



## Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Roeland Pieter Smit

Title: Performative Power and Terrorism in Europe in the 2010's

Programme/year: Master in International security studies, 2018

Author of Evaluation (supervisor): Dagmar Rychnovská

Criteria	Definition	Maximum	Points
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
	Research question, definition of objectives	<b>10</b>	10
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	<b>30</b>	28
	Methodology, analysis, argument	<b>40</b>	35
<i>Total</i>		<b>80</b>	73
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
	Sources	<b>10</b>	10
	Style	<b>5</b>	5
	Formal requirements	<b>5</b>	5
<i>Total</i>		<b>20</b>	20
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	93



## Evaluation

### Major criteria:

The author contributes to the current literature on counterterrorism by testing a theory of performative power, developed by Dutch scholar De Graaf to show how our societies respond to the acts of terrorism. The original theory was developed to explain terrorism in 1970s and Roeland puts it under the test of current counterterrorism by analysing the Paris and Nice attacks from the recent years. The research goal is thus very clear and the choice of it proves author`s independent thinking and the ability to develop his own research project.

The thesis demonstrates advanced knowledge of the literature on terrorism and counterterrorism as well as securitization and the related debates on exceptionalism in current societies. The conceptual framework draws on the theory of De Graaf, which author uses in his empirical research.

The operationalization of the theoretical framework is conducted in very high quality and is very well presented and explained. The choice of methods and data is appropriate and the empirical analysis is conducted carefully and in great detail. The only weak point I see in this part is how the theory testing is operationalized. In other words, it remains less clear how the “appropriateness” of the original framework by De Graaf would be assessed. In the final part, the thesis delivers on this point in great detail, but without prior guidance, i.e. only inductively. Given the overall very well managed logic of the research design, this part is surprisingly less developed.

### Minor criteria:

The thesis is very well written, the focus is well balanced between theory and empirics and the text is easy to follow and very well structured. The author presents a mature, thought-through thesis that upholds high standards of academic writing.

### Overall evaluation:

This is a strong and original thesis. The goals of the thesis and motivations for writing it are well chosen and very well explained. The work draws on thorough theoretical as well as empirical research and well-crafted research design. The author thus clearly demonstrates his ability to think about current international



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security issues from a critical perspective, work with theoretical concepts and methods of security studied as well as develop his own argument based on a careful analysis and critical thinking. The final “verdict” on the applicability of the performative power theory is well argued, structured and presented, which allows the author to confidently criticize the theory and suggest in which directions any potential updates shall go. This is a very fine piece of MA research and it is my pleasure to recommend this thesis for defence.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: *Dajmar Rycel*