in a *Groundhog Day* of confirmation bias, unable to conduct research among the very group it has subjectified".

Critical approaches to terrorism are not a new take on terrorism studies and did not appear after 9/11. In the 1970s, left-wing scholars developed political-economy approaches to violence, whose contribution was marked by the affirmation that terrorism, seen as a strategy, could be employed by both state and non-state actors (Chomsky and Herman 1979; Herman 1982; Herman and O'Sullivan 1989; Gold-Biss 1994). However, after 9/11, CTS carved its clear space and footprint in the field of terrorism studies, as some scholars felt frustrated with the way 'terrorism' was understood and depicted. Such scholars were also horrified by the human rights abuses that counter-terrorism measures were legitimizing – something brought to the fore by the US' answer to 9/11 and its interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. This was triggered by Richard Jackson's 2005 book, *Writing the War on Terrorism*, and further strengthened by the setting up in 2006 of the Critical Studies on Terrorism Working Group (CSTWG) within the British International Studies Association (BISA), the creation of the journal *Critical Studies in Terrorism* in early 2007 and of the

Routledge Critical Terrorism Studies book series in 2009, and, more recently, the publication of the Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies in 2016.

Initially, CTS authors focused, predominantly, on the critical assessment and discourses legitimizing the so-called Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Jackson 2005; Stokes 2005; Blakeley 2007; Blakeley 2009; Miller and Mills 2009) in order to denounce the atrocities being committed under such a banner and to offer a counter-narrative to the dominant, mainstream understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism. However, over time, research topics have expanded and developed in relation to the debates of the day, which will be covered in the following section. Therefore, as opposed to MST, CTS consist of “terrorism-related research that self-consciously adopts a sceptical attitude towards state-centric understandings of terrorism and which does not take existing terrorism knowledge for granted but is willing to challenge widely held assumptions and beliefs” (Jackson 2007, 246). At the heart of CTS is a concern with progress and emancipation towards a better, more just, and equal world, which implies an open normative agenda and a recognition that objective, value-free social science is impossible.

In this vein, in 2007, Richard Jackson issued *The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies*, which organized this subfield around three overarching elements: ontological, epistemological, and ethical (Jackson 2007). In ontological terms, drawing from constructivism in International Relations, CTS perceive the term terrorism as a label that merely represents a violent political strategy at the service of state and non-state actors, and as a social fact that evolves and changes according to spatial and temporal coordinates (Toros 2008); not as a stable, objective and scientifically identifiable phenomenon, as described by MST (Jarvis 2009). Terrorism is rooted in historical, political, and cultural contexts, which at a micro-level are subjective constructions of reality made by individuals that see in violence a strategy to achieve their goals (Della Porta 2013).

In epistemological terms, knowledge is considered a social process attained by language, discourse, and relational exercises, which is always dependent on the context of its conception and connected to power, being susceptible to serving “as a political tool of influence and dominance” (Jackson et al. 2011, 37). Thus, CTS recognize the uncertainty and partiality of knowledge regarding terrorism, suggesting a clear and constant critical reflexivity in the knowledge production process, acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher, the interests behind the research and the effects it can have on society. CTS equally invite methodological and disciplinary pluralism, denounce ahistorical and decontextualized analysis, raise gender issues, and engage with communities and professionals in the field (Jackson 2007).

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Finally, in ethical terms, CTS give precedence to universal human values and societal security rather than national security concerns, assuming an emancipatory approach (McDonald 2009). Such an approach aims to eradicate myths and preconceptions that surround terrorism and that, on the one hand, incarcerate people by employing the dynamics of fear and terror (Breen-Smyth 2007), and, on the other hand, address the conditions impelling individuals to resort to terroristic strategies (Jackson 2009). According to Jeroen Gunning, this emancipatory praxis allows us to

move beyond the state as the sole legitimate referent, and beyond state-centric security notions, to the wider notion of human security and an analysis of how ‘terrorism’ and counter-terrorism affect the security of all, starting from the (gendered) individual, through the community to the state, and including such concerns as social justice, inequality, ‘structural violence’, culture and discrimination. (Gunning 2007, 376).

Thus, through emancipation, CTS has aimed to gather efforts to end the use of state and non-state terrorist violence, to defend human rights in situations of terrorism and counter-terrorist violence, to combat illegal and immoral practices such as targeted killings and torture, to offer non-violent responses to terrorism, and to address structural conditions that might lead to terrorism (Jackson et al. 2011).

