



**DEPARTMENT OF
SECURITY STUDIES**
Faculty of Social Sciences

Performative Power and Terrorism in Europe in the 2010's

Master Thesis



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Abstract

This diploma thesis called ‘Performative Power and Terrorism in Europe in the 2010s’, deals with the evolution of terrorism, counterterrorism and the use of the theory of performative power, as coined by Beatrice de Graaf in 2010. Since the recent attacks in Paris (13th of November 2015) and Nice (14th of July 2016), terrorism has become a hot topic again for both scholars and policymakers. De Graaf has provided a schedule of fourteen signifiers in order to measure the performativity of authorities, and the extent to which they are capable of influencing public fears and opinion when it comes to terrorism. A schedule that should concretise the way in which theory can be ‘translated’ to practice. By means of two case studies, regarding the terrorist attacks mentioned above, the theory and its signifiers will be analysed. The result of this analysis was stunning. This paper argues the theory and the signifiers are partially flawed and anachronistic. Although De Graaf considers her theory to be universal, the research conducted in this document reveals shortcomings and proves it does not stand the test of time. In order to make performative power and the signifiers time-resistant it has to be altered. Recommendations are therefore provided at the end of this paper.

Keywords: terrorism, counterterrorism, performative power, performativity

Extent of study: 19.388 words, 122.247 characters

'Terrorism is theatre'

Brian Jenkins, RAND Corporation, 1975

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Introduction

In a time of terrorist attacks in Western Europe (such as in Paris, Nice, Brussels, Berlin and London), states have to react to an increased feeling of insecurity among its citizens. It concerns a period that marks the beginning of counterterrorism policy in the Europe after the 9/11 attack. History has proven to us that despite similar threats in the cases mentioned above, the nature of the response to such threats is totally diverse in different states.

Dutch counterterrorism expert Beatrice de Graaf analyses different responses within the 'security dispositive' and the framework of her 'performative power'¹ in *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A comparative study*. She uses fourteen 'signifiers', analysing both material and immaterial effects of governmental responses to terrorism, such as policy implementation on the part of the police, intelligence services and the judiciary. This offers her the chance to frame issues such as the public mind or the power of mobilising popular support for counterterrorism. Her research does focus on counterterrorism in the Netherlands, the FRG, Italy and the United States. In the end, she concludes that low levels of performative power from the side states can have a positive effect on all cases of counterterrorist measures (De Graaf, 2011:5).

The theory of performative power and the fourteen signifiers concerns a theory at the intersection of political science and historical science here. The basic idea behind the theory is to 'tick the boxes', assess whether certain factors or signifiers are present or not, based on empirical information. This makes this theory on how to battle terrorism much more practical, more feasible, and less vague than other academic approaches to eradicate terrorist violence. Since De Graaf used four different case studies to develop her theory of performative power and the complementing fourteen signifiers, she covers a variety of terrorist (and therefore counterterrorist) strategies. An approach De Graaf therefore claims to be universal to all cases of terrorism, and useful to all counterterrorist policy makers. A theory that has proven its worth over the past decades, considering the fact it has been able to perfectly catch both public opinion, as well as government's reactions after terrorist attacks, and could therefore be seen as a primordial instrument in developing counterterrorism policy. (De Graaf, 2011: 1).

¹ Please note it does not concern Jean-François Lyotard's notion of performativity in this paper. More information on the postmodernist view on performativity can be found in *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge* (Lyotard, 1979).

Times do however change. Is the conclusion of De Graaf, which referred to terrorism in the ‘roaring seventies’ still valid? After all, society has changed half a century after the terrorist waves that De Graaf has been describing in her book. The whole nature of society has changed, and terrorism seems to put a bigger burden on society than in the seventies, and also the means for both terrorists and governments to influence the public (e.g. via social media) grew. Furthermore, since nobody before has tried to apply the signifiers to any other cases of counterterrorism policy by states, it could be useful to test De Graaf’s theory in its totality. By selecting two contemporary cases of terrorist attacks, this thesis hopes to find out to what extent the theory of performative power as coined by De Graaf is still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe.

Therefore, and given the objective of this thesis, the following research question has been formulated: *To what extent is the theory of performative power as coined by Beatrice de Graaf still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe?*

As mentioned above, the main goal is to analyse to what extent the theory of performative power as coined by Beatrice de Graaf is still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe. It does so by analysing the French government’s reaction and changes to its CT policy after the Paris and Nice attacks, according to the fourteen signifiers developed by De Graaf. This paper will test this theory of performative power and the fourteen signifiers; do the signifiers still function in today’s circumstances when it comes to counterterrorism? Should factors be added, deleted, or maybe altered? In short, what works, and what does not work? In this way, I am aiming to find out more about De Graaf’s theory’s feasibility these days.

Moreover, this thesis will have a look at some of the conclusions De Graaf is drawing based on her own work back in 2010. Several of these conclusions might look obvious, others do not, but all of them are based on the theory that will be under scrutiny in this paper. Therefore, the theoretical, methodological and practical basis of her conclusions will be put to the screws in order to understand her reasoning, which she claims to be universal and see if there are any flaws in the theory she coins. Consider it to be a ‘second opinion’ on her conclusions, which might be useful in case the fourteen signifiers she bases them on show any flaws.

This thesis should however not merely be seen as a follow-up to De Graaf’s theory of performative power, but rather as the result of different influences from the field. Within this field, De Graaf’s work takes a unique stance by bringing those new developments together. Scholars such as Booth, Seniwati and Emmers for instance, stress the importance of more

inclusivity of terrorism in security studies in general. Furthermore, experts such as Bureš advocate for a better practical implementation of those new insights. De Graaf's methods can be seen as innovative in the field. The practical implementation of counterterrorism often lacks, but is being concretised by De Graaf, as will be described in the literature review of this paper. Moreover, she broadens the scope of what is being considered terrorism (and therefore the tools that can be used in counterterrorism), exactly as Booth, Seniwati and Emmers argue.

Theoretically, this thesis will also and partially be based on the so-called securitisation theory, as developed by the Copenhagen School. This theory is seen as one of the most important contributions to security studies over the past decades. The theory claims that security is intersubjective and socially constructive. This will be of huge importance to the research, since the fourteen signifiers as mentioned by De Graaf are largely based on the reaction of society to insecurity. De Graaf's theory should, as will later be argued, be seen as a step beyond securitisation theory, considering the fact that it concretises acts being taken after topics are securitised. Therefore, the second and most important theory that will be investigated in this paper will be the theory of performative power, which will look into performative power and the fourteen signifiers. These will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter of this paper.

As mentioned before, the signifiers play a big role in measuring the performative power of governments. De Graaf had many sources at her disposal, but she decided to focus on the publications and archives of security services, minutes of the policy-making authorities and interviews with (former) civil servants of those organisations. Although some of these sources are hard to reach and/or classified for the topic of this research, there are many more official (press) publications by the authorities, which are more accessible than in the past. Therefore this paper's sources can be limited to those official publications or interviews with those who are professionally involved (from the side of the authorities) with the topic (De Graaf, 2011: 5).

To guide the development of the research, this paper will be structured as follows. After this introduction, firstly the literature review framework will follow. It concerns the current discourse in literature around terrorism studies, the literature review so to say. The reader will acquire a solid knowledge of where the Western and European societies are when it comes to terrorism, as well as a brief history of terrorism, coming from the 1800's during the 'birth of terrorism', but there will be some extra attention for the high days of terrorism in Europe during the 1960's and 1970's. Concepts such as Rapoport's four waves of terrorism and security theory will be reviewed to position De Graaf's theory.

The next part of this research will focus on the theoretical framework. This chapter will dig into the theory of De Graaf and the fourteen signifiers as well as its operationalisation. The definition of performative power according to De Graaf will be introduced to make the reader familiar with the core theory of this research. To do so, other peripheral concepts such as performative power and an explanation of De Graaf's perception of the way policymakers react to terrorism in society will be highlighted. The performativity of the state when it comes to counterterrorism as well as the current discourse around it will be discussed here.

In the two following chapters, case studies will be conducted to test De Graaf's theory of performative power and the fourteen signifiers and to see whether they are still useful these days. As mentioned before, the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13th 2015 and in Nice on July 14th 2016 will be used as examples here. After providing the reader with brief summaries of the events and some facts and figures, the boxes of the fourteen signifiers will be ticked and the performativity in both cases will be schematised. To conclude these chapters, analyses of counterterrorism measures will be conducted in a following chapter.

Last, but not least, all conclusions drawn from the chapters (but especially the two case studies) will be used to test whether the scheme and the fourteen signifiers as coined by De Graaf are still relevant to terrorism these days. This will happen in the conclusion. If necessary, suggestions for improvement and my point of view will be given. Recommendations for possible future research will be done.

1 Literature review

Terrorism and the threats it creates to societies are dominating the news and politics these days. Scholars, as well as policymakers and citizens have gotten more and more involved in the discourse around the causes, the impact and counterterrorist measures. Although terrorism as we know it was born long before the 20th century, the first thorough research conducted on the topic goes back to the 1970's and 1980's when Europe was struggling with the aftermath of terrorism committed by for example the Rote Armee Fraktion (West Germany), the Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (France) and the Brigade Rosse (Italy) (Crenshaw, 2014: 556-559). However, the true catalyst for intensify research within academic circles were the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States (Sageman, 2014: 565-567) Since then, many researchers in different fields of expertise (social sciences, humanities, etc.) have been gathering data by monitoring analysing terrorist acts all around the world (Freilich *et al.*, 2009: 460). This chapter will provide the reader with a brief overview of the history of, and research done on terrorism in Europe and the world, and position De Graaf's theories in the debate that evolved around it.

1.1 Definitions of terrorism

When talking about terrorism and counterterrorism, it should be highlighted that there is not and official definition of terrorism (and consequently counterterrorism); it concerns a phenomenon that is being debated about among scholars for a long time. When it comes to the data scholars are basing their research on, it generally evolves around three main ingredients, agreed on by on academia from all different disciplines. In general one should consider the role of three different stakeholders when it comes to terrorist acts, namely the perpetrators (or terrorists), the victims, and the audience (or public). (Sandler, 2015: 3). It does however not come as a surprise that all of these definitions come with some ambiguity. The maybe most controversial definition is the one of the victims. According to various scholars, combatants should not be counted as victims when it comes to freedom fighter in a country that is being occupied, such as happened during the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq. On the other hand, combatants serving as peacekeeping troops who are killed in action (such as in the US Marines barracks bombing in Lebanon in 1983) are being considered victims of terrorism, although the responsible terrorist movement (Hezbollah) might think so differently. When it comes to terrorist attacks in failed states such as Somalia (Al-Shabaab) the confusion might be even bigger, since the political motives for such actions might not always be clear enough to identify

friend or foe. Another definition that is easier to get grip on is the audience. University of Oxford's political scientist Todd Sandler refers to the audience as

‘The collective that terrorists seek to intimidate through their want on brutality. With sufficient and sustained intimidation, the audience will apply pressures on the besieged government to concede to the terrorist group’s political demand or alternatively to take decisive action to annihilate the group (Sandler, 2015: 3).’

In general, one refers to the general public (and public opinion in general here). As Sandler points out, it is mainly the first two definitions that cause ambiguity, as described above.

