Terrorism, Security, and Power in Russia: Domestic, Regional, and International Dimensions

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Abstract

This thesis examines the securitisation of the terrorism threat in Russia and its relation to regime consolidation and broadening of political influence. It traces and analyses terrorism-related securitisation moves made by the Kremlin from 1991 to early 2019, using securitisation theory to analyse Russia's counterterrorism agenda in domestic, regional, and foreign policy. Counter-terrorist securitisation rhetoric runs through Russia's domestic, regional, and foreign policy, making it an important component of Russia's political and social set up. The presence of securitisation rhetoric at all levels of analysis shows not only its importance for Russian political life but also the centrality of the securitisation processes in generating political change. Thus, employing the Copenhagen School of security as the theoretical framework, I argue that since the Chechen-Russian conflicts the Kremlin has been using the threat of terrorism as the justification for its domestic, regional, and foreign policy alterations. These changes have resulted in the strengthening of the regime, the increase of Putin's power and authority, and the expansion of Russia's political influence on the regional and international level. It is argued that Russia's counterterrorism agenda has been central to its endeavour to reclaim its superpower status.

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To a student, if you are reading my thesis – believe in yourself, you can do it!

Abbreviations

ASEAN The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CIS ATC the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Centre

CIS CRDF the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Rapid Deployment Force

CIS the Commonwealth of Independent States

CS the Copenhagen School (of security)

CSTO the Collective Security Treaty Organisation

EAEU the Eurasian Economic Union

FSB Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation

FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation

IMU the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as IS

KGB *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, known in English as Committee for State Security, was the main security agency in the Soviet Union

NAC the National Anti-terror Committee

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NG *Novaya Gazeta* (a Russian newspaper)

NRMs New Religious Movements

OSCE the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SCO the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

UN the United Nations

USSR the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Current scholarly and public debates over Russian politics and society tend to focus on a narrative of irreversible decline. Some scholars connect it to the decrease of revenue from oil and gas sales, a poor economic situation, and a growing centralisation of power that might result in the impoverishment of Russia's economic subjects and sub regions (Goble, 2017; Wimbush, 2017). Russia's demographic challenges, the weakening of intellectual property produced, as well as the deteriorating quality of the political elite in Putin's circle are seen as the signs of the Russian Federation's inevitable collapse (Barbashin 2016; Balzer, 2016; Berman, 2016; Eberstadt, 2016). Other authors argue that the Kremlin has reverted back to a Cold War mentality, thus modern Russian foreign policy should be analysed in the framework of a new Cold War rhetoric (Furman, 2006; Lucas, 2009; Sakwa, 2008; Simes, 2007). Such scholars tend to refer to Russia's inability to move on from the Cold War period when discussing global politics.

Contrary to the claims of Russia's decline, recent prominent events indicate that Russia is advancing its foreign policy and is seeking to reclaim its superpower status. This can be seen in examples such as the Syrian counterterrorism campaign, where Russia presented its military enhancements to the world, or the 2014 annexation of Crimea, which brought Russia new territories. Russia is assertively repositioning itself as a capable international actor, and this quest for global recognition has not gone unnoticed. For example, the annexation of Crimea might be seen as an international move only a superpower would have been able to conduct (Katchanovski, 2016; Neumann, 2015). Russia's campaign in Syria has been noted to be coherent, logical, and legal, as it has been justified by the invitation of the Syrian government, contrary to the US's involvement (Carpenter, 2017; Gambhir, 2015). These two examples of Russia acting as an assertive global power have been presented to the Russian audience in a favourable light and greatly celebrated (Shapiro, 2017). The Kremlin meticulously follows an assertive, uncompromising position regarding Russia’s place in the world, overlooking any international criticism (Oldberg, 2010, 2011).

This thesis argues that Russia has started a new chapter in its history by positioning itself as a capable counterterrorism actor in the international arena; a period in its history where the threat of terrorism plays an important role. The presence of the terrorism threat at every level of Russian politics is staggering: from military education and training exercises in schools to the highest level of foreign policy. Contemporary Russian foreign policy is impossible to imagine without its counterterrorism profile. The fight with terrorism was an important turn in Russia’s search for global recognition, because it allowed Russia to establish its new standing ground. This would be this new standing ground that could guide much of the Kremlin’s domestic, regional, and international decisions for years to come.

1.1 Research Aim and Objectives

To date, there exists very little consistent analysis of the terrorist threat in Russian foreign policy that doesn’t fall into either geopolitical or democracy debates (Leichtova, 2014). This is demonstrated in many Russian foreign policy discussions revolving around geopolitics, the absence of democracy in Russia, or the strong grip of Vladimir Putin as the driver of Russian foreign policy (Astrov & Morozova, 2012; Bacon, Renz, & Cooper, 2013; Blank, 2008; Roberts, 2017). Such approaches rely heavily on Russia’s history as the guiding tool for analysing Russian foreign policy. However, as Shearman (2011) notes, historical analogies are insufficient for exclusively explaining Russia’s foreign policy goals and directions. These approaches to Russian foreign policy analysis are potentially limiting for the scholarship and their usage needs to be reconsidered. Russian foreign policy analysis would benefit from being looked at in a different way, with a focus on non-traditional threats affecting Russian foreign policy formation.

The threat of terrorism represents one of these non-traditional threats. The threat of terrorism and its influence in Russian policies has often been seen as instrumental in the hands of the Kremlin. As a result, counterterrorism was considered as one possible cooperation platform for improving the relations with the West (De Haas, 2010; Eran, 2003; Pravda, 2003). However, there is a lack of analysis on how the terrorist threat affects Russian policies in different ways, influencing its policies at the domestic and international levels, as well as Russia's policies in the post-Soviet space. This thesis uses social constructivist theory to analyse Russian foreign policy. This study's goal is to refocus the analysis of security threats in Russian foreign policy, by departing from solely looking at the overpowering attention of real threats towards an incorporation of perceived threats into the analysis. I argue that Russia's endeavour to reclaim its superpower status has been greatly assisted by its counterterrorism agenda.

The aim of this research is to investigate how the Kremlin uses the threat of terrorism to alter Russia's domestic, regional, and foreign policy in order to regain global influence. The thesis addresses 3 objectives:

1. To analyse the Kremlin's power consolidation as the result of the securitisation of the terrorist threat on the domestic, regional, and international level; and
2. To explore the contribution of the counterterrorism agenda to Russia's pursuit of international influence;
3. To examine a societal aspect of the Kremlin's terrorist threat securitisation and the consequences the Russian public and other audiences have experienced as the result of this securitisation.

As suggested in these objectives, the first key intended outcome of this research is to show how the securitisation of terrorism gradually made the counterterrorism agenda a platform for Russia to re-claim its international influence and the superpower status.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Securitisation theory was chosen as the theoretical approach for this thesis because the application of securitisation theory allows this analysis to move away from the juxtaposition of Russia and the rest of the world: multipolarity versus unipolarity, democracy versus authoritarianism, progress versus stagnation (Bacon et al., 2013). The Copenhagen School of security started an important and necessary debate on security being more than traditional military threats to nation states (Barthwal-Datta, 2009; M. Williams, 2003). Securitisation theory sees security threats as relative concepts, departing from a realist reading of threats (Buzan, 1983). Security threats are seen in terms of perceptions and concerns, as social constructs (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). This approach to the definition of security threats allows a consistent analysis of constructed threats (Emmers, 2007). Thus, the constructivist approach, which the Copenhagen school and consequently this thesis follows, brings new insights to Russian foreign policy analysis.

The securitisation analytical framework helps to methodically study security threats: how threats become securitised, what actors are involved, and how these actors justify the emergency measures that are requested to deal with security threats (Buzan et al., 1998). The ultimate goal of a securitisation process is power consolidation in the hands of a securitising actor (Ibid). Thus, the securitisation framework allows a thorough analysis of security threat developments and power dynamics that follow securitisation processes. This thesis applies the securitisation theoretical framework to Russian foreign policy analysis, and this framework, being an analytical tool, not a normative one, aims to assist a practical security analysis (Taureck, 2006).

An important contribution of securitisation theory to security analysis is that the securitisation framework allows the analysis of societal changes that result from a securitisation process (Balzacq 2005, 2010a; Watson, 2012). In traditional approaches to

Russian foreign policy analysis, society is often either disregarded or is kept on the edges of the analysis, lacking agency and a proactive position (Dawisha, 2014; Gessen, 2012; Rykhtik, 2012). Securitisation theory permits us to see society as an actor with agency, an equal participant that has the power to influence national security by accepting/rejecting the claims securitising actors make (Balzacq, 2010a; Wæver, 2015). Thus, securitisation theory allows us to bring together the terrorist threat conceptualisation, policy analysis, and a societal factor, namely the people who create and/or support or reject the Russian counterterrorism rhetoric.

Securitisation theory points toward the analysis of primary data and state language, thus I decided in the early phases of my research to conduct interviews in Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to gain primary information on the societal dimensions of counterterrorism in these countries. During my fieldwork conducted in Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus in 2016, I interviewed a range of civil society professionals and academics. These interviews greatly challenged my pre-existing ideas about society and security in the post-Soviet space. These ideas were predominantly based on academic literature and the mass-media coverage of terrorist events. I faced significant difficulties in getting access to interviewees, constituting a potential limitation of the study; although I now see these difficulties as an example of the changes that the terrorist threat securitisation brought to Russia and the post-Soviet space. I experienced challenges in reaching out to participants, who had to overcome their suspicious mind-sets. Also, a few of those who had promised to give interviews suddenly stopped responding to my attempts to contact them and I never heard from them again. Overall, a high degree of suspicion and nepotism in civil society and academic circles likely affected this research. However, the interviews support some of the conclusions this thesis makes, as the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion may be seen as one dimension of the success of the securitisation of counterterrorism.

Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan have incorporated the counterterrorism agenda into domestic and foreign policy in different ways, but the interviews revealed similarities that should be mentioned in relation to all three countries. First, when the interviewees were asked to sign any papers related to their participation in the interview, they exhibited a great amount of suspicion towards it and did not want to go on record. They argued that if they signed the papers they would not be able to speak freely. They were afraid that if their governments learnt that they had some critique to share they could face repercussions. Regardless of the information they might or might not have possessed, they were afraid of their governments. As Anna Ryl', a civil society representative in Kazakhstan said, “people are afraid of participating [in counterterrorism-related activities]” (Personal communication with Anna Ryl', 2016). None of the interviewees had anything noticeably anti-government to say but they were concerned that any type of critique, if known, could result in some sort of negative consequence on their part. They agreed that they did not feel free to talk about their governments in general, as well as the counterterrorism agenda of their said governments in particular.

Secondly, interviewees noted the lack of trust in their governments, pointing out that they are rather sceptical about information their governments share with the public. The absence of transparency of counterterrorism efforts and not knowing what was going on in the counterterrorism sphere worried almost all interviewees. When asked their opinions regarding the counterterrorism efforts of their governments and the Russian government (if known), interviewees were reluctant to give their opinions at all, and tried to change the course of conversation towards a less political direction. They would rather discuss what terrorism is as an abstract concept and the motivation of terrorists to commit acts of terrorism rather than share their own opinions on their government’s counterterrorism efforts.

Civil society representatives and academics (especially in Russia) did not feel like they were allowed anywhere near the discussion on terrorism, nor did they participate in any counterterrorism planning or decision making (Personal communication, 2016). Overall, interviewees noted that civil society in the above-mentioned countries is disenfranchised, alienated and not interested in political activity. This sentiment is also strongly reflected in the interviews with civil society representatives in Russia conducted by Barkovskaya (2017). She highlights that Russian civil society has been greatly affected by the law on "foreign agents" and many people have left the NGO space, scared of the government's responses, and have not returned.

Another interesting observation that was made during the interviews is the extent of the normalisation of the terrorist threat in post-Soviet space. The terrorist threat securitisation has resulted in the acceptance of the threat of terrorism to the point where its existentiality was not to be questioned. All interviewees based their opinions on the premise that the threat of terrorism was "real", they did not doubt the danger of the threat. None of the interviewees discussed whether the terrorist threat might have been perceived differently or exaggerated for political purposes. The foundation for interviewees' reasoning was that the terrorist threat posed a "real existential threat" to the post-Soviet space in general and their respective countries in particular (Personal communication, 2016). Thus, their understanding of the terrorist threat was in line with the Kremlin's counterterrorism rhetoric.

Overall, my fieldwork in Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan showed the trend of civil society professionals and academics not believing their governments are candid in their counterterrorism efforts. It also highlighted the alienation of civil society and academics during the securitisation process. While the insights gained from these interviews exemplify a rather small strata of society and cannot be extrapolated to represent country-wide opinions, these findings can be used to highlight the extent of the terrorism securitisation's effect not only on Russian society but the post-Soviet space as well. As a result of the interviews being less fruitful than expected, this thesis utilises a significant amount of information from primary government sources as well as secondary data sources (existing literature, the media, and the press).

The second intended outcome of this research is to show how the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric has changed on three levels of analysis: domestic, regional, and international. The three-level analysis brings the holistic attitude to the research aim and helps to comprehensively study Russia's return to global politics as a counterterrorism actor. As Buzan and Wæver (2003) argue "it is unlikely that Russia even under pressure would retreat to a purely internal security agenda. The level of the 'near abroad' is a crucial arena and the ultimate measure is the global level" (p. 408).[1] Thus, the three-level analysis allows the examination of the ways in which Russia's counterterrorism agenda has been utilised by the Kremlin at different levels. The three-level approach brings coherency into the analysis and helps to trace Russia's securitisation rhetoric explicitly focusing on the important aspects of securitisation at each level. The study of all three levels of securitisation rhetoric helps to show the consistent and methodical nature of the terrorism securitisation by the Kremlin.

The analysis conducted at the domestic level is focused on how the counterterrorism agenda appeared and developed in Russia, commencing the securitisation of the terrorist threat and consequently altering domestic policies. Understanding of these events is paramount for the analysis of how the terrorist threat became securitised, as the securitisation of terrorism in Russia would have been impossible without the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat. The terrorist threat "emanating" from the North Caucasus allowed the Kremlin to create the sense of imminence of the terrorist threat for Russian society, and the urgent need for a response that the 9/11 alone could not provide. A discussion of Russia's international position as a counterterrorism actor would be impossible without an understanding of how the terrorist threat became securitised domestically and why it was so heavily prioritised by the Kremlin. The domestic focus allows us to investigate when the terrorist threat became instrumental in Russia's politics and what factors made it possible, bringing in the historical and cultural context of the securitisation process in Russia.

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[1] Hereinafter the near abroad. Russia's near abroad is a versatile term used for former Soviet republics, it implies the interconnectedness of Russia and the post-Soviet space (Buckley, 2002; Jackson, 2003). For more see Götz, E. (2017). Putin, the state, and war: the causes of Russia's near abroad assertion revisited. *International Studies Review*, *19*(2), 228–253.

The domestic securitisation analysis is followed by an examination of the Kremlin's terrorism securitisation at the regional level. Analysing the influence of the counterterrorism agenda at the regional level emphasises Russia's securitisation rhetoric in the post-Soviet space. Scholars have noted Russia's unwavering concentration on the increase of its influence in former Soviet republics (Oldberg, 2010; Shevtsova, 2006). The regional focus brings together Russia's ambitions of reinforcing its influence in post-Soviet countries, the desire of regional political elites to stay in power, and the securitisation of the terrorist threat, which takes regional cooperation to the next level. Regional securitisation is inherently important in Russia's path to regaining its international influence, as Russia sees the post-Soviet space as its natural sphere of influence (Klubkov, 2015; Makarychev, 2015; Nation, 2007).

The analysis of securitisation rhetoric at the international level shows how the counterterrorism agenda changed Russian foreign policy and the way Russia has positioned itself in global politics. By utilising the terrorism threat in its foreign policy, Russia has succeeded in locating itself as one of the main international counterterrorism fighters, re-claiming its global influence. As the result of the terrorism securitisation at the international level, Russian society has been significantly transformed into showing more support for Russia's more assertive and sometimes aggressive foreign policy. Russia's role in Crimea annexation and the military conflict in the Eastern Ukraine has been supported by the Russian public, which provide domestic support for the Kremlin's firm foreign policy (Pinkham, 2017).

This thesis focuses on a political process of securitisation that has been instrumental in the achievement of power consolidation by the Kremlin, and not on possible motivations for regime consolidation and power accumulation. Undeniably, the persona of the political leader is important and could facilitate regime consolidation, but the consolidation itself is possible even if leaders are changing. This can be clearly seen from the example of the Putin – Medvedev – Putin presidency change. I do not make a distinction between Putin's foreign policy and the one of Dmitry Medvedev when he took the office in 2008. Putin remained in power as Prime Minister during Medvedev's presidency, so the Prime Ministerial position gained more power thanks to Putin's political personality. For the securitisation analysis, the presidential position retained its securitisation power even if president Medvedev was seen as possessing weak credentials (V. Shlapentokh, 2009). Therefore, this thesis supports the idea that a political system prevails over a personality, seeing the change in Russian leadership as a mere smokescreen for the ongoing processes of regime consolidation (see also Shevtsova, 2006). Even though the official leadership in Russia has changed, the political system remained the same, and the channels for political change stayed mostly unaffected by the "democratic" change in power (De Haas, 2010).