In the context of the current special issue, which commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11, this article aims to trace the impact of this date on the field of terrorism studies, focusing particularly on its role in the establishment of CTS as a school of thought. In the following pages, we discuss the core debates stirred by CTS scholarship over the years, its recent advancements, and, eventually, discuss existing gaps and ways forward.

## **Key debates in CTS**

The critical research agenda proposed by Richard Jackson, Jeroen Gunning and Marie Breen-Smyth (2009) called for: in-depth and systematic analysis of the linguistic, conceptual, ideological, and institutional processes, as well as political-economic contexts behind the field of terrorism studies and counter-terrorism practices; thorough research on state terrorism and repression; contextualized analysis of terrorism in time and space, including the dynamics of violent and non-violent militancy in various social movements; gender-sensitive analysis of terrorism that not only focus on the role of women in terrorism and counter-terrorism, but also the role of masculinity; the inclusion of voices and perspectives of those in the global South; and detailed examinations of the ethics, impacts and effectiveness of counter-terrorism practices and policies. A number of scholars and students of terrorism have taken up different parts of this critical

research agenda and made important contributions to CTS as a subfield, a few of which we cover in this section.

First, CTS scholarship has thoroughly engaged with questions of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and praxis in the study of terrorism from the point of view of different disciplines and alternative theoretical and methodological approaches inspired by critical theory, constructivism, post-structuralism, postcolonialism, and feminist theory, to name just a few (for an overview see Stump and Dixit 2013; Dixit and Stump 2016). Such an engagement is not surprising considering that CTS was founded with the intention of deepening and broadening the study of terrorism (Toros and Gunning 2009; Jarvis 2009). From the very beginning, CTS followed the spirit of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and of the Aberystwyth School's approach to security, and placed normativity based on emancipation at the centre of its political agenda (McDonald 2007). Therefore, ‘doing’ CTS does not only imply deconstructing existing understandings of terrorism and resulting counter-terrorism – although this is an important “face” of the project (Jarvis 2009). It also means looking for and formulating new, less violent, more ethical and humane ways of dealing with (and understanding) political violence.

Second, CTS have advanced key debates about the nature and definition of terrorism, the use of the ‘terrorist’ label and the language of terrorism, and the construction of the terrorism threat used by political leaders and the media to legitimize certain politics (see Kassimeris 2007; Mueller and Stewart 2011, 2012). CTS-inspired research does not only uncover and describe these issues, but also point out their consequences, denouncing the use of the GWOT rhetoric to legitimize and justify these measures, which include “invasive processes of surveillance, securitization, border management, social control, democratic constriction, neo-liberalization, legal transformation, and exceptional politics” (Jackson 2016, 26–27). However, it is important to note that CTS scholars have not only provided a robust critique and deconstruction of existing counter-terrorism practices, but have also attempted to articulate an alternative emancipatory counter-terrorism approach. For instance, Sondre Lindahl’s (2018) work offers a theory and model of counter-terrorism based on emancipation and non-violence, outlining the basic assumptions, priorities, principles, strategies and tactics, measures and evaluation of counter-terrorism. This model aims to prevent terrorism through the re-conceptualization of how we study and understand this phenomenon which can happen through a radical rethinking of the ontology, epistemology and agenda of counter-terrorism, whose efforts must commensurate with the desired goals (Lindahl 2018). This author has recently further developed this debate, focusing on the notion of

emancipation, which is reinterpreted as a Weberian value-axiom and used as the basis for normative theorizing and action within CTS (Lindahl 2020).

Third, CTS scholars have answered the call to engage with the actors of terrorist violence in order to better understand their subjectivity and world views (Gunning 2007; Toros 2012; Heath-Kelly 2013b; da Silva 2019). This has long been considered a taboo (Zulaika and Douglass 1996), as terrorist actors' perceptions and claims are almost always ignored and the human beings behind them simply demonized (Jackson 2005; Toros 2008; Gunning 2009). Thus, challenging mainstream understandings of actors of political violence, CTS have looked at political violence "as a symptom of a dysfunctional social order" rather than "as a symptom of a dysfunction in the social order" (Toros 2012, p. 21), aiming to understand the role played by violence within the social reality through the perspectives and experiences of its first-hand agents.