1.2 The state of contemporary terrorism

In 2002, UCLA's professor of political science David C. Rapoport published his paper ‘The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11’. In his paper, Rapoport brings to attention the fact that terrorism should not be seen as a new phenomenon, when it suddenly became a hot topic again after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. While describing the history of 135 years of terrorism, it becomes clear how deeply implanted it is in our modern culture. To this end, Rapoport introduces the so-called ‘Four Waves of Terrorism’, each triggered by international political changes or revolutions. (Rapoport, 2002: 11).

The reasons for describing the history of terrorism making use of Rapoport's ‘Four Waves of Terrorism’ are multiple, as De Graaf argues. The case studies De Graaf conducted all took place within the third or ‘New Left Wave’ during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. Her reasons for doing so were as follows:

‘As far as the period of terrorist violence and counterterrorist is concerned, the 1970's was chosen, because the period of 30-40 years provides the opportunity for using a range of government documents on counterterrorist activities and facilitates more angles for research and analysis than current cases would. The terrorist (and counterterrorist) activities considered here constitute a finished episode in history. The terrorism of that age, described by Rapoport as the ‘third wave’ of revolutionary terrorism, has come to an end and can be made the subject of scrutiny without new incidents or measures disturbing objective analysis. At the same time, the 1970's are still relevant to current discussions of counterterrorist strategies, since many of the institutions, instruments and provisions in combating terrorism were put in place in that decade. Political decisions-

making processes were dictated by the same mechanisms of agenda setting and mobilising political and public support (De Graaf, 2010: 15).’

The framework given by Rapoport will therefore give the reader more guidance when it comes to the positioning of the current terrorist movements, when comparing it to the work of for example De Graaf. Also, considering the fact that we have seen a fair share of the current wave, one can safely assume that the risk of can be made the subject of scrutiny, even though one should realise a few new incidents or measures disturbing objective analysis might still take place. This risk is however small, considering the fact that many incidents already happened, and many measures were already taken in the past decades. Therefore, what follows is a brief description of the waves as coined by Rapoport in 2002.

The ‘Anarchist Wave’ appeared in Russia in the 1880’s and lasted for about 40 years. One of the reasons he mentions for the quick world-wide spread of this wave was the invention of the telegraph, daily mass newspapers, and the construction of railroads during this period of time, shrinking time and space. This did not only instigated violent terrorism in Russia, but also helped movements such as the Sons of Liberty and the Ku Klux Klan develop rapidly in the United States. Rapoport concluded that every new wave of terrorism lasted about 40 to 45 years and he was right. In the 1920’s, the world was flooded by new terrorist movements, which he summarises as the ‘Anti-Colonial Wave’. Terrorist groups arising in this time include what is being known as ‘the oldest terrorist movement’, namely the IRA. It concerned movements fighting for independence from the empires of the defeated states that were being broken up by applying the principle of self-determination. Often so-called mandate states were created by the victors of WW I and WW II, which caused a discrepancy with their own national policies. They could not articulate the principle without also raising questions about the legitimacy of their own empires, as Rapoport stresses. A series of new states (e.g. Ireland, Israel, Cyprus, Yemen and Algeria) emerged (partly) as the result of such terrorism. The third wave, also known as the ‘New Left Wave’ emerged during the Vietnam War. The Vietcong resistance against the might United States raised hopes that the western capitalist establishment would be vulnerable to this type of guerrilla warfare too. This kind of terrorist movements therefore mainly affected left-wing youngsters in the ‘developed world’. Groups such as the PLO, ETA, RAF and the Brigade Rosse were among the most successful of them. International terrorism was really given a new spirit during this wave, considering the revolutionary ethos that created bonds between the separate groups. Some groups, such as the PLO conducted even more attacks abroad (Israel,

West Germany, France, etc.) than in their own home country. It was during the last decade of the third wave that the fourth wave, the so-called 'Religious Wave' began. Although religion played an important role in all of the previous waves, religious identity always overlapped with ethnicity in order to secure and create secular sovereign states. During the religious wave however, the goal was totally different. Whereas the previous wave hoped to establish new individual states, the new wave aimed for '[...] supplying justifications and organising principles for a New World to be established'. (Rapoport, 2002: 10-11).

Another reason why describing the latter two waves of terrorism is of primordial importance to this research is as follows. As indicated above, 30 to 40 years after the end of the third wave, one can say it is safe to make an analysis of the latest wave. This offers two interesting opportunities. First of all, one can analyse the tactics being used in the newer waves, as well as its long term developments. Secondly, and in my opinion most interesting, one can draw possible parallels with previous waves (which is the case according to De Graaf, considering the facts she claims her theory to be universal). On the other hand, although not mentioned explicitly, De Graaf points out there are huge differences between the two waves of terrorism which are under scrutiny here. She refers to them, within the context of the murder on right-wing political activist and moviemaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004:

'As a historian, I was aware of a series of casualties and victims who died as a result of acts of political violence in the 'red decade' of the 1970s. Hardly anyone made references to that, however. Second, what struck me as odd was that during the first and second post-November 2004 years nobody seemed very interested in reflections on the effectiveness of all the new antiterrorist measures that were profoundly new to Dutch society [...].' (De Graaf, 2010: 3.).

De Graaf here refers to the fact that there was an unprecedented upheaval in counterterrorist measures after just one political murder, compared with almost none in the 1970s, leaving the reader of her work with the question if her theory is really that universal if the approach during the 'red decade' has been very passive, whereas it has been more active while being 30 years into the new wave. Here one can wonder whether the Dutch state was really that 'passive' during the 1970s, and what the reason for doing so might have been. This however implies that there could even be a difference in applicability of the theory. It is for this reason that it is important to also apply her theory to, in this case, fourth wave terrorism (such as in Paris and Nice) in other circumstances (France) to see whether it is still valid, and for what reasons.

1.2.1 Context of contemporary and 'fourth wave' terrorism

Although Europe was already used to terrorism since the 1960's, the events of 9/11 confronted the world to a new problem: transnational terrorism. Whereas terrorism was in general bound to individual countries before, new international networks could be identified now. The terrorist attacks that took place in Western countries, such as the ones in Boston, Las Vegas, Orlando, Paris, Brussels, London and Berlin perfectly make clear that terrorism does not only take place in the Middle East, Asia or Africa. Governments worldwide suddenly have to come up with solutions and combat terrorism together, as the so-called War on Terror (instigated by US President George W. Bush in 2001) perfectly illustrates. Scholars analysed five causes for the rapid global spread of terrorism, leading to a type of terrorism that is harder to cope with for the international community these days (Ugorji, 2017: 2-4)

Firstly, the rise of Daesh in the Middle East as an umbrella network for terrorists worldwide counts for the emergence of terrorist attacks in Europe and the United States. Daesh is being held responsible for these attacks being committed by its affiliates in Western countries and for recruiting lone wolves over social media. Secondly, when it comes to terrorism in Africa, the para-military Boko Haram movement poses a threat to Western Africa. Although the terrorist movement mainly fights for an Islamic state in north-eastern Nigeria, the conflict has a spill-over effect to neighbouring countries such as Niger, Cameroon, and Chad where the groups seems to get more foothold. Paradoxically, this seems to be the result of an effective military approach by the Nigerian army against the movement. Thirdly, again the success of the American military in finding and killing Osama Bin Laden, as well as the international community's fruitful cooperation in bringing down the Khaddaffi regime, caused a power vacuum leading to the emergence of new terrorist activities in the Sahel region. The current mayhem in the region can be considered the result of a failed (or even non-existent) state, and the rebranding of Al-Qaeda after Bin Laden's death. Fourthly, Al-Shabaab's attacks in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia seem to be supported by a bigger international network of terrorists, wanting to create even more chaos in the Horn of Africa, again in a failed state. Fifthly, the successes of the War on Terror and the Coalition of the Willing in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq have pushed the activities by terrorist actors towards neighbouring states. A steep increase of terrorist attacks can for instance be seen in Pakistan and Kurdistan. Over the past years the number of fatalities has been on a one-third rise in these regions. Lastly, the fact that lone wolves have gained ground in Western countries (instead of entire terrorist cells) demonstrates how serious the problem has become. The fragmented as well as the unpredictable

nature of these lone wolves is posing a bigger and bigger threat to Western societies (Ugorji: 2-4).

Scholars around the world have concluded that there are common drivers when it comes to the rise of terrorism. In developing countries, often the home base of terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda or Daesh, there are links between state sponsored violence and domestic or regional intractable conflicts or terrorism. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 for instance, gave birth to anti-Western ideas in the entire Middle East. The death of Muammar Khaddaffi in Libya, the civil war in Syria and the enduring ethnic conflict in Iraq accelerated the spread of Daesh's ideology from 2013 on. As concluded earlier, it has been the support from these regions that give a spark to terrorist actions in Western societies. In Western societies, those who commit attacks often seem to come from deprived backgrounds. It concerns youngsters susceptible to extreme Islamic ideology due to unemployment, social and / or cultural exclusion, access to weapons and of course social media, that commit these terrorist attacks (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2008: 422).

Transnational terrorism is therefore, instead of domestic terrorism, the biggest problem the world is currently facing. When looking at the biggest terrorist attacks of the past years for example, we can see a majority of the attacks is being committed by lone wolves inspired by Daesh, or terrorist cells supported by international networks such as Al-Qaeda or Daesh (McCauley, Moskalenko, 2014: 70). In the case studies that will be conducted in this paper, examples of both backgrounds will be used.

1.3 The state of contemporary counterterrorism

Considering the new transnational element, scholars consider international coordinated efforts from every effected country to be the only solution against terrorism. The United Nations General Assembly, in close cooperation with the United Nations Security Council have put effort in this by developing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UN General Assembly, 8th of September 2006). The newly established UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) helps member states by taking four different types of counter-terrorism measures:

‘Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; measures to prevent and combat terrorism; measures to build States’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in this regard; and measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental

basis of the fight against terrorism' (UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2006: Part I).

When looking at the practical measures being applied by the CTITF, this translates to projects ranging from charity projects in order to avoid radicalisation, to trajectories to clean up nuclear, chemical or biological waste to prevent terrorist from acquiring weapons from it. Also, conferences are being held to raise awareness, and schools are being set up to train digital specialists to tackle future cyber threats (UN Office of Counter-terrorism).

But not only the UN has made work of combatting terrorism in the world. Also in a European context, the European Council has implemented new measures, after several terrorist attacks within the European Union (e.g. London, Madrid, etc.). Although counterterrorist policies by the EU's institutions and its predecessors can be traced back to the 1960's, most measures that were taken were implemented shortly after the 9/11 and March 2004 attacks. It concerned a tighter cooperation in the field of justice and intelligence, especially when it comes to the exchange of information. Furthermore, additional responsibility and powers were transferred to Interpol and Europol in order to combat terrorism. According to Oldřich Bureš (Prague Metropolitan University), the EU's counterterrorism policy risks to remain 'more of a paper tiger than it is an effective counterterrorism device'. According to him, this is mainly due to the fact that a coherent approach by the responsible branch within the European Council; Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), is lacking. Borders simply still remain within the EU (Bureš, 2006: 57-70).