Securitisation rhetoric runs deeply through Russia's domestic, regional, and foreign policy, making it an important component of Russia's political and social set up. The presence of securitisation rhetoric at all levels of analysis shows not only its importance for Russian political life but also the universality of securitisation processes in bringing political change in Russia. Regime consolidation, as a result of terrorist threat securitisation in Russia, might not be the change some pro-democratic observers want to see but it should not be overlooked. An increased international influence that Russia is gaining as the result of its active engagement in global counterterrorism activities is heavily based on the securitisation processes happening domestically and regionally, so they should be analysed together. My focus on the three-level analysis of the terrorist threat securitisation highlights the continuity of political processes in Russia as well as it challenges the reduction of Russia's foreign policy choices to geopolitics and/or the absence of democracy in the literature (Leichtova, 2014; Lo, 2003).

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis focuses on the securitisation of the terrorist threat by the Kremlin domestically, regionally, and internationally, in order to make conclusions about how Russia uses the terrorist threat in its domestic and foreign policy and Russia's reappearance as a superpower. This research sets out to address a gradual regime consolidation that became possible due to the securitisation of the terrorist threat that the Kremlin started in 1999 and continues to implement in 2019. In addition, it addresses the societal changes that Russian society and some other post-Soviet countries, as well as the international community to some extent, faced as the result of the securitisation of the terrorist threat.

This dissertation progresses in seven chapters. In Chapter 2 I discuss the literature devoted to Russian foreign policy analysis in general and how terrorism and security are presented in the field in particular. The literature reviewed belong to both English and Russian speaking scholarship, thus this literature review does not represent a particular "Western" or "Russian" approach to Russian foreign policy analysis, it is more of a fusion between the two. I do not intend to compare and/or contrast either, as neither literature has a prevalence in my analysis, both sets of literature are drawn upon in this research. The literature review addresses questions of Russia's domestic and foreign policy development, security and terrorism in Russian foreign policy, as well as the role of society in foreign policy formation. Discussing counterterrorism in Russian foreign policy literature, I note the persistent juxtaposition between Moscow and the West, and how this trend became formative in Russian foreign policy analysis. I argue that the literature on Russian foreign policy lacks focus on the Russian public's agency in foreign policy formation. In addition, Chapter 2 discusses the lack of securitisation theory application for Russian foreign policy analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing some shortcomings that have been identified during the literature analysis.

In Chapter 3 I present the framework for analysis used in this research, namely securitisation theory, its origin, processes, implications, and critique. The constructivist approach, which securitisation theory is part of, sees security as a social construct, thus Chapter 3 investigates how seeing security as a social construct would change how we see the world, and what it means for the analysis of security and the terrorist threat. Chapter 3 states the case of securitisation theory's uniqueness and applicability to the analysis of the terrorist threat in order to make conclusions regarding foreign policy formation. The chapter discusses the securitisation process in detail, particularly securitisation theory's main constituent parts such as securitising actors, referent objects, and audiences. I emphasise how the analysis of society's participation (audiences) in politics can help us to learn more about political channels and power consolidation processes. The chapter proceeds by discussing the main critiques aimed at the Copenhagen School, and addresses how this critique can help us to improve securitisation analysis.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 follow a similar structure, including three integral parts: a discussion of a securitisation audience, an analysis of the process of staging the terrorist threat, and the results of securitisation at the domestic, regional, and international levels respectively. Chapter 4 is devoted to the question of the Chechen resistance and its paramount importance for the securitisation of the terrorist threat in Russia. Russian domestic policy regarding the terrorism threat is analysed, with close attention to the moment when the threat of terrorism started to gain importance in post-Soviet Russia. The chapter elaborates on the Chechen-Russian wars as the starting point of the terrorist threat transformation from a politicised issue to a security concern. It was the time when the Kremlin had started to use the terrorist threat to shape Russian society and their perceptions of the terrorist threat. In this chapter I start the discussion of emergence and the following evolution of the terrorist threat in Russian politics, and, consequently, how the counterterrorism agenda became a foundation for Russian politics. The chapter highlights the formative years of Russian counterterrorism from the securitisation theory perspective. A short overview of the main historical events and cultural peculiarities that contributed to the securitisation of the terrorist threat in Russia, as well as the analysis of these events from the securitisation perspective are presented. The chapter discusses the 1999 apartment bombings, the Nord Ost Hostage Crisis (2002), and the Beslan Massacre (2004) in order to show how the threat of terrorism has been securitised on the domestic level in Russia. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion of legal and societal changes that are indicative of the successful securitisation of the terrorist threat at the domestic level. These changes have significantly affected the Russian public, especially the way in which non-governmental organisations and the media are treated by the Kremlin. This part reflects on the societal aspect of securitisation analysis, showing the changes Russian society faced as the result of the Kremlin's promoting its counterterrorism agenda. To illustrate these changes, the laws on "foreign agents" and "undesirable organisations" are discussed.

Chapter 5 brings the terrorist threat securitisation discussion to the regional level. The regional level is examined in the framework of Russia's near abroad, the space that Russia sees as its natural sphere of interest in the post-Soviet world (Nation, 2007). Chapter 5 discusses Eurasia as a space that the Kremlin prioritises in its foreign policy, and analyses main concepts that influenced our understanding of Russia's position in Eurasia. The concepts of Eurasianism and the unity of the Russian World are discussed in order to show how the Kremlin altered securitisation rhetoric to fit the regional profile. Chapter 5 assesses how the terrorist threat had been presented to the Eurasian population. In addition, major regional security platforms are discussed: the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, as well as other regional cooperation initiatives as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. These organisations are seen as platforms for the Kremlin to deliver securitisation rhetoric, as a possible stage for the promotion of Russian counterterrorism agenda aimed at the extension of Russian influence. The chapter concludes with an analysis of legal changes that followed the regional securitisation and supports the arguments in favour of calling it a successful securitisation.

Chapter 6 analyses the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the international level and the consequences of such securitisation for Russia's domestic audience and the international image of Russia. This chapter address how the terrorist threat penetrated the international level of Russian politics, shaping Russia's political decisions abroad. It is also argued that the power projection based on the terrorist threat securitisation at the international level has been of paramount importance to the domestic audience, which supported the Kremlin in its international endeavours. Chapter 6 is focused on the case of Syria in order to illustrate how the Kremlin utilises the terrorism threat for regime consolidation and gaining domestic and regional support for Moscow's counterterrorism activities. It is also argued that the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the international level allowed Russia to start the process of regaining international recognition by positioning itself as an important counterterrorism player. In addition, the chapter emphasises the persistence of the Chechen issue in Russian politics, showing the connection between the Chechen terrorist threat and the Syrian counterterrorism campaign. Chapter 6 also discusses the development of the

Kremlin’s securitisation expertise, emphasising sophisticated technologies and approaches that Moscow uses at the international level.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by summarising the discussion of the securitisation of the terrorism threat in Russia. Chapter 7 argues that the securitisation of the terrorist threat in Russia was successful on all three levels, domestic, regional, and international. Chapter 7 focuses on the summary of the thesis, reiterating the main points made in this thesis: the importance of the terrorist threat securitisation for Russia’s international recognition, the development of Moscow’s expertise in securitisation at the international level, and the normalisation of a fear of terrorism, which indicates successful securitisation of the terrorist threat at all levels of analysis. Furthermore, I discuss the implications of this thesis for future research and argue that an analysis of non-traditional threats within the framework of foreign policy can be beneficial for both practitioners and academics.

Chapter 2 Russia's Foreign Policy, Counterterrorism, and Security

This chapter provides an overview of the main developments in Russia's foreign policy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, focusing the discussion on the transition from the relatively liberal pro-western foreign policy of Yeltsin towards the formation of Putin's more independent and assertive foreign policy agenda. The importance of Putin's personality for Russian foreign policy formation is also considered, following by Russia's quest to gain international influence in to the context of the war on terror. I will present the terrorist threat's contribution to Russian foreign policy changes and accentuate how my project fits into the existing body of literature and aims to expand the horizons of Russian foreign policy analysis.

This chapter will proceed in two parts. Part one will examine developments in Russian foreign policy since 1991. It will highlight the most influential moments in the formation of Russia's foreign policy, the differences in the leadership styles of Yeltsin and Putin, and the domestic factors influencing foreign policy decisions that could not be disregarded in a foreign policy analysis, such as the importance of the media and society in foreign policy formation. Part one will finish with a discussion of securitisation of the terrorist threat in Russia and highlight the need for more research in this area.

Part two will look at how Russia's foreign policy is discussed in the existing literature, focusing on the ways scholars tend to analyse Russia's national interests. This part emphasises the insufficiency of one explanation over the other, as for example geopolitics can explain some Russian foreign policy's advances in modern times but not everything. This part also includes the debate of the uniqueness of "Russia's way", accentuating the body of literature that argues in favour of Russia's special path of development, and sometimes even seeing Russia as a separate civilisation. The Russian way of classifying international relations is presented to show the debate on the Westernizers, Statists, and Civilizationists, which is explained alongside the traditional western framework of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Extra attention is payed to the discussion of constructivism, as it provides the basic conceptualisation for this thesis.

This thesis takes securitisation theory as a tool to analyse Russian foreign policy, which allows us to avoid a dichotomy in Russian foreign policy literature: the juxtaposition between the alleged imperial ambitions of Russia and the West, the contrast between the old imperial world of military power and the new world of democracy and human rights, the opposites that have been dominating the literature for quite some time (Leichtova, 2014). Bacon et al. (2013) aptly sums it up: "It would be inaccurate and unhelpful to conclude that Russia is authoritarian, or that Russia is democratic, or indeed to start one's analysis from either assumption. Russia is somewhere in between; different areas of policy reflect different priorities" (p. 178). In addition, blaming the nature of the Russian regime for challenges Russia faces, and offering democracy as the solution to all problems, real and hypothetical, is a superficial way to analyse foreign policy (Leichtova, 2014; Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2010). Securitisation theory allows us to put aside the labelling of Russia as non-democratic/non-Western. Instead of focusing on what Russia is not, securitisation offers a way to analyse the Kremlin's political actions without slipping into a debate of whether or not Russia is on the way to democracy (Aldis & Herd, 2003; Bacon et al., 2013).

There are many ways to analyse Russian foreign policy and its foundations: a historical analysis, an analysis by presidents or an analysis by the relationships with international players, such as NATO or the EU, to name a few.[2] However, this chapter focuses on the main arguments that have been constant throughout modern Russian foreign policy analysis in relation to security and terrorism. My intent is to show the main trends that have been surrounding the discussion of Russian foreign policy and terrorism, primarily since

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[2] For an excellent analysis of Russian foreign policy by presidents see De Haas, M. (2010). *Russia's foreign security policy in the 21st century: Putin, Medvedev and beyond*. Routledge.

Putin came to power in 1999, and some of their shortcomings in response to modern research challenges. There are certain patterns that are evident in the analyses of Russian foreign policy. It is worth noting that these trends did not appear in 1999, as many of them had started during the Cold War period or earlier. Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Rieber (1993) calls these trends "persistent factors" that have been reoccurring and reshaping Russian (and Soviet before that) foreign policy for decades (p. 315). Russia against the West and democracy, the crisis of Russian identity, and/or the absence of coherency in the Kremlin's decision making – it is not an exhaustive list of Russian foreign policy trends by any means, but these themes persist in Russian foreign policy scholarship (Lynch, 2001).

Despite a significant amount of literature written on Russian foreign policy, the field remains preoccupied with a few major leitmotifs which leave little space for new ideas (Leichtova, 2014). It is not part of my task to gainsay the importance of that body of scholarship but rather to point out that their repetitiveness and conventionalism might get in the way of welcoming new thinking to the field. There is a need for new ideas and different theoretical approaches, of course without a complete abandonment of the existing scholarship but with the intent to question mainstream thinking.

2.1 Russian Foreign Policy

A new chapter of Russian history started in 1991, following a turbulent year of the August coup, which was an attempt to overthrow Gorbachev's rule and oppose his reforms. The coup was unsuccessful and Gorbachev returned to his post; at the same time Boris Yeltsin improved his political position on the wave of civil resistance that opposed the coup in Moscow (Roberts & Ash, 2009). However, the coup was not the only sign of discontent within the union, as Soviet republics were dissatisfied with the Kremlin's political and economic decisions (Rieber, 1993). As the result of this continuous dissatisfaction, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine signed the Belovezha Accords on the 8th of December, agreeing to end the Soviet Union. The signing of the Belovezha Accords was rather contradictory: only three countries out of twelve signed it (the Baltic republics had left in August 1991), thus three countries made a vital political decision for nine remaining republics. On the 21st of December 1991, the remaining countries (excluding Georgia) joined Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine in the desire to become independent and signed the Alma-Ata Protocol, stating their aspiration for a democratic future within a newly formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ("*Deklaracija Soveta Respublik Verhovnogo Soveta SSSR v svjazi s sozdaniem Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyh Gosudarstv*" 1991). At the same time Mikhail Gorbachev left office and Boris Yeltsin became the first president of the newly formed Russian Federation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union was a drastic change in international politics, and now both Russia and former Soviet republics needed to navigate the world of global politics on their own.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia faced a difficult time, both politically and economically, which affected the formation and implementation of foreign policy (Jackson, 2003). Russia inherited not only important political assets, such as a seat at the United Nations Security Council and the nuclear arsenal, but also various political and security problems, such as constant separatist challenges coming from the North Caucasus, and especially Chechnya, which added a great degree of instability to the transition period. The domestic situation in Russia was also far from ideal: the consequences of the command economy's collapse, such as numerous industrial complications caused by the new borders, or the need to have a separate currency, required the Kremlin's undivided attention. Immediate separation with the former Soviet republics was not possible for Russia, as the countries became so interconnected, especially in the economic sector, that the parting was indeed unmanageable in a short period of time (Nygren, 2007). At the same time Russia did not have enough resources to continue to exercise its power over former Soviet republics, or so called Russia's "near abroad" (Buckley, 2002; Jackson, 2003). It was the time for major changes: after the collapse of the USSR Russia underwent a stage of denying the remnants of Soviet foreign policy and started to define new priorities (De Nevers, 1994; Ivanov, 2001a, 2001b). The same generation of politicians, who were born and raised in the Soviet Union, faced the need to readjust their political ambitions to a new reality where Russia was no longer a large union, and possibly not a great power anymore. Jackson (2003) argues that Russia did not inherit the Soviet Union's position as superpower. It was a challenge for Russian political circles to find a way to balance the ambitions of greatness with the humiliation of the breakdown of the Soviet Union (Buckley, 2002). An attempted constitutional reform at home also saw complications: Yeltsin wanted more powers granted to the president, whilst the parliament disagreed on the matter. This standoff resulted in the 1993 siege of the parliament, after which Yeltsin, with the support of Russian military leadership, had an opportunity to expand presidential powers in the new constitution (Mankoff, 2009; Robertson, 2019). Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was preoccupied with domestic affairs. Incapable of both retaining the feeling of greatness internationally and solving domestic problems, the Kremlin was engaged in finding the balance between foreign and domestic policy. However, proposals that rendered Russia as an ordinary (as opposed to a superpower) international player did not find support in Russia's political circles at the time. For example, Foreign Minister Kozyrev's proposal of liberal economic reforms to become a reliable partner for the West did not result in any enthusiasm from the Kremlin and Russia's political circles (Aven & Koch, 2011; Rumer, 2007). Undeniably, Russia's foreign policy needed to reflect the changes demanded by the new world order but the domestic situation remained volatile.

Russia's independent foreign policy after the USSR's dissolution had been exaggerated as explicitly non-Soviet. The first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, made every effort to portray Russia as a new international player, distinct from the USSR but the one that retained the greatness of the Soviet Union despite losing territories and population (Bogaturov, 2017a; Rumer, 2007). Yeltsin might have been seen as a tottering and irrational international speaker but he symbolised the change that intended to distinguish him from previous Soviet leaders, thus reshaping the impression Russia was making at the international level. Russia’s foreign policy during Yeltsin’s period went through a process of searching for a new international identity, as Yeltsin appeared as a more easy-going, approachable leader who could joke with Western leaders as an equal. In the years that followed, Russia’s foreign policy would be guided by the quest for international recognition; the Kremlin would demand respect and acknowledgement from international leaders, as if Russia had inherited it from the Soviet Union (Forsberg, Heller, & Wolf, 2014). During his term, Yeltsin’s belief that Russia and the West could pursue similar goals and common interests in global politics marked the beginning of Russia’s pro-West foreign policy (Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012). For Russia, this meant a departure from the impartial, uptight, and ideology-based Soviet diplomacy and the movement towards a new open and perhaps a more democratic approach (Bogaturov, 2017a).