Fourth, the gendered aspect of terrorism research has been taken seriously by CTS, which have studied the role of women in terrorism and counter-terrorism scenarios, but also the gendered epistemologies behind such study (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, 2011; Martini 2018). Usually interpreted through passive frames of victimization, feminist scholars within CTS have highlighted the importance of re-politicizing women as perpetrators of political violence to provide a nuanced understanding of terrorism and, more recently, radicalization. More recent literature has criticized the understanding of Muslim women as gatekeepers of their communities and the resulting focus PVE programmes have put on Muslim women. These reproduce problematic understandings of women as apolitical, peaceful, and domestic subjects (Winterbotham and Pearson 2016; Pearson, Winterbotham, and Brown 2020; Auchter 2020). Moreover, feminist scholars in CTS have pointed out how this understanding led to the penetration of PVE and CVE into the domestic and private sphere. In other words, the focus on the domestic and private realm and the rendering of women into allies within P/CVE not only reproduces gendered understandings of the actors of violence but also allows the penetration of the logic of security into these realms (Auchter 2020).

Fifth, CTS scholars have consistently filled a significant gap within the broader security and terrorism fields by researching various facets of state terrorism (Blakeley 2007, 2009; Jackson, Murphy, and Poynting 2011; Jarvis and Lister 2014), including the unethical and immoral nature of practices such as torture, rendition, and targeted killing. The research conducted by 'The Rendition Project' (Blakeley and Raphael 2016), for instance, has not only informed scholarship on state terrorism, but has also had great societal impact by providing evidence on opaque state activities which has enabled human rights activists, lawyers, and victims to take them to justice. Thus, CTS have brought to the centre of the debate a kind of violence that is usually dismissed

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from debates on terrorism. Moreover, CTS have highlighted the obscuring of state-perpetrated violence while shifting the gaze solely towards non-state actors' violence works to reify and legitimize positions of power in international politics.

Finally, counter-terrorism approaches in the West have been, lately, scrutinized by CTS scholars, including the already mentioned different dimensions of the GWT, societal surveillance, but also state-led counter- and deradicalization approaches. In the next section we focus, particularly, on the latter.

### **Recent issues: Preventing and Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism**

More recently, CTS research has followed the evolution of counter-terrorism into practices of preventing and countering radicalization (Schmid 2013), as well as preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) (Martini, 2021; Martini, Ford, and Jackson 2020). Conceptualized as the (psychological) journey that an individual undertakes towards violence or as “anything that goes on before the bombs explodes” (Neumann 2013), radicalization has been presented, in mainstream terms, as the path an individual follows to embrace politically motivated violence. CTS have produced a strong body of knowledge emphasizing the highly problematic nature of such an understanding. The focus on ‘radicalization’, a concept that came to theoretically delineate a process which, in practical terms, is not straightforward. In other words, while the mainstream literature has focused on producing models to explain radicalization and have sought for pull and push factors (Borum 2011; King and Taylor 2011), CTS have brought into the debate the questioning of the validity of these universal models to study human and social behaviour (Baker-Beall, Heath-Kelly, and Jarvis 2015). The first and most important theme CTS focused on was the depiction of radicalization as affecting “vulnerable” individuals, individuals that needed to be safeguarded from falling prey to radicalizing discourses and narratives. CTS has strongly resisted this categorization of individuals embracing violence because of the lack of rationality, depoliticization, and pathologizing they have been put through (Heath-Kelly, Baker-Beall, and Jarvis 2015). In other words, among others, Heath-Kelly et al. denounce the denial of the political nature of violence and ideologies, a strand inherited from counter-terrorism, as seen above. At the same time, the language of vulnerability allowed the fixation of counter-terrorism, now implemented mostly through countering radicalization, on individuals likely to be susceptible to radicalization. Programmes and measures thus started focusing on subjects “at risk” of being radicalized. Here, again, scholars such as Heath-Kelly problematized this logic by emphasizing the performativity that these measures came to play (Heath-Kelly 2013a). Countering radicalization

strategies worked by spotting subjects at risk and precluding them to become “risky”. However, permeated by a biased logic of calculation of risk, of identification of subjects that potentially may be at risk and focusing on them, counter-radicalization also constructs these individuals as risky – thus the performativity of the logic that creates subjects “at risk of being risky” (Heath-Kelly 2013a, 396).

