



## Talking About Terrorism: Securitisation, Emancipation, and the Construction of the Dominant Paradigm

Henry Strong

## Executive Summary

This dissertation analyses the discourse on terrorism in Europe, particularly through the actions of two discursive productive agents. These productive agents, as they are referred to herein, are the media and political actors. The actions of each of these agents has been analysed in the context of the terrorist incident in Manchester in May, 2017.

The aim of this dissertation is then to establish how the dominant paradigm on terrorism is produced, and whether that paradigm is securitised. Guided by the securitisation framework of the Copenhagen School of Critical Security Studies (Wæver, 1989; 1995; 2004; Buzan et al., 1998), the dissertation analyses the specific output from both productive agents following a widely broadcast European terrorism incident. The aim is to establish what role each of the productive agents plays in building the dominant paradigm on terrorism, and whether the result is one which could be considered a securitisation of terrorism.

The motivation which drives this study is provided by the concept of emancipation by the Aberystwyth School of Critical Security Studies. In this dissertation, emancipation serves as both the method and the result: through emancipating the discourse, society itself is emancipated from the negative impacts of a misguided paradigm. This theory is supported by research from Matt McDonald (2007) and Ken Booth (1991).

Upon analysis of the gathered results, this dissertation finds that each of the productive agents plays a different role, but that political actors successfully securitise terrorism in Europe, helped by the media during the build-up to the speech act. News media plays a preparatory role in the production of the discourse, as it immediately presents an inflated audience with a series of emotional triggers (Howard, 1992, 107). The speech acts made by political actors are more likely to be successful *after* the audience has been prepared by the news media.

The result of this securitisation is that much of European society lives under the presence of a perceived threat, which has been created by the securitisation process. The important action to be made the highest priority to alleviate this perceived threat is the engagement of a critical discourse. Emancipation of society from this threat can be accomplished only if the discourse itself takes a critical turn. According to Booth (1991), emancipation equates to true security. When faced with a threat that cannot be entirely prevented, such as terrorism, the only option for relief is to emancipate the discourse (McDonald, 2007).

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

Terrorism has become a topic of security within the EU. There has been, according to statistical evidence, an increase in the number of terrorism related deaths in Europe in recent years (Statista, 2018). Accompanying this increase has been a discourse of security, which in many ways has enhanced the perceived threat of what is, in objective terms, a minor threat to life in Europe.

Securitisation, as it has been defined by the Copenhagen School of Critical Security Studies and as it is used in this paper, is the discursive process to which terrorism has been subjected in Europe, elevating it from the status of 'political issue' to that of 'security issue' (Buzan et al, 1998, 23; CASE Collective, 2006; Wæver, 1995; 2004). Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998, 23) state "securitisation can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicisation". As a result of media subjugation and political speeches, terrorism has become perceived as an imminent threat of major proportions.

The question that needs to be answered is: is a perceived threat as great a danger to society as an objective threat? In this dissertation, I make the argument that it is. But what creates this perception, and how can a perceived threat be alleviated?

The answer to the above question is firstly, securitisation, and secondly, discursive emancipation. Through the process of securitisation, described within this dissertation, terrorism has reached a new level of perception. The way that terrorism is now perceived is largely out of proportions with the actual danger it presents. But because perceived threat is equal in effect to objective threat, there is therefore a great threat posed by terrorism. So, an emancipation of the discourse, and an *emancipatory* discourse, would be an essential move away from the politics of fear that Europe applies to itself with regard to terrorism.

This dissertation sets out to answer the following main question: has terrorism been securitised in Europe, and if so how has this occurred and what are the consequences? The discourse, if securitised, may itself be the cause of more insecurity than the actual terrorism. The hypothesis that this dissertation takes is that terrorism itself is not what threatens the freedom of European society, but rather it is the discourse, and that if the dominant paradigm were to be 'emancipated' from the discursive practices which create it, the perceived threat of terror would dramatically reduce. This reduction in perceived threat, according to the theory of emancipation within Critical Security Studies, is equal to the production of true security (Booth, 1991, 330).

The following pages combine two key theories of Critical Security Studies (CSS) with an analysis of news media and political treatments of towards terrorism in the past two years. The main example of the Manchester Arena bombing in May 2017 is used to inform the analysis of the media and

political speeches, with one brief reference also being made to the incidence in Nice in 2016. The coherence of this dissertation depends on two key things; firstly, that the reader engages with the idea that a perception of threat, sometimes called a subjective threat, is equal in status and effect to a real threat, sometimes called an objective threat. To offer a childish mantra: “sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me”, is fundamentally flawed in the context of this thesis. Words, the way they are said, who says them, and why, are as powerfully shaping the quality of life in European society as physical incidents. Words about terrorism are no different; they construct an image and society lives within it, regardless of the objective reality.

Secondly, and equally importantly, the reader should understand that this dissertation is not working towards a way of reducing terrorism, but rather towards a way of reducing terror. The theories employed, sources examined, and analyses that take place here work towards justifying a discursive turn, an emancipation of the dominant paradigm from what is ultimately a securitised state.

Understanding these two key points will help set the reader’s approach to the dissertation. The discussion here is both tangible and intangible, dealing with real events and real words but only a perception of threat, not the actual threat itself. This dissertation is not part of counter-terrorism discourse, but rather part of the critical discourse around the construction of security.

### 1.1 – Methodology

This dissertation examines a subject within the field of social sciences. The methodology for undertaking the research was therefore a set of empirical qualitative methods, with the unit of analysis being the discourse and those agents that produce it. Therefore, the direct units of analysis were, in the case of this study, the media and government.

David Silverman’s *Doing Qualitative Research* third edition (2010) is the comprehensive text which guided and justified the methods used in this dissertation. Using this text, the measures taken to achieve the various goals of the study found their methodological basis. According to Silverman (2010), there are “three different kinds of student dissertation: theoretical, methodological, and empirical” (330). Understanding the methods laid out by Silverman for each kind of dissertation, I have decided to treat this dissertation as a combination of theoretical and empirical dissertations.

The first part is the empirical analysis of media and political sources. A selection of broadcasts, publications, and statements were analysed for their rhetoric, and then discussed in the context of various theories and concepts. The second part is theoretical, situating this research within a much wider discourse, and discussing the more abstract aspects of this study. The theories were used

also to justify the hypothesis and the conclusion. is the empirical analysis of media and political sources. A selection of broadcasts, publications, and statements were analysed for their rhetoric, and then discussed in the context of the various theories and concepts outlined during the theoretical part.

The first key method to open the dissertation and structure further analysis was secondary qualitative research. To situate this research within its broader field, the existing literature on security discourse and the dominant paradigm on terrorism was consolidated in the literature review. On finding that the field of Critical Security Studies (CSS) is the field surrounding this dissertation, the works of several key authors within the field, as well as the formative works which guided the development of CSS, were analysed.

There are frameworks and concepts already heavily in use in CSS which arose during the first instance of secondary qualitative research. The two key concepts, securitisation and emancipation, were found to be central to the dissertation, and were therefore scrutinised further. More secondary qualitative analysis of the books and journal publications of authors like Matt McDonald (2007; 2008), Ken Booth (1991; 1999; 2005), Ole Wæver (1989; 1995; 2004) and Barry Buzan (1998) build the structure for the theoretical side of the analysis. Much of what these authors have written within CSS also justified the hypothesis of this thesis.