On a more national level, counterterrorism measures are taken very differently per country. This also has to do with the different approaches to the understand of the concept of counterterrorism by various countries and institutions both nationally and international, especially in relation to securitisation theory. Moreover, as Junker highlights, the diverse grouping of professionals and scholars are often not found together in the struggle against terrorist (ergo, counterterrorism), and their paths do not normally cross, leading to clashes in the preferred approach. (Bunker, 2015: 1). Policymakers, or operators as Bunker calls them, focus more on training, oversight, action, physical outcome and time critical schedules. The scholars (or theorists), rather look at the role of the individual, the immaterial outcome, idealism versus realism, and do not consider time to be a relevant factor. Both parties simply have different interests when it comes to battling terrorism and adding to counterterrorism practice.

As De Graaf also points out, the expectations of counterterrorism are therefore different. Both for policymakers, and for scholars. Furthermore, this also differs in various parts of the world. The idea about how to combat terrorism in Russia, can for example be different from the one in Europe. There is a lot of discrepancy about what approach is the most effective, since for instance arresting everybody within or close to a terrorist cell might cause the radicalisation of plenty of other terrorists. Policy makers can however also shift their scope towards prevention, but this might only have effects on the long term (De Graaf, 2010: 6).

1.3.1 The debate around counterterrorism in the academic context

It is especially on the academic level that there is still a lot of discussion on counterterrorism and its definition, leaving policymakers alone when it comes to the struggle against terrorism. As Buzan, Waever and De Wilde originally argued when they developed the idea of securitisation theory: ‘Security can be broadened to include other threats beyond the traditional the traditional military and political domain. Security depends on the character of the referent object in question.’ (Buzan *et al.*, 1998). This obviously includes terrorism, and subsequently counterterrorism, as Smith (2005) and Booth stress:

‘The critical approach [of securitisation theory] seeks to deepen conceptions of security, rather than merely broaden them’. ‘The realism of orthodox security studies is part of the problem in world politics rather than being the problem solver’ (Booth, 2005: 3). ‘Nonconventional weapons and terrorism are certainly security threats’, Booth argues. It (the practice of counterterrorism) should be seen, according to Andreas and Price argue, as the growing fusion between law enforcement and a national security mission (Andreas and Price, 2011: 31).

Just like the author of this paper and Cavelti, Seniwati emphasises the role of counterterrorism as a step ‘beyond securitisation theory’. A perfect link can be established between securitisation theory and counterterrorism strategies, according to Seniwati and his work on the issue of terrorism in Indonesia. Instead of the traditional three-step approach² for successful counterterrorism, he uses the approach as coined by Emmers and Caballero-Anthony in which the implementation of non-discursive action is implemented too (Seniwati, 2014: 236). It is very clear that terrorism these days is part of the range of different threats that should be included when it comes to securitisation theory. The main point of this debate in academics

² Ranging from non-politicized, to politicized and finally securitised (Buzan *et al.*)

however is, where and if counterterrorism can be included in the three-step system as originally coined by Buzan, Waever and De Wilde, or if it is time to ‘update’ the model as proposed by the Copenhagen School back in the 1980’s.

Another important debate that is current going on when it comes to counterterrorism and its role in states that are ‘under attack’, is to what extent acts of counterterrorism (e.g. state of emergency, detention without trial, possible torture, etc.) can be legitimised by the authorities in such a state, in short; what the limits of counterterrorism are. A series of measures that counterterrorism scholar Andrew Neal defines as ‘exceptionalism’ (Neal, 2010: 1).

Does exceptionalism save lives, or is it destroying the freedoms and the law that the people have acquired over time, and that the state has is supposed to protect? As the legal expert Carl Schmitt once argued: ‘Sovereign is he who decides on the exception’ while stressing that there is always the possibility of an existentially threatening exceptional event of situation that falls beyond the limits of law, liberty, rights and constitutional government. Not more than logical, according to Schmitt. Just like in the debate around the inclusivity of counterterrorism, scholars seem to not agree with each other on this in these times of increasing awareness when it comes to for example privacy. Nevertheless, Schmitt seems to be on the ‘winning’ side these days, considering the fact that our current state system has its political and philosophical limits. As will be made clear in the case studies that will follow (Neal, 2010: 2).

When looking at the other side, Neal argues that the classic discourse on liberty and security are flawed. According to the origins of this relationship (Hobbes and Kant), liberty is only possible under heavily restrictive political conditions. One can in that case not talk about liberty or security, but rather liberty under security. Terrorism and consequently counterterrorism do, because of their very nature, operate outside of the limits that liberty and security offer, as Hobbes and Kant did not foresee (Neal, 2010: 3).

As the examples about counterterrorism above have shown, its definition, its role in relation to security studies, and where its moral and legal limits are, are under scrutiny. The case studies conducted in this paper, will clearly show that these debates remain important and relevant, in order to perform counterterrorism, and defeat terrorism.

2 Theoretical framework

This section will introduce the reader to two main theories that will be used in this paper: securitisation theory and performative power theory. As will be explained later on in this chapter, the latter theory will be analysed and evaluated in the case studies, and should be seen as the ‘step beyond securitisation theory’. Securitisation theory serves as an ‘inspiration’ for performative power theory, one could say. Performative power theory can be considered the ‘result’ of the securitisation of a certain topic. Therefore, securitisation theory will be discussed first, before introducing performative power theory and its key findings, as well as the analytical framework which will be used in order to properly analyse both theories.

2.1 Securitisation theory

One of the theories that will be central in investigating the idea of performative power in terrorism, and a theory that has already proven its importance in general when it comes to conflict in general, is securitisation theory as coined by the so-called Copenhagen School. This trend of thought emerged after the Cold War, when scholars suggested that the scope of security studies should be both widened and deepened, adding extra dimensions to security (besides the military). Securitisation theory, mainly associated with Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, argued that security issues are not a hundred percent objective. They are rather subjective, something socially constructed, Buzan and Waever argued. According to them, a security issue has to go through several stages before it becomes securitised (namely; non-politicised, politicised, securitised). In this process, actors use ‘speech acts’, designating a threat to a referent object, and declares it an existential threat, leading to the right to use extraordinary means or break formal rules for security reasons to tackle the threat (Buzan *et al.*, 1998; Buzan and Waever, 2003).

The idea of the speech act is based on three different units in the process. Firstly, there are the *referent objects*: who or what is said to be existentially threatened and has a legitimate claim to survival (i.e. states or nations). Secondly, there are the *securitising actors*: people that are securitising an issue by stating that a referent object is threatened (this happens in general by political leaders, authorities, etc.). Thirdly, *functional actors*: people affecting and influencing decisions in the given field (this can be either military, politically or environmentally for instance). If all these actors respond correctly to each other, and if the audience the arguments given by them, one can speak about a securitised move. (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 36).

For the reasons given above, securitisation is and intersubjective process, which means that it does not concern an objective threat. It is hard to measure the result, so to say. It can rather be described as a subjective threat perception, which is accepted by a fair share of the public (De Graaf, 2010: 10-11). As De Graaf argues, securitisation theory contributes to performative power since her study:

‘ [...] takes this approach some steps forward by applying the idea of ‘securitisation’ to the political decision making process, the vying for support and the setting of the discourse of counterterrorism. Setting the political agenda, generating political and public support and framing the threat are parts of a social and cultural process of ‘securitisation’ that draws on existing political traditions and fears but which, invoking national crises, can construct new ones as well (De Graaf, 2010: 10-11).’

Several scholars support De Graaf in her line of thought here. Terrorism experts such as Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post and Victoroff argue for example that counterterrorism policies do not only include objective measures, but that their framing and presentation are also of primordial importance to make them work (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008: 58-65). According to them, counterterrorism is simply of form of communication, like securitisation theory seems to argue too (De Graaf, 2010: 10-11). The stance of Kruglanski, Crenshaw, Post and Victoroff are taking here, shows the added value of De Graaf’s concept of performative power. Whereas securitisation theory in general the steps that are being taken following the securitisation of an event or series of events (terrorist attacks in this instance), objective measures but especially framing and presentation of those acts are the most important (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008: 58-65). A gap De Graaf is filling.

2.1.1 When is securitisation of counterterrorism successful?

In order to answer the main question being asked in this paper, it is of utmost importance to decide when counterterrorism and performative power can be deemed ‘successful’. If a basic definition of success cannot be established, it would be hard to decide whether the a next step, a step ‘beyond securitisation’ (as will be discussed later in this chapter), is relevant to make and measure.

The definition of ‘successful’ in this context is of course an ambiguous one. The founding fathers of securitisation theory, Buzan, Waever and De Wilde do however and luckily provide us with a solid definition (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 6) In their opinion, securitisation is successful when a speech act is conducted, a referent object is regarded as an existential threat, and an

audience that is responding to and accepting the securitisation. This leads to, most importantly for the research question of this paper, the conclusion that the result of successful securitisation is a shared recognition that extraordinary counter-measures are necessary and legitimate in order to counter a threat. This means that if the audience does not accept that the referent object is under an existential threat, the securitising move will fail (Karsten, 2016 : 29).

2.2 Performative power

The main framework being used in these papers will be the De Graaf's 'performative power'. The key question De Graaf is asking herself is: What do counterterrorism officials want? When it comes to terrorism it is those officials setting the agenda and having to respond to terrorist activities. They have to take the measures and basically 'sell' these to the public, also to raise enough support of both the public and subsequently the politicians. Two words are key here: performativity and process. As De Graaf states herself, it concerns 'the way in which they (the policy-makers) *perform*, or in other words carry out the *process* of countering terrorism, can have more impact than the actual arrests being made (or not being made).' The focus of her research is what she calls the performativity of counterterrorism, or its 'performative power'. To be more exact:

'Performative power expresses the extent to which a national government, by means of its official counterterrorism policy and corresponding discourse (in statements, enactments, measures and ministerial remarks), is successful in 'selling' its representation of events, its set of solutions to the terrorist problem, as well as being able to set the tone for the overall discourse regarding terrorism and counterterrorism – hereby mobilising different audiences for its purposes (De Graaf 2011: 3).'

De Graaf acknowledges here that the state is obviously not the only player when it comes to the field of counterterrorism (think of advisors, politicians and academics for instance) and measures taken to reduce the risks. Therefore, she highlights that this theory stresses the attempts made by governments to influence the public opinion when it comes to the legitimacy and accuracy of its counterterrorism policy. In the whole context of terrorism, De Graaf indicates that there exists a set of so-called 'signifiers' affecting counterterrorism. Here it concerns mechanisms that mainly influence public opinion, needed to make counterterrorist measures work. Here it does however involve mechanisms that can work both ways: they can either boost public support, or inflame hostile sentiments against the government(s) and even create support for terrorist groups. A good example of such damaging behaviour would be for

instance the ‘War on Terror’ after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, instigated by the United States and their allies, the ‘Coalition of the Willing’. The Muslim world perceived this act as a combination of both anti-Muslim and imperialist. Beatrice de Graaf and Bob de Graaff even consider this act as an a curse to Western society, instead of some sort of crusade against terrorism (De Graaf, De Graaff: 2010).

The former British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, David Miliband, realised this, stating:

‘The call for a ‘war on terror’ was a call to arms, an attempt to build solidarity for a fight against a single shared enemy. But the foundation for solidarity between peoples and nations should be based not on who we are against, but on the idea of who we are and the values we share. Terrorists succeed when they render countries fearful and vindictive; when they sow division and animosity; when they force countries to respond with violence and repression. The best response is to refuse to be cowed (De Graaf & De Graaff, 2010: 272).’