Moreover, recalling processes already displayed by previous counter-terrorism strategies, CTS denounced how practices of counter-radicalization, shaped by Neo-orientalist understandings, securitized specific – Muslim – communities. Again, working through the logics of these being “at risk of being risky” (Heath-Kelly 2013a, 396), programmes focused on working closely with Muslim communities, securitizing them and, in the end, rendering them “suspect communities” – sub-groups within societies that need to be scrutinized closely because of their supposed vulnerability to extremist ideologies (Breen-Smyth 2014; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009). This process rendered these sub-groups of the population as the domestic fronts of the war on terror (Kundnani 2015) – where intervention is needed (Jackson 2017). This has been described by critical scholars as a way of “policing multiculturalism” within Western societies (Ragazzi 2016) – and thus, these programmes were conceptualized from CTS as broader governmentality, something that became stronger with P/CVE, as discussed below.

Furthermore, where CTS has significantly contributed is the problematization of counter-radicalization and deradicalization programmes. The programmes intended to prevent or counter radicalization leading to terrorism or violent extremism (PVE, CVE, or P/CVE) have gained international policy and political prominence, and there has been, as might be expected, a rapid expansion of the academic literature on such programmes. To date, however, that literature still provides relatively weak evidence about the effects of these programmes, or even indeed about what many of these programmes look like in practice, with much of the literature tending to concentrate on broader policy analysis and theorization of the logics that supposedly underpin these programmes (Bush, Choudhury, and Thomas 2019). On the one hand, critical scholars provided empirical research on the implementation of deradicalization either through interviews with members of Channel panels and mentors (Pettinger 2020; Martin 2019; Thornton and Bouhana 2019; Elshimi 2017) or information collected through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests (Dudenhoefer 2018). On the other hand, CTS unpacked the logics behind the implementation of programmes that address individuals who have not committed violent crimes. Drawing from this reflection, among others, Tom Pettinger shows how programmes are implemented through logics of calculation of risk, which are shaped by the social context(s) they

are embedded in (Pettinger 2020). Thomas Martin adds a reflection on the securitization of specific “epistemological objects” of risk and identities that are also formed through the process of identifying individuals at “risk of being risky” and in the attempt of governing an unknown future (Martin 2018; 2014). Lastly, Elshimi points out that by intervening on the Self, addressing specific absences of (Western) values and enforcing a (neoliberal) thinking, counter- and preventative radicalization programmes are better conceptualized as “technologies of the Self” (Elshimi 2017) that work within the broader paradigm of governmentality and reshape individuals into (liberal) subjects (Skoczyllis and Andrews 2020; Cuadro 2020).

It is here that strategies – and CTS analyses with them – shifted even more drastically towards the intervention into the pre-crime space. In fact, in the last years, this shift went even further and the pre-crime space where interventions take place is now one of ideas, thoughts and ideologies as counter-terrorism has evolved into CVE and PVE – the countering and preventing of (violent) extremist ideologies (Martini, Ford, and Jackson 2020). Extremism has become both a synonym of and a key term to discuss (counter)terrorism - despite a significant lack of clarity of the concept (Martini 2020; Onursal and Kirkpatrick 2019). While this ambiguity has not prevented the broader academic community from using the term and conceptualizing strategies to counter it and prevent it, CTS has focused on the problematic character of strategies and a vocabulary that focuses on ideas and ideologies rather than acting to prevent an act of violence.

The majority of the CTS literature has focused on how P/CVE has broadened and deepened counter-terrorism. In fact, the prevention of the adoption of extremist ideologies needs to look for allies outside of the traditional security authorities and outside of law enforcement and traditional counter-terrorism. P/CVE has thus penetrated and allied itself with society in its broad sense, securitizing spaces such as schools and universities (Jerome and Busher 2020), and even social and health care (Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2018; Younis 2020) – subjecting these social spheres to the logics of security (O'Donnell 2020). P/CVE has thus penetrated domestic and private realms, furthering security into societal realms (Auchter 2020).