The second, and perhaps more major method used to gather results was primary qualitative analysis. Television and print news media sources, as well as political statements following the terrorist incident in Manchester in May 2017, were examined for their rhetoric, especially in the context of the Copenhagen School's framework for securitisation. Analyses and conclusions were drawn from the sources gathered, which include British tabloid sources such as *The Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *The Daily Mirror* and *The Scottish Sun*. Other European tabloid sources such as *20Minutes*, *Bild Zeitung*, and *El Periodico* were also consulted. In broadsheet print media, examples came from *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* in the UK, and *El Pais*, *Le Monde*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* across Europe. All print media analysed was published within five days of the incident. Television media sources from directly after the incident, as well as from the following day, were sourced from BBC News, BBC One, and Sky News.

To discuss the societal implications of discourse, and the production of a dominant paradigm, an interview was conducted with Professor Nico Carpentier of the Uppsala University in Sweden. The interview was held at a conference at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, on January 21. Prof. Carpentier was recognised as a potential candidate for the interview for two reasons; firstly,

his position as a professor in Informatics and Media and his status as a respected academic in the field of communication. Secondly, his keynote presentation at the conference covered the discursive progression from signifying practice to dominant paradigm. From the conference programme, “In this approach, communication plays a key role in making the multitude of signifying and material practices circulate, but also in sedimenting them into discourses” (The Hague University of Applied Sciences, 2018, para. 14).

Overall, the methods of this study could be characterised as being a mix of primary and secondary qualitative research. The final remark to be made with regard to methodology concerns language. Throughout this paper, the first-person identifier ‘I’ may appear in isolated instances. I understand that the use of the third-person builds an atmosphere of objectivity and impartiality. However, this dissertation is describing what is an entirely subjective phenomenon. Terrorism itself, threat, and the perception of threat, are all highly subjective. If I were to remove myself from the discussion by writing entirely in the third person, it would be to present something subjective as an objective reality. Therefore, there are instances here that I have chosen to write in the subjective, first-person form, as to do otherwise would be a distortion of my own subjective view on a largely subjective discussion.

## 1.2 – Chapter Outline

This dissertation is structured as an academic research paper. Following this introduction and methodology, the relevant literature on the field is reviewed in a literature review chapter, ranging from early literature which formed a basis for Critical Security Studies, to more modern assessments of these past frameworks and concepts.

Chapter 3 is the first of the two ‘findings’ chapters. In this chapter, the actions of the media following the Manchester terrorism incident are described. This chapter looks at the viewing numbers following the incident and compares them to viewing numbers during normal broadcasting. The statements made within each broadcast, the style of the broadcast and the composition of the broadcast are important findings displayed here. This chapter is also a collection of headlines from print media from across Europe and the UK.

Chapter 4, as the second ‘findings’ chapter, gathers the important theoretical frameworks within Critical Security Studies, and describes them and their relevance to terrorism. Securitisation and Emancipation are described separately, and then linked through their combined use in describing the perception of a terrorist threat, as opposed to the objective existence of a terrorist threat.

These two chapters are analysed in Chapter 5, the analysis chapter, for language and rhetoric. The discursive style used to describe the incident is of particular relevance. But the analysis also looks at the findings on a macro-level, describing the consequences of an inflated television audience simultaneous to a 'crisis' style broadcast. Another macro-level analysis is the discussion of the global response to the incident in Manchester; world leaders from a long list of sovereign states all made statements regarding an incident which occurred in an unrelated, distant, foreign sovereign.

This is all brought together in Chapter 6, the conclusion. The analysis has been an extended discussion on the findings, and this discussion is then summarised into concise conclusions in this chapter. Furthermore, the second part of the conclusion briefly looks at the move towards de-securitisation, which is the process that may remedy the gross public misperception that is described in this dissertation. But de-securitisation must be visited with more detail in another study, as it cannot be successfully and fully brought within the parameters of this dissertation.



## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Due to this dissertation consisting of two forms of study, being part-theoretical and part-empirical, the review of relevant literature is therefore also segmented. In this literature review, all the immediately relevant literature has been divided into three different segments. The first segment outlines important concepts which pertain to the general field of this research. These concepts are central to this paper as they feature strongly in the theoretical structure and practical conclusions of the dissertation.

Specifically featured in this section are two of the three main schools of thought in critical security studies, and how these schools have shaped the field of critical terrorism studies. The emergence of central concepts such as securitisation and emancipation is directly attributable to these schools of critical security studies. Then, after establishing how these concepts are relevant to critical security studies, it can be understood what role they may play in a critical discourse analysis of terrorism in Europe.

The second segment relates to the motivation behind this paper. In this section, a ‘need’ is established, in the sense that some examples have been laid out as to why a critical review of the discourse surrounding terrorism is necessary. These examples come from two kinds of sources: political and media sources.

The final segment of this literature review addresses the contradictory nature of the concept of terrorism. Taking a post-positivist approach, terrorism is a topic with ambiguous definitions and therefore flexible interpretation. Therefore, post-positivism as a point of departure addresses the definitional inconsistencies surrounding the term and helps facilitate the understanding of the subjectivity of all discourse. This, in turn, fuels the discussion about the emergence of a dominant paradigm: who creates it (actors), who receives it (audience), and what effect does it have on society (consequence)?

### 2.1 – Critical Security Studies, Emancipation, and Securitisation

This dissertation takes place within the central field of critical security studies. As an addition to the existing critical security studies literature, core concepts of relevance to the field are the subject of analysis. These concepts, as with any other core critical security studies concepts, have been established within one of the three main schools of critical security studies. These schools are the Paris School, the Copenhagen School and the Aberystwyth School (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006, 444; Wæver, 2004).

Each of these schools of thought have contributed differently to the development of the field. The contributions of the group of academics known as the Paris School have been significant. However, the Paris School has strayed from the international relations base that is native to the other two schools. Topics such as law, political sociology, criminology, and migration issues have been the focus of the Paris school. “What bound them together was a research interest in policing as a structuring practice” (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006, 449), which juxtaposes the research interests of this dissertation. On the other hand, the Copenhagen and the Aberystwyth Schools have been responsible for opening up two particular core concepts that are crucial to this dissertation. These concepts are **emancipation** as a security concept, and the production of security discourses through **securitisation**.

Before moving onto the concepts specifically, it must be made clear that the strict adherence to these three schools is frowned upon in critical security studies. As the field of critical security studies has developed, the lines between the three schools have become significantly blurred. C.A.S.E. Collective calls this a “cross-fertilization” (2006, 443) of all of the critical approaches employed by the three schools.

Michael C. Williams of the C.A.S.E. Collective also advises strongly against the strict adherence to certain schools of thought. In his own words, “both theoretical and political reality are rarely so conveniently structured, and to present them as such rarely advances our understanding of either” (1999, 343). The use of the schools of thought in this paper is mainly for opening up the core concepts of emancipation and securitisation. However, the emergence of these schools has been so defining in critical security studies that failing to refer to them when theoretically situating this paper would be remiss.

Firstly, the Copenhagen School’s framework on securitisation handles the act of speaking security, called by Ole Wæver “the speech act” (1995, 55). Described as a securitisation framework, the work of the Copenhagen School largely covers the elevation of a topic from the political realm to the security realm through its spoken presentation as an existential threat (Buzan et al, 1998, 23; McDonald, 2008, 566). Since the original description of this framework, the ensuing debate has led to an increased emphasis on the role of the audience in validating the speech act (McDonald, 2008, 566). Thanks to this increased audience-emphasis, McDonald now summarises the role of the speech act and the speaker as simply one part of “the inter-subjective *construction* of security” (2008, 566).