Shortly after the pro-Western turn in Russia’s foreign policy, Moscow had started to realise that Russia’s international interests would not necessarily line up with the West’s ambitions, especially on major international matters; instead, their opinions on how international diplomacy should be conducted might be quite contradictory (Mankoff, 2009). The conflicts in Yugoslavia in 1990s and the following Kosovo crisis showed that the West would not yield their international ambitions in the space that Russia considered a priority; on the contrary, Russia would need to find a way to either reconcile or challenge the Western ambitions in some way (McNabb, 2016; Oldberg, 2011). This period in Russian foreign policy is characterised by the rise of pragmatism, with Vladimir Putin appearing in 1999 as the personification of such approach. Russia's new leader was different from Yeltsin, although he followed Yeltsin's method of opposing the preceding leader's policy in order to forge his own. Unlike Yeltsin, Putin presented himself to the public as a leader who is guided by not his emotions but the duty to serve his country. During Yeltsin's time in office Russia had seen widespread corruption, as well as economic and social problems, and the ascension of Putin to the highest political position in Russia was initially seen as a positive change (Nau, 2012). If Yeltsin's rhetoric was based on the great power assumptions, Putin took the course for a more pragmatic foreign policy (Gaddy & Kuchins, 2008). From his appearance in the Russian political arena in the wake of the First Chechen War, to March 2018 when he was re-elected for his fourth term, Putin kept researchers questioning his personality and political life alike. Some scholars connect his political ascension to a potential revival of the Russian Empire in modern times and imply the need for a leader that would rule the empire, someone with a "strong hand", someone capable of bringing Russia back to its glory (Myers, 2015; Neumann, 2015; Sakwa, 2004). Some call such personification of Russian politics a natural part of Russian mentality, an ingrained desire to see a strong hand, a monarch of sorts (Abdullaev & Saradzhyan, 2006; Blank, 2008; Roberts, 2017; V. Shlapentokh, 2009). Putin as a personification of Russia's hopes and dreams, and his strong political personality drastically differs from one of Yeltsin, who sometimes was considered to be an absurd, internationally embarrassing politician and was associated with the failure of the late Soviet leadership style (Sakwa, 2004). Some research tries to find all the answers in Putin's KGB past and for example is critical of the absence of standard of living improvement in Russia, arguing that Putin has intentionally prevented the Russian population from a better economic life to keep the existing political order (Gessen, 2012; Politkovskaya, 2007).[3] Yet, despite the difference of opinions, there is an implicit understanding of the importance of Putin for Russian politics combined with the intriguing stability of his approval ratings.

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[3] KGB (*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti*), in English Committee for State Security, was the main security agency for the Soviet Union.

Many authors are fascinated with Putin's persona and partially explain the Kremlin's positions and Russia's goals by it. The question "Who is Mr Putin?" has guided a lot of writing about Russia's current political set up and future foreign policy goals (Dawisha, 2014; Gessen, 2012, 2017; Hill & Gaddy, 2015; Myers, 2015; Sakwa, 2004; Stuermer, 2008; White, 2006). From the beginning of his presidency, Putin showed himself to be a man of action. He charted a new, more assertive and confrontational course for Russian foreign policy (Lo, 2003; Tsygankov, 2010b). Putin has been known for proclaiming independent foreign policy. In 2000, in his address to the Federal Assembly, he stated: "the foundation of this policy [foreign policy] is pragmatism, economic effectiveness, and the priority of national tasks" (The Kremlin Transcripts, 2000). The praise or denigration of Putin as the most important man in Russia's politics sometimes reaches the grotesque level. Dugin (2012), an open representative of Russia's right-wing political circles, argues that Putin's personality was exactly what won over the electorate during his first elections. He believes in Putin's resilient character, and argues that the fear Putin created in the country was the key to his political success, hence Putin is a strong leader, a "tsar", who presumably should possess significant strengths and unique knowledge (Dugin, 2012). Currently, Putin is believed to be a political figure that could be considered a "new tsar" (Blank, 2010; Myers, 2015; Gessen, 2017). The importance of a leader's personality undeniably matters, but at the end it is the system that prevails (Baev, 2004; Lynch, 2016). This is why Roberts (2017) highlights that the traditional Russian foreign policy analysis, purely focused on geopolitical motives of Russia, is omitting the importance of identity politics under Putin. Bacon et al. (2013) argue that instead of asking the question "what is Putin like" (p. 10), we should focus on what the regime is doing, on its policy advances. As Wegren and Herspring (2010) argue, "Putin as president was distinctly non-ideological" (p. 293), emphasising the deficiency of any clear understanding of who Vladimir Putin is, especially his mysterious past in the secret service (KGB). Undeniably, the appearance of Vladimir Putin on Russia's political stage was an interesting change in Russia's political life, even if it was not recognised as such at the time. However, it was not the only factor influencing Russian foreign policy formation.

Russia's assertive foreign policy in the near abroad shows that Russian foreign policy had a significant dimension of anti-Western tendencies, whether they are aimed at tackling the political or economic involvement of Western political actors in Russia's near abroad or counteracting Russia's influence on the international arena. Spechler (2010) argues that Russian foreign policy often confronts the Western "democratisation" approach, and as a result Russia started to defend regimes and leaders who were outspokenly against regime change as the solution for all problems. Thus, the Kremlin promotes an assertive foreign policy agenda with military solutions and makes friends with the regimes that support this worldview, like the Assad's regime in Syria (Tsygankov, 2010b). The resurgence of Russia in 2003-2008, before the economic crisis of 2008 that hit Russia hard, fuelled Moscow's feeling of greatness and was reflected in the foreign policy agenda, which became more confident and less compromising (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014). The peak of this foreign policy thinking can be seen in Putin's assertive speech at the Werkunde Security Conference in Munich in 2007, especially in the part where he rejects the possibility of a unipolar world:

> However, what is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it refers to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within. And this certainly has nothing in common with democracy. Because, as you know, democracy is the power of the majority in light of the interests and opinions of the minority. Incidentally, Russia – we – are constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those

> who teach us do not want to learn themselves. I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world. (Putin, 2007)

As it can be seen from the speech, Putin insisted on the impossibility of a democratic unipolar world, calling out the US for using double standards and not following through with the democratic agenda. Putin's speech at the conference was emblematic of Russia challenging the US on the international arena (Gaddy & Kuchins, 2008). In 2008, Dmitry Medvedev, Putin's elected replacement, appointed Putin as his Prime Minister, however the Putin/Medvedev tandem continued to implement the same approach to Russian foreign policy: Putin's approach (McNabb, 2016). Levada Center's poll has been asking the question "In whose hands is the real power in the country?" from December 2007 to May 2011, and the best ranking Medvedev received was 22% of respondents thinking he was in charge, the number that plummeted to only 11% after the 2008 Russo-Georgian War (Levada Center, 2011). According to the poll, around 30% of responded believed the power was in Putin's hands, and approximately half of the respondents assumed that the power was shared between Putin and Medvedev. Medvedev's presidency has therefore largely been analysed taking Putin into account (McNabb, 2016; Treisman, 2012).

Some researchers suggest that such an anti-West coalition might be the result of Russia's uncertainty in its own capabilities to be a great power on its own (Lo, 2003; Sakwa, 1996). As Neumann (2015) notes, great powers are not those who learn, they are those "from which *others* learn" (p. 5, emphasis in original). Hence, Russia's own path to future international leadership may include building a coalition of states. Some suggest that Putin's regime is afraid of pro-Western domestic unrest and consequent possibilities for colour revolutions (Allison, 2006, 2013; Baev, 2013; Blank, 2012; Hlosek, 2006; V. Shlapentokh, 2009; Stuermer, 2008). Quite often modern Russian foreign policy is referred to as looking back to the 1920s foreign policy style, with aggressive anti-West foreign policy and extreme self-reliance (Lynch, 2001; Sakwa, 2004; V. Shlapentokh, 2009). For example, De Nevers

(1994) argues that Russia was disheartened by the Western attitude towards it after the USSR disintegrated, and Moscow got an impression that Russia must rely on its own resources. As the result, Russian foreign policy has a significant anti-Western agenda as part of Russia's vision of itself as a great power, although scholars often disagree on how big this agenda is ("Russia and Eurasia", 2015; Stuermer, 2008).

Therefore, in terms of Russia's relations with other international actors, these relations are based on a juxtaposition of Russian and other political players, such as the US, the European Union, or NATO. Russia is seen as a reactive player, responding to others' political moves and quite often lacking a proactive stance in modern affairs (Åtland & Pedersen, 2008; Bacon, 2015; Lo, 2015). Many politicians and academics overlooked Russia's intentions to claim back the superpower status, not expecting Russia to act on its promises (Onuch, 2016). However, the desire to be recognised as a superpower that is equal to the US or the European Union and the need to be the leader in the post-Soviet space are the two objectives that have consistently shaped Russia's foreign policy. The fear of being a lesser international player than the United States has guided a significant part of Russia's foreign policy over these years, and this can be seen in Russia's intolerance for regime change and NATO's enlargement in the areas that are important for Russia (McNabb, 2016). This clash of interests resulted in the international standoff following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Syrian campaign.

Several theories have been proposed to analyse Russian foreign policy priorities, some focusing on regional developments, others on the international agenda. Russian foreign policy literature presents us with a few ways to explain Russia's foreign policy priorities. Some suggest that Russia's regional 'sphere of influence' is vital in terms of protection and power projection, pointing to the core of Russian foreign policy which is in Russia's desire to protect its area of interest, or "periphery" (Lo, 2003; Rumer, 2007; Sergounin, 2003; White, 2006). However, Russia's "periphery" has been differently presented in the literature, it varies from post-Soviet countries to Russian-speaking people. One explanation is that geopolitics is the best way to describe Russia's desire to exercise power and control on post-Soviet space; geopolitical motives are indeed very much alive in Russian foreign policy, despite Russia's attempts to diversify its approaches (Astrov & Morozova, 2012; Blank, 2016; Konnander, 2006; Lo, 2003; Mouritzen & Wivel, 2012; Nygren, 2006). Mouritzen and Wivel (2012) use the example of the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 to show the hesitancy of the United States (US) to interfere in Georgia precisely due to its distance from America and its proximity to Russia. Georgia is part of Russia's "periphery", and therefore Russia would be inclined to react protectively to any Western influence in this area (Mouritzen & Wivel, 2012). Thus, the geopolitical analysis of Russian foreign policy shows not only Russia's prevalence in its near abroad but also the reluctance of foreign powers to interfere with Russia's affairs in Russia's "extended territory" (Lee, 2010).

However, geopolitics alone cannot fully explain developments in Russian foreign policy agenda. The connection between geopolitics and modern Russia is not transparent, as there is an arising debate regarding the weakening of Russia's geopolitical strategies in Putin's time (Nygren, 2006; Sakwa, 2004). Putin is seen as a pragmatic and flexible leader who can achieve foreign policy goals without following only a geopolitical course (Ivanov, 2001a; Jackson, 2003; Lo, 2003; Rykhtik, 2012; Sakwa, 2004; Tsygankov, 2005, 2010b). Some experts point out the importance of national interest protection in Russian foreign policy (Ivanov, 2001b; S. Kortunov, 2005; Lynch, 2001; Sakwa, 1996; Tsygankov, 2010b). As Ivanov (2001b) argues, "[Russia's] foreign policy should be based on national interests rather than political ideology" (p. 8). Researchers note that national interest is the only factor that matters to Russia and such prioritisation finds its way into foreign policy formation (Sakwa, 2004; Stuermer, 2008). However, more recent studies reflect on a change in how

Russia is framing its pursuit of national interests. Some scholars note that Russia is moving away from being subjugated by past experiences towards a more pragmatic, action based foreign policy (Campana & Légaré, 2010; Galeotti, 2010; Simons, 2014; Tsygankov, 2010b, 2012). Hence, pragmatism more than imperial ambitions is said to guide Russian foreign policy. De Nevers (1994) notes that if Russia choses a rigid approach to pursuing its national interest, it might significantly restrict its future opportunities for a more moderate foreign policy agenda.

However, as Sakwa (2004) highlights, national interests need to be strongly promoted at the international level, thus Russia's foreign policy can be better understood from the position of power. The predictability of Russian foreign policy was challenged by the annexation of Crimea, as the transparency of it is in question in the situation in Eastern Ukraine. Nonetheless, as Lo (2015) argues, the main international problem for Russia is not one of crisis, but a long slow decline, stagnation, and Russia's irrelevance in the international arena. Thus, Russia needs to adapt to a new pace of life, to the changes that modern affairs require, and imperial thinking as well as geopolitics alone will not give the Kremlin enough speed and space for manoeuvres. As Leichtova (2014) argues, "[Russian Federation's] size, its power and weakness, its international significance and insignificance all unite to form a unique ensemble that can hardly be grasped by traditional analytical tools" (p. 1). There is a need for new thinking and new solutions.

2.1.1 When domestic politics meets the foreign policy agenda: the media and the public in Russia

In the modern interconnected world, it is often difficult to draw a clear line between domestic and foreign policy. Frequently, there is no fixed division into domestic and international politics, as something perceived as domestic by one actor might be an international agenda for another (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). For example, in the case of Chechnya, which wants to become independent from Russia, Moscow sees it as a domestic issue, denying the Chechen's claim for independence as the Kremlin is adamant in considering Chechnya as a part of Russia (Kogan-Yasny, 1995). Chechens, on the contrary, see the conflict between Chechnya and Russia as an international issue, because they believe it is their right to declare independence if they so desire. Thus, the same issue can be a concern for both domestic and foreign policy. The difference between the two is usually defined in the framework of internal/external dimensions of policy, although the boundaries between them are becoming more and more translucent (Buzan et al., 1998; Nau, 2012). Domestic factors, such as society, ideology, and bureaucracy, undeniably influence foreign policy, and foreign policy decisions impact domestic policies (Neto & Malamud, 2015).

The main two domestic groups that are paramount for an analysis of any securitisation processes in Russia are the public and the media (Bacon, Cooper, & Renz, 2013). However, if most of Russian foreign policy literature somewhat recognises the importance of the media, the role of the public in the formation of the security dimension of foreign policy is often neglected. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced many economic and political challenges within its borders: corruption, organised crime, economic decline, the absence of democratic institutions, to name a few (Gessen, 2017). The period of the 1990s might have been the most difficult in the history of modern Russia (Bogaturov, 2017b). The problems Russia faced at the domestic level inevitably influenced its foreign policy. For example, a few Russian groups consolidated their efforts to amass political influence. There are believed to be a few groups and/or individuals who are responsible for the creation of Russian foreign policy such as security forces, oligarchs, politicians. The oligarchs, the richest people in Russia, who were mainly involved in the natural resources industries such as oil, gas, and precious metals mining, represented one domestic group that the Kremlin could not disregard due to their financial influence (Dawisha, 2014). Another group, comprised of Russian businessmen, formed an alliance called Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP, or *Rossiyskiy Soyuz Promyshlennikov I Predprinimateley*), which would accumulate enough political power to advise the President, thus acquiring an opportunity to influence Russia’s foreign policy (Bogaturov, 2017b).

However, the existing literature creates an image of an absence of ordinary people in the picture (Dawisha, 2014; Gessen, 2012; Rykhtik, 2012). Galeotti (2010) argues that Russian public opinion presented to the government and international observers might be fabricated, although it is not a sufficient reason for the exclusion of the Russian public from foreign policy analysis. Rykhtik (2012) argues that Russian foreign policy is essentially different from the US approach, because Moscow does not need public support to justify the use of force due to the absence of proper checks and balances in Russia’s political setup. There are a few exceptions to the case, for example Simons (2014), who argues that soft power is important in Russian foreign policy and emphasises that the outcome of any foreign policy would be more visible if the domestic public supports the course Russia has taken. Neumann (2015) approaches the question with more consistency, arguing that Russia does not have a communication link between the state and the population. Some scholars deny the Russian population agency in foreign policy formation, for example Wegren and Herspring (2010), who argue that “the Russian population is patient and unlikely to revolt” (p. 302). The question of public participation in foreign policy agenda formation is often overlooked and/or underdeveloped in the Russian foreign policy literature.

Interestingly, at the same time Russian foreign policy is often described in terms of some domestic tendencies affecting foreign policy thinking (Leichtova, 2014). Thus, Russian society would find itself in limbo – summoned when needed to show domestic tendencies but denied a proactive position in foreign policy making. For example, Politkovskaya (2007) argues that Russian society has no say in the political life of Russia because the social inertia and apathy were the reasons for the appearance of a leader like Putin which made the oppression of political opposition in Russia possible. Thus, Russian society is seen as both having and lacking agency in the current political context and its consequent analysis, which causes confusion and unnecessary clouding of foreign policy analysis.

