

Title: The Effectiveness & Effects of Canada's Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams

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Research Question:

This paper is part of a larger project that studies the emergence of the idea of integration together with its implications. This paper asks: how has the idea of integration been institutionalized in Canada? What are its implications? Moreover, how should we study the effectiveness and effects of counter-terrorism institutions?

Importance:

The idea of integration in counter-terrorism institutions has become common wisdom in Western policy. Understanding how integration has emerged, and what effects it might have, is key to understanding how well contemporary counter-terrorism is working to prevent attacks, but also to understand how any particular set of policy choices renders certain outcomes possible and closes off other pathways. The effectiveness of counter-terrorism institutions cannot be dissociated from their effects on citizens if the time-line of counterterrorism is generational.

Research Findings:

Studying the effectiveness and effects of counter-terrorism institutions is difficult because of lack of access. However, any study should take into account the limits of the rational model of cost-benefit analysis; second, the politics of security; and third, the difficulties of doing security research. Integration in Canada pre-dates 9/11, but has accelerated since then. The inflow of extra funding after 9/11 and the O'Connor and Major Commissions were clear drivers of integration, but so too was institutional competition between security organizations. Implications of integration include a tendency to framing problems in the same way, the increasing gathering and sharing of information about Canadians, and oversight and review mechanisms that lag behind contemporary practice.

Implications:

The evaluation of counter-terrorism from a critical perspective must be more tentative and less definitive than the evaluation of counter-terrorism from a rationalist perspective. We should continue to turn our attention to the workings of our counter-terrorism institutions. Interested parties are encouraged to read Kitchen's published and forthcoming works (see bibliography) for more complete examinations of issues surrounding integration in security and counter-terrorism.