Specifically, a speech act has two criteria for success. Firstly, as mentioned above the audience plays an important role. The speech must reach an audience willing to accept its terms and embrace the embodied sentiment. For this to happen, the claim must be socially acceptable. Secondly, the speech must be made by a person of an adequate social position to make a claim (Buzan et al, 1998, 27-29; Wæver, 1989, i). This does not have to be a political figure, but in the study of terrorism a political leader is the person who best fulfils this second criteria. Once these criteria have been met, a speech act can be developed into a security discourse.

The central role that spoken discourse plays in the construction of security is vitally important to this dissertation. Understanding securitisation as the construction of security and linking that construction to the topic of terrorism leads logically to a discourse analysis. What is to be examined in this dissertation is whether the topic of terrorism is being securitised, thereby elevating the perceived threat of terrorism through discourse. That can be answered by a conducting an empirical examination of the discourse itself.

The contribution of the Aberystwyth School to critical security studies is heavily related to the concept of emancipation. Emancipation itself, in the field of critical security studies, has evolved from being a concept primarily concerned with humans into a term which applies to “its own ‘theory of security’ and research agenda” (Booth, 1991; Booth, 2005, 260; C.A.S.E Collective, 2006, 448; Wyn Jones, 1999, 2001; Sheehan, 2005). Ken Booth, a researcher central to the development of emancipation as an Aberystwyth School concept, described that “emancipation, theoretically, is security” (1991, 319), as true security is found only in the emancipation of an individual from all threat. The blocking of a threat leaves a person in a state of physical security, but the threat still exists.

The Aberystwyth School suggests that security involves the *emancipation of society’s psychological interpretation* of threat. If that threat is terrorism, it should now be clear how the two concepts of securitisation and emancipation align to form the basis of this study: the topic of terrorism has undergone a process of securitisation through public discourse, leaving society with some impression that it poses a direct existential threat. Because it has gone through the securitisation process, it is no longer considered rationally, but considered in ‘extreme’ terms. Emancipation, then, is both the method to reduce this problem, and the result. By emancipating the discourse, the topic of terrorism is reduced from a securitised state to a space of more rational treatment. That, in turn, alters the public discourse and therefore results in society’s collective emancipation from the psychological threat that terrorism once posed.

Here, Matt McDonald's article *Emancipation and Critical Terrorism Studies* (2007) becomes relevant. In this article, McDonald has described the possibility for emancipation to be something of a "philosophical anchorage" (2007, 252; Booth, 1999, 43), from which a new study of terrorism can be achieved. This is exactly what occurs in this dissertation; the utilisation of emancipation as a method by which to refresh the discourse on terrorism, motivated by achieving a state of emancipation as an end result.

## 2.2 – Identifying Discourse

As a component of the discourse analysis that is present in this dissertation, the way that the discourse is produced must be discussed. The concept of securitisation – the production of a security discourse – has already been covered. However, the production of a security paradigm relies upon an existing discourse. The existence of this discourse can be attributed to certain 'productive agents' of discourse (N. Carpentier, personal communication, January 19, 2018).

The process of identifying the agents responsible for the production of discourse, and indeed how discourse itself can be understood, is clarified by Prof. Nico Carpentier. In a personal interview, Carpentier (2018) explained the actions of certain institutions in a privileged position for the production of discourse. This dissertation continues to refer to these privileged institutions as 'productive agents' active in particular 'arenas of discourse production'.

Discourse, at its most basic level, is language: the thematic flow of written and spoken words around a certain topic (N. Carpentier, personal communication, January 19, 2018). There are, as a result, many discourses surrounding a theme. According to Whisnant (2012, 1), referencing Foucault, 'discourse' is a broad term used "to analyse the systems of thought, ideas, images, and other symbolic practices". But to avoid confusion and misinterpretation, at the level of speech – the lowest level of discourse production – a discourse could be called a "signifying practice" (N. Carpentier, personal communication, January 19, 2018).

To add to this idea of one signifying practice, Foucault imagined the idea that society is full of many signifying practices, all competing with one another. At some point, these many signifying practices may synchronise, and in some way start to show a pattern or order forming. Foucault (1972, 38) wrote "whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say ... that we are dealing with a discursive formation".

Therefore we can look at the way that these many signifying practices come together to participate in "discursive formation" (Foucault, 1972, 38; N. Carpentier, personal communication, January 19,

2018). I have identified two arenas in which a dominant paradigm is produced through the synchronisation of signifying practices. These arenas are politics and the media. The discourse analysis takes place around the suggestion that the dominant paradigm on terrorism in Europe is responsible for its securitisation; its widespread perception as a great security issue. Therefore, the examination of key elements from each of the arenas is necessary to build a conclusion.

Firstly, the role of the media in producing a securitised discourse on terrorism is substantial, but not direct. The other arena, politics, is more direct in its streamlining of signifying practices into a unified message. The media itself plays a role in the way that the issue is presented immediately, and the media is responsible for creating a national sentiment around the issue, but it does not issue a single statement in the same way that a political figure does. In this way, the political actor has more discursive power than the media.

In this dissertation, the role of the media is analysed in the context of securitisation, as a valid actor contributing to the discourse on terrorism. Outside of the securitisation framework, there are two other sources which describe the importance of media analysis in terrorism. These sources are firstly a handbook from UNESCO (2017), and Charlie Beckett's (2016) *Fanning the Flames: Reporting Terror in a Networked World*. Both of these texts assess the role of the media in producing a certain discourse on terrorism, but they are used loosely as this dissertation does handles the *relevance* of the media's engagement in terrorism, rather than the engagement itself. I am not researching journalistic misconduct, rather describing how the media fits into the securitisation process. Nevertheless, these two sources are worth mentioning as they appear with relevance to the media analysis in Chapter 3.

Securitisation, as Wæver originally characterised it, was specifically related to 'the speech act' made by a public figure with an appropriate claim and a sufficient platform (1989, i). These two criteria are met by politicians who make public statements. Therefore, European politicians who have made statements on the Manchester Arena bombing are examined in this discourse analysis. Their role in developing the public discourse on terrorism should not be denied, but the correlation between the audiences of political statements and of news media is also crucial. A connection between the audiences of certain media outlets and certain political statements allows an insight into how these two forces of securitisation are combined to strengthen the message.

### 2.3 – Conflicting Definitions and Post-positivism

Other terms in security studies, such as 'national interest' or 'national security', are applied ambiguously, dependent upon the intent of the speaker (Wolfers, 1962, 147). Terrorism, it may be

argued, belongs in the same league of ambiguous, politically charged monikers, which have inherent meaning in a variety of ways. As Wolfers has stated with regard to national interest and national security, terms of this nature “...may not mean the same thing to different people. They may not have any precise meaning at all” (1962, 147).

At the simplest level, post-positivism is an ideology which assumes the contradictory position to positivism. The unwavering certainty of observation, the law-like use of theory and data to concrete single and defined conclusions characterise positivism (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, 15). Post-positivism, on the other hand, recognises the fallibility in all observation, as the position of the observer is subjective in every different case (Creswell, 2013; Hacking, 1983). In the case of terrorism, the post-positivist approach explains the failures of social scientists and law-makers to arrive at a secure definition.