Miliband singlehandedly identified a ‘signifier’ that triggered performative power of counterterrorism in a negative way, De Graaf and de Graaff say. The United States and the United Kingdom mobilisation of the public turned against them both domestically and internationally after the promise of extreme measures. Public opinion therefore plays a key role when it comes to performative power in counterterrorism. As terrorism expert Brian Jenkins once stated in a 1975 RAND report: ‘(t)errorism is theatre’. The goal of terrorist is to induce fear to societies. Waldmann argues that the reaction of (and the impact on) society can luckily purposely be affected by the government in various ways. Less visible drama and strengthening the state’s power are of primordial importance to the authorities prevent the terrorists from reaching their goals (De Graaf & De Graaff, 2010: 272).

Miliband managed to identify one signifier of performative power. Of course, many distinctions can be made when it concerns public opinion and how to influence it when it comes to counterterrorism. In total, De Graaf has identified fourteen signifiers, which will be introduced below, and which will later on be applied to the case studies. The thin line between failure and success in coping with terrorism makes it even more relevant to identify signifiers and it will be this question being central in this paper (De Graaf & De Graaff, 2010: 272).

2.2.1 Signifiers

The fourteen signifiers as discussed by De Graaf can be divided into three aspects: aspects pertaining to politicisation of counterterrorism, aspects pertaining to discursive framing on the

terrorist threat, and aspects pertaining to mobilisation efforts in the struggle against terrorism. The three aspects will be introduced accordingly.

2.2.1.1 Aspects pertaining to politicisation of counterterrorism

The first four signifiers dig into the politicisation of counterterrorism. The focus of these aspects will be on the processes of radicalisation and polarisation in society. It stresses for example people who have died or got wounded as a result of terrorist attacks. This is important since it influences for example politics or the perceived risks, and to what extent the public is willing to get involved in counter-terrorism measures. (De Graaf, 2010: 235).

‘1. More attention for counter-terrorism is generated when political leaders personally and explicitly express themselves on the issue, rather than leaving this to lower level authorities. When counter-terrorism has a high priority, and is demonstrated as such by the highest possible political authority (e.g. in a presidential speech), the level of performative power is correspondingly higher.

2. When counter-terrorism becomes the central issue in electoral campaigns or is employed to demonise the political opponent, the issue is politicised and the performativity increases.

3. When the perceived personal risk is high and counter-terrorism officials feel directly threatened themselves (for instance because colleagues have previously been the target of terrorist actions), the performative power increases as well, since the sense of urgency of the threat is higher.

4. The resonance of terrorist violence and the extent to which the public is prepared to accept counter-terrorism measures is also amplified when the issue has national priority over other issues (such as financial crises, environmental hazards, etc.). On the contrary, if new crises from a completely different policy field emerge, attention from terrorism might drift away, and the performativity decreases.’ (De Graaf, 2011: 4).

2.2.1.2 Aspects pertaining to discursive framing of the terrorist threat

When it comes to the discursive framing of the terrorist threats, the focus will be on the role of the security and intelligence services regarding politicisation. What is their concrete policy towards terrorists or how is the threat being demarcated? Are the security forces making uses of certain existing views or fears, etc. (De Graaf, 2010: 239).

- ‘5. When the threat is expanded to include not only the specific terrorist offenders, but also sympathisers and the broader terrorist constituency, the threat demarcation becomes broader and more urgent, which also fuels the degree of performativity.
6. When war rhetoric is used or the tone of the discourse grows more militant, the performative power increases.
7. When counter-terrorism officials or politicians refer to historical experiences of (civil) war, chaos and violence, existing or slumbering fears are invoked and the persuasiveness of counter-terrorism policy and the severity of the threat are enhanced.
8. The explicit refusal to ‘talk to’ terrorists – not wanting to enter into negotiations with them, for instance, or not offering them exit-strategies or reintegration programmes – also keeps the level of performative power high.
9. When no shared tradition, culture or overlap of values exists between the terrorists and those countering their actions and counter-terrorism policies explicitly capitalise on this mental distance, the discourse will be increasingly irreconcilable and intransigent. In such a case, the performative power is high: society rallies against political violence, the (alleged) terrorist sympathisers feel antagonised.’ (De Graaf, 2011: 4)

2.2.1.3. Aspects pertaining to mobilisation efforts in the struggle against terrorism

Lastly, the specific set of measures taken when it comes to legislation and the spectrum of violence are being considered under aspects pertaining mobilisation efforts. Before one can act against terrorism, new laws should be introduced and ratified. Furthermore, if authorities decide to make use of a broader spectrum of arms or units this should be mentioned under this category of aspects (De Graaf, 2010: 241).

- ‘10. Counter-terrorism officials can also explicitly and directly mobilise the population. By placing fugitive terrorists on a ‘Ten Most Wanted’ list and initiating raids or witch hunts, the population becomes directly involved in counter-terrorism. This increases the visibility of the measures and demonstrates the government’s decisiveness, but also increases the level of performance of counterterrorism policy.
11. Deploying special units that are generally trained for a higher spectrum of violence than regular police units to investigate, prosecute or arrest terrorists adds more drama to the situation, which leads to an increase in the performative power.

12. The introduction of new anti-terrorism legislation also increases the performative power, since it establishes new legal categories, new offences and new types of perpetrators in the counter-terrorism discourse.

13. The introduction of new legislation – such as a ‘gag law’, data mining provisions or a law on control orders – that is not specifically aimed at terrorism also gives counter-terrorism policy a supplementary boost, since new laws affect the tone of the discussion, attract media attention and affect the terrorist’s constituencies.

14. Major ‘terrorism trials’ – trials that involve national or regional prosecution officers (or Grand Juries) trying well-known individuals or entire groups – often serve to generate a dynamic and mobilising power (such as solidarity campaigns, hunger strikes, protest demonstrations, acts of revenge, etc.). Hence, the performativity of counterterrorism increases.’ (De Graaf, 2011: 5)

2.3 Key findings about performative power

While doing research on the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF), the Brigade Rosse (BG), the Black Panther Movement (BPP), and the Moluccan movements in the Netherland, De Graaf applied her ideas of performative power and the fourteen signifiers on all of those cases. De Graaf drew some interesting conclusions about the struggle of governments against terrorism. Her work indicated for instance that there is a correlation in how counterterrorism measures were performed, and to what extent the authorities managed to ‘mobilise’ the public, and the success of terrorist activity on the other hand. The results of this relation are however not always obvious. (De Graaf, 2011: 3).

Firstly, she concludes (as one might expect) that if the number of people dying or getting harmed as the result of terrorist attack is high, the response when it comes to counterterrorism and performative power will be high. This seems to be very obvious, considering the fact that such attacks lead to havoc and mayhem, covered by the media, triggering social fear, and being securitised quickly. However, and now it is getting interesting, this causal relationship does not always hold true. De Graaf points out that the opposite might actually also be true. According to her, a lack of counterterrorism policy can influence violence positively. In short: a high level of performative power, introducing many laws, mobilising the public, etc., can increase the number of terrorist attacks leading to even more casualties. This was the case with the RAF, BG and BPM in the 1970’s for instance. However, when looking beyond this point of high

performative power, one can spot a decrease in terrorist violence too, as soon as the performative power is declining. This causality can be explained in different ways of course (such as a short delay in between measures being ratified and valorised for instance), but it is still surprising to see that a high level of performativity even increased radicalisation and terrorist violence. De Graaf argues that this is mostly the result of the terrorists realising their actions are considered ‘useless’, seeing their attacks are failing to influence the public in the way they want them to see it. Consequently, the terrorist movements fails to further expand their operations (De Graaf, 2011: 6-7).

Secondly, and most surprisingly, De Graaf draws attention to the fact that a shortage of counterterrorism measures, manpower or instruments (or its weak implementation) does not necessarily mean a detrimental effect on performative power of a state. De Graaf gives the example of Moluccan violence in the Netherlands in the 1970’s and 1980’s, where the Dutch government only decided to focus on decreasing radicalisation tendencies to avoid public fear. This resulted in the number of Moluccan terrorists willing to commit violence was waning. It also diminished the existing fears and positively influencing the public debates and discourse on national security vis-à-vis insecurity. However, even in more polarised societies such as West Germany, which was being torn apart by violence of the leftist terrorist RAF, a lower degree of performative power can positively contribute to diminishing terrorist violence. The German Minister of the Interior, Gerhart Baum, managed to do so in 1979, by joining former RAF member Horst Mahler in his appeal for more deliberation and less polarisation. Something that would have been unimaginable in the preceding decades (De Graaf, 2011: 7).

Although a monopoly on violence and connection to the media and the public remain important, these conclusions show that even non-conventional ways might defuse tensions in society and can reduce terrorist activity. There might be alternatives for policy-makers and politicians than maintaining policies or enacting new ones that show state power and that aim to mobilise the public *en masse* (De Graaf, 2011: 7). Considering the before-mentioned developments in society (e.g. social media, globalisation, etc.), this paper will try to analyse whether these conclusions are still valid nowadays, to what extent and how these can be applied to the two case studies.

2.4 Analytical framework

This section will provide the reader with information on the more practical side of this research. The methods (in this instance the case studies), the operationalisation (the research questions that will be taken into account) and the data will be discussed to prove the validity of the way in which research is being conducted in this paper.

2.4.1 Methods

As mentioned above, the Copenhagen School and securitisation theory can play an important role in counterterrorism these days, considering the fact that it can be seen as the step before performative power enters effect. In general, one analyses relevant texts to study securitisation, which will be done in the form of case studies and qualitative content analysis in this paper. Before doing so, this section will briefly dig into the concept of case study research.

Nowadays, the case study method is being used more and more for qualitative research. According to Yin, 'the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as organisation and managerial processes.' A common concern about the usefulness of case studies is therefore the fact that they do not provide a solid basis for scientific generalisation. Yin's response to this is that:

'case studies [...] are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study [...] does not represent a 'sample', and in doing a case study, your goal will be to generalise theories (analytical generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation) (Yin, 2003: 10).'

He also points out some other important characteristics of case study research, which in his view render it even more useful. According to Yin,:

'A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident', something we have already concluded earlier in this paper, considering the ambiguity of for example the definition of 'terrorism' and many others. Furthermore, according to Yin, 'The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003: 13-14).'

As argued before, the most used way of studying securitisation is by means of qualitative content analysis of relevant texts, also since as Balzacq argues ‘*content analysis emphasizes the measurability of variables or counting and coding*’ (Balzacq, 2011: 51). This paper will however be, to some extent, an exception to this idea. Whereas texts and articles still play an important role when it comes to securitisation, this research will mainly seek to approach the theory coined by De Graaf from a different angle. It is therefore not necessarily a methodological choice that has been made here, but rather a choice of what topic exactly has to be studied. The angle has already been selected, and the author will try to test the falsifiability of De Graaf’s theory regarding performative power, hopefully contributing to either a better understanding or suggesting improvements.

As described in earlier section of this paper, this research will follow all of the elements described above, for the purpose of theoretical orientation and interest in individual cases, the terrorist attacks in both Paris and Nice in this case. When it comes to the practical implementation of these case studies, a rather odd but very useful approach will be used. Each case study will start with a brief overview of the events that happened on the specific night. Afterwards, this paper will not follow a chronological order, but divide the events and their consequences among the three categories in which the signifiers can be found, establishing a clear overview of the signifiers present or absent.