However, modern technological advances influence international politics. This can be seen in several political events that would have been impossible without the media. The allegations of Russian government interference in the 2016 US presidential elections with the goal of boosting Donald Trump's candidacy caused an official investigation by the Former Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Director Robert Mueller, who headed the Special Counsel investigation into the matter. The examples of Donald Trump, conducting foreign policy activity via Twitter, or the case of Cambridge Analytica, a British political consulting firm that mined Facebook data for business purposes instead of academic research, call for a deeper understanding of new links between people and governments. In Russia, the media has always been an important aspect of politics and it the government-media relations have not stopped developing over the years (Simons, 2010). For example, Russia's television channel, Russia Today (RT), that started as a domestic channel but evolved into a tool of the Kremlin's foreign policy when its English-language branch was launched in 2005. Since then, RT became an important outlet for the dissemination of the Kremlin's position on domestic and international matters, especially for the audience that does not speak Russian (Nau, 2012).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the history of development of the Russian media follows the pattern of the foreign policy agenda's advance. The golden days of Russian journalism during Yeltsin's time, when the media enjoyed freedom and a low level of censorship did not last and the media had to change following Putin's authoritative changes in Russia (Simons, 2010). Russia's television network was the first to succumb to the new assertive changes in Russia, slowly becoming the main medium of government-public communication (Simons, 2010). During Putin’s first and second terms in the office, the Russian media would see significant changes: the reassertion of state control and increased censorship. The 2000 Doctrine of Information Security drafted by the Security Council headed by Sergey Ivanov, a known Putin ally, entrusted the Kremlin with the power over the Russian media (“Information Security Doctrine of the Russian Federation,” 2000). Even if the doctrine was not legally binding, it started the Kremlin’s assault on free media. Over the years, Putin’s regime would subjugate oligarchs who owned major shares in the Russian media, force journalists to quit, and re-establish government control over the main media outlets (Skillen, 2016). The media would see increased restrictions in reporting the crisis in Chechnya and a number of the deaths of journalists who were critical of the government. The deaths of Dmitry Kholodov, who wrote about the corruption in the Russian Army and died from an explosion caused by a booby-trapped briefcase in 1994, or Anna Politkovskaya, who devoted her life to journalism and human rights activism, and was actively criticising the Kremlin for the Chechen conflict and was shot dead in 2006, were symbolic of Moscow’s understanding of the importance of the media and simultaneously showed the fear of the media’s powers. Thus, the media possesses significant capability to influence politics, on both domestic and international level, essentially bridging the gap between internal and external aspects of modern politics. As I will show in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the Russian media was not only actively engaged in the securitisation processes in Russia and abroad, but was also changed as the result of it. Unfortunately, securitisation processes resulted in a higher degree of restriction of the Russian media (Bacon et al., 2013). Undeniably, some authors recognise the need for an inclusion of social factors into Russian foreign policy analysis, but it still mostly remains on the fringe of national security interest discussions (Bacon, 2015; Clunan, 2009; Simons, 2010; Tsygankov, 2014). One of the goals of this thesis is to highlight the importance of the public's participation in foreign policy making and consequently, to contribute to the body of literature on the matter.

2.1.2 Securitisation of terrorism in Russia: an uncharted territory

The application of securitisation theory in Russia has been rather limited. There is some literature on securitisation and security in Russia (Åtland & Pedersen, 2008; Bacon et al., 2013; Blank, 2010), but the securitisation of terrorism remains under-researched. There has been, of course, some research done on securitisation in Russian domestic politics, particularly a book by Bacon, Renz, and Cooper (2013), *Securitising Russia: the domestic politics of Putin*. The book is devoted to the securitisation analysis of domestic policies in different sectors, such as civil society, migration, and the economic sector, among others. Bacon et al. (2013) specifically limit the scope of their research to domestic policies in Putin's Russia, thus greatly expanding our understanding of securitisation process within the country. These authors provided a brilliant account of securitisation theory application in Russia's context, and are the inspiration for future researchers in the field. My thesis aims to add to this body of literature, contributing a securitisation analysis of the terrorist threat and its consequences for Russian foreign policy to the emerging body of literature on the application of securitisation theory in the Russian context.

Blank (2010) emphasises that securitisation processes in Putin's Russia are large in scope and have penetrated different spheres of politics. Elaborating on "Russia's unending quest for security" (p. 171), Blank emphasises that the Putin regime sees security as a process, not an ultimate goal, which goes hand in hand with the conclusion of this thesis. Åtland and Pedersen (2008) conclude that Russia's securitisation actors, influential politicians that grew up in the Soviet system, are inclined to continue to use their Soviet mindset to deal with Russia's modern security challenges. These politicians are more likely to see security situations in the framework of antagonism between Russia and the West.

Fedor (2011) notes an interesting development in how spirituality in Russia becomes more militarised and calls it "securitizing the Russian soul" (p. 160), emphasising the overarching importance of security in Russia's life. All abovementioned authors highlight that securitisation audiences formed from the Russian public and political elites react to the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric rather favourably, supporting a more authoritarian approach to politics. As Leichtova (2014) emphasises, the constructivist approach to Russian foreign policy analysis, which securitisation theory is part of, is a promising departure from mainstream analyses that represent the more traditional approaches to Russian foreign policy formation analysis. This thesis aspires to add to a non-traditional, constructivist analysis of Russian foreign policy literature.

2.2 Main Trends in Russian Foreign Policy Literature

The academic debate on Russia's foreign policy has been, and still is, multifaceted and complex. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many scholars have sought answers to various questions about why Russia acts the way it does. Does it want to revive the Soviet Union and unite the Eurasian countries again? Does it want a war with the West? Does it want to go back to a monarchy? The concept of foreign policy and its formation have been analysed through various prisms, from the Soviet ideology of Marxism and Leninism to the contemporary Western approaches. The question of Russia's foreign policy formation remains paramount for both academics and practitioners alike, introducing diverse opinions to the debate (Forsberg et al., 2014; Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012). The Western classification of the leading International Relations schools into realism, liberalism, and critical theory or the constructivist approach applies to Russia; however, there are a few schools of thought that evolved in Russia and might have a somewhat ambiguous position in the Western classification (Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2010). Nonetheless, they help to understand Russia's foreign policy formation like no others. These schools of thought are Westernizers, Statists, and Civilizationists. This classification is based on the discussions of how Russia sees itself and the other/rest of the world, which allows us to understand academic debates on Russia's foreign policy better. Westernizers, as can be derived from the name, are pro-West. They consider Russia to be a Western nation and put emphasis on cultural, political, and historical similarities between the two (Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2004, 2010). The Westernizers can be seen as Russia's liberals, advocating for accepting the Western way of conducting diplomacy and supporting the idea that Russia belongs to the West. Boris Yeltsin and his Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev were distinguished representatives of the Westernizers, although liberal reforms proposed by Kozyrev were ahead of his time (Rumer, 2007). The Westernizers approach was particularly on the rise during Yeltsin's time in the office in 1991-1999 and in the aftermath of the 9/11, the moments in Russia's history when hopes for improved relationships with the West, and especially the US, were high.

The next group, the Statists, believe that the state's ability to conduct independent domestic and foreign policy, as well as to support law and order, is essential for a strong state (Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2010). The Statists put much emphasis on the state's independent abilities and can be seen as Russian realists (Shakleyina & Bogaturov, 2004). After Russian foreign policy scholarship made a turn after the USSR's dissolution, so-called 'new imperialist' thinking emerged, which was a way to explain Russia's alleged attempts to reconcile the ambitions of greatness with a practical approach to foreign policy. Constant comparisons of Russia to the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire can be referenced to the "new imperialism" idea, highlighting that Russian foreign policy is aimed at the revival of Russia as a new empire (McNabb, 2016; Rumer, 2007). It is not uncommon among scholars to refer to both modern Russia and the USSR as empires. For example, Sakwa (1996) aptly notes that "Russia became the successor not only to the Soviet state, but also to the Russian empire" (p. 303). Buckley (2002) calls the USSR "the Soviet empire" (p. 42), McNabb

(2016) refers to modern Russia as “the rebirth of the Soviet Empire” (p. 3), emphasising the continuity of imperial thinking throughout Russian foreign policy. This ‘new imperialism’ argument accentuates Russia’s assumed desire to expand its territories, project power, and exercise authority over obedient countries under its protection.[4] In the 21st century, the Statists connect the imperialist argument to Russia’s craving to increase its international and regional influence to acquiring new territories, often by military means. Russian foreign policy literature focusing on Russia’s imperial ambitions made a resurgence after the annexation of Crimea (McNabb, 2016). In the framework of Crimea annexation’s discussion, Allison (2014) also calls such thinking neo-imperial, emphasising the continuity of Russia’s imperial ambitions, but noting that the new imperial idea has changed during Russia’s modern history in order to answer the contemporary challenges Russia faces. Rumer (2007) calls modern Russia post-imperial, focusing on the persistence of imperial ambitions but on a diminishing scale. Many experts argue that Russia continues to dream of the restoration of an empire which would help to fight off possible threats and to revive Russia’s imperial might and international recognition, and the annexation of Crimea can serve as an example of this type of foreign policy (Herspring & Rutland, 2005; Jackson, 2003; McNabb, 2016; Ragsdale & Ponomarev, 1993; Roberts, 2017; Stent, 2016). Statism neither sees duality as an essential characteristic of international politics nor argues in favour of solving conflicts predominantly by military means. The Statists suggest that the Russian idea is based on a vision of a strong, independent, internationally respected state; thus, Russia’s foreign policy should pursue these goals.

Critical theory, or constructivism, can be seen in the academic debate on the matters of Russia’s identity politics, civil society, and political perceptions. Constructivism offers us a way of incorporating values and perceptions into analysis, thus expanding our understanding of foreign policy formation and implementation, helping an observer to better understand internal and external political processes in a given country (Buzan et al., 1998; Hopf, 1998; Katzenstein, 1996; Lapid, Kratochwil, & others, 1996). Focusing on intersubjective social context and the way it takes shape and influences politics, constructivism offers valuable insight into the formation of Russia's foreign policy (Hopf, 1998). Constructivism has been less popular than, for example, realism, in the analysis of Russian foreign policy, but it has great potential to expand our understanding of Russia's foreign policy formation. Constructivism is especially insightful in the case of Russia because it allows us to incorporate people's ideas and perceptions into the analysis. For decades, Russia has been particularly concerned with its international image, striving to be seen as a superpower after the collapse of the USSR (Gaddy & Kuchins, 2008). Constructivism helps us to bridge the gap between the realist part of Russian foreign policy, such as military spending or economic ties, and a more ephemeral part of foreign policy, namely the desire to be internationally recognised as a superpower. Thus, constructivism offers a way to look at Russia's foreign policy that incorporates both existing political structures and the world of ideas and perceptions (Alekseyeva, 2007). The constructivist approach in general, and securitisation theory in particular, allow us to have a coherent, holistic, rigorous analysis of Russian policies without falling into an overly subjective point of view (Bacon et al., 2013; Leichtova, 2014). In the Russian classification of IR, constructivists are represented by a group of thinkers called the Civilizationists. The Civilizationists reflect on the notion of Russia's unique position in the world, reinstating that Russia has its individual fate and an exclusive place in the world. (Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2004, 2010). One of the latest most remarkable examples of placing the right for Russia's domination in the world can be illustrated by the Eurasianism idea advanced by Alexander Dugin. Alexander Dugin, an ultra-right-wing political figure in Russia, argues for Eurasianism to be the main goal for Russian foreign policy (Dugin, 2012; Shlapentokh, 2007; Umland, 2009). He believes Russia should focus its attention in Eurasia, Russia's natural sphere of security interest, and firmly confront any enlargement attempts of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), as well as any Western efforts to expose Eurasia to democratic principles and Western values. Places such as Eurasia, the Balkans, and the Baltic states should be strongly protected, which would be an inevitable problem for a NATO presence in these areas. Dugin's Eurasianism is an example of the literature focusing on Russia's 'unique path', or the Civilizationists approach. Such literature highlights Russia's uniqueness, emphasising its distinctive values, culture, and political regime (Blank, 2008; Colton & McFaul, 2005; Tsygankov & Tsygankov, 2004). V. Shlapentokh (2009) argues that "All the differences between Russian and Western democracy are caused by the specific cultural and historical heritage of Russian political culture" (p. 318), including the inclination of Russian politics towards a consolidation around one individual and the tendency to explain anti-Russian attitudes by the West's fear of Russia's uniqueness and power.

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[4] For a Soviet-era overview of imperial ambitions in Russian foreign policy see, for example, Jelavich, B. (1964). *A century of Russian foreign policy, 1814-1914.* Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Some Civilizationists suggest that there is a case of Western values being seen as alien by the Kremlin; these values are seen as almost unnatural to Russian culture, thus creating a base for a unique 'Russian way' of doing things, including finding its way to democracy (Colton & McFaul, 2005; D'Anieri, 2016; Dawisha, 2014; V. Shlapentokh, 2009). V. Shlapentokh (2009) argues that Russian foreign policy conveys that Russia's path to democracy is not only good enough but could be even better than a Western one. However, Rumer (2007) is critical of the Western approach to counter Russia's foreign policy in the near abroad and argues that the West should stop condemning Russia's near abroad policies and start helping Eurasian countries instead, assisting them in their pursuit for more independent and self-sufficient policies (also in Blank, 2008).

2.2.1 Terrorism and security

The denial of Russia's agency in its international actions as well as its hard work towards the big return to a great power resulted in the gap in Russian foreign policy literature. In terms of formation of Russian foreign policy, the counterterrorism agenda in Russian foreign policy has become the threshold that Russia crossed in order to reclaim its great power status. The counterterrorism agenda became one of the pillars of Russia's return as a superpower, a pro-active policy that the Kremlin pursues. Russia has used the events of 9/11 and the global awakening to the threat of terrorism to its advantage. This chapter will proceed by focusing on the analysis of terrorism and security in Russian foreign policy literature.

There is no disagreement among scholars regarding the importance of terrorism in Russian foreign policy. Some point out that the Kremlin keeps rewriting and reshaping its policies and aims, thus post 9/11 changes are seen more as recalibrating than radicalising foreign policy (Pravda, 2003; Rumer, 2007). Sakwa (2004) argues that one of the main priorities of Russian foreign policy for Putin was that "foreign powers could no longer expect to discipline and punish Russia" (p. 236), which highlights Russia's refusal to take an inferior position in international affairs. The global war on terror offered Russia a unique opportunity to change how it is perceived on the international level (De Haas, 2010).

In terms of Russia's own reasons to engage in global counterterrorism, the literature suggests that the Kremlin saw an opportunity to use the global fight against terrorism to its advantage (Abdullaev & Saradzhyan, 2006). Russia's involvement in the global fight with terrorism can be also seen as a way to distract international attention from domestic politics, especially the situation in Chechnya. Some scholars argue that Putin used the 9/11 events to Russia's benefit, particularly to ease international condemnation of the Russian actions in Chechnya (Abdullaev & Saradzhyan, 2006; Herspring & Rutland, 2005; Lo, 2003; Pravda, 2003; Rykhtik, 2012). However, as Herspring and Rutland (2005) argue, the overarching goal of Russian foreign policy remains to be the restoration of Russia's international image as a capable player; thus, the counterterrorism agenda fit into the Kremlin's plan to make Russia a great power again. Scholars point out the importance of Chechnya for Russia's counterterrorist image, most explicitly how instrumental it has been for Putin's political career and served as a constant reminder of the dangers of terrorism (Buckley, 2002; De Haas, 2010; Jackson, 2003). Lo (2003) argues that two main foreign policy priorities of Putin are the fight with terrorism and an improvement of Russia-US relations, the improvement in which the US would start seeing Russia as an equal international player. Some note that the West has been rather disappointed in Russia's desire to keep its national interests as highly prioritised as the war on terrorism when the Kremlin continues to follow its own agenda instead of joining the West in their counterterrorism advances (Kanet & Piet, 2014; Mankoff, 2009).

However, there are differences of opinion among scholars on the extent to which Russia prioritises the terrorist threat and the global fight with terrorism. Some authors believe that Russia is less interested in the global aspect of the war with terror and is more focused on the regional terrorist threat (Govella & Aggrawal, 2012; Legvold, 2012). This assumption has been partially proven erroneous by the Russian campaign in Syria, which has a significant international dimension. Some researchers see the foreign policy agenda, and the counterterrorism angle of it, as highly instrumental for Russia, especially for its domestic political consumption (Rukavishnikov, 2014; Tsygankov 2010b). For example, Baev (2004) argues that for Russia counterterrorism represents a way to consolidate Russian dysfunctional society around a decent goal, offering a simplified version of a proper foreign policy agenda for the public. He argues that Russian politics was in disarray after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so the Kremlin needed a simple but relatable foreign policy focus that is contemporary, international, and threatening to Russian society enough to consolidate the efforts of the country in need. The counterterrorism agenda happened to be this driving force of Russian foreign policy. My thesis adds to this type of literature, arguing that counterterrorism goals were used not only for social consolidation, but also for social homogenisation, allowing the Kremlin to praise those supporting the regime and silence opposition. Some authors, like Stepanova (2006), assume that the solution for the problem of terrorism lies within Russia, and it can be a bridge that the Kremlin builds to engage the Muslim population. She argues that the solution for Russia's problem with radical Islam lies within its boundaries, in its Muslim population, and they should be the engine that drives that fight.

Nonetheless, many scholars note that the threat of terrorism has been the number one priority in Russian foreign policy, and this trend intensified after Dubrovka and Beslan, terrorist events in Russia that changed how Russia perceived the terrorist threat (De Haas, 2010; Eran, 2003; Pravda, 2003). Russian foreign policy has been reoriented to serve the counterterrorism agenda, and some scholars believe that Russia had already been aware of the importance of the terrorist threat and 9/11 was more an awakening to the West than to Russia (G. Gleason, 2001; Godzimirski, 2006; Mankoff, 2009; Remington, 2009). As Pravda (2003) argues, Putin has radicalised the Kremlin's approach to foreign policy after 9/11, but it was more an intensification of existing tendencies rather than the creation of a new foreign policy agenda from scratch. For example, G. Gleason (2001) says that Russia had been pursuing the anti-terrorism agenda in Eurasia before 9/11, especially in its cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation which aims to fight terrorism amongst other threats.