Wolfers’ comment relates directly to the purpose of this dissertation. In conducting this discourse analysis on terrorism as a securitised topic and the attached consequences, I take a post-positivist approach. The meaning of terrorism which has been ascribed through securitisation practices is a constructed meaning. What terrorism actually is, how it can be defined, is open to discussion.

“In its popular understanding the term ‘terrorism’ tends to refer to an act that is wrong, evil, illegitimate, illegal and a crime. The term has come to be used to describe a wide range of violent, and sometimes not-so-violent conduct (especially in the hands of the media since September 11 2001)” (Conte, 2010, 7).

Conte’s description of how ‘terrorism’ is a term which has come to have a variety of purposes and meanings supports the post-positivist idea that the definition is not definite. In the case of terrorism, it is rather fluid.

The post-positivist element of this paper is therefore important to be noted here: threat, as with terrorism, as with national security, is a concept more abstract than it is objective. A threat to one person may not appear to be so to another, thus cementing the idea that a securitised discourse on terrorism is an enhancement of what is perceived as, rather than what objectively is, a threat.

### Chapter 3 – ‘Streamlining’ Towards a Dominant Paradigm

It appears that the dominant paradigm on terrorism in Europe has become securitised. Speaking of terrorism in terms of absolute security has cemented the paradigm in this state. As far as the dominant paradigm goes, terrorism is not considered simply a reality of 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century life in Europe. It is not one of many lethal-yet-unlikely occurrences that may befall a human being during its daily routine. It is not seen as another largely-invisible by-product of various Western political, military, and humanitarian decisions. It appears that terrorism is seen predominantly as a direct existential threat to the life of oneself, one’s family, and one’s society, with little further concern for its placement in reality. Essentially: what terrorism really *is* today, in the normative and the holistic senses, has become irrelevant, as it has been ascribed a heightened significance through extensive treatment in discourse. There is a perception of terrorism which exists independently of its objective realities.

This discursive treatment can be analysed. Here it is important to combine the ideas of Wæver discussed in the literature review regarding securitisation and its criteria for success, and Nico Carpentier’s description of Foucault’s idea about how any signifying practices that share patterns can be connected. The connection between these two ideas is of paramount importance: a precondition for a successful speech act is audience acceptance, and audience acceptance is generated by a political figure streamlining all of the signifying practices into a single discourse. This is done with a single speech act. It is here that the lines between securitisation and older Foucauldian ideas of discursive formation cross.

To explain further: a signifying practice on its own is nothing but an indication of only one individual’s stance. The power of signifying practices is seen when a thematic group of these utterances is “streamlined” to form a single, unitary, dominant voice (Foucault, 1972, 38; N. Carpentier, personal interview, January 19, 2018). In many cases, the speech act which catalyses the process of securitisation is indeed this exact process: the streamlining of many individual voices by one much larger voice, before a larger audience. This shows the hand-in-hand relationship between signifying practices and securitisation. As a result, the meaning that is ascribed to certain aspects of society – such as terrorism, for example – is warped away from what it is, normatively speaking, towards how it is presently represented by a speaker who fits the appropriate criteria.

This process requires certain actors. Who these actors may be depends upon which issue is being dealt with. With a topic such as abortion, for instance, the actors may be medical unions, scientists, religious figures, parents’ societies, schools and youth psychologists. With an issue like terrorism, the actors are security experts, intelligence agencies, the police force, and the government.

The involvement of these kinds of actors shows that terrorism is, by default, a security issue. This cannot and should not be denied. But being a security issue is different to being a securitised issue. Terrorism is a security issue, but through securitisation it is being presented as a threat of existential proportions to a society, resulting in a particular – distorted – perception of threat. Security and securitisation are therefore separate; what is in the security realm does not have to be securitised, and what is securitised may not necessarily be an issue of security.

The point here is that productive agents vary based on the subject of the discourse, but in most cases, there are two productive agents that consistently have major influence, regardless of the topic. These are the media and political figures.

### 3.1 – The Challenges for Productive Agents

Of these two productive agents, it is the media which is in the most precarious position when it comes to their involvement in discourse production. News media in particular is obliged to make known all occurrences which may be of relevance to their audience. When dealing with terrorism, the role of the news media becomes particularly double-edged. On the one hand, the media is obliged to report events, including those events which are shocking (UNESCO, 2017, 5). On the other hand, terrorism must not overtake news coverage to the point that the coverage executes the wish of the terrorists themselves: spreading a message of fear and ultimately influencing the behaviour of a society (Bell, 2016, 3; UNESCO, 2017, 5).

But one major conflict for news media is audience rejection, and this is particularly interesting when thinking about discourse. According to UNESCO, “the public has also acted as a censor, criticising the media that appeared to them to deviate too far from the official line, or to be too “understanding” with respect to the “opposing camp”” (UNESCO, 2017, 15). Therefore, it becomes clear that when the news of terror is too aggressive and one-sided, it is sensationalist in the eyes of an analyst. But if it is too measured in ‘understanding’ terrorism or its causes, it faces rejection.

Entertainment media faces a similar challenge to the news media. While entertainment media, in creating an exciting, consumable product, seeks to dramatise events that people have some involvement with, or ability to relate to, they also face the moral dilemma of tapping into something like terrorism through sensationalism. James Der Derian speaks of how “the CNN-effect” is becoming “the YouTube effect”; a seamless transition of the power of discursive direction from a news outfit to an entertainment outlet (Der Derian, 2008).

The position of political actors is somewhat less difficult to navigate than that of the media. The examples outlined in this chapter show that political actors are motivated to act as discursive



agents to achieve a social result among a certain society, or sub-section of society. The power of using terrorism to build a kind of social rapport among people is strong, and this appears to be the case when a statement is made by an individual political actor (Kaplan, 2005, 9).

Naturally, both of these productive agents are, when producing content related to terrorism, fulfilling their own obligations. The fact that they have made statements regarding terrorism, and thus contributed to the discourse and the creation of a securitised dominant paradigm is not to be questioned: this is their job. Their right to be involved in this discourse should not be disputed. However, it is the *way* that they contribute to the paradigm that I would like to bring under scrutiny. In other words: what is being said, and how does it steer the discourse? And most importantly, what motivates such political comments? These questions are discussed further in the analysis.

### 3.2 – Terrorism in the Media

At which point does the reporting of terrorism cross the line from reporting into “fanning the flames”? (Beckett, 2016). The examples that follow are of reporting in the news media directly after the May 2017 bombing of the Manchester Arena.

After the Manchester bombing in May 2017, public engagement with news media in Europe spiked. In the UK, BBC One’s average daily audience in quarter 2 of 2017 was 621,670. During the morning coverage of the attack in Manchester, this number increased almost 5-fold to approximately 3 million viewers (Darvill, 2017, para. 3; Statista, 2017A). Later in the day, the BBC One national evening news extended their regular show. This extended show resulted in a delay to the regional news, further disrupting later evening programming (Darvill, 2017, para. 2). Similarly, the TV ratings for ITV increased, seeing a viewership of approximately 900,000 people between 9:25AM and 2PM, up from their average of 570,725 (Darvill, 2017, para. 3-5; Statista, 2017A; Statista, 2017B).