2.4.2 Operationalisation

Case study research is a very effective method for the purposes of this paper, as it allows to study both the core of the theory (securitisation theory in combination with ‘checking the boxes’ by means of the fourteen signifiers) as well as analyse the practical consequences of certain policy choices. Whereas the type of methodology was described in the section above, this part of the paper will highlight how case study research will exactly be used throughout this work.

Obviously, it will be the research question that will be guiding the research conducted in the case studies to be analysed. For this reason, it is of importance to reiterate the research question posed at the beginning of this paper: *To what extent is the theory of performative power as coined by Beatrice de Graaf still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe?* Moreover, it is of equal importance to have a good overview of the theories that have been chosen for answering this question. As the research question already indicates, the main theory to be used is the one on performative power, as coined by De Graaf in 2010. This work will however also keep an eye on securitisation theory since, as De Graaf indicates herself too, it is

in close relation with her own theory. Both De Graaf and Waever, work with a list of variables and the basis of variables when it comes to performative power seem to be close to each other.

The only difference, in the author's opinion, is however the 'stage' in which these variables are analysed. Whereas securitisation theory asks questions such as: *Who securitises? Which issues? For whom or what? Under which conditions? With what results?* (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 32). De Graaf however, takes it to the next level by already asking follow-up questions: *How to securitise? Which measures are being used? What is the effect? How is society dealing with the new the conditions or possible results?* De Graaf's theory is basically about the question how to substantiate the concept of the 'state of exception (as coined by Giorgio Agamben) as result of the securitisation process, in which he describes why and how a sovereign state has the ability to use the rule of law in the name of the public good, and on what legal basis this happens, in relation to securitisation theory (Hanrieder & Kreuder-Sonnen, 2014: 1).

It is interesting to see that such a 'next stage' has already been earlier described in different works. Dunn Cavelty, who's works and research were considered of great importance to make cyber-threats one of the main threats in modern times in the US history, already noticed this 'two-phased approach'. Although cyber-threats might look like quite a different topic, and not relevant for the research being conducted here, I would like to highlight the importance of the type of approach Cavelty is using here. Whereas he applies this approach mainly to threat politics, he describes how any threat can be taken beyond securitisation, and hence, according to the author of this paper, beyond securitisation theory, making it relevant to this paper too.

'While the first phase focuses on the initial framing and securitisation move, until the issue has made its way successfully onto the agenda and elicits its first policy response, the second phase starts when the issue at hand is on the agenda and subsequently begins to undergo change (Dunn Cavelty, 2008: 24).'

Considering the subject of this paper – terrorism in the 2010's – and the case studies selected, there will be less attention for the first stages of securitisation theory. As the case studies will perfectly illustrate, terrorism in France in 2015 and 2016 was already in a securitised stage (mainly due to the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris on January 7th 2015). As the matter of fact, terrorism is very often a securitised topic, considering the violent disruptive effect it has on society. It is however especially the second phase that is of interest to this paper, considering the fact that it wants to find out what the nature of the security measures drafted by the

securitising actor (the French government in this case) is. In this way, securitisation theory, performative power, and the case studies will be theoretically covered.

Since the goal of this paper is to find out whether De Graaf's theory is still applicable for cases of terrorism in Europe in the 2010's, two case studies have been picked. The focus will be on following questions, mainly drawn from the fourteen signifiers:

- Has there been any change in the aspects pertaining to politicisation of counterterrorism?
- Has there been any change in the aspects pertaining to discursive framing of the terrorist threat?
- Has there been any change in the aspects pertaining to mobilisation efforts in the struggle against terrorism?
- How did the French government act after the selected cases of terrorism, when it comes to performative power, and which effect did this have?
- How can our understanding of contemporary terrorism help to further develop or improve the theory of performative power?

By answering these specific questions, together with our prior knowledge of De Graaf's theory and case studies as described in her work, it will be possible to get a good understanding of how and to what extent the theory of performative power is still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe. This will not only lead to a 'yes or no answer' when it comes to fighting terrorism. It will also provide the reader of this paper with a very good understanding of how counterterrorism developed over time, considering the fact that case of counterterrorism from the 1960's, 1970's and 1980' will be compared with examples from 2015 and 2016. Moreover, it will make clear what type of counterterrorism measures do work, and which one do not. To this end, all primary and secondary sources used in this paper will be addressed while keeping the questions mentioned above in mind.

2.4.3. Data

Although De Graaf had many resources at her disposal, she decided to focus her research on publications and on the archives of security services, minutes of the policy-making authorities and interview with (former) civil servants of those bodies. Despite the fact that this paper aims to 'test' De Graaf's theory and apply it to two contemporary cases, the decision was made to only consult resources that are openly available. The explanation for doing so it three-fold.

Many resources are however still classified, considering the secret nature of the operations that might still be going on. It might therefore harder to consult those types of information, although

authorities seem to be more transparent than decades ago. This was much more different in the case of De Graaf’s work ‘Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A comparative study’, published in 2010, where she analysed files that used to be classified for many years, but that were disclosed in the decades after. Considering the fact that the case studies to be described concerns events that took place in 2015 and 2016, it will be harder but not impossible to find such resources. Moreover, we have already concluded that, since performative power is closely related to securitisation theory, it is especially the information that is open to the public, and the information that is publicised, being influential for the public opinion and support. Classified information does not reach the ordinary people and is therefore of no interest to our research. Lastly, it is simple for the sake of length and the feasibility of conducting this research that the types of sources have to be limited. For this last reason, it has been decided by the author not to put too much emphasis on the role of social media when it comes to primary sources. This will however be discussed via secondary sources, to not lose ourselves in analysing a too extensive data set research.

When it comes to data, a lot of information will be drawn from the sources summed up below (Table 1).

Primary sources	
<p style="text-align: center;">Strategic Concepts</p> <p><i>(documents outlining the French State’s natural and fundamental security tasks. Documents resulting from and reacting on the terrorist attacks that will be analysed, as well as declarations or introductions of new policies, laws, etc. that might have influence performative power)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>French Presidential Press Office (www.Elysee.fr)</i> - <i>French Governmental Press Office (www.gouvernement.fr)</i> - <i>French Governmental Archives (www.discours.vie-publique.fr)</i>

<p>Public Statements or Press Releases</p> <p><i>(Here it concerns the public declarations by important officials when it comes to counterterrorism policy)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>French Presidential Press Office (www.Elysee.fr)</i> - <i>French Governmental Press Office (www.gouvernement.fr)</i> - <i>French Foreign Ministry (www.diplomatie.gouvernement.fr)</i> - <i>French Official Press Office (www.vie-publique.fr)</i>
<p>Other relevant documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Daily Newspaper The Local (www.thelocal.fr)</i> - <i>Daily Newspaper Le Figaro (www.figaro.fr)</i>

Although more types of data would certainly broad the scope of this paper, the author is convinced that the set of resources described above will be capable of answering the key questions posed. Gaps in primary sources, on which this document will mainly rely, will be complemented with carefully selected and recent literature on the topic. It will concern books, academic articles within the field of security and counterterrorism studies, drawn from renowned journals and think tanks. By adding this secondary literature, the events that happened, as well as previous and current events can be put into context.

3 The Paris attacks

This chapter will provide the reader with a detailed case study of the terrorist attacks that took place on the 13th of November 2015, as part of a comparison with another terrorist attacks taking place on the 14th of July, the year after. The aim is to inform the reader of this paper with the basic information about the attacks, and to determine which security and counterterrorist measures were taken during the six months after the events. At the end of the chapter, a schematisation of the previously discussed fourteen signifiers as coined by De Graaf to measure the degree of performative power.

3.1 Line of events

On the night of Friday the 13th of November 2015, France was hit by several terrorist attacks in its capital Paris. Gunmen and suicide bombers hit a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bar, almost simultaneously, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. It all started around 21:20 at the ‘Stade de France’, where the French and German national teams were playing a soccer game in attendance of French President François Hollande and his German counterpart Angela Merkel. Three suicide bombers detonated their suicide belts within several minutes, killing themselves and one by-passer. Soon after, several carnages would take place in the city centre. With one ‘suicide squad’ having killed themselves, two other squads were still heading for their targets. From 21:25 until 21:40, the first band managed to drive by several terraces in the Marais district of Paris and kill dozens of people enjoying the start of the weekend, being shot by police officers. The last squad managed to get into the, by now, infamous Bataclan theatre and take the a concert-going crowd hostage before eventually killing many of them. Not a single active shooter survived that night. Police officials did however manage to arrest the brains behind the attacks that night: Salah Abdeslam and Mohamed Abrini. All assailants were radicalised Muslims, having strong ties with the Islamic State (BBC, 9th of December 2015).

3.2 Analysis of counterterrorist measures

The next section will discuss the most important measures taken by the French counterterrorism officials during the period following the terrorist attacks of the 13th of November 2015. For the sake of clarity, the measures will not be written down chronologically, but divided into the three groups of signifiers, as discussed earlier in this paper: Measures pertaining to politicisation of counterterrorism, measures pertaining to discursive framing of the terrorist threat, and measures pertaining to mobilisation efforts in the struggle against terrorism. In this way, it will be much

easier to identify and group the counterterrorism measures taken, and to put them in under a specific signifier in the scheme.

3.2.1 Counterterrorist measures politicising the threat

Another interesting measure taken after the Paris attacks, was the result of French counterterrorism officials feeling themselves directly threatened, with a perception of high personal risk. Police volunteers were quickly allowed to carry their guns while being off-duty after the national police organisation asked for it. Firstly, it would offer the police officers to protect themselves in case terrorists would target them. Secondly, the statement says, policemen must have to fight back, prevent or stop terrorist attacks from happening, if they see such things during their off-time. Former French president François Hollande even encouraged the municipal authorities (who are in charge of the police) to arm the police even while being off-duty (Le Figaro, 14th of June 2016).

Also interesting to see, was the level of politicisation of the threat in an international context. There was a lot of criticism on the French government after the Paris attacks, since bad cooperation between the Belgian and French intelligence service apparently prevented them from avoid the attacks. Although the terrorists were already ‘in the picture’, intelligence was not shared between them. The issue was quickly politicised and both countries found a way to share information more quickly, considering the fact that the terrorists’ roots could be found in Belgium too. Former French Prime Minister expressed himself personally here, rather than leaving it to lower authorities to solve the problems (French Governmental Press Office, 1st of February 2016).

Important to mention here is the role that politicians play when it comes to politicising the threat of terrorism. Although all French political parties cried wolf over the events, and wanted more investments in counterterrorism measures, the signifier related to making counterterrorism a central issue in electoral campaigns or employing it to demonise the political opponent cannot be valorised here. The next elections of any importance when it comes counterterrorism policy, would take place in May 2017, meaning that it would not be within the six-month period this paper is investigating. Therefore, this signifier is not being touched upon when it comes to the Paris attacks.