Within these dynamics, the new actors of security called to collaborate with prevention – depending on the countries – are teachers, professors, doctors, psychologists, members of the civil society, religious leaders, and even community and family members. This has also given rise to the constitution of formal and informal networks of collaborations within society – widening further the scope and the reach of counter-terrorism (Martini, Ford, and Jackson 2020). Here, CTS has denounced how P/CVE has been based on the disciplining of the “extremist” subject and its reconstitution into the “moderate”. This has been taking place through the (enforcement of the)

adoption of specific values denounced by CTS as neoliberal ones (Cuadro 2020) through a process that CTS describes not only as aimed at the countering of terrorism but as a broader neoliberal governmentality of the society in general and, specifically, Muslim individuals through their depoliticization (Skoczylis and Andrews 2020).

### **Concluding remarks: ways forward and the future of CTS**

In this paper, we lined up the core commitments, critical research agenda, and key debates that underpin CTS. From this, it is clear that CTS scholars have articulated a novel approach to the study of terrorism and security rooted in a critical, emancipatory, and ethical praxis, which does not assume that states are inherently legitimate in their violence, applies a gendered approach to terrorism and counter-terrorism, and resorts to a wide variety of ontological, epistemological, and methodological approaches. CTS scholarship also has societal impact by offering evidence of unethical and destructive counter-terrorism practices, thereby supporting the work of human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists. It also put forward a call for engagement outside of academia, through, for example, arts and literature. Richard Jackson's novel, *Confessions of a Terrorist* (Jackson 2014), is among the first example of CTS scholars' engagement with popular narratives. Outside of academia, CTS influences the work of artists, such as Faisal Hussain (see [www.suspectobjects.com](http://www.suspectobjects.com)).

Despite the vast amount of important research done in this subfield since its creation in 2005, there are some areas that need to be further developed. Feminist scholars, for example, advocate for a stronger engagement with domestic violence. While CTS have managed to advance this line of research, as mentioned above, feminist scholars claim that a stronger focus is needed on state or non-state, public or private violence (Jackson 2016). CTS has managed to incorporate feminist accounts of violence only in part and, with some remarkable exceptions (see, for example, Auchter 2020), it has not yet followed the perpetration of violence within the private and domestic realm. This may be related to the fact that CTS research has focused mostly on 'official' narratives and understandings of terrorism and counter-terrorism, putting forward a strong critique of the public legitimization of certain security measures, but leaving aside some other issues such as domestic terrorism.

Secondly, despite its commitment to a broader and more inclusive agenda, CTS are still mostly Western. Research tends to be produced in Western countries by Western scholars (Jarvis 2016). Moreover, there is a strong predominance of research produced in the UK and focusing specifically on British counter-terrorism and P/CVE. This is not surprising, as this country is one

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of the leading nations in the implementation of these strategies. However, CTS need to further open their field, specifically incorporating more research on non-Western countries and by non-Western scholars. At the same time, while some remarkable exceptions exist (Groothuis 2020), they need to gather more postcolonial scholars, to further decolonize its agenda and its gaze.

Lastly, and linked to the latter two issues, while one of the major CTS commitments was the focus on state terrorism, this has been somewhat left aside as the field has progressed. The majority of CTS scholars still focus on official narratives and practices of countering and preventing terrorism and on mainstream understandings of terrorism. As Jackson (2016) points out, while important advances have been already made (Blakeley and Raphael 2016; Blakeley 2009; R. Jackson, Murphy, and Poynting 2011), there are currently few CTS scholars working on the topic. Clearly, this may be related to the considerable challenges involved in this type of research, including the fact that it is a highly securitized field – both in terms of access and of funding. Moreover, linked to this aspect, more research is needed on the relationship between state and non-state actors and on the impact of foreign policy in causing violent resistance, as well as on the effectiveness and legitimacy of non-violent, peaceful forms of counter-terrorism (e.g., dialogue and negotiations, political reforms and concessions, dealing with grievances) in order to further the CTS proposal for an empirically and ethically grounded counter-terrorism paradigm (Jackson (Richard Jackson 2016).

After 9/11, the creation of a differentiated CTS school of thought offered the opportunity to gather critical scholars from different disciplines and to facilitate a way of doing research and an explicitly critical research agenda. The establishment of a dedicated journal, book series, and different research groups has encouraged not only critical perspectives, but also reflection in the broader field of terrorism studies, which is guided by a clear, coherent, and systematic research agenda and informed by a particular ontology, epistemology, and normative position.

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