



Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A Comparative Study (Contemporary Terrorism Studies)

By Beatrice de Graaf

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Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A Comparative Study (Contemporary Terrorism Studies) By Beatrice de Graaf

This book offers a new model for measuring the success and impact of counterterrorism strategies, using four comparative historical case studies.

The effectiveness of counterterrorism measures is hard to assess, especially since the social impact of terrorist attacks is a fundamental and complex issue. This book focuses on the impact of counterterrorist measures by introducing the concept of the performative power of counterterrorism: the extent to which governments mobilize public and political support - thereby sometimes even unwittingly assisting terrorists in creating social drama. The concept is applied to counterterrorism in the Netherlands, Italy, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States in the 1970s.

Based on in-depth case study research using new primary sources and interviews with counterterrorist officials and radicals, a correlation is established between a low level of performative power and a decline of terrorist incidents. This is explored in terms of the link between social drama (as enhanced by counterterrorist measures) and ongoing radicalization processes. This book demonstrates that an increase in visible and intrusive counterterrorist measures does not automatically lead to a more effective form of counterterrorism. In the open democracies of the west, not transforming counterterrorism into a performance of power and repression is at least as important as counterterrorism measures themselves.

This book will be of much interest to students of terrorism and counter-terrorism, discourse analysis, media and communication studies, conflict studies and IR/Security Studies in general.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An innovative approach to assess effectiveness in governmental counterterrorism measures through what the author terms "the concept of the performative power of counterterrorism," which is "the extent to which governments succeed in mobilizing public and political support in favor of their policies, thereby weakening terrorists' ability to create their "social drama." - Joshua Sinai, 'Terrorism Bookshelf: Top 150 Books on Terrorism and Counterterrorism', Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2012)

About the Author

Beatrice de Graaf is a Historian and Associate Professor at the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at Leiden University, Netherlands.

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