3.2.2 Counterterrorist measures framing the threat

One of the strongest and most immediate acts conducted by the French government, in combating fear in the public opinion, was a speech by former president François Hollande on

the day after the attacks. Besides mentioning the number of casualties and announcing the state of emergency and the closure of the borders, Hollande used a very violent type of rhetoric:

‘This is a terrible ordeal which once again assails us. We know where it comes from, who these criminals are, who these terrorists are. [...] Face with terror, France must be strong, it must be great and the state authorities must be firm. We will be. [...] What the terrorists want is to scare us and fill us with dread. There is indeed reason to be afraid. There is dread, but in the face of this dread, there is a nation that knows how to defend itself, that knows how to mobilise its forces and, once again, will defeat the terrorists (French Foreign Ministry, 16th of November 2015)’.

This type of speech act can clearly be linked to several signifiers under counterterrorist measures framing the threat. Firstly, war rhetoric was used and the tone of the debate became more militant than it was before. Secondly, Hollande (as a counterterrorism official), was referring to historical experiences existing and slumbering fears, existing after the terrorist attacks at Charlie Hebdo earlier that year. Thirdly, by using language such as ‘defeat the terrorists’, the former president clearly indicates the explicit refusal to talk or negotiate with the terrorists. By giving just one speech, he managed to touch upon three signifiers in the field of framing the terrorist threat.

Another measure taken by French government officials was the increased security in public transport. It did however not specifically concerns special police or army units being introduced, or any new legislation. Although in general this measure was widely dismissed as a ‘security theatre’, due to its limited scope, the public transport was considered as a high priority target for terrorists. The authorities were therefore specifically trying to mobilise the public and involve them in counterterrorist measures (The Local, 19th of July 2016).

In the aftermath the terrorist attacks, the French government noticed that secularism had to be brought under the attention of the youth again. Most of the terrorists had radicalised in France, something the authorities had to avoid. It was also a concern, considering reports coming in of many pupils not respecting the minute’s silence for those who died in the attacks. Therefore the government introduced a plan to boost the country’s secular values in schools. As part of this plan, ‘National Secularism Day’ was created, following the French tradition of laicity. Although the plan did not really work out, the wish of the authorities to follow this path can be linked to a serious lack of shared traditions, culture or overlap of values between (potential) terrorists and authorities (French Education Ministry, 24th of November 2016).

3.2.3 Counterterrorist measures mobilising the public

One of the most comprehensible measures taken by the French authorities was the inauguration of the state of emergency in French, mere hours after the attacks. Even though such an act is very controversial considering the fact that it strips the basic rights of individuals, even the opposition parties in the French parliament backed this proposal. It offered the French counterterrorism officials many more tools to combat terrorism, such as carrying out raid on homes and putting suspects under house arrest without the regular preceding judicial procedures. Originally, the state of emergency would last 12 days, but it would be extended several times and only terminated in November 2017 (Le Figaro, 1st of November 2017). Although it touched upon many signifiers in the field of regular legislation, anti-terrorism legislation and popular mobilisation, its results can also be traced back to politicisation of the issue and a broader threat demarcation.

Another measure taken by French government officials was the increased security in public transport. Although in general this measure was widely dismissed as a ‘security theatre’, due to its limited scope, the public transport was considered as a high priority target for terrorists. The authorities were therefore specifically trying to mobilise the public and involve them in counterterrorist measures (The Local, 19th of July 2016).

Lastly, and possibly most spectacularly, as a result of the state of emergency and better cooperation with the Belgian intelligence agencies, French authorities managed to touch upon the last signifier De Graaf proposes. The initial escape of Salah Abdeslam, the mastermind behind the Paris attacks, unleashed one of the biggest manhunts France had ever known. Abdeslam was eventually arrested in March 2016, five months after the events took place. Although his trial was supposed to be of major importance in the French news, his extradition from Belgium to France took a long time. Furthermore, Abdeslam decided to exercise his right to remain silent, and the first steps of his trial would take place behind closed doors. Therefore, one cannot speak of a spectacular show trial increasing performative power (Le Figaro, 18th of March 2016). Moreover, the trial and the eventual verdict cannot be included in our research, considering the six-month period this paper is investigating.

3.3 Schematisation

In conclusion, and as the scheme below clearly indicates, the performative power of the French government was extremely high in the months after the attacks in Paris. Twelve out of fourteen signifiers can be deemed present. The only signifiers to be absent are absent due to external

factors, which cannot be influenced by the French authorities, such as elections and a show trial of the mastermind behind the attacks.

Performative Signifier	Presence
1. Was there more attention for counterterrorism, generated by political leaders personally and explicitly expressing themselves on the issues, rather than leaving it to lower level authorities?	Yes (+1)
2. Did counterterrorism become a central issue in electoral campaigns, or was it employed to demonise the political opponent?	No (0)
3. Did counterterrorism official feel themselves directly threatened, or was their perception of personal risk high?	Yes (+1)
4. Was the resonance of terrorist violence high, and was the public prepared to accept counterterrorism measures, ergo, was it a national priority over other issues?	Yes (+1)
5. Did the threat demarcation become broader or more urgent than before?	Yes (+1)
6. Was war rhetoric used, or did the tone of the discourse become more militant?	Yes (+1)
7. Did counterterrorism officials refer to historical experiences or existing / slumbering fears to invoke fear?	Yes (+1)
8. Was there an explicit refusal to talk to, or negotiate with, terrorists?	Yes (+1)
9. Was a serious lack of shared traditions, culture or overlap of values between the terrorists and authorities capitalising the mental distance?	Yes (+1)
10. Has the public been mobilised by the counterterrorism officials by directly involving them in counterterrorist measures?	Yes (+1)
11. Were any special units (usually used for a higher spectrum of violence than regular police) deployed as part of the counterterrorist measures?	Yes (+1)
12. Was any new anti-terrorism legislation introduced?	Yes (+1)

13. Was any other new legislation introduced, potentially giving counterterrorism policy a supplementary boost?	Yes (+1)
14. Were any well-known individuals or entire groups tried by major 'terrorism trials'?	No (0)

4 The Nice attacks

Similarly to the previous section, this chapter will be a detailed case study of the terrorist attack that took place on the Bastille Day, July 14th, 2016. It will provide the reader with the basic knowledge about the events that day, as well as determine which measures French counterterrorist officials took in the six months after. Just like in the previous part, a schematisation will be provided at the end to analyse the degree of performative power. In this way, a comparison with the reaction of the French authorities after the 13th of November 2015 attacks can be made in the next chapter.

4.1 Line of events

On July 14th, 2016, Bastille Day in France, tragedy struck again. At the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, the Tunisian-French Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drove a 19 tonnes truck into a large crowd of partying people. Just after the fireworks at 10:30 p.m., Lahouaiej-Bouhlel bypassed the police barriers that were erected to barricade the promenade, by mounting the pavement and killing the first unsuspecting bystanders. After having driven more than two kilometres over a period of five minutes, security forces managed to kill the driver who initiated this carnage, after a short shoot-out. His act of terror left a trail of corpses and injured people. In total, eighty-four people succumbed, and another three hundred were left injured. Lahouaiej-Bouhlel allegedly adhered to the Islamic State, and sought to punish France for participating in the coalition to destroy the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (Stonehem, 2016: 1-2).

4.2 Analysis of counterterrorist measures

The next section will discuss the most important measures taken by the French counterterrorism officials during the period following the terrorist attacks of July 14th, 2016. Just like in the previous chapter, the measures will not be written down chronologically, but divided into three groups.

4.2.1. Counterterrorist measures politicising the threat

Besides increased attention for counterterrorism, as I will describe below, it is important to highlight that just like after the Paris attacks international political attention became more important, forcing the French authorities not to leave it to lower level authorities. The international dimension was important, since half of the victims in the attack were foreigners. Therefore, international police organisation Interpol was forced to come in and help with the investigation, sending in special response teams to cooperate with the French authorities. Also, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, expressed his deepest

sympathy and condolences to the victims, their families, and the government and people of France. His spokesman also stated:

‘The Secretary General hopes that all those responsible for this massacre will be rapidly identified and brought to justice. He stands firmly by the French government and people as they confront this threat and stresses the need to intensify regional and international efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism (United Nations, 15th of July 2016).’

By doing so, Ban Ki Moon took the attention for counterterrorism to the next level, both nationally and internationally. Something that did not only have to do with lower counterterrorism officials investigating and fighting terrorism, but also involving officials on state level. Hence, the international community managed to touch upon one of the signifiers, and not the national leaders. Something that we have to take into account when analysing the signifiers. Change does not necessarily have to come from the national authorities only in a more and more interconnected world.

Considering the fact that the presidential and parliamentary election of May 2017 were still far away during the time of the attacks in Nice, one cannot say that the events can be included in this paper’s scope of research. The topic of terrorism would become an issue of the electoral campaign in the beginning of 2017. There was however one local candidate running for a seat in parliament for a different region, who suspended his campaign for the primary elections considering ‘the horror of Nice that struck our children [...] in order to grieve for our losses’. Demonisation of political opponents over the issue would only take place later, mourning and grief were the main sentiments during the months after the events.

When looking at the other two signifiers indicating the politicisation of the terrorist threat, one can see that counterterrorism officials still felt themselves directly threatened, and their perception of personal risk was still high. Police officers were for example still carrying their guns off-duty, as was permitted shortly after the Paris attacks. There are however no clear acts that indicate a further increase in this feeling of insecurity. Nevertheless, fear was still all around and this signifier can therefore be deemed present. The same counts for the resonance of terrorist violence and the public being prepared to accept the measures being taken. Antiterrorism was simply a priority over a lot of other issues in France at that moment. There was some discussion about whether to prolong the state of emergency, since some parties in the

French parliament were doubting if the basic human rights of the French citizens were still being respected.

4.2.2 Counterterrorist measures framing the threat

Just like after the attacks in Paris, the Elysée had to give a declaration about the events in Nice. In the first instance, it looked like if the President was only condemning the attack and simply informing the people about the official investigation. One week after the events however, on the 22nd of July, president Hollande made an interesting move when it comes to the framing of the counterterrorist threat. Both the Islamic State and the assailants involved in the attacks in both Paris and Nice claimed to be conducting their acts of terror as a punishment for France in participating in the international coalition fighting the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Hollande did however decide to, as announced by his Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve, to provide the Iraqi army with several batteries of artillery to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq. They would be helped by an increased number of French military advisors. Moreover, Hollande announced, as a result of the Nice attack he would send the only French aircraft carrier the *Charles de Gaulle* to support the Iraqi army. ‘The goal...’, Hollande clarified, ‘... is to explain to the French citizens in a direct manner where and how we are putting efforts in the issue’(French Governmental Archives, 22nd of July 2016).³ A spokesperson of the Elysée later added:

‘We are gathering all of our forces to show the French citizens a level of security in which they are able to live normally. The battle against terrorism is an absolute one(French Governmental Archives).’⁴

In a speech a week after the attack, Hollande points out an even darker scenario:

‘The current threat is of an even higher level. We have foiled an increasing number of attacks, without having needed to reveal them, simply since it seemed essential to apprehend the perpetrators and to ensure that they could not do any harm. The threat will however last. It does not only concerns France, many other countries are also victims. We must however defend ourselves, here, on our soil. To protect ourselves, we must eradicate terrorism both from the inside and the outside (French Governmental Archives, 26th of July, 2016).’⁵

³ It concerns a quotation which was translated by the author of this paper.

⁴ It concerns a quotation which was translated by the author of this paper.

⁵ It concerns a quotation which was translated by the author of this paper.