During this extended coverage, the language used by the BBC remained moderate in comparison to various other sources. With regard to sensationalism, both BBC One and BBC News coverage of the Manchester Arena bombing stayed within the boundaries of responsible reporting, without appearing to contribute to hysteria. The opening broadcast of the attack erred on the side of caution. The word displayed on the screens was, in single quotations, ‘explosion’, rather than the more sensational options of ‘bombing’ or ‘attack’. The report did not state that a ‘terrorist attack’ had taken place, but rather that the police services were ‘treating it as a terrorist incident’ (BBC, 2017A).

The following day, BBC One released a 45-minute lunchtime extended bulletin on the incident. This bulletin, composed less as news and more as a full-length report/short documentary had a more

sensational approach than the news breaks of the previous evening. The images used, while never graphic in their display of death or injury, were composed in a way which would adequately display the panic and hysteria of the incident. Particularly resonant with the middle demographics and parents was an emotional appeal from a Manchester mother, whose daughter had not been home since the beginning of the concert the previous evening (BBC, 2017B).

By comparison, the Sky News Special Report performed less responsibly. The Sky News report had markedly more repetition of the scenes in the stadium, dramatic language used in interviews, and little informative reporting (Sky News, 2017). The entire production presents more like a compilation of footage from witnesses' phones, and eyewitness testimonies than a news report. The most extreme statements of eyewitnesses were also repeated. One sentence which was played twice within the first three minutes of the report was "...and then a gentleman said 'run!'". Other statements which were broadcast in the Sky News report were "you could smell the burning", "we were hoping it wasn't the worst, but it ended up being the worst", and "people were trampling over us" (Sky News, 2017).

In print news media, the delivery of the news relied on headlines to convey one single, immediately digestible, piece of information. The results that are to be seen here vary greatly between tabloid and broadsheet media outlets. Broadsheet media reflected the language used by reporters in the mainstream television news outlets, while tabloid prints used language which was more extreme and likely to elicit an emotion response. The following headlines are good examples of how the print media broadcast the attack to their respective European audiences (Pleasant, 2017; Williamson, 2017).

*El Pais* (2017), one of Spain's three major daily newspapers, reported the attack with the following headline: "May announces police have identified the Manchester suicide terrorist". In France, *Le Monde* (2017) published the title: "Families targeted by terrorism". The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (2017) wrote "22 dead by suicide bombing in Manchester". The Guardian's (2017) headline read "Murder in Manchester: at least 19 die in arena attack". The Daily Telegraph (2017) headline was straightforward in stating "Manchester explosion kills 19 concert-goers".

In tabloid journalism, the headlines were more emotionally-charged and spectacular. Some examples are *The Daily Mail's* (2017) headline: "Carnage at Pop Concert: At least 19 dead and scores injured as 'terror blast' rips through Manchester Arena". *The Daily Mail's* Sunday newspaper, *The Mail on Sunday* (2017), published the headline "The Casual Killer on his way to Mass Murder". *The Scottish Sun* (2017) writes "Terror at Teen Concert", while the *Daily Mirror*

(2017) reported the attacks with the headline “Pictures of innocence... Killed by evil”. Finally, *Metro’s* (2017) headline was the most sensational of all, using “Now they kill our little girls”.

Around Europe, the various tabloid publications were similar in style to the British tabloids. *20Minutes* (2017) in France wrote: “Attack in Manchester: ‘Everything is being done to protect the French’, says Collomb”. *Bild Zeitung* (2017) used an extremely graphic image, along with the title “Children as target”. Barcelona’s *El Periodico* (2017) ran with “Deadly concert”.

### 3.3 – Terrorism according to Political Actors

Following the Manchester terrorism incident, political actors from around Europe made comments which were critical to the securitisation of terrorism. Securitisation in critical security studies relies upon a speech act to be made by a relevant political figure in which terrorism is presented as a kind of threat to society’s immediate wellbeing (Wæver, 1989).

Theresa May’s address to the nation following the incident was, in many ways, very moderate. The entire speech appeared to be without a hint of securitisation, until the final lines: “let us celebrate those who helped, safe in the knowledge that the terrorists will never win and our values, our country and our way of life, will always prevail.” (Time, 2017, para. 11). In these closing lines, May ended an emotional speech with a reference to the apparent battle between the UK and terrorism. By addressing the terrorists as an enemy who threaten British values, the British way of life, and Britain itself, May made a clear securitising speech act. With these words, Prime Minister May elevated terrorism into the realm of national security, thus the effective securitising move being made.

In the search for further examples, the former French President Francois Hollande’s address after the Nice terrorist attack of July 14, 2016, shows the securitisation of terrorism. Hollande speaks of France as a direct target of terrorists, using the sentence “France was hit on its National Day, 14 July, the symbol of freedom, because human rights are denied by these fanatics, and because France is obviously their target” (American Rhetoric, 2016, para. 6). His speech is constantly referring to the struggle between France and the extremists. Some clear examples of securitising speech: “France ... will always be stronger – I assure you of that – than the fanatics who seek to attack it”, “Nothing will make us yield in our determination to combat terrorism, and we’re going to intensify our strikes in Syria and Iraq”, and the clearest securitising speech act of all: “The whole of France is under the threat of Islamist terrorism” (American Rhetoric, 2016, para. 6-18).

Another phenomenon which plays a role in securitising terrorism occurs when a political figure in one country speaks about a terrorist incident which has occurred in a different country. Angela

Merkel made an address stating “I assure the people of Great Britain: Germany stands by your side”. Federica Mogherini also commented on the situation, saying “Fear will not prevail”. Other political leaders that commented directly on the terrorist incident in the United Kingdom were Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi, Benjamin Netanyahu, Shinzo Abe, Justin Trudeau, Jean-Claude Juncker, and many others from around the world (Henley, 2017).

This kind of intense, global response is the effective final step to securitising the discourse. The statement of a political actor with a direct link to the event – in this case, that person would be Theresa May – is generally considered enough to fulfil the securitisation criteria. But simply the list of figures who commented on the Manchester Arena bombing shows that terrorism is has indeed attained a globally recognised securitised status.

## Chapter 4

### 4.1 – The Reality of Perception

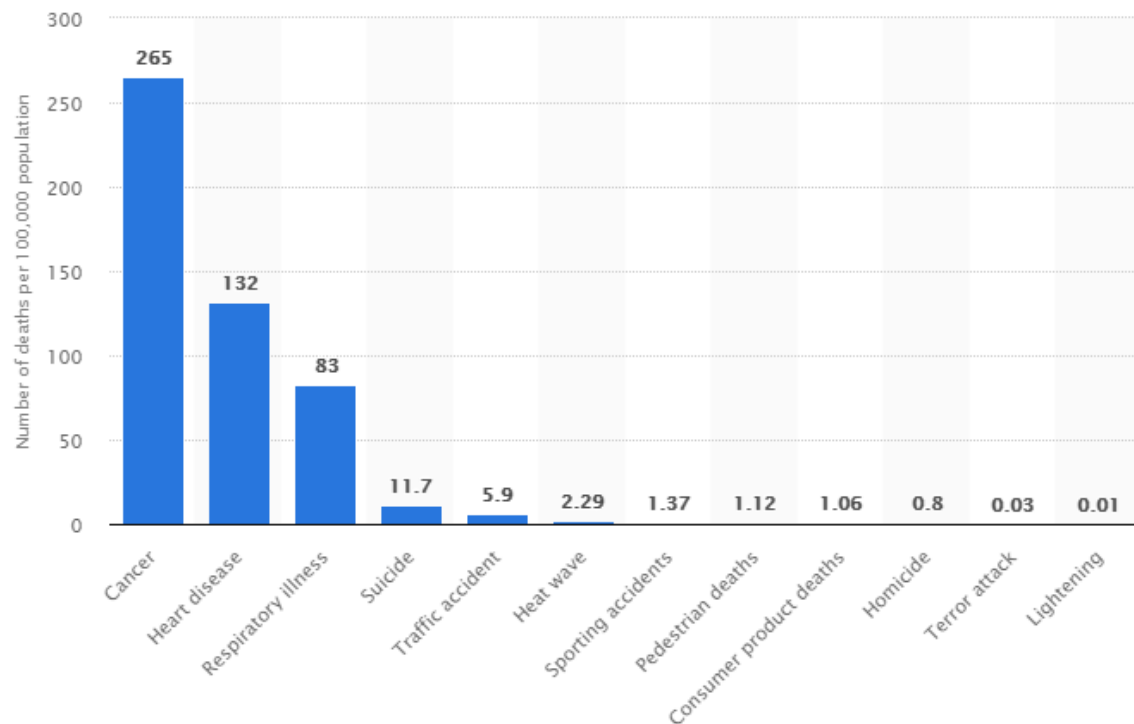
“If, for instance, one is afraid of robbers in a dream, the robbers, it is true, are imaginary – but the fear is real” (Stricker, 1879, 51).