Some scholars identify the changes following the global war on terror and its influence on the relationships between Russia and the West as positive. Most explicitly, the relations between the US and Russia saw a resurgence of talks and cooperation (Gerber, 2015; Herspring & Rutland, 2005; Legvold, 2012; Light & Allison, 2006; Lo, 2003; Nygren, 2007). There were reserved hopes for a possibility of more pro-American Russian foreign policy developments, and cooperation in the counterterrorism sphere was seen as a way for Russia and the US to find new grounds to improve their relations (Cross, 2006; Rykhtik, 2006; Stepanova, 2006). These scholars see counterterrorism as a path for Russia to become a reliable partner for the US, although such a positive assessment of Russia-US relations is contested. For example, Baev (2006b) argues that Russia lost the chance for such cooperation with the West on counterterrorism grounds when the Kremlin had started to oppose any democratic changes that Western actors were proposing to Russia's near abroad. Tsygankov (2010b) notes that Russia was ready to engage the West in cooperation on global affairs, but as Russia became stronger and the West was preoccupied with other issues, such deep international cooperation never saw the light. Andrey Kortunov (2017) notes that "Russia can definitely survive without the West generally, and without Europe in particular" (p. 16), emphasising how overrated Russia's alleged dependency on the West actually is. Thus, the initial rise of optimism for better relations between Russia and the US changed to a cautious analysis of a more pragmatic approach to counterterrorism cooperation.

Research on renewed Russia-US cooperation on counterterrorism grounds resulted in some valid scepticism, especially in terms of the relations between Russia and NATO. Some scholars, such as Godzimirski (2006), argue that a counterterrorism coalition with the US would have given Russia influence over NATO, as if Russia and the US becoming good allies in counterterrorism would matter more than the US commitment to NATO. However, other researchers disagree with the idea that a counterterrorism coalition could be used by the Kremlin to impede NATO enlargement (De Haas, 2010; Nygren, 2007; Rumer, 2007). Some showed disbelief in the possibility of counterterrorism cooperation creating obstacles for NATO's actions, arguing that Russia has nothing to convincingly set against NATO enlargement (Nygren 2007; Rumer, 2007). As Ko (2002) argues, "disputes over NATO enlargement, humanitarian intervention, globalization, unipolarity and rogue states will sometimes limit or even imperil cooperation" (p. 45). Some go further and argue that the war on terrorism might even obtain a nuclear dimension; thus cooperation, not competition, between Russia and the US, is paramount (Blank, 2008; Tsygankov, 2012). Presented with these sometimes radically opposing views, a researcher would realise that the war on terror has been portrayed very differently in the literature. The essence of this debate is perhaps best summed up in Baev's words (2006a): "Russia's war against terrorism is not about winning; it is about having it" (p. 324).

2.3 Summary

There is no school of thought in the analysis of Russian foreign policy that has all the answers. The literature on Russian foreign policy is vast and multifaceted, and this chapter has outlined the main developments in the Russian foreign policy field: the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, the rise of Vladimir Putin as the president, and the consequent changes in Russia's view of the world. An increased dissatisfaction in Moscow's international position resulted in an assertive, proactive foreign policy that aimed to increase Russia's prestige in the international arena. The ultimate goal of Russia's foreign policy has been declared as the restoration of Russia's position as a superpower. Russia's uncompromising approach to following its interests has been noted by many, who have emphasised that such an approach might not be looked at favourably by the West (Kanet & Piet, 2014; S. Kortunov, 2005; Lynch, 2001; Mankoff, 2009; Sakwa, 1996; 2004; Tsygankov, 2010b). The persistent pursuit of national interests found a reflection not only in the increased anti-western trajectory of Russian foreign policy, but also in the personification of it, where we can see Vladimir Putin portrayed as the saviour for the Russian people and even a new tsar (Blank, 2010; Gessen, 2017; Myers, 2015). Domestic factors, such as the media and the public's participation in the formation of foreign policy, were discussed to show the importance of these factors to the Kremlin's strategizing of Russia's course of actions, as well as their capabilities not only to influence foreign policy but also be instrumental in the process of foreign policy formation. The discussion of the terrorism securitisation in Russian foreign policy highlighted that Russia's counterterrorism agenda transformed foreign policy: the war with terrorists, on national, regional, and global levels is now an essential part of Russian foreign policy. Researchers might disagree on the extent to which the counterterrorism agenda influences the core of Russian foreign policy, or for what reason, but its importance has been accentuated by many (Åtland & Pedersen, 2008; Baev, 2004, 2006; Blank, 2010; Fedor, 2011; Leichtova, 2014; Simons, 2010).

The discussion of academic debates on the Russian foreign policy issues shows that there are a few ways the debates have been shaped: in terms of the traditional western divide into realism, liberalism, and constructivism, or in a more Russia-centric approach by the Westernizers, Statists, and Civilizationists. If we put analytical differences aside, the main themes shaping the debates are the relationships between Russia and the West, increased centralisation of power in Russia, and Moscow's desire to be recognised as a superpower by the international community. These recurring themes are essential for the discussion and analysis of Russian foreign policy, especially in the aftermath of the 2014 Crimea annexation, the 2015 Syrian campaign, Russia's meddling in the 2016 US presidential elections, and a continuous standoff between Russia and the West. Besides, the lack of research on public involvement in Russian foreign policy analysis was noted. The Russian population lacks a say in Russian foreign policy analysis, something that Hansen (2000) calls the absence of speech, and she argues that it should be considered a warning sign as far as democracy and freedoms are concerned. This thesis aims to reflect on domestic and international audiences as influential participants in Russian foreign policy formation, thus adding to the literature on Russian foreign policy analysis.

The Kremlin's securitisation of the terrorist threat appears to be the answer to the challenges that Russia faces domestically and abroad, as well as Russia's ticket back to the superpower stage. In the following chapters, I will argue that the counterterrorism agenda and Russia's involvement in the war on terror are the instruments for Russia to make a return as a superpower to the international stage. Hence, our analysis of Russian foreign policy needs to adapt as well. My thesis is an attempt to add another angle to Russian foreign policy analysis by using securitisation theory to analyse Russia's foreign policy.

Securitisation theory, as applied in this thesis, offers a relatively neutral way to analyse foreign policy. However, the neutrality of the securitisation theory approach should not be equated with absolute impartiality. Securitisation theory provides us with a framework of analysis which allows us to move beyond political personalities and historical allegories as the primary explanations for foreign policy decision, but at same time leaves an opportunity to include political personalities and historical lessons into the analysis as variables (Buzan & Wæver, 2003; Buzan et al., 1998). Such neutrality can help us to understand Russian foreign policy better: not only to label Vladimir Putin as a pragmatic leader but also treat his political actions as such. The discussion of securitisation theory and the insights into the Russian foreign policy analysis that it can offer will continue in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Securitisation Theory

In this chapter I discuss the Copenhagen School (CS) of security,[5] also known as securitisation theory, and its usage as the theoretical framework for this thesis. The chapter begins with a general overview of the Copenhagen School, including its major contribution to the field and how it can enrich our understanding of security. Also, I argue that the CS can and should be used as a tool for security analysis. The chapter will proceed by discussing the Copenhagen School's main constituent parts, the understanding of which is necessary to the deployment of securitisation theory in this thesis. In addition, this chapter presents an argument that securitisation theory allows not only a connection to certain political moves related to the terrorism threat perception with corresponding political change but also a reflection on the societal aspect of policy analysis by the inclusion of the securitisation audience.

The Copenhagen School aims to enlarge our understanding of security threats, how they are formed and treated, and by whom (M. Williams, 2003). It can be considered a new approach to security, an attempt to rethink what we see as a threat and how a new reading of security can help to explain certain political processes that were challenging or under-analysed before (Barthwal-Datta, 2009). It is important to remember that a definition of security, as well as Security Studies as a field, remains highly contested and there is no general consensus over either the definition or what should be included in Security Studies.[6]

It is believed that securitisation theory was first formally introduced by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde in their 1998 book *Security: A new framework for analysis* as a critical approach to traditional security. Buzan et al. (1998), building on previous work related to regional security complex theory (Buzan, 1991; Buzan, Kelstrup, Lemaitre, Tromer, & Wæver, 1990; Wæver, 1995), argue that securitisation theory is "a new and comprehensive framework of analysis for security studies" (p. vii). Security complex theory introduced the idea that security issues are relative and fluid, despite how stable they might seem to an observer: "Security complexes tend to be durable, but they are neither permanent nor internally rigid" (Buzan, 1983, p. 106). Seeing security issues as changing structures which depend on more than just power struggle or geography. Buzan (1983) defines a security complex as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another" (p. 106).

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[5] The term coined by Bill McSweeney in McSweeney, B. (1996). Identity and security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School. *Review of International Studies, 22*(1), 81-93. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/stable/20097432

[6] See, for example, Krause, K., & Williams, M. C. (Eds.). (1997). Critical security studies: concepts and cases. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Security complex theory was later developed as a part of the Copenhagen School, and Buzan et al. (1998) refined the definition of a security complex. The debate evolved from seeing power in rather realist terms to analysing security in terms of perceptions and concerns. The thinking thus moved towards seeing security issues as being socially constructed, theorising security as intersubjective politics, not only the use of force (Buzan et al., 1998). As Patomäki (2015) argues "Reality is socially constructed" (p. 128). This significant shift in the analytical framework may be helpful in reflecting on the current tendencies of fighting "invisible" wars, as opposed to traditional military conflicts (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). The increased usage of technologies to carry out attacks, get messages across the globe, or recruit followers should not be underestimated. For example, the usage of technology in both the planning of the 9/11 attack and the consequential response by the US shows that not only the use of force but also the perception of and identification of threats play a great role in the security agenda formation (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Securitisation theory analyses security threats as a process. As Balzacq (2010b) notes, "securitization predominantly examines how security problems emerge, evolve and dissolve"

(p. 56). It allows an analysis of security threats' formation and definition, as well as an observer can trace how they are managed. Hence, securitisation theory critically approaches security and threat formation, but also includes an analysis of how security threats are socially constructed (Bourbeau, 2014; Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Lacher, 2008; Malik, 2015; Watson, 2012; M. Williams, 2003). Krause and M. Williams (1996) aptly describe the approach, arguing that:

> The basic claims of the critical and constructivist approaches are that "security" is not an objective condition, that threats to it are not simply a matter of correctly perceiving a constellation of material forces, and that the object of security is not stable or unchanging. Instead, questions about *how* the object to be secured (nation, state, or other group) is constituted, and how particular issues (economic well-being, the risk of violence, environmental degradation) are placed under the "sign of security" become central. "Security" (especially "national security") is understood as a particular set of historical discourses and practices that rest upon institutionally shared understandings. (pp. 242-243, Italics in original)

Buzan et al. (1998) argue that securitisation theory "offers a constructivist operational method for distinguishing the process of securitisation from that of politicization – for understanding who can securitize what and under what conditions" (p. vii). Taureck (2006) notes that "security is social and intersubjective construction" (p. 55), and many scholars refer to securitisation theory as an analytical mechanism. Scholars underline the importance of securitisation theory as an instrument which can help to enlarge how security is understood (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Bigo, 2000; Guzzini, 2011; Wæver, 2004).

For example, the process of creating meaning can be illustrated by naming a ship: it is done by saying something (Buzan et al., 1998). Similarly, when a threat is discussed as socially constructed, it implies that it is created by the people talking about it, conveying meaning. By calling something "security" we construct reality. As Balzacq (2010b) maintains, "Securitization theory argues that language is not only concerned with what is 'out there', as realists and neorealists assume, but is also constitutive of that very social reality"

(p. 56). According to Watson (2012), security can be best understood as "a field of activity", where different actors pursue various agendas and their interests might collide or assimilate, causing diverse political and social responses (p. 288).

Securitisation theory is an attempt to widen Security Studies, incorporating different aspects and critiques that challenge the prevalence of military threats in security theorising (Barthwal-Datta, 2009; Buzan et al., 1998; Roe, 2008). Moving away from the neorealist reading of security threats, Buzan et al. (1998) argue that securitisation theory allows the methodical analysis of a wider security agenda and "to locate the relevant security dynamics of the different types of security on levels ranging from local through regional to global" (p. 1). Thus, securitisation theory is a tool for security analysis that brings forth a more comprehensive understanding of how security threats are formed and developed. As Taureck (2006) argues, securitisation is an analytical tool, not a normative theory, and can be helpful for those who are interested in the question of the nature of security. Hence:

> securitization theory is not a political statement on the part of the analyst, but … is instead a theoretical tool of analysis with which the analyst can trace incidences of securitization and desecuritization. Securitization theory by itself does not enable the analyst to say what security should be/not be. Securitization theory thus seeks to answer the question — what does security do? — and little beyond this. In this understanding, securitization theory is nothing but a theoretical tool to facilitate *practical* security analysis. (p. 55, Italics in original)

However, it is difficult to make a distinction between security and politics. As B. Williams (2015) aptly notes, "securitization is above all political" (p. 114). It is difficult to draw a line between politics and security, as they interact and get intertwined so closely that they might become inseparable.[7] Taureck (2006) argues that "Securitization/desecuritization is a political choice by a securitizing actor, which the analyst seeks to uncover by means of using securitization theory; hence at this level whether or not the analyst agrees with the securitization/desecuritization in question is irrelevant" (p. 58). Thus, a researcher remains an observer in securitisation theory by not creating any new meanings of security themselves.[8]

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[7] For more on the conceptualisation of politics in the CS see Watson, S. D. (2012). 'Framing' the Copenhagen School: integrating the literature on threat construction. Millennium, 40(2), 279-301.

The Copenhagen School offers a new way of looking at security threats as perceived threats. This goes alongside the traditional neorealist approach where only "real" state-related threats, for example, invasion or war, represent security threats. Baldwin (1997) argues that there are many ways to define security, but not all definitions are necessarily useful for policy making. He emphasises that when we think about security threats in politics, we often imply national security threats, something that threatens the state. He refers to such thinking in relation to the Cold War period:

> If military force was relevant to an issue, it was considered a security issue; and if military force was not relevant, that issue was consigned to the category of low politics. Security has been a banner to be flown, a label to be applied. (Baldwin, 1997, p. 10)

Krause and M. Williams (1996) also disagree with narrowing down the concept of security to the security of a state, arguing that "the concept of national security does not simply represent a reaction to objective conditions; it is built on a series of political and epistemological choices that *define* what is considered security" (p. 234, Italics in original).

Securitisation theory has been chosen for this dissertation as the most appropriate analytical tool, which allows to analyse security as a social construct and draw conclusions on the change of state-society relations. A more International Relations-oriented approach such as, for example, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), was considered but securitisation theory provides a unique opportunity to tie together social changes and security analysis. Unlike securitisation, FPA focuses on human decision making in the field of foreign policy, making it an invaluable tool to analyse foreign policymakers' choices and actions (Hudson,

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[8] For the critique of such approach see Aradau, C. (2001). Beyond good and evil: ethics and securitization/desecuritization techniques. Rubikon E-journal; Aradau, C. (2004). Security and the democratic scene: desecuritization and emancipation. Journal of International Relations and Development, 7(4), 388-413. 10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800030.

2013). FPA is a multifactorial and multilevel tool of analysis, although it has been critiqued for its complexity and inflexibility (McClosky, 1962, quoted in Hudson, 2013, p. 6). The main difference between securitisation and FPA is that the former conceptualises security as a political process, while the latter focuses more on decision-makers in foreign policy. FPA's focus on human decision making makes it less attractive for solving the puzzle this thesis puts forward, as the counterterrorism field often lacks details necessary for an FPA analysis.

The Copenhagen School moves away from the traditional understanding of a tangible security threat, arguing that "security is … a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat" (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24). Thus, non-traditional, intangible, and perceived threats should not be neglected but become part of security analysis. As Watson (2012) notes:

> members of the CS [Copenhagen School] explicitly engage with, and incorporate, key insights from the traditional, military-focused security studies literature, again suggesting that the CS securitisation framework remains one of the few sites of potentially productive engagement between traditional and 'new' security studies. (p. 281)

Hence, securitisation analysis can incorporate both "real" security threats in the neorealist reading and intangible, perceived threats.

The presence of a real threat, such as a previous attack by a militant group (for military threats) or an existing oil spill (for environmental threats), can facilitate successful securitisation of the threat. Buzan et al. (1998) call such circumstances facilitating conditions (p.17). Facilitating conditions are "linguistic-grammatical composition, social capital of the securitising actor and existing social knowledge" (Ibid, p. 33). It is possible to make a convincing case for a threat that has not manifested itself physically in the real world; however, the securitisation of such threat might require more political effort. For example, a threat of a naval invasion for in landlocked country could be politically shaped and presented, but the willingness and ability of the public to relate to that threat is less than to the threat of an invasion by ground troops. Therefore, the presence of a threat's manifestation in real life increases the chances of said threat to be successfully securitised.