Just like after the Paris attacks, this type of speech act can be linked the three signifiers regarding counterterrorist measures framing the threat. War rhetoric was being used here and by sending troops to the Middle East, the debate certainly became more militant than before. Furthermore, by claiming the battle against terrorism is an ‘absolute’ one and by wanting to ‘eradicate’ terrorism, Hollande does not show any mercy when it comes to the terrorists. Talking or negotiating does not seem to be an option anymore. Finally, the Elysée seems to be referring to historical experiences and existing fears when by stating that the government wants to show the French a new level of security, implying ordinary citizens were suffering from insecurity. Again, Hollande managed to touch upon several signifiers in order to reinforce performative power (French Governmental Archives, 22nd of July 2016).

In the very same speech on the 22nd of July, the president also made a really clear statement indicating a serious lack of shared traditions, culture and overlap of values between the terrorists, capitalising the mental distance between them and the authority’s point of view:

‘What is it the terrorists are looking for? They seek to frighten us and to disunite us, to separate us, to divide us in order to sow hatred and discord. Our unity and spirit are therefore essential if we want to stand up against this challenge. Similarly, the terrorists want us to give up our freedom, our rule of law, which puts us to a test in order to avoid discord and confrontation. We should not want stigmatisation of our views on religion, in this case the Islam, which has its place in our Republic. On the other hand, Islamism and fundamentalism are our enemies (French Presidential Press Office, 22nd of July 2016).’⁶

This speech held in front of the National Défense Council is clearly indicating that the president is focussing on any possible existing and slumbering fears in society too. Although Hollande points out that there is a huge mental distance between the ‘French values’, and resistance against Islamism and fundamentalism, he clearly embraces unity and the national spirit. A France where freedom, rule of law, and religion play an important role.

4.2.3 Counterterrorist measures mobilising the public

Moreover, two days after the attacks, the former Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve announced the mobilisation of 40,000 reservists to boost the presence of security forces in the streets and make the public feel more safe. Of these 40,000 troops, over 12,000 would be drawn

⁶ It concerns a quotation which was translated by the author of this paper.

from the regular Gendarmerie Nationale since, as Cazeneuve highlight, a fair share of the remaining reservists still had to be recruited from ‘all willing French patriots’. This measure taken by the Interior Ministry indicates a new presence of special units, that would usually be used for a higher spectrum of violence other than the regular police forces, as part of counterterrorist acts taken by the authorities. Moreover, it involved the public directly in counterterrorist measures, since Cazeneuve specifically asked the French people to sign up for service, thereby mobilising the public (French Interior Ministry, 19th of July 2016).

Another measure that touched upon many of the signifiers, but mainly the ones under the mobilisation of the public, was the state of emergency. Although the state of emergency was already declared in the hours after the November 13th 2015 Paris attacks, on July 20th 2016 (a week after the Nice attack) the French parliament agreed on an extension of this measure for six more months. It gave way to further exceptional search and arrest power for the police forces, in other words the introduction of new legislation potentially giving counterterrorism policy a boost, and particularly introducing new anti-terrorism legislation. This was also done, considering the fact that the European Soccer Championship would take place in France in the weeks after. The Hollande government could not afford to be struck by a terrorist attack during such an international and open event. Moreover, the prolongation of the state of emergency put counterterrorism high on the agenda and made the threat demarcation become broader and more urgent, not to speak about the political results of this measures (French Presidential Press Office, 15th of July 2016).

Whereas in the case of the Paris attacks there was a clear mastermind being arrested, who could be put on a terrorism trial and reinforce performative power, this was not the case in Nice. The death of Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel probably even made it harder for the French authorities and society, since it made extra clear to them that these terrorists were willing to die for their cause.

4.3 Schematisation

In conclusion, just like in the previous chapter, the level of performativity is extremely high scoring twelve out of fourteen signifiers being present. Also, it appears that it concerns exactly the same signifiers for the same reasons. Again, elections were too far away to make counterterrorism a central issue in electoral campaigns, and again there was no show trial boosting performative power. This raises the question to what extent the context as well as the measures taken in the period of time after the Paris attacks might still influence performative

power after the Nice attacks. It looks like if certain counterterrorist measures did not have to be taken ‘again’, since France was already in a state of emergency, covering several signifiers.

Performative Signifier	Present?
1. Was there more attention for counterterrorism, generated by political leaders personally and explicitly expressing themselves on the issues, rather than leaving it to lower level authorities?	Yes (+1)
2. Did counterterrorism become a central issue in electoral campaigns, or was it employed to demonise the political opponent?	No (0)
3. Did counterterrorism official feel themselves directly threatened, or was their perception of personal risk high?	Yes (+1)
4. Was the resonance of terrorist violence high, and was the public prepared to accept counterterrorism measures, ergo, was it a national priority over other issues?	Yes (+1)
5. Did the threat demarcation become broader or more urgent than before?	Yes (+1)
6. Was war rhetoric used, or did the tone of the discourse become more militant?	Yes (+1)
7. Did counterterrorism officials refer to historical experiences or existing / slumbering fears to invoke fear?	Yes (+1)
8. Was there an explicit refusal to talk to, or negotiate with, terrorists?	Yes (+1)
9. Was a serious lack of shared traditions, culture or overlap of values between the terrorists and authorities capitalising the mental distance?	Yes (+1)
10. Has the public been mobilised by the counterterrorism officials by directly involving them in counterterrorist measures?	Yes (+1)
11. Were any special units (usually used for a higher spectrum of violence than regular police) deployed as part of the counterterrorist measures?	Yes (+1)
12. Was any new anti-terrorism legislation introduced?	Yes (+1)

13. Was any other new legislation introduced, potentially giving counterterrorism policy a supplementary boost?	Yes (+1)
14. Were any well-known individuals or entire groups tried by major 'terrorism trials'?	No (0)

5 The Paris and Nice attacks in perspective

This section will dig into the results of the case studies investigated in the two chapters before, in order to discuss, interpret and put the outcomes in perspective. This is necessary, considering the fact that the case studies are obviously not exactly the same when it comes to their backgrounds (from both a historical and a contemporary point of view), and implications. Together with the theoretical background (namely: performative power theory as well as securitisation theory) which has been provided in earlier chapters, this part of the paper will attempt to illustrate the different circumstances of both attacks, and point out both parallels and differences, in order to create a better understanding of the use of De Graaf's theory in the case studies used.

The following sections will discuss the Paris and Nice attacks, analysing the level of performative power, and finishing by a brief description of the background of the specific terrorist attack. These two parts will be followed by a more general subsection which will introduce some arguments that can be deduced from the comparison.

5.1 Now and then: performativity in perspective

First things first; following the results of applying De Graaf's theory to the Paris attacks in November 2015, one can only conclude that there is a very high level of performative power in France in the aftermath of the events. Out of the fourteen possible present signifiers, twelve are clearly present. Extremely high, mainly due to measures such as the state of emergency and extra legislation as well as the mobilisation of both extra police and military reserves. Measures that have not been taken in other countries, although a treat keeps persisting in those countries too. None of those other countries has however experienced attacks on the scale as France experienced them during 2015 and 2016.

Such high levels of performative power should though not be seen as exceptional, when looking at the phenomenon from a historical point of view. Just like other countries (as described in De Graaf's work on which this paper is based), countries in Western Europe have been struggling with such high levels (or even higher, up to the maximum of fourteen signifiers present) of performativity. It mainly concerns the events of the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's here, when (mainly) left-wing terrorist groups managed to boost levels in West Germany and Italy to similar heights (De Graaf, 2010: 136-137). Whereas those countries were not spared during those 'red decades', France had already had its fair share of political (if not 'military') terrorism during the beginning of the 1960's. Performative power hit its highest peaks those years as a

result of the political clash between President Charles de Gaulle and the French army, fighting in French Algeria against the independence movement there. When De Gaulle decided to abandon Algeria as a French colony, big parts of the French military forces decided to turn against the president himself, hoping to ‘restore order’ in Paris. The military-drilled terrorists committed terrorist attacks against both civilians and politicians, killing over 2000 people from April 1961 to April 1962. As pointed out in prior research, performativity in those years was just as high as in 2015 and 2016, detecting the presence of about twelve signifiers (Smit, 2016: 19).

5.2 Background: differences and parallels

In order to correctly compare the two case studies, one should take into account that the characteristics of attacks were often from a totally different nature. On the other hand, the assailants in both events could be linked to extreme thoughts and affiliations to Islamic terrorist groups such as Daesh, although affiliation with such groups is often only claimed by the groups themselves; not the terrorists.

When it comes to the Paris terrorists, one can see a group of youngsters who grew up in Western Europe (either France or Belgium), radicalising in the very same region. It often concerned people who were described as ‘normal guys’, and integrated pretty well, since for example Abdeslam ran his own bar. Moreover, he and his friends were not reported as religious extremists, since they have been spotted drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco, forbidden according to Islamic rule. All of the assailants were radicalised in their home countries, and went to Syria to receive training by Daesh back in 2013 and 2014. The terrorists also knew each other, it was a group of brother, neighbours and friends who in some way grew up together. This made them very successful for multiple reasons. They trusted each other, and were able to keep their lines of communication short, and face-to-face. Despite and thanks to modern ways of communication they managed to keep below the radar when planning their large scale attack. This is the realm that modern day intelligence services can still not get a grasp on, making terrorist using these tactics more effective. With the help of their training in Syria, as well as radicalised elements in especially the Brussels’ black market environment, the group managed to prepare for the disastrous attack in Paris (Aydinli, 2015: 126).

In the case of the Nice attack, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was a so-called ‘lone wolf’, he was not part of some kind of terrorist cell under command of for instance Daesh like in Paris. It concerned a Tunesian-born Frenchman who had personal struggles. Although he was described

as a ‘weird loner’, had certain behavioural problems and was considered as ‘depressed’, Bouhlel was not on any terrorist watchlist according to the French authorities. According to interior minister Bernard Cazeneuve, Bouhlel started radicalising just three months before he committed his attack. Due to his ‘lone wolf’ behaviour, as well as his lack of affiliation with any known terrorist group, he remained the stay under the radar during the preparations for his act of terror. Moreover, he was not provided with the right training or equipment for committing such an attack, and decided to rely on quite ‘creative’ ways of attacking the public (Friedman, 2016: Part III).

5.3 Vicious circles

Another interesting conclusion that can be drawn from the comparison of the two case studies, is the vicious circle when it comes to the level of performativity. The level of performativity after the Paris attacks, was just as high as after the Nice attacks, and it concerned exactly the same signifiers being present. This raises the question to what extent high levels of performative power can actually influence each other and prolong the effects. Moreover, one should consider what the effects of a high level of performativity on the long term are. As mentioned by De Graaf in her book, a high level of performativity can also simply trigger the terrorists, since to them it seems like if their reign of terror is ‘effective’ (De Graaf, 2011: 5).

5.4 Validity of the theory: the changing nature of counterterrorism

Although the case studies showed a lot of similarities when it comes to the goals and effects of the attacks on the French society and counterterrorist measures, the backgrounds of both events and their assailants have been very different. Despite the fact that these differences might not look very interesting to answering the research question, it actually can.

As discussed before in the theoretical framework, De Graaf drew certain conclusions from her analysis and the functioning of performative power in general. She sees very strong correlations between high performativity when it comes to counterterrorism, as well as the activity of terrorist groups. Terrorist groups tend to become more active and aggressive when governments get more suppressive and public opinion changes. In the eyes of such movements, they get the impression their actions ‘do matter’ or ‘do make a change’ in society, stimulating to continue their campaign of terror (De Graaf, 2011: 5).

