

Contribution of psychology to the challenge of terrorism Project Task Force on Terrorism and Peace Building

The IAAP Board created a Task Force on Terrorism during its 2016 meeting in Yokohama. A better understanding of what spurs violence and terrorism in today's world is needed to develop more effective approaches to thwart violence and terrorism in the world. That is the reason why we are contacting by an online survey with experts around the world. The knowledge and generosity of this experts let us show you this interview. Today we have the honor to show the answers of Professor Arie W. Kruglanski to the our survey.



Professor Arie W. Kruglanski Interview

Are you conducting research related to terrorism (for example, victims, causes, cyber-terrorism, prevention, radicalization, services, etc.)?

Yes, I am conducting research on radicalization and deradicalization in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, Morocco, and have written extensively about it. I am presently contracted to publish two books on this topic, one on our theory of radicalization the other on exiting neo nazis in Germany.

Do you have practice or other relevant experience with terrorism (for example, intervention programs, courses taught, disaster response, etc.)?

Yes, I taught and gave many lectures on the psychology of terrorism, radicalization and deradicalization

Working in this field, what special challenges have you faced and how have you addressed them?

A challenge I faced was in research with detained violent extremists, how to ensure that the answers they provide are veridical and truthful. We dealt with this problem through a variety of open ended questions in which they told their life stories and from which we could infer their underlying psychology rather than relying only on direct questions about their states of mind.

What are the 3-4 main references about your work. This could include journal articles, class syllabus, newsletter articles, etc.

1. Kruglanski, A. W., Chen, X., Dechesne, M., Fishman, S., & Orehek, E. (2009). Fully committed: Suicide bombers'

motivation and the quest for personal significance. *Political Psychology*, 30(3), 331-357.

2. Kruglanski, A. W., Bélanger, J. J., Gelfand, M., Gunaratna, R., Hettiarachchi, M., Reinares, F., & Sharvit, K. (2013). Terrorism: A (self) love story. *American Psychologist*, 68(7), 559-575.
3. Kruglanski, A. W., Gelfand, M. J., Bélanger, J. J., Sheveland, A., Hettiarachchi, M., & Gunaratna, R. (2014). The psychology of radicalization and deradicalization: How significance quest impacts violent extremism. *Political Psychology*, 35(S1), 69-93.
4. Kruglanski, A. W., Jasko, K., Chernikova, M., Dugas, M., & Webber, D. (2017). To the fringe and back: Violent extremism and the psychology of deviance. *American Psychologist*, 72(3), 217-230.

Can you suggest other specific contributions related to terrorism made by psychologists (for example, intervention protocols, best-practice guidelines, theoretical models, public communications, psychosocial programs, etc.)

I was very impressed by the Aarhus model in Denmark that includes community level interventions designed to prevent violent extremism as well as to promote

deradicalization of those who already embarked on violent extremism

How do you think psychology can contribute to addressing terrorism and its consequences?

In my opinion, psychological understanding of radicalization and deradicalization could provide the guidelines for intervention programs designed to effectively promote counter and deradicalization in specific contexts. This would mean combining theoretical knowledge with knowledge of the specific context where interventions are planned in order to see how best deradicalization can be accomplished in given circumstances.

How can psychology prepare to address the evolving nature of terrorism and its consequences in the next 3-5 years?

Along the lines of my answer to question 6, above, psychologists trained in the theory of radicalization and deradicalization should collaborate with experts in specific venues and locals to design together intervention programs that, while consistent with psychological knowledge of these processes, are based on practical knowledge of the contexts in which the theory is applied.

Prof. Arie W. Kruglanski