Quoted by Sigmund Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913), William Stricker’s description of how imaginary circumstances can warrant a genuine response comes close to describing the problem with the way we talk about terrorism. Freud (1913, 365) continues: “According to the testimony of our feelings, the emotion experienced in the dream is in no way less valid than one of like intensity experienced in waking life”. This concept is core to the following study of this chapter, as it acknowledges the basic idea that one’s perception of a threat can essentially be equal to one’s subjection to actual threat, regardless of the reality.

Booth (1991) makes the argument that the only form of genuine security comes from being emancipated from threat. To hold a threat at a distance by means of protective measures does not actually eliminate the threat itself; simply distances it. The threat, whatever it may be, continues to exist and continues to be a threat, albeit a distant one. Another option is to eliminate the threat, but to maintain a state of dominance over something is also not equal to emancipation: the threat is controlled, but it is a state of control that needs to be maintained, effectively resulting in the threat continuing to influence the behaviour of the threatened. Emancipation links security to the cessation of the threat not through control or prevention, but through a perceptive change. If a threat is not perceived as threatening, it loses all of its power, as its power was dependent upon its threatening nature. This is apparent under the principle of ‘reciprocity of rights’ (Booth, 1991, 319).

Terrorism is a difficult topic to think of in this way. Much of what terrorism is, at its core, is practically, objectively, threatening: it is spontaneous, seemingly random, destructive, and fatal. This disqualifies terrorism as an entirely ‘perceived’ threat; it is also a practical threat. But it is a practical threat only to a certain extent: statista (2018) demonstrates with the following table, that terrorism was one of the least likely causes of death in Europe in 2016. The actual danger that terrorism poses to the everyday lives of Europeans is lower than many other leading causes of death, including being many times less likely than regular homicide.

Figure 1: Mortality rate in the EU in 2016 from various causes (per 100,000 population). (Statista, 2018).



This leaves a gap between the real threat of terrorism and the perceived threat. It has already been established that the perception of something, whether it is real or not, is enough for feelings to be affected. So, the most compelling argument to be made here is that of Ken Booth (1991) and the Aberystwyth School of Critical Security Studies: security from a perceived threat comes from total emancipation from the perception. This is not to say that European society can, in any sustainable way, be free from terrorism. It is simply the argument that the elevated perception of terrorism as a result of securitisation can be removed through a critical turn in the discourse.

Matt McDonald (2007) addresses the need for this critical discursive turn in his paper *Emancipation and Critical Terrorism Studies*, in which he references Booth's theory of emancipation as a form of true security (1991). The need for a critical discursive turn is prevalent, especially considering the gap between real and perceived threat.

Emancipation should be considered the key concept in this discursive change. Understanding that emancipation is a precursor to security justifies the discursive change. It has been demonstrated repeatedly in the previous chapter that the productive agents who influence the discourse are building the securitised dominant paradigm, and therefore the cessation of this securitisation would, theoretically, reduce the perceived threat. And, as perception can be as impactful as reality, the kind of perception that is built becomes most important.

## 4.2 – The Perception of Reality

The struggle between perception and objective reality has been one that has existed in Critical Security Studies since before the framework of securitisation was theorised (van Munster, 2012). Offering the framework, Ole Wæver (1995) provided that the central issue of security is not whether or not threats are real, but whether a certain societal issue can be effectively socially constructed as a threat (van Munster, 2012). In Wæver's framework, he outlines that not all speech acts are acts of securitisation; the speech act must follow a rhetorical structure (Wæver, 1995; van Munster, 2012). This rhetorical structure must be derived from the language of war, referencing themes such as survival, urgency, threat and defence (van Munster, 2012, n.p). Whichever issue is being spoken as an issue of security, must be spoken of in these terms to be securitised.

Both Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998) and Rens van Munster (2012) clarify that the Copenhagen School's securitisation framework is one that is supposed to be used to elevate an issue into a realm of extraordinary action. It may be helpful to think of securitization as a process by which an issue in debate is taken to a new 'status', a new level of priority, at which point any kind of response is justified, including emergency action, as long as it alleviates the threat (Buzan et al, 1998, 23-24; Wæver, 1995).

However, after being subject to the various discursive processes and high levels of academic scrutiny inevitable for such a framework, the speech act came to be known as only part of the construction of securitisation (McDonald, 2008, 566). The second step in the construction of a security discourse is the audience consent, in that an audience must accept the speech act to be genuine, and the threat to which the speech act refers to be real (McDonald, 2008, 566).

And therefore, the Copenhagen School framework for securitisation – as it entails both a speech act and a consenting audience – describes the perfect situation for reality to be perceived inaccurately by a society. The perception of reality is that a great threat exists, perhaps even an existential threat, when a speech act is made to a consenting audience. But the issue here is that the development of this perception does not rely on the audience having an objective grasp upon reality. It relies only upon the correct conditioning of the audience and the timely delivery of a speech act.

This is where emancipation can enter the fold. From a theoretical perspective, emancipation is a key concept in addressing the divide between perception and reality. Here, the essential mode of emancipation is discursive. According to Matt McDonald (2007), an "understanding of emancipation as a process of freeing up space for dialogue and deliberation enables a focus on

crucial questions, experiences, and practices neglected in most orthodox accounts of security and terrorism” (252). Here, the value of emancipation as a security term refers to its ability to be applied to a dialogue. By freeing a dialogue from what McDonald (2007) calls “orthodox accounts of security”, emancipation is performed in a discursive manner.

Emancipating the discourse from one state and allowing it to evolve into something else is what McDonald (2007) is describing. This is the model that applies also to the wider terrorism discourse in the practical realm. The way that terrorism is discussed, on all fronts – in the media and in politics – is in many ways a non-emancipated dialogue of security and threat. The turn of this discourse into a more critical, less securitised account of threat, is a compelling idea in a society which appears to currently be dominated by securitisation.

