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The aftermath: meaning-making after terrorist attacks in Western Europe

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Western Europe has been confronted with several terrorist attacks over the past years. This dissertation investigates what happens after such attacks. Scholars emphasise that terrorism is not just about killing, as terrorists want to capture the attention of an audience. Yet, what these audiences do after attacks has remained understudied.

This dissertation looks into the meaning-making process after jihadist attacks in Brussels, Nice, Berlin and Manchester (2016-2017). The study focuses on two core actor groups - the authorities and citizens - and the use of frames, rituals and symbols. Special attention is paid to the first day, the first week and the first anniversary of the attack, for which the author has visited the commemorations.

Overall, this dissertation shows how terrorism is not a successful violent communication strategy. After performing the opening acts, the terrorists are quickly pushed off stage, doomed to stand behind the curtains and watch a different play unfold.

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THE AFTERMATH

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MEANING-MAKING AFTER
TERRORIST ATTACKS IN
WESTERN EUROPE



**JEANINE DE ROY
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