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Stigmatizing State Sponsors of Terrorism: An Evaluation of Feasibility

In the post-Cold War World, stigmatization emerged as a way of disciplining transgressive states. However, the existing state of affairs raises questions on the feasibility of targeted punishment and disciplining through stigmatization. Even the members of the Western liberal-democratic society of states sharing certain normative stances and similar security concerns do not always act in solidarity in creating an “audience of normals”, a group of states that come together to “stigmatize” -label, stereotype, separate and discriminate- a norm-breaking/deviant/transgressor actor, to put an end to its transgressive behavior. When they do, the stigmatization might not bear the targeted outcomes due to either the stigmatized actor’s stigma management or the stigma’s inadequate intensity. Adopting the theoretical insights revolving around the concept of stigma in international relations, this paper aims to explore at which instances a Western “audience of normals” was able to be mobilized to stigmatize states involved in terrorist activity. Three case studies from the Middle East and North Africa region, namely Iran, Libya, and Syria are selected to show the consensus and difference of approaches of the EU and the US in stigmatizing the terror-related activities of these actors. By doing this, the study will contribute to the theoretical debates on stigma imposition and discuss potential outcomes for international security.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

International Relations, International Political Sociology, Middle East Studies

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?

Yes

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