Securitisation rhetoric and consequent change can be seen as part of a political process and help a researcher to create a consistent study. Emmers (2007) argues that "the Copenhagen School raises the possibility for a systematic, comparative, and coherent analysis of security" (p. 132). A security threat could be seen as a perceived threat, which would expand how we theorise security (Aradau, 2008; Emmers, 2007). Wæver (2004) argues that "it is by labelling something a security issue that it becomes one" (p. 13). Hence, almost any issue could become a security threat if it has been carefully constructed, thus the need for a limiting definition of security is diminishing. Securitisation theory can be seen as an analytical tool which allows for more clarity in studying security (Hansen, 2000; Huysmans, 1998; Rychnovská, 2014). To emphasise the importance and clarity of securitisation, Taureck (2006) concludes: "securitization theory offers one of the most concise and attractive analytical tools in critical security studies today" (p. 59).

When security is seen as a social construction within the Copenhagen School, it is not surprising that the threat of terrorism has been used to push for policies that might not otherwise be approved (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). This thesis focuses on the securitisation of the terrorist threat by the Kremlin in the Russian Federation and abroad. The beauty of such securitisation, from a political perspective, is in its versatility. This is because the terrorist threat often does not represent an immediate military threat but rather the possibility of an attack that may or may not be happening in the foreseeable future. Threats like terrorism are invaluable for securitisation purposes – the creation of a sense of a looming threat is instrumental in uniting societies against an enemy. But how do certain subjects become securitised?

3.1 Staging a Threat

If one were to open up a broader understanding of security threats and trace how perceived security threats emerge and develop, attention must be paid to the process of 'staging' a threat, as argued by the Copenhagen School. The introduction of the idea of threat staging is one of the Copenhagen School's main contributions to the field of security studies (Huysmans, 1998). Febrica (2010) notes that almost any issue can be positioned as a security threat if the issue is properly staged. To stage a threat means to communicate its danger to the public in a way that the threat is perceived to endanger the survival of the public/nation/humanity. The process of staging an issue as a threat and presenting it to the public is often referred to as *a speech act*, a definition borrowed from language theory (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 26) or *a securitisation move* (Ibid, p. 25). Thus, through a speech act a government seeks "to convince society why a certain condition constitutes a security threat" (Febrica, 2010, p. 571). As Bourbeau (2014) argues, "A security speech act not only describes a state of affairs but also determines appropriate ways of acting and participating in relation to that state of affairs" (p. 191). This approach can be used to earn public support for a political or societal change if the threat has been presented in the right light.

The Copenhagen School's theorising of a speech act is based on the understanding of an act of vocalising a threat: "it is the utterance itself that is the act… By saying the words, something is done" (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 26).[9] Staging a threat is a complex process that involves at least three groups of actors: a securitising actor, a referent object, and a securitisation audience. Buzan et al. (1998) mention that "security *is* a quality actors inject into issues by securitizing them, which means to stage them on the political arena ... and then to have them accepted by a sufficient audience to sanction extraordinary defensive moves" (p. 204, Italics in original). However, not any act of speaking security would constitute a speech act: a securitising actor is as important as the speech act itself (Ibid). In addition, there could be other actors in securitisation process besides those who have legitimacy to speak security, and these are referred to by Buzan et al. (1998) as functional actors “who affect dynamics of a sector” (p. 36). They are neither securitising an issue nor accepting or rejecting securitisation rhetoric, but they can influence both the process of staging a threat and how a securitisation audience reacts to the staging. As Salter (2010) aptly sums up, securitisation is about different agents competing for resources and public attention via securitisation moves, using the targeted audience to back up their proposed changes.

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[9] For more on "security utterances" see Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a theory of securitization: Copenhagen and beyond. European journal of international relations, 13(3), 357-383.

In discussions of a speech act, a controversial issue is whether the speech act should be analysed as an illocutionary or perlocutionary act. The original view of the Copenhagen School is that a speech act should be considered as an illocutionary act, as “done in saying” (Wæver, 2015, p. 122), the approach which became known as political securitisation. Another approach is for a speech act to be seen as a perlocutionary act, the approach which became recognised as social securitisation (Balzacq 2005, 2010a, 2010b). This is not to say that either political or social securitisation has prevalence in securitisation scholarship or all the answers. Arguing that the Copenhagen School is not clear on the issue of speech acts, Balzacq (2010a) puts forward a new approach to securitisation, which he calls social securitisation. According to Balzacq (2010a), “the lack of a clear position upon whether securitization is primarily of an *intersubjective* nature or an illocutionary (self-referential) act, is susceptible to lead to different kinds and often contradictory readings of securitization theory” (p. 6, emphasis in the original). Balzacq (2010a) argues that perlocutionary logic describes a speech act more coherently when the mere aim of a speech act is to provoke a response, achieve a goal, thus understanding security as a speech act is a restrictive approach.

Wæver (2015) disagrees with such division, arguing that securitisation theory was based on speech act theory and was heavily influenced by works of Hannah Arendt and John

Langshaw Austin for a very particular reason: analysing speech acts as illocutionary acts allows the avoidance of the division between the act of verbalising (communication) and the act of making something happen (action), thereby creating a possibility to see a speech act as both communication and action. Wæver (2015) argues that changing illocutionary logic to perlocutionary undermines the theoretical framework of securitisation theory as it was envisioned to expand the theorising of security and to reflect on its modern challenges. Thus, defining speech acts as an illocutionary act would allow the creation of a coherent analysis by taking speech acts at their face value. Undeniably, the speech act is called an act for the simplicity of explanation, but in reality it could be challenging to trace what speech, public appearance, or a call for change constituted the start of securitisation process (Roe, 2012). Balzacq's approach adds an additional step to securitisation analysis, raising questions regarding the intentions of a securitising actor.

In my work I take the original Copenhagen School's take on the speech act debate, as the simplicity of illocutionary logic allows more space for the analysis of the terrorist threat. Terrorism-related political discourse is often full of unreliable or unverified information, speculations, and overt deceptions; thus, it is important to have a clear and logical framework of analysis.

The development of the speech act debates generated responses from many scholars and provoked a lot of thinking which significantly contributed to the development of securitisation theory. The theory was, as a consequence, significantly enriched by authors focusing less on speech acts as a process of vocalising an issue and more on highlighting other ways of communicating a message (Balzacq, 2010a; Bigo, 2002; McDonald, 2008; Stritzel, 2011), such as in images and photo (Campbell & Shapiro, 2007; Hansen, 2011; Möller, 2007; M. Williams, 2003), in the absence of speech acts (Hansen 2000, 2007), in euphemisms (Eroukhmanoff, 2015), or in popular culture (Stritzel, 2012).

What does this mean for the securitisation of terrorism? The works of Hansen (2000, 2006), M. Williams (2003), and Stritzel (2012) show that securitisation theory can offer more insights into the usage of the terrorist threat for political purposes when the theory is refocused, and different aspects of human communication are included into the analysis. M. Williams (2003) and Stritzel (2012) rightfully argue that visual materials can be of no less importance than vocal securitisation moves. Images can provoke a significant response, for example the Charlie Hebdo case[10] or the photo of Aylan Kurdi[11] which sparked an intensive reaction from domestic and international audiences, public and politicians alike. For the securitisation analysis of the terrorist threat an opportunity to include visual information gives a researcher the flexibility of choice and can greatly advance the analysis. This thesis does not include photographic material, but audio and video materials are used extensively.

Threats become security threats through the process of securitisation. A securitisation move is a process of transforming a politicised issue into a security threat, by articulating the danger of the threat to a particular referent object that is either accepted or rejected by the securitisation audience.[12] Wæver (2003), quoted in Hass (2009), succinctly describes the securitisation process:

> Security is about survival. In security discourses, an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object. The designation of the threat as existential justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle it. The invocation of security has been the key to legitimising the use of force, and more generally opening the way for the state to mobilise or to take special power. [. . .] 'Security' is the result of a move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as above normal politics. (p. 83)

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[10] For more see Kowsar, N. (2016). The impact of a post-Charlie Hebdo world on cartoonists. *Social Research: An International Quarterly, 83(1)*, 7-19. doi:10.1353/sor.2016.0003

[11] For more see Binder, W., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2018). Refugees as icons: culture and iconic representation. *Sociology Compass, 12(3)*, n/a. doi:10.1111/soc4.12568

[12] For more on tacit securitisation moves see Sjöstedt, R. (2013). Ideas, identities and internalization: explaining securitizing moves. *Cooperation and Conflict, 48(1)*, 143-164.

Thus, the securitisation process is a way to upgrade a political issue to the next level of importance, the level that would allow the overstepping of established political norms.

However, securitisation is not only a tool of moving an issue beyond regular political practices within a given country but also a way of gaining or losing power. Power consolidation in the hands of a securitising actor after successful securitisation is one of the primary outcomes of the securitisation process. When the issue has been successfully securitised, and emergency measures have been assigned, the securitising actor receives more power over the securitised issue. Securitisation brings political change circumventing the existing political channels:

> The key political quality of the speech act of security is a break in the normal political rules of the game. When security becomes an act, it is not a routine practice, an acting out of given procedures and institutionalized conditions of felicity, a habitual practice, but creates a scene in which actors and things are brought into a relation that challenges a given way of doing things. (Huysmans, 2011, pp. 372–372).

Thus, securitisation is instrumental in achieving political gains. Buzan et al. (1998) highlight that a securitisation actor acquires power through successful securitisation but does not have to use this power to justify having it as the securitisation of said issues has already happened. Therefore, securitisation as a process can be used to gain political power, even though there is no guarantee of that.

Buzan et al. (1998) mention that the analysis of securitisation rhetoric should start by looking at "discourse and political constellations: When does an argument with this particular rhetorical and semiotic structure achieve sufficient effects to make an audience tolerate violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed?" (p. 25).[13] To understand how to use securitisation theory as an analytical tool, the discussion of main parts of the securitisation process is necessary. We need to understand who a securitising actor is and how to become one, what or who could be a referent object and what is needed for something or someone to become one. In addition, we need to pay attention to who is the securitisation audience, how it can approve or reject securitising moves and how we would know that the securitisation was successful.

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[13] I follow the Copenhagen School approach to seeing securitisation as the invocation of emergency policies as a result of speech acts, which is different from one of Bigo who sees securitisation as an institutionalised approach and argues that routine, "in-between drama" moments should be part of securitisation analysis.

3.2 Basic Concepts of Securitisation Analysis

How would we know that an issue presented is a security threat? The Copenhagen School's analysis starts from identifying a threat's position within a political spectrum. The range of possibilities starts from a non-politicised position with no public debate over an issue and goes to the politicised sphere where the issue becomes part of the public debate (Buzan et al., 1998). The next step would be the securitisation stage, where the issue becomes a security concern, a process triggered by securitisation rhetoric. The final stage, when an issue becomes a security concern, is characterised by the emergency measures which are invoked to manage the issue. Emergency measures, or extraordinary policies, are different from standard political solutions, also known as *normal politics* (Buzan et al., 1998). It is an important moment in the securitisation process, as the appeal for emergency measures over normal politics allows the bypass of a state's system of checks and balances. According to Roe (2012) there is no definitive distinction between normal and extraordinary politics in the original securitisation framework, but he aptly sums it up: "extraordinary politics, is, in this sense, what normal politics is not" (p. 251). Normal politics encompass predictable political reactions to threats: behaving according to legislation, using the constitution, criminal code,

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For this approach see Bigo, D. (2002). 'Security and immigration: toward a critique of the governmentality of unease, *Alternatives*, 27: *Supplement*, 63–92.

and other official political channels, whereas securitisation permits the circumvention of standard political procedures.[14]

Sometimes it is difficult to be certain when an issue is being securitised, although securitisation rhetoric consists of a few common patterns that can help to identify a threat as being staged. For example, would any discussion of an issue related to state security make the issue a security threat? McDonald (2008) argues that it may happen at different stages, and there is no clear distinction in the Copenhagen School when this transition appears. The transition from a politicised threat to a security concern may happen when the issue is vocalised as a security threat, or when the audience shows its support for the claim, or when a corresponding policy changes, or when emergency measures are deployed.[15] However, as Salter (2010) argues, the securitisation process is more complicated than someone getting a free pass on an emergency response; the process of securitisation is much more than just calling something a threat.

To understand when an issue started to be securitised, we need to ask the question: “to what degree is the issue-area discussed as a part of a wider political debate?” (Salter, 2010, p. 120). It is paramount to establish a ground zero, a point in time when the issue has started to move away from an accepted political agenda, becoming more than a politicised issue. Then one has to pay attention what caused such shift and how the political debate facilitated or hindered such change. As McDonald (2008) notes, the context in which securitisation happens is extremely important as it helps to understand why certain actors were successful in presenting issues as security threats, and how political communities can be persuaded to move an issue beyond normal politics. Thus, a step in the analysis when a researcher builds upon the political, social, and historical context should not be omitted.

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[14] For the critique of such conceptualisation of normal politics see, for example, Abrahamsen, R. (2005). Blair's Africa: the politics of securitization and fear. *Alternatives*, 30(1), 55-80; Hansen, L., & Nissenbaum, H. (2009). Digital disaster, cyber security, and the Copenhagen School. *International studies quarterly*, 53(4), 1155-1175

[15] McDonald (2008) also argues that finding the right moment when securitisation happened might be impossible when the analysis concerns more time consuming extensive political processes such as migration or refugee policies.

3.2.1 Securitising actor

The next essential question to address is: Who can be a securitising actor? Who can make securitisation happen? Wæver (2011) argues that "Securitization ultimately means a particular way of handling a particular issue, processing a threat through the security format. Thus, the security quality does not belong to the threat but to its management" (p. 472). According to Buzan et al. (1998) a "securitizing actor is someone, or a group, who performs the security speech act. Common players in this role are political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups" (p. 40). The definition proposed by Buzan et al. (1998) implies a variety of different actors who can securitise an issue, but in reality, it might not be the case, as securitising actors need to possess enough power and legitimacy to stage a threat. As Taureck (2006) argues:

> In practice, securitization is thus far from being open to all units and their respective subjective threats. Rather, it is largely based on power and capability and therewith the means to socially and politically construct a threat. In this way the study of security remains wide, but with restrictions pertaining to 'who' can securitize it is neither unmanageable nor incoherent. (p.55).

Thus, theoretically any actor with enough power and legitimacy can securitise an issue, but in reality, the existing political framework might be an obstacle for those who do not belong to the government or possess any other set of characteristics that are important for a given country.

Even though the definition by Buzan et al. (1998) looks relatively straightforward, it is important to differentiate between the roles one person can perform as an individual or as a representative of a collective. As Bigo (2002) argues, "securitization results from power positions, not from individuals creating new frames" (p. 74). For example, if Putin goes to church it could be unrelated to his position as President. However, when he receives a blessing from Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill at Blagoveschensky Cathedral on his inauguration day, 7 May 2012, it is different ("*Putin v tretij raz vozglavil Rossiju*", 2012). Such act can be seen as a political statement as Putin here represents the head of the government, and acts on its behalf. Thus, it is important not only to trace who can speak security but also to define different moments where actors may act on their own personal level rather than representing their collective identity. In addition, not all actors are equal in their capability to securitise a threat, so actors with greater political or social power will have more chance to succeed (Buzan at al., 1998; M. Williams, 2003). Therefore, the number of actors who might be successful in securitising an issue could be rather limited in practice.

M. Williams (2003) argues that not everyone can become securitising actors or be considered as such. Apart from belonging to a collective - for example, political circles - a securitising actor has to be credible and possess the right to speak on behalf of such a collective (Buzan et al., 1988). Not many people can speak on behalf of a state, the rules for such activity are rigid and there are official channels to be used, such as official public speeches, public events, and official government websites. However, there are other ways to 'speak security', especially if actors are identifying themselves with, for example, a nation, not a state. For instance, when President Putin speaks security at a public event, we can say that he is speaking on behalf of the state as the elected President and he has a right to do so. However, if we see a member of the Chechen resistance demanding the independence of Chechnya after taking hostages in Moscow in 2002, we question this person's legitimacy to make such demands as well as the credibility of the demand. Thus, with the change of identity from the state to the nation we go from analysing rather straightforward official sources to a sphere of the uncertainty of the speaker's legitimacy as well as constant attempts to verify it. According to Buzan et al. (1998), the legitimacy and credibility of securitising actors would greatly depend on the referent object of securitisation, something that needs protection from a threat.

Sometimes it can be problematic to name a particular securitising actor. Buzan et al. (1998) suggest that it is better to concentrate on the logic behind the speech act in an attempt to understand institutional (organisational) logic. This logic is rather straightforward in the political sector: a government usually speaks for a state, being essentially the state in that sense (Ibid, p. 41). However, it might be more challenging in sectors other than political, because when someone claims to speak for a group of people staging a particular issue as an existential threat, the question of legitimacy becomes essential. This thesis is concentrated on the political sector securitisation and follows the original approach of Buzan et al. (1998) to naming the main securitising actor: the state.