I do however argue this correlation is out-of-date these days, and my reasons for doing so is two-fold. To begin with, one should consider the role of the lone wolves (such as Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel), undermining the idea of group behaviour and motivation when

performativity rises. Of course, individuals can also be committing attacks and get more exciting to continue when public opinion changes and performativity is on the rise. We should however not forget lone wolves do often not survive their acts of terror, or end up in jail. Furthermore, the same argument counts for organised groups of terrorists. Jihadi terrorist is often characterised by suicide attacks, as we have seen in this paper's case studies too. If the assailants do not survive an act of terror, one cannot speak about a possible 'sequel' to the previous deeds, rendering one of her conclusions useless.

Conclusion

This thesis started with the question to what extent the theory of performative power as coined by Beatrice de Graaf is still applicable to contemporary cases of terrorism in Europe nowadays. After all, De Graaf developed her theory based on a comparative case study of terrorist movements in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's. She claims that her theory is universal in guiding performative power conducted by governments who are struggling with terrorist attacks. The world did however change since then, considering the rapid development of for instance means of communication or the change in types of terrorism. Hence, the author of this paper decided to select the November 13th 2015 and July 14th 2016 attacks in France to test her theory. After briefly reviewing the different chapters, a series of recommendations will be done and the applicability of De Graaf's theory will be evaluated.

Overview

The literature review dug into the current position, definitions and theories of terrorism and counterterrorism studies in both the academic debate, and the practical application of policy by authorities. It makes the reader of this thesis familiar with the most dominant streams concerning the topic, such as the waves of terrorism (as coined by Rapoport) and the role of terrorism in these days, as well as the causes of current day terrorism. These could mainly be related to Muslim extremism, which has a spill over effect to Europe and the United States. The chapter does however also show that there is broad range of approaches to the issue, subsequently leading to miscommunication and a lack of clarity when it comes to policy and definitions. Moreover, there is a broad debate on the limits to counterterrorism. Debates which are all of primordial importance to combat terrorism.

The second section of the paper dug into the theoretical aspect of this research. After a brief introduction of the role of securitisation studies, one can argue that De Graaf's theory can be seen as a complementing element to securitisation theory, since performative power concretely describes measures that can be taken, instead of describing the a process as securitisation theory does. Performative power theory does so by using a set of signifiers, developed to literally measures the level of government intervention in order to make the fear of the public for terrorist attacks decline. It is this set of signifiers that are being used in the case studies selected.

The information for the case studies are mainly being drawn from open sources, just like De Graaf did for her own research.

In the first case study, a high level of performative power was discovered. With a score of 12 out of 14 signifiers being present, the period of time after the November 13th 2015 attacks in Paris are not an exception when it comes to times of terrorism. The cases investigated by De Graaf deal with the same levels of performativity. The same counts for the second case study, conducting research on the terrorist attacks in Nice on July 14th 2016, where 12 out of 14 signifiers were present.

Although De Graaf's theory is offering a refreshing view on the way academia can offer counterterrorist officials help these days, this research made clear that there are still some bottlenecks in both methodological and theoretical implementation.

Criticism

When it comes to the methodological implementation, it should be noticed that performative power and the signifiers have their limitations timewise. As it seems, the effect of certain acts of counterterrorism can have different effects in different times, since the context is often totally different, limiting the usefulness of the theory on the long-term. De Graaf's findings indicate that the performative power in West Germany under the Red Army Faction have been just as high as in France nowadays, although the death toll appears to be six times lower in the 1960's and 1970's. Moreover, it should be noticed that this theory can also be rendered less effective on the short-term. This paper for instance, focussed on the six-month period after both terrorist attacks. The measures taken after the first attack for example, are likely to influence performative power after the second attack. The state of emergency was still on its place in Nice, although it was instigated after the events in Paris. Therefore, it becomes harder to measure performativity, since there is a certain 'threshold level' still in place. One might even talk about some type of 'vicious circle', since a continuous series of measures might influence each other making single events have a spill-over effect long after counterterrorism measures were taken.

Also, another flaw in performative power theory when it comes to the short-term, are its signifiers. A clear example is the presence of show trials or certain legislation. Often, like after the Paris attacks, it takes time to catch those responsible for the carnage (five months), and more than two years after the trial has not even started yet. Additionally, unlike some decades ago,

trials can take place behind closed doors. Another flaw when it comes to the short-term, is that it might take authorities longer than six months to instigate new legislation (such as the ‘Plan Vigipirate’) to respond to rising threat levels. Often it takes at least one year to do so, leading to ‘delayed performativity’.

Yet another weakness that can be spotted when it comes to the signifiers, is the fact that some signifiers cannot be influenced at all by counterterrorism officials. A good example would be the role of elections. As described in both case studies, major elections in France would only take place in May 2017 (both presidential and parliamentary). Therefore, a signifier would automatically test absent, lowering the performativity of the authorities. Also, as the same signifier describes, one can ask to what extent it would be politically possible and correct to demonise the political opponent since the authorities have a certain responsibility in a country. By demonising political opponents, a government would not be acting against terrorists, but rather against political opponents.

Another obstacle from a more methodological point of view can be spotted. De Graaf’s does not specifically mention which conditions have to be met to be able to say a signifier is ‘present’ or ‘absent’. Although the description of the signifiers is pretty clear, the conditions remain vague. Some measures might for example cover several signifiers, such as a state of emergency. On the other hand, one can also ask if some actions taken by counterterrorist officials can fully be considered as why a signifier is present or not. A good example would be the measures of the French authorities of arming police officers who are off-duty. This act could adhere to for example a higher perceived personal risk by counterterrorism officials who feel directly threatened. It could however also be seen as the introduction of new (anti-) terrorism legislation.

De Graaf’s findings in practice

As described in the theoretical framework of this paper, De Graaf claims her theory to be universal, when it comes to the correlation between the way in which counterterrorism measures interact with performative power by the authorities. The two conclusions she draws based on her case studies are as follows. Firstly, she states that a higher number of casualties (both deceased and wounded) boosts performative power. The authorities are simply more willing to take draconic measures if there is more suffering. Secondly, she noticed that this causal relationship does not always hold true, since it might also trigger further violence and prolong the conflict (e.g. waves of terrorist attacks).

When having a look at the case studies discussed in this paper, it is not very hard to prove the first of De Graaf's conclusions to be true. Although this research does not provide the level of performative power in the period of time before the Paris attacks, one can clearly see that the increased number of anti-terrorism measures taken shortly after November 13th 2015 made performative levels go through the roof. When it comes to the second conclusion De Graaf draws in her research, it is much harder to prove her finding right. This can partially be related to one of the flaws of the theory, as discussed above: both short-term research does not benefit this theory. The short period of time did not offer the authorities the luxury of lowering their performative power, meaning that the other explanation (namely; less attacks due to declining performativity) could not be tested. Another explanation of why a lower level of performative power could make the number of terrorist attacks decline, as a result of effective counterterrorism measures, could also hardly be tested on the short-term. Firstly it concerns a lack of manpower and instruments, which is certainly not case in France considering the large number of extraordinary forces being mobilised. Secondly, efforts to decrease radicalisation among youngsters who might potentially be willing to commit violent attacks. Although a Day of Solidarity was organised in French schools, true deradicalisation programmes have not been set up yet.

Lastly, one should realise the very nature of terrorist acts has changed over the past decades. The fourth (or religious) wave of terrorism is characterised by the high number of lone wolves and suicide attacks. As explained in the previous chapter of this paper, these characteristics do clash with De Graaf's conclusions on the correlation between when it comes to rising performativity being the reason for further peaks in terrorist attacks, simply because there would not be anyone left after the first attack.

In sum, the second part of De Graaf's own conclusions (drawn from her theory) are very hard to apply on other case studies. The theory listens to a very limited scope of cases, and even than it might be hard to prove. Again, as mentioned above too, short-term usage of this theory does not render it very useful since many signifiers are simply eliminated by it. The only conclusion to be proven correct is the most obvious one: a high number of casualties will automatically lead to a high level of performative power in counterterrorism.

Suggestions

Besides signifiers being vague or overlapping each other, thereby blurring the differences between them, one can also speak about missing signifiers. A signifier that was maybe less

significant when we are talking about the period of time that De Graaf has been doing research on. As mentioned in the introduction, times change, and globalisation and the internationalisation of terrorism might pose a serious risk to the usefulness of De Graaf's theory. In the opinion of the author of this paper, the international dimension of this theory is lacking. As the case study on Paris clearly indicates, French and Belgian authorities have clearly failed to cooperate although the suspects were already on their 'radar'. The willingness of both the Belgian Prime Minister and the French President at that point can partially adhere to the first signifier on political attention on the level of the state leader.

International attention for terrorism can however also improve performative power, considering the fact that terrorism prevention did indeed increase after the Paris attacks. Moreover, declarations by foreign heads of states or leaders of international organisation (such as Interpol, the EU or the United Nations) can also contribute to an increased sense of security. More measures could, and should be taken in an international context to win hearts and minds of the European (including the French) people, making the international political context more important to the signifiers, something that is currently lacking. As Bureš mentioned before, international counterterrorism policy should not remain a 'paper tiger', indicating the importance of proper policymaking. In this respect, the signifiers deployed by De Graaf in order to measure performative power in her study, cannot automatically be applied to contemporary cases of terrorism considering the new internationalised dimension.

Verdict

Although De Graaf claims her theory on performative power (arising from 'ticking the boxes' of signifiers) to be universal, I do not fully agree with this view. On the one hand, as can be seen above, De Graaf's perception of performative power is fully built on a series of signifiers that are partially vague or outdated.

A good example of a signifier that should be altered is the one on the use of counterterrorism in electoral campaigns or the demonisation of political opponents. As described above, elections times are not always close, meaning that this signifier cannot always be present, lowering performativity in some cases, leading to an unfair judgement. A good way to obviate this problem, is by looking better at intermediate election polls or other types of surveys among the public to measure the effectiveness of counterterrorist measures.

Another signifier that causes problems when it comes to its usefulness would be the one on major terrorism trials. Whereas this signifier might have been useful in the past, privacy has become more of an issue these days, not allowing the public to be influenced by it. Moreover, the rise of suicide terrorism makes public trials less feasible. This issue could easily be avoided by deleting it from the list of signifiers considering the fact that, although it might still remain relevant, it is simply not possible to analyse anymore.

Therefore, any extension studies on this subject should focus on clarifying the criteria and boundaries of the signifiers. This is especially important since time limitations do not benefit the usefulness of the theory. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that De Graaf's theory provides a toolkit and at least some guidance when it comes to the analysis of counterterrorist measures. Also, her conclusions when it comes to both the causality and sometimes the lack of causality between performative power and the number of terrorist attacks. Moreover, it should be noticed that the general conclusions De Graaf has drawn are still valid. It should also, after all, not be forgotten that performativity together with the fourteen signifiers for the first time managed to merge several fields of studies and to make the influence of terrorism and counterterrorism 'measurable'. The theory just needs an update when it comes to the methodological implementation.

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1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or similar degree.

In Prague on March 25, 2018

Roeland Pieter Smit

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. P. Smit', written over the printed name.