#### 4.3 – Securitisation vs Critical Discourse?

Throughout this dissertation, a securitised discourse is often placed in opposition to a critical discourse. This distinction is helpful, as it shows that the securitised discourse is securitised beyond the actual security threat that it poses; that the threat posed by terrorism is no more than the fatal threat of other, less stigmatised incidences, but that through a process of securitisation it has become perceived as something far greater than it is. This is necessary, in this dissertation. But it is also important to understand that securitisation does not always have to be mutually exclusive from critical discourse. A securitised discourse can also be critical; if this is the case, then the threat that is being securitised is likely to be genuine. This could be called ‘justified securitisation’, but the securitisation of terrorism does not fit this label.

What is discussed here is not that a securitised discourse automatically equates to a bias or sensational one, but rather that certain topics (in this case terrorism) can be made into something which they are not. Through the forces of securitisation, the topic of terrorism can be turned into a spectacle of unprecedented proportions, posing an immediate and direct threat to the people of a specific country. *This* is where securitisation can have an unnecessary negative impact; in the sense that it can be used, and is used, to produce a misguided, widespread social consensus. The following chapter handles, among other things, what motivates the deliberate political will to carry out securitisation.



## Chapter 5 – Analysis

Chapter 1 illustrates a variety of ways that acts of terrorism prompt the two discursive productive agents to perform their productive functions. The way that the media in particular decides to broadcast an event can have dramatic effects on the discourse surrounding terrorism, as it primes the public for the ensuing political statements. The findings of Chapter 1 and the theoretical structures outlined in Chapter 2 are combined in this analysis to lead towards conclusions on European terrorism discourse.

Simply looking at the viewing figures, it is clear to see that terrorism is good for television. The drama of the event, the departure from normality, and the sense of real-time engagement in an unfolding story is an effective formula for attracting an increased audience (Howard, 1992, 109). However, whether this spike in interest and in news engagement is disproportionate compared to the event is almost impossible to say. All that it proves is that in the face of extreme events, the public interest in the news increases. I would argue that this is a natural phenomenon. However, the crucial fact to draw from these viewing figures is that during a terrorist incident, the captive audience of news media can be many times larger than it normally is. This inflation in viewership makes the news media dramatically more powerful as a productive agent during terrorist incidents than during business-as-usual broadcasting. Therefore, specifically *what* is being said becomes more effective in discursive production, because it reaches a larger audience, who already feel in some way affected by the issue.

Furthermore, according to the theory of securitisation, the effectiveness of the speech act depends upon the acceptance of the audience (Buzan et al, 1998, 26-33). During a terrorist event, due to the nature of the event, the audience of a speech act is likely to be a more accepting audience than at other times. This provides even more evidence that the news media has inflated power as a discursive productive agent at these times.

The initial BBC television reporting of the incident was commendably balanced. At the point when the news was initially becoming known to the broadcasters, the stations were visibly careful to remain distant from assumptions, opinions, and generally conclusive statements. A highly critical analyst would make the observation that the reports focussed only on delivering shocking statistics, such as the death count, the response of the public services such as transport and police, and recounts of events from bystanders. But at that point – on the evening of the incident – the news stations could not have made a report which included anything else. They could not, at that point, make any reference to the identity of the perpetrator, and they could not insinuate which organisation may be responsible for arranging the explosion. To do so without proper information

would have been more conducive to the production of a misguided discourse than to simply make reports based on the few facts that they knew. So, regarding the initial news breaks, the mainstream news outlets performed generally well.

However, I would argue that the scenes of the special reports from Sky and the BBC during the following day were more stirring of emotions such as anger and fear. It could certainly be said that in this regard the coverage was still within the boundaries of 'reporting', and for the BBC report this is perhaps the case. But the report made by Sky News was, to be sure, far more directly influencing the condition of the audience. The images which were played the most and the earliest were those of chaos and distress, despite the fact that these images have the least information to offer. As a result, the impression that it leaves is one of complete fear. Other important information, such as the potential motivations for the attack, how it was carried out, and what the immediate and long-term responses will be, were left out of the report entirely.

Dr von Hippel's comments were the only moments of critical reflection during the Sky broadcast, as she called for "patience while they put the pieces together" (von Hippel, 2017). To wait for a clear picture of the event, supported by information and analysis, would be the healthiest response for the discourse. Instead, due to the way that media is distributed today, the news networks remain competitive only through the immediate distribution of news, even when there is no actual 'news' to be seen.

This highlights a clear issue with the way that the media acts as a productive agent in terrorism discourse. While the role of the media is to report, the necessity to remain competitive and to provide an inflated audience with immediate gratification results in the broadcast of high-level speculation and any footage which conjures an emotional response from a desperate audience. Laurence Howard wrote, importantly:

"We identify with the victim of violence and are imbued with feelings of compassion and sympathy in the face of the victim's distress. Yet we can do very little to aid the victim on the television screen; therefore, we, too, are likely to be frustrated, humiliated, and intimidated – a victory of sorts for the terrorist". (1992, 107).

This description of the role of the viewer when confronted with scenes of terror is still relevant today. As the event unfolds on the television screens of an entire nation, the audience experiences the frustration, humiliation and intimidation that Howard (1992, 107) describes. Regarding the production of the discourse, this is where the speech act is prepared: an audience of millions are

put through hours of distressing scenes and made to feel 'humiliated' and 'intimidated'. The natural response for these people is to look for some kind of relief to these feelings. This is, in a way, the preparation of the successful securitisation which is soon to follow in the form of a speech made by a political figure.

The headlines of reputable, mainstream, broadsheet newspapers across Europe in the morning of the following day were largely factual, using little emotive language and presenting only those facts which could be responsibly presented. The obvious exception here is the Guardian (2017), whose headline included an alliteration: "Murder in Manchester". However, the article which followed this headline treated the incident with much more care, avoiding the use of further emotive language.

It is when the tabloid prints are analysed that the discursive direction starts to become clearer. Today, the print news media industry is undergoing a shift known as 'tabloidisation', by which broadsheet newspapers are losing readership to tabloid newspapers, and, in efforts to counter this, are adopting tabloid elements to remain competitive (Rowe, 2011, 462): "identifiable tabloid properties, such as the simplification and spectacularisation of news, are increasingly characteristic of contemporary newspapers" (Rowe, 2011, 449). This helps to explain the Guardian's sensational headline.

But besides the move of broadsheet newspapers to adopt certain tabloid characteristics, the entire trend shows that the interest of the wider audience is that of the wider tabloid readership. *The Sun* and *The Mail on Sunday* have the two highest readerships of British Sunday newspapers, well ahead of the third-placed broadsheet *The Sunday Times* (Newsworks, 2015). Tabloid newspapers have found a formula for producing easily digestible news that people can consume quickly, while still feeling as though they have engaged in current affairs. The increased exposure and easily transferable content – a single headline can tell an entire emotional story – makes the tabloid headlines more powerful in steering the paradigm.

What I believe is most apparent in the study of terrorism in the media is that it is not about the media as a whole acting irresponsibly, but rather the clash between responsible and irresponsible journalism. The main television stations and the broadsheet media have, by and large, reported responsibly on the attacks in Manchester. Sensational tactics are low, and neutral language has been used. The problem, in this instance, is the sensational journalism which is pushing terrorism towards securitisation. As responsible journalism on terror is taking place alongside irresponsible journalism, the conditions are not right for terrorism to become a securitised topic from the media

alone. The two different styles of journalism are not unified. But when a political figure speaks, that figure presents a unified voice against terror. So it is therefore in the hands of political figures to make or break the securitisation process.