3.2.2 Referent object

When a speech act targets a securitisation audience, communicating a security threat to it, it articulates an existential threat to a certain referent object. The referent object is an object and/or entity which existence is depicted to be under a threat. In Buzan et al. (1988) referent objects are described as "things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival" (p. 36). A referent object is something facing the threat that is so dangerous it can cease to exist if no measures are taken to fight the threat. The survival of the referent object depends on how well the security threat can be mitigated, which would most likely require some kind of emergency measures. The securitising actor would call for emergency or special measures to fight the threat, which might result in a change of policy aimed at tackling the threat. According to Buzan et al. (1998):

> the existential threat has to be argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity. (p. 25)

Therefore, the presence of an existential threat is crucial for a transformation process of a politicised issue into a security concern. An existential threat is required for such transformation to occur. However, it is paramount to reiterate that the threat securitised does not have to be present at a given time (or potentially at all). The existentiality of a threat is a prerequisite for securitisation, but the *reality* of the threat is not (Buzan et al., 1998). One can try to securitise the threat of an alien invasion without an alien threat being present, although such securitisation may be more difficult to achieve.

Buzan et al. (1998) mostly consider applying securitisation at the state level, seeing a state as a referent object. They argue that the state level, or the middle level (after the individual level and before the international level of analysis), is the level for the straightforward securitisation theory application, as it is easier to trace the construction of security threats, identities and securitisation moves. At the state level securitisation moves can be seen in a clear, concise way, as participating actors are more apparent (Buzan et al., 1998). In the case of securitisation of the terrorism threat, the state level of securitisation theory application is predetermined by the nature of the threat. Terrorism as a political tool is often aimed at an official government/authority of a given country, thus the state level of analysis might be the case if a researcher is interested in the securitisation analysis of the terrorism threat.

It is worth noting that securitisation can be applied in a broader sense, not necessarily involving a state, as it was later explained within the Copenhagen School’s framework (Buzan & Wæver, 2009). Buzan and Wæver (2003) made it clear that the securitisation framework is open to different interpretations: “it is perfectly possible that the world is still largely state-centric, even if our framework is not. The finding is more interesting when the framework does not predetermine the result” (p. 45).

The question of non-state securitisation is particularly important for the question of terrorism securitisation, because securitisation can incorporate many different aspects. For example, the possibility to include environmental issues as the threat and humanity as the referent object is essential in the discussion of weapons of mass destruction (Nyman, 2013). In addition, technological advances also should not be underestimated. Huysmans and Buonfino (2008) illustrate this point using the example of the introduction of ID cards in the United Kingdom (UK), highlighting that many debates are influenced by the threat of terrorism even if the language used for securitisation does not state that clearly. State-centrism has been emphasised, for example, by Wilkinson (2007), who argues that substate actors and groups that do not interfere with high politics can be left out of the securitisation analysis. The concept of non-state securitisation actors is important as non-state actors may intervene in the securitisation process, for example, trying to mitigate securitisation moves produced by a government (Barthwal-Datta, 2009).

Another issue raised by Balzacq (2008) relates to the possibility of non-public securitisation. Non-public securitisation implies that the audience for securitisation moves is restricted to a circle of certain people and has not been made public. The question of public securitisation involves a public (audience) that listens to securitisation rhetoric. Sometimes it is possible to reverse engineer non-public securitisation based on existing official documents, memoirs or media reports, as was done by Salter and Mutlu (2013). But when the terrorism threat is used in the political sphere, it becomes more complicated to notice and analyse non-public securitisation. Balzacq (2008) argues that in the case of a terrorist threat it is possible to enrich the analysis by the inclusion of political tools as the sign of successful securitisation. Thus, it would be beneficial to include legal changes in the analysis of securitisation of terrorism because these changes would reflect the non-public securitisation that happened behind closed doors. Rather often the concept of terrorism is linked to the national interest and data regarding terrorism issues is classified. Hence legal changes would show the result of political will and in-government discussions that would not be accessible for a researcher (Balzacq, 2008).

Why can legislation be seen as evidence of successful securitisation? In a situation when responses from a targeted audience are to be questioned due to existing corruption or the absence of political transparency, legislative changes can be illustrative of a political change that securitisation brings (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019; Mabee, 2007; Sperling & Webber, 2019). In such a situation, our judgment of the success or failure of securitisation process needs to adapt to the existing political conditions. In that case, legislative changes that follow the staging of a threat can be seen as sufficient evidence for the success of securitisation (Buzan et al. 1998). To put it in other words, legislative changes show us that certain actors have acquired more power to protect their cause as the result of securitisation. For example, Salter and Mutlu (2013) make a case for the four waves of securitisation of Diego Garcia, not all of which were made public. However, the issue of building military bases on Diego Garcia which required the relocation of aboriginal people was successfully securitised. Political changes were implemented, even though there were no emergency measures proclaimed publicly and the public was not made aware of what was happening. Nonetheless, Salter and Mutlu (2013) argue that it was no less of a securitisation case than any other example: “We would argue that there is always an audience, and that in this case the audience was the diplomats and politicians at the constitutional conferences that had to accept the British argument of necessity” (p. 823). Thus, even if the information of audience was incomplete, the securitisation analysis was possible based on the official documents, observations, and legislative changes.

Carrera (2006) notes that a security threat can represent not only an existing threat such as war, but also the absence of state action on a given issue. For example, he mentions how the deficiency of integration of migrants can be seen as a threat in a public debate over immigration (Carrera, 2006). Thus, a threat can be framed in different terms, but ultimately the presentation of a threat as a security concern allows the transformation of an issue from the politicised part of the political spectrum to the securitisation level by staging the threat as existential.

3.2.3 Securitisation/targeted audience

The last, but not the least, constituent part of securitisation rhetoric is the securitisation audience. The concept of audience plays a significant role in securitisation theory, thus giving a rare opportunity to analyse society within a security debate. As Wæver (2015) puts it:

> Securitization is that kind of theory, organized around a theoretical conception of a distinct political move, allowing for causal analysis of its consequences, sociological analysis of social patterns that condition political possibilities and political theory exploring human life under different arrangements. (p. 126).

An analysis including how the audience is formed, how credible and legitimate it is, how it accepts or rejects securitisation moves would significantly enrich our understanding of the formation of security threats.

However, the definition of a securitisation audience is rather blurred in the original securitisation theory, and the relationship between a securitising actor and an audience is not clear (Lupovici, 2014; Roe, 2008; Stritzel, 2007). Buzan et al. (1998) acknowledge a securitisation audience as “interpretative community - it is the context in which principles or legitimacy and valuation circulate and within which the individual constructs an interpretation of events” (p. 37). Later in *Security: A New Framework of Analysis,* the closest description of the securitisation audience is “those the securitizing act attempts to convince to accept the exceptional procedures” (Ibid, p. 41). Buzan et al. (1998) do not discuss how the audience is formed, how it becomes credible or can legitimise political decisions, or who would constitute as an audience (Kaunert & Leonard, 2011; Stritzel, 2007). Côté (2016) offers to define the audience based not only on a set of possible characteristics but also on the basis of what it can bring to the securitisation process: “the individual(s) or group(s) that has the capability to authorize the view of the issue presented by the securitizing actor and legitimize the treatment of the issue through security practice” (p. 548). Such a definition implies that the securitisation audience is not equal to the general public, as it is impossible to get feedback from all the people in a country, thus the targeted audience should be people who have the capability to endorse proposed security measures.

How would a securitising actor portray a particular section/group within a society to be the audience for securitisation? The audience should be credible in a way that the rest of the public believes that a certain group represents their views and interests clearly and sufficiently. Thus, the question of the targeted audience is undeniably paramount to securitisation theory, especially in non-democratic settings when policy making could be less straightforward and traceable (Balzacq, 2010a; Wilkinson, 2007). For example, the targeted audience’s composition becomes complicated in the case of Russia, with its multi-national population, large territory and internal tensions within the public itself, such as, for instance, the migration problem in Moscow. The conflict between native-born Moscow inhabitants, people from other regions of Russia (especially the Caucasus), and Central Asian countries resulted in a long history of mutual distrust and even hatred (Vendina, 2013). Russia is home to a significant number of both Muslims and Christians, which may contribute to the implicit public expectation of an equal representation of the confessions in the securitisation audience in order for the public to accept securitisation moves. Or, alternately, they could be turned against each other as part of the securitisation process. Regardless of the outcome, the securitisation audience’s composition is greatly dependent on a securitisation actor’s ability to represent a given audience as capable and credible for securitisation purposes.

Thus, in the case of terrorism threat securitisation, the ultimate aim of securitisation – gaining more power and resources – is reliant on the targeted audience. This thesis approaches the question of targeted audiences following Côté's theorising of audiences' capabilities to support securitising actors that in turn would allow the actors to change typical political agendas within securitisation processes (Côté, 2016). The targeted audience should be able to influence legislative change in order for the securitisation purpose to be achieved. In that case, one can look into who would be the people capable of changing the terrorism-related legislation. Which brings us to the reinforcement of the idea that legislation can be evidence of successful securitisation.

However, the size of the audience will have an impact on the results of securitisation. For example, in the case of the Chechen terrorist threat securitisation in Russia, the audience for the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric was the general public. Considering that the general public cannot directly change terrorism-related laws, why was it chosen? The Kremlin targeted the general public on the wave of the Chechen conflict in order to be able to introduce new counterterrorism laws without public uproar. The Kremlin fostered the sense of fear in the general public, and when the proposed legislation changes had been presented to the public, it was in agreement with the government that those were necessary measures.

Balzacq (2010a) argues that the existing audience ultimately shapes possibilities for securitisation moves. The audience is not reactive in securitisation theory, it is proactive in a sense that it forms a space where securitisation becomes possible. Côté (2016) emphasises the definition of a securitisation audience as an entity that contributes to the securitisation process and not only possesses certain characteristics (agency vs the absence of thereof) but allows it to pre-empt the securitisation analysis being overly biased towards using the Western definitions of audience and agency. Thus, the definitions used in securitisation analysis contribute to the securitisation process and an explicit conceptualisation can make the audience's analysis more flexible and case-oriented.

The presence of a certain type of audience partly organises securitisation moves by setting up a range of existing audience characteristics. Such characteristics, if targeted in speech acts, could ensure that it is the targeted audience that receives the messages, so a particular audience might be more likely to respond to a certain securitisation language. The idea of the securitisation audience representing collective identities in society rather than individual identities shapes the understanding of what we would call the audience for a given securitisation move in a given situation (Hansen, 2000; Wilkinson, 2007). The response from the securitisation audience can be different, for example, it can be formal by policy makers or informal/moral on the part of the general public (Kaunert & Leonard, 2011).

According to Salter (2010) a few questions should guide our analysis of the public acceptance or rejection of securitisation moves: "Is the description of the threat as existential accepted or rejected? Is the solution to the threat accepted or rejected?" (p. 120). At this stage a researcher should establish the composition of the securitisation audience, and the reaction of the audience to the securitisation move: did the audience accept or reject the staging of an issue as threatening to their existence? Buzan et al. (1998) focus on the approval of emergency measures, not necessarily their immediate implementation. They highlight that some type of acceptance by the audience is required, but not necessarily the enforcement of proposed measures (Buzan et al., 1998). However, there are more radical takes on the issue, as Floyd (2016) emphasises in the implementation of emergency measures or policies as the sign of an audience's acceptance.

The question that then arises is how can we trace securitisation moves and audiences' responses to them? Vultee (2010), for example, notes that the media can be used to identify the audience's acceptance of securitisation moves: "Media acceptance of frames is only one link in the larger chain of public acceptance essential to a successful securitizing move" (p. 45). Thus, the media's participation in securitisation is highly important (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).[16] The final phase of a securitisation process is when the public approves of a securitising attempt after which "the securitising agent can obtain permission to override rules" and the public (or a certain part of the public that constitutes a securitisation audience to claim nationwide approval) should express its compliance with the new policy (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24). Thus, according to the initial theorising of the Copenhagen School, it is impossible to securitise an issue if the targeted audience rejects the proposition.

The concept of the audience's acceptance or rejection of securitisation moves is recognised as one of the most important contributions of the Copenhagen School, alongside the enlargement of the security threat conceptualisation and speech act theorising (Balzacq 2005, 2010a; Watson, 2012). McDonald (2008) notes that it is paramount to pay attention to "the questions of why particular representations of threat resonate with particular communities, and how particular actors are either empowered or marginalized in 'speaking' security" (p. 564). Clearly, certain groups in society could be not only marginalised in speaking about security, but also never make it to the public sphere to enter the security debate.[17]

The securitisation framework can be useful for understanding how security issues, especially terrorist threats after 9/11, were used to create a new layout of politics where the terrorist threat is institutionalised and is dealt with within a certain political framework (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Lacher, 2008). As Huysmans and Buonfino (2008) aptly note, terrorism has become inseparable from modern politics, producing more different outcomes than could have been imagined:

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[16] For the role of media in securitisation also see Hass, R. (2009). The role of media in conflict and their influence on securitisation. *The International Spectator*, *44(4),* 77–91.

[17] For an excellent analysis of the absence of gender and the importance of silence in securitisation theory see Hansen, L. (2000). The Little Mermaid's silent security dilemma and the absence of gender in the Copenhagen School. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies, 29*(2), 285–306. http://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290020501

> Since 11 September 2001 terrorism has become a priority for governments around the world. More often than not, this priority has involved rhetoric of exclusion and fear of foreigners combined with a political demand for intensifying control of the cross-border movement of people. (p. 766)

One could argue that terrorism today is more than just a threat, it is a part of everyday life, it exists in the background of almost every main political decision made and is embedded into political structures. For example, the problem with refugees fleeing Syria and 'invading' Europe is partially fuelled by global actors fighting ISIS in the region. The significant increase in the inflow of asylum-seekers to Europe evoked certain political moves from European leaders to counteract it. Aradau (2008) notes that it did not necessarily result in the improvement of quality of said responses:

> The life of refugees and asylum seekers can be valued as they are provided with food, shelter, and even medical assistance, but are in principle excluded from the political community. They are to be saved from sinking boats only to be deported to their country of origin. By bringing the condition of politics upon the precondition for acting as a political subject, the discourse of life preservation closes down struggles about the kind of life that people can live. (p. 73)

Thus, political structures that are in place to deal with certain security issues can be relevant and efficient ("refugees are saved") at their face value but lack the reflection on how mainstream thinking regarding those issues is embedded into politics ("sending them back is the solution"). However, individuals and societies matter no less, as public opinions can greatly influence political decisions, but both levels are often underestimated and not considered part of security studies.[18]

Securitisation theory allows us to bring in new insights and analyse, in this case, how such an inflow of refugees could improve or hinder the domestic or foreign policy making if treated in different ways. For example, refugees could be portrayed as dangerous and threatening to win over the certain parts of society or they could be shown as immigrants that need help. The refugee question does not belong to the neorealist reading of security and it would be outside the traditional military threat analysis framework. Securitisation theory can be used to analyse it, thus enriching the analysis and giving a researcher more space for establishing causal connections.

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[18] Baldwin (1997) in his analysis of security conceptualisation argues that almost any type of security analysis can be applicable at individual or societal level, but neither an individual nor society is considered to be a constituent part of security threat creation and perception.

3.2.4 The importance of securitisation context

McDonald (2008) notes that "Ultimately, those interested in the construction of security must pay attention to the social, political and historical contexts in which particular discourses of security (even those defined narrowly in terms of the designation and articulation of threat) become possible" (p. 573). The analysis of securitisation moves as multidimensional processes can represent a challenge, particularly in places where free speech and other freedoms are restricted. Context is important as it gives depth to the analysis of various events and allows one to understand power relations between a securitising actor and a targeted audience (Stritzel, 2007). As Barthwal-Datta (2009) aptly notices "When analysing security in developing states and regions, these [Euro-American model] assumptions work to produce a security picture which does not take into account the local socio-political context and security actors other than the state" (p. 278). In a case of securitisation, when three groups of actors (a referent object, a securitising actor, and an audience) are participating (even involuntarily) in the process, the context helps to find the right focus to understand whom these groups represent and what they stand for. Stritzel (2012) argues that context and historical background are paramount for the analysis of a speech act:

> the performative power of a speech act cannot only be captured in the abstract but needs to be contextually located within broader structures of meaning and power, both synchronically and diachronically. In other words, speech acts need to be related to and analysed within the context of

> specific social settings and textual fields, as well as broader historical sequences and continuities. (p. 553)

Common history can be used as securitisation language in securitisation moves, for example, the concept of brotherhood between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples were used to guide the public opinion to support the possibility of returning the Crimean Peninsula to Russia. However, without an understanding of the Soviet legacy and political structures that remained in place after the collapse of the union it could be difficult to grasp why certain political figures have greater political power in Russia than they would have in more transparent democratic settings. For example, the rise of Vladimir Putin to the top of Russian political circles is hardly understandable from the democratic point of view but it became more comprehensible when the Soviet tradition of naming a political successor is taken into consideration. Wilkinson (2007) shows the importance of the context for securitisation in the case of Central Asia: the limitation to the state level activities and the focus on Russia as the only player in the security sphere (both in politics and the media) are claimed to be insufficient for the full analysis of any given security threat. Thus, the importance of historical and cultural research of securitisation context should not be underestimated.

