Summary

The thesis deals with terrorism and its development as a social phenomenon since 1970s. It has argued that terrorism has undergone a process of radicalization and globalization, particularly as a result of the changed international situation and proliferation of modern technology. Nationalistic terrorism has been replaced with a global form of terrorism. In a similar vein, revolutionist ideologies, typical for terrorist groups of 1970s and 1980s, has given a way to radical interpretations of religions, namely Islamism, which has received substantial popularity as a result of prevailing grievances of the Muslim world.

Even though there is no clear distinction between the old and the new form of terrorism, the two social phenomena differ to an important extent. During the second half of 20th century leftist terrorist groups dominated the scene with their fight for a regime change and battle against capitalism as well as imperialism. The organization of the groups took the form of hierarchy and had only limited number of members. At the beginning of the new millennium, the situation changed dramatically with the proliferation of Islamic groups, including the global terrorist group al-Qaeda. The groups work without a formal power structure and are able to hit targets anywhere in the world, as the terrorist attack in New York on 11th September 2011 showed. For Islamic groups, suicide bomb attacks have become the principal method of their fight. The qualitative change of terrorism emerged as al-Qaeda employed the modern technology and gave a way to extensive terror the world had never seen before. In the contemporary world, terrorism has become nearly undefeatable.