In political statements, the language used is commonly more directly pointing out the situation as a battle: there is one force which threatens the state, and the state will do everything in its power to win. It is this exact message which is actively conducting the securitisation of terrorism in Europe.

The speech made by Theresa May was largely without securitising speech acts. Only in the closing lines did she place terrorism and Great Britain against each other, as opposing forces. Interestingly though, the securitisation was carried out further by political actors around Europe, who had no direct link to the incident. Mogherini's comments that Europe will "prevail" is a reference to the idea that there is a struggle in place, one that must be 'won' by either side (Henley, 2017).

The question remains; why would a political figure make a speech act which is inflating something into a national threat, a threat to society itself, while the objective threat remains largely contained? What motivates the deliberate political will for this to happen? In this case, the answer is not individual political gain, as it may be during other times. Here, the answer is so that the state can claim that any further action is with 'national interest' or 'national security' in mind. It opens up avenues of action that may otherwise have been excessive or unnecessary. By placing an issue such as terrorism in the domain of 'national security', the state allows itself the right to act against the issue as it pleases.

With this observation, Wolfers' (1962) description of the terms 'national interest' and 'national security' become relevant again; by using the process of securitisation, a political figure does not achieve any kind of political gain for him or herself, but rather for the state. Wolfers' (1962, 147) makes the following observation regarding the terms 'national interest' and 'national security': "Thus, while appearing to offer guidance and a basis for broad consensus, they may be permitting everyone to label whatever policy he favors with an attractive and possibly deceptive name". *Here* is the political will to carry out securitisation; it is this motivation, the opportunity for a government to move more freely than normal, which drives a state to label terrorism alongside national security. This answers the question of *why* securitisation would be carried out by a political figure. What occurs as something of a side-effect of securitisation, is the massive public perception of an imminent threat, leading to the gap between perceived and objective threat.

Acknowledging that fact, it would be accurate to say that terrorism as a topic is elevated somewhat into the realm of security, and beyond the realm of politics. The nature of terrorism as "a part of

the twenty-first century” (N. Carpentier, personal communication, January 19, 2018) is completely denied by the level of attention it gets from political figures. As discussed in Chapter 2, if the speech act itself fails to securitise successfully in one instance, the combined global voice of political figures from a large number of countries, all who make reference to terrorism in extreme ways (the “scourge of terrorism”, for example (American Rhetoric, 2016)), does result in securitisation.

I would make the argument that the political figures are actually generating much of the hysteria against which they swear to prevail. Mogherini’s words “fear will never prevail” (The Guardian, 2016) is actually implying that Europe is going into battle with fear itself, which ironically is quite a scary concept. It is constantly portrayed by leaders and politicians around Europe that terrorism is a phenomenon of unprecedented horror. Simply the list of world leaders who took the time to comment on the Manchester Arena bombing is telling. The highest profile political figures on Earth – the leaders of Russia, China, the United States, and Germany, among others – all lined up to say something about an event which took place in a different state. All of a sudden, a tragic event in the United Kingdom has become a global talking point, within which the ideas of threat, attack, battle, and imminence are widely distributed.

The result of this is that the horror which is supposedly brought to Europe by a terrorist, is actually being broadcast in certain terms by someone of high public status. The incident itself does not feature heavily in the comments of these politicians, rather the dialogue focusses largely on the element of battle; that ‘our country’ or ‘our land’ will prevail in its efforts to conquer this opposing force. Such a discourse meets the criteria for securitisation, as it is a rhetoric of war.

But in analysing the various global responses to terrorism, the issue arises of whether or not the securitisation process is actually justifying any kind of emergency, extra-legal action. In many of the political speeches made, the rhetoric is suitable to fulfil the criteria, *except that* it does not indicate the state should take any extreme measures. There is one exception to this, however: Francois Hollande’s 2016 speech after the Nice attack. In this speech, he promises to increase strikes in Syria and Iraq, as well as extend the state of emergency for three months further than planned (American Rhetoric, 2016).

But perhaps the most important point to be made here is with regard to the idea that securitisation is a two-part process. The speech act is often cited as being the first part, with audience consent following suit. But actually, the findings of the first chapter would support the idea that audience consent is generated by the key discursive agent – the media – before a speech act is made. The success of the speech act, and subsequently the success of the securitisation, rests somewhat in

the hands of the media, as it is the media which prepares the audience for the speech act. So it is clearly a kind of symbiotic relationship between the media and the deliverer of the speech act: securitisation relies upon these two discursive agents working together.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusions

### 6.1 – The Dominant Paradigm and its Consequences

This dissertation has studied the idea that the dominant paradigm on terrorism in Europe is the cause of the heightened perception of its threat. By analysing the output of the media, and the speeches of politicians following terrorist incidents, an answer was sought as to whether the discourse is securitised, how it has become so, and what would be the consequences of securitisation?

I have found that the dominant paradigm on terrorism in Europe is indeed securitised, and through analysis of the sources, and an interview with an expert, I have established that this dominant paradigm is indeed separated from the objective reality of life in Europe today. There is a gap between the threat that European society faces, and the threat that European society perceives.

The way that the securitisation framework is described by its architects and its critics is that it consists of two parts: the speech act, and the consent of the audience. I have found in this study that due to the actions of the media following a major terrorist incident, any speech act is likely to be met with audience consent. The media therefore plays what could be called a *preparatory* role, as it combines a variety of emotional techniques to prepare a large audience for the delivery of the impending speech act, which is then successfully undertaken by a political figure.

This securitised dominant paradigm has consequences, and these are to do with the gap between perception and reality. Sigmund Freud (1913) has assisted in helping to describe the fact that emotions do not rely upon objective realities. Indeed, even when an objective reality is certain beyond dispute, an emotional response may not necessarily follow the indisputable fact before it. But Arnold Wolfers (1962) has shown that terrorism is a highly ambiguous and disputed concept, and therefore the emotional detachment from objective reality is enhanced, amounting to a situation by which the massive perception of society can be vastly different from the reality. I would conclude that the major consequence of the dominant paradigm on terrorism in Europe today is exactly that much of society has such a gripping fear of something which presents little objective danger.

### 6.2 – Moving Towards De-securitisation

The final comments to be made are with regard to the future. A securitised topic such as terrorism in Europe can, and should, be moved away from a security dialogue, and towards critical assessment. The way that it is spoken about in the media and by politicians, and the kind of response it garners internationally, must face a reform if the perception of threat is going to

decrease. I have established that the threat is largely perceived, and that perceived threat is as powerful over emotions as objective threat. I have also established that true security lies in the emancipation of one from threat, as is the theory of the Aberystwyth School of Critical Security Studies. Now, the field has to put its minds and its words towards the practical actions that must be taken in order to achieve this discursive emancipation, and eventually the physical emancipation from this great perceived threat.

‘Freedom and security’ are often grouped in rhetoric, and in many ways, this is understandable; because freedom *is* security (Booth, 1991). A discursive emancipation – the release of the discourse from securitising practices – is the precursor to physical emancipation: the release of society from the threat it is perceived to be under. When perceived threat is as powerful as objective threat, then it is the perception that must change.

This dissertation has proven that perceptions, despite their immense power to create real emotions, are easily and swiftly manipulatable under the right circumstances. The de-securitisation of terrorism, and the masse emancipation of European society from a gripping perception of terrorist threat, is in the hands of those two key discursive agents who hold the greatest power to drive perceptions one way or the other: the media, and our political leaders.



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