Preface

This book examines the impact of the EU on Turkish counter-terrorism policies towards the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the context of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) threat. It analyses the EU's normative role on Turkey within four distinct periods: the inertia (1984–1999), the conditional transformation (1999–2004), the social transformation (2004–2015), and the backsliding (2015–2020) in which paradigm shifts in Turkish counter-terrorism policy were based on different domestic and EU-level factors. The main argument traced in the book is that when the EU has promoted democratization in Turkey, it has also implicitly impacted on Turkey's counter-terrorism policies. When the EU has provided a credible membership prospect to Turkey, and when the PKK attacks have been at a low level, then the EU conditionality strategy, based on rational reasons, has been influential on Turkey's adoption of EU promoted norms. However, when there has been no membership prospect and high levels of PKK violence, having a significant majority of the political actors in policymaking who are socially internalized to the appropriateness of EU-promoted norms has led to the adoption of EU norms. In line with the diminishing number of these political actors and the politicization of the public administration, serious backsliding has appeared in Turkish counter-terrorism policies in the context of adoption of democratic reforms. This comprehensive text provides conceptual and empirical analysis for students, academics and policymakers, both in Turkey and the EU, who are interested in the EU's impact on candidate countries' counter-terrorism policies, and EU–Turkey relations. It reveals how the EU impact on democratic transition and on the counter-terrorism policies of a candidate state can turn into backsliding within a few decades, despite all the effort by the EU and domestic political actors. This book comprises a lesson-drawing case for the EU and other countries to follow a different approach while transforming a counter-terrorism policy of state, through normative means, with the support of an international actor.

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