3.3 Terrorism in Securitisation Analysis

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 changed the field of terrorist threat perception and counterterrorist responses forever. The destruction of iconic Twin Towers that was broadcasted all over the globe started a new political era in which terrorist threats and attacks are closely intertwined with everyday politics. After the 9/11 attack the threat of terrorism has been elevated to the level of war, and the “war on terror” should itself be seen as the first successful securitisation move (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019). This move helped to validate a profound military response exercised by the US, which has, in turn, influenced international politics in many ways. States have actively proclaimed changes in their political routine in the immediate aftershock of 9/11, committing to the cause of eradicating terrorism (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019).

The political consequences of 9/11 are hard to overestimate as it has provoked far-reaching changes in both American and international politics. For example, the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act) included amendments that were illustrative the fear of new terrorist attacks and significantly affected people's lives: indefinite detentions, the uncontrolled mass surveillance of phones, and the expansion of national agencies' authority (107th Congress, 2001). These radical political changes are the result of the post 9/11 fear and shock, and they showed the world the way America wants to deal with the terrorist threat. To put it in other words, the securitisation that followed the 9/11 attack changed not only how American politics is conducted but also how security is theorised:

> The securitisation of terrorism is, therefore, not only represented by marking terrorism as a security issue, it is also solidified in the organisation of security policy-making within the US state. As such, the impact of a 'war on terror' provides an important moment for analysing the re-articulation of what security is in the US, and, in theoretical terms, for reaffirming the importance of a relationship between the production of threat and the institutionalisation of threat response. (Mabee, 2007, p. 385)

Thus, one can argue that the securitisation of the terrorist threat in the US on the wave of 9/11 was not only successful but later massively institutionalised around the world.

Another example, the European Union (EU), went down a slightly different but remarkable path. The 9/11 attack resulted in the unification of EU member states' extradition legislation and new laws defining terrorism were adapted, as "the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 became a normative defining point for European integration" (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019, p. 270). Even though the European states have not been directly hit by 9/11, the rhetoric surrounding the attack was aimed to convey that it is not only the American lives that are in danger but the civilized world:

> 9/11 was therefore used by some actors to convince the EU member states that, although some of them may continue to face threats from ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorist groups, they now all faced one major, collective terrorist threat, embodied at the time by al-Qaeda. This was a crucial development as it paved the way for the development of EU counter-terrorism cooperation for the first time, which subsequently became institutionalised and routinised in EU formats. (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019, p. 273)

Thus, the EU example illustrates that the securitisation of the terrorist threat is possible not only in any political setting, democratic or otherwise, but also can transcend geographical and political boundaries. This notion of collective securitisation expands our understanding of how security threats come to be and are acted upon, as well as reiterating the constructivist underpinning of securitisation theory (Sperling & Webber, 2019).

However, this active period of 2001-2004, which is characterised by significant changes in European politics and legislation, was followed by a period of inaction. Kaunert and Léonard (2019) argue that it reveals a pattern: “Terrorist attacks tend to lead to a spike in the number of EU counter-terrorism policy initiatives, to be followed by a period of deceleration until a new terrorist attack pushes terrorism to the top of the policy agenda once more” (p. 271). Thus, terrorist threat securitisation can be characterised by both an ample response after a terrorist act and the repetition of such behaviour after another terrorist threat arises. This pattern will also be seen in the following chapters on securitisation in the Russian Federation; the similarities of terrorist threat securitisation both in the West and Russia reaffirm the universality of securitisation as a political process capable of bringing change to various political systems. The existence of a democratic political system does not prevent securitisation processes from happening. The relationship between state and society are easily affected as the result of securitisation in any political system, as it can be seen especially on the example of the American post-9/11 securitisation processes (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019; Mabee, 2007).

To understand how the terrorism threat can be used for securitisation purposes, it is important to mention the complexity of the definition of terrorism. There is no consensus over what terrorism is and how it should be defined (Kovač, 2007; Scharf, 2004; Sezgin, 2007). As Kronenwetter (2004) aptly notes, “one thing we know for sure: terrorism is wrong” (p. 4). Many social science scholars have attempted to define terrorism (B. Hoffman, 1998, 2006; J. Hoffman, 2007; Schmid, 2004, 2013; Weinberg, 2005). The terrorism definition debate is slightly different in various fields: in psychology, the focus is more on the motivations of terrorists (Crenshaw, 1981; Kamm, 2008; Victoroff, 2005); in law, the concern is about the creation and application of criminal law condemning terrorism, and future process of checks and balances after its implementation, as well as the functionality of international counterterrorism agreements (Saul, 2005; Scharf, 2004).[19] Laqueur (1977) argued that it would be virtually impossible to create a definition of terrorism because terrorist activities vary so much and are so multifaceted and versatile that any attempt to consolidate such activities into one working definition is unmanageable. Kronenwetter (2004) argues that a definition of terrorism which was created by governments is intrinsically self-serving, implying that such definition would suit a state’s agenda. Thus, terrorism becomes a highly politicised issue. Ganor (2002) believes that the creation of an objective definition of terrorism is inevitable, but Richards (2012) opposes this point of view and claims that a universal definition of terrorism might be almost impossible to achieve. He argues that a universal definition would be so vague it would blur a terrorism definition’s boundaries to an extent that when the definition would become so all-embracing it would be almost meaningless, and worthless in practice. Mullins and Thurman (2011) highlight that there is no consensus over who is a terrorist and what terrorism is, therefore, collecting and interpreting data about terrorism is essentially a controversial task. Masters (2008) notes the challenge of defining terrorism using the practices terrorists employ, emphases that the inclusion of every type of terrorist attack into the definition makes it ultimately unusable. Different views on how to define terrorism mentioned above is not an exhaustive list, but a small sample of the spectrum of views on the matter. As it can be clearly seen, there is no agreement on what terrorism is and the attempts to define it are rather different.

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[19] For the criminological perspective see, for example, Freilich, J. D., & LaFree, G. (2015). Criminology theory and terrorism: introduction to the special issue*,* *27*(1), 1-8, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2014.959405; for the economics perspective see, for example, Sandler, T. (2015). Terrorism and counterterrorism: an overview. *Oxford Economic Papers*, *67*(1), 1-20.

However, it is possible to identify two main approaches to defining terrorism: the criminalising approach and the war time approach (Martin & Weinberg, 2014). The core difference between the two is in the understanding of what constitutes a terrorist act and who are terrorists. The criminalising approach implies the recognition of terrorism as a crime and the consistent usage of law to deal with terrorists and consequences of their activities (Kovač, 2007). Ideally it should mean that an act of terrorism is defined in clean and logical terms, leaving no room for doubt and political manipulation, and with each act of terrorism prosecuted according to a criminal code. Therefore, states are expected to deal with terrorism using the existing legal framework, and if it is an international matter then international norms and laws should be applied (Kovač, 2007; Saul, 2005). Consequently, no illegal practices should be allowed when dealing with terrorist issues, suggesting that domestic laws and international norms and conventions should be respected and followed rigorously. Thus, practices such as renditions or torture should cease to exist. Fighting terrorism should not be the reason for illegal activities. Securitisation theory helps to analyse how states can avoid falling into this legal trap by introducing emergency measures to fight terrorists. The securitisation process allows the movement of security issues and consequent responses beyond normal politics.

The wartime approach suggests identification of a terrorist act as a war crime (Banks, 2005). Thus, according to the war crime approach, terrorist formations should be considered as military formations, their actions as actions in war, which has to be treated as such (Martin & Weinberg, 2014). Schmid (2004a) argues that even if terrorists neglect the rule of war, essentially terrorist organisations are military formations. Undeniably, the wartime approach gives the terrorist threat a great sense of importance and uniqueness. Andréani (2008) aptly sums up this concern using an illustrative example of the war on terror waged by the USA after the 9/11 attack: “for themselves the Americans demand all the benefits of war in dealing with their foes, while denying them any protection. They claim to be at war while denying their enemies the right to be at war with them” (p. 122). Thus, terrorists might find themselves being outside of law quite literally – no one would listen to their grievances, and if captured, they would still remain outside the law, thus not guaranteed any humane treatment at all. As Roach (2011) notes, “the United States’ advanced degree of legalism may encourage the use of extralegal approaches and those based more on a war model than a crime model” (p. 10). Clearly, such juxtaposition makes counterterrorism efforts more difficult while political manipulation of the terrorist threat becomes more alluring. If terrorism is understood as a crime and is subsequently dealt with in accordance to domestic laws, the case should be prosecuted by the police. However, in reality terrorism is often in national security jurisdiction, which takes the case of terrorism out of domestic criminal law jurisdiction. As the state is the entity making and enforcing the laws, the wartime approach might make it easier to exploit political labelling and use counterterrorism legislation not for fighting terrorism but for fighting political opponents of the current regime.

Apart from difficulties with defining terrorism on the domestic level, defining it internationally is not any easier. Roach (2011), in his writing about the United Nations’ response to 9/11, critically assesses the UN’s inability to provide a coherent definition of terrorism, or even define terrorism using more general criteria. Thus, he argues, the Security Council’s primary focus on non-state actors involved in terrorism and the absence of guidance for states drafting counterterrorism laws resulted in many countries dealing with terrorism on the national level in the way they deemed appropriate (Roach, 2011). Thus, without a coherent international understanding of what terrorism is, states created their own self-serving, complicated, and all-encompassing definitions of terrorism which are prone to political abuse, or they started to use non-criminal legislation, for instance, immigration laws, to deal with terrorism (Ramraj, Hor & Roach, 2005). As this thesis will show in following chapters using the example of the Russian Federation, the definition of terrorism plays a paramount role in the securitisation process.

Besides quite radical and sometimes extreme differences in how we think about terrorism, there are more moderate opinions. When we try to theorise terrorism, a majority of definitions of terrorism in the contemporary world represents a synthesis between the criminal and wartime approaches. Schmid (2004a, 2005, 2011) analysed more than one hundred definitions of terrorism and argues for a definition that embraces both schools of thought, by embedding a wartime argument into a legislative system. Scharf (2004) aptly sums up this approach by defining terrorism as “the peacetime equivalent of war crimes” (p. 360). The significance of such an approach can be illustrated by the fact that this definition is used by the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The terrorist threat represents an opportunity for securitisation theory application. Terrorism is connected to many political issues such as immigration, asylum seeking, border control, visa and passport control, religious extremism and radicalisation, clandestine military operations, openness and the transparency of governance, to name a few. The terrorist threat has been institutionalised since 9/11 and embedded into legislation: The Patriot Act in the US, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) and Prevent strategy in the UK, creating a spill-over effect all over the world (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008). Roe (2008) notes that the ATCSA is an example of legislation fast-tracking that points to the need for timely answers to the terrorism threat, which was agreed to require an emergency response. Even if Roe (2008) does not believe that the rushed procedure resulted in less debate over the legislation change, it is rather clear that the terrorist threat was deemed highly important as it had created the need for an urgent legislation change. Thus, the threat of terrorism has a proven record of influencing important political decisions.

Terrorism represents an interesting case for securitisation analysis, because threats can be presented as existential even when they are not, as Malik (2015) shows in the case of Iraq invasion in 2003. Different authors writing about securitisation and terrorism mention various aspects of the securitisation analysis that can help to produce a better understanding of the securitisation of terrorism. A definition of terrorism might not be of essential importance as long as political elites can frame an issue using the threat of terrorism (Eroukhmanoff, 2015; Staun, 2010). This thesis follows an official definition of terrorism by the states analysed, hence the events/organisations/people labelled as terrorist are seen as such according to official statements. Thus, it is more of a question of a securitising actor having enough power to do what they desire than a question of the nature of terrorism.

3.4 Success of Securitisation

How can we know that securitisation rhetoric was successful? An evaluation of securitisation and its consequences could be not a straightforward process, so Buzan et al. (1998) propose that securitisation is successful when an issue that was securitised moves out of a normal political agenda by being assigned extraordinary measures. Successful securitisation transforms the political set up in a state and impacts the perceptions of security threats in society. According to Buzan et al. (1998), "[a] successful securitization thus has three components (or steps): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules" (p. 26). The results of securitisation can be different, varying from an intended result, to an unexpected outcome or the absence of any consequences (failed securitisation). The usage of securitisation rhetoric can bring significant political changes and Salter (2010) recommends paying attention to the results of securitisation, asking a question: "Are new or emergency powers accorded to the securitizing agent?" (p. 120). How the securitising actor reacted to the result of the securitisation move can be illustrative: in the case of successful securitisation was it a success or a compromise in their understanding of options that were available? The reaction from the securitising actor can also be rather expressive, especially when the securitisation act did not achieve the needed level of emergency response approval and the actor decided to continue securitising moves. In the US, for example, terrorism has moved from being one of many security threats to being one of the most important national security threats, with the Patriot Act being reflective of the legislative change. Another example discussed by Richards (2012) shows changes in the British government's Prevent strategy that focuses on ideology as "extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also a part of a terrorist ideology" (p. 17). The Prevent strategy was amended to reflect the British government's thinking regarding terrorism; it illustrates both how terrorism has been moved beyond normal politics. It points towards the uniqueness of the terrorist threat as this confronting terrorist ideology requires a special strategy document. In addition, the subjectivity of security threats can be seen, because defining non-violent ideology as terrorism is rather controversial and problematic as it significantly diffuses the definition of terrorism to an almost non-operational definition. Thus, the changes that happen during and after successful securitisation should be a part of the analysis of political change, not a mere signifier that securitisation was successful.

Even though Buzan et al. (1998) argue that the implementation of emergency policies is not required for successful securitisation, it is paramount not to stop the analysis on the stage of identifying securitisation moves, as these moves may be a part of a bigger securitising agenda. Securitisation theory is rather versatile on how the results of securitisation can be analysed. Buzan et al. (1998) argue that the assigned changes are a requirement for securitisation to be called successful, leaving it up to an observer to see whether those accorded changes get implemented in reality as policy changes or other legislation alterations. However, analysing securitisation as a process that results only in the suspension of normal rules of politics does not reflect the spectrum of political decisions that are possible within the security sphere, restricting opportunities for incorporating the results of securitisation into normal politics (Wolff, 2009). According to the original theorising of the Copenhagen School, securitisation is successful when the emergency measures are proclaimed, but Buzan et al. (1998) do not explain how the results of securitisation might become the new rules of normal politics. McDonald (2008) emphasises the danger of under-theorising the division between normal politics and emergency politics, pointing out that the lack of such theorising may portray securitisation as regressive and reactive, which does not adequately reflect the political reality, where emergency measures could be a part of normal politics:

> It depicts security as a failure of 'normal politics' rather than recognizing security as a site of contestation and therefore for (even emancipatory) change. This is especially important if security is still that most powerful of political categories — defining political priority, a community's identity and its core values. The focus only on the negative designation of threat serves the interests of those who benefit from dominant negative and exclusionary articulations of threat in contemporary international politics, further silencing voices articulating alternative visions for what security means and how it might be realized. (p. 580)

Thus, the question whether the implementation of emergency policies adds an additional dimension to the process of securitisation is a researcher's decision, because such implementation is not required by the original securitisation framework offered by the Copenhagen School (Buzan et al., 1998).

A further division that has appeared within securitisation theory relates to the ways in which the invocation/implementation of emergency measures are seen in securitisation analysis. The founders of the Copenhagen School advocate that the implementation of emergency measures is not paramount, the invocation of such measures by the securitisation actor receiving power to override normal politics is enough for a successful securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998). However, some scholars disagree and argue that securitising actors have the power to incorporate a security threat into normal politics using the securitisation approach, thus changing normal politics, not only overriding it (Balzacq, 2010a; Bigo, 2000, 2002; Huysmans, 2002, 2006). These scholars note that rejecting the possibility of emergency measures being included into normal politics may result in the under-theorising of securitisation's impact on the political arena. Thus, if securitisation is successful, and an issue is moved beyond normal politics or, more precisely, beyond existing political practices that are currently in place to deal with the issue, then, consequently, legislation and political practices may be changed in order to reflect on the security challenge. Then it is possible to argue that the succeeding political tradition (that was changed because of the issue that had been successfully securitised) would become part of normal politics. Thus, securitisation may be considered more as a political tool than as an end game: as a process of bringing the political change, not the result on its own (Balzacq, 2010a).

Scholars advancing this argument would become known as the Paris School of security; they see securitisation moves as part of normal politics, arguing that issues can be securitised even if they haven't reached emergency level approval (C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006). As the securitisation theory field keeps developing, this debate is still ongoing, with Neal (2010), for example, expressing scepticism about securitisation theory's ability to properly capture the relation between securitising actors and the audience. He claims that the Copenhagen School does not go deep enough into the theorising of the power that securitising actors possess, and how it was formed and developed and what they can accomplish using it. Bourbeau (2014) argues that the merge of the exceptionalist approach and the routine approach to security might be the answer to many methodological questions that the Copenhagen School has been asked. Different developments in securitisation theory can help us to expand the possibilities of the theory's implementation in the cases of terrorist threat securitisation (Salter, 2010).

In this thesis I follow the Copenhagen School's original approach to the defining the moment when the targeted audience accepts the securitisation rhetoric. Due to the nature of the terrorism threat and counterterrorism practices, it could be difficult for an observer to make a judgement regarding whether or not any measures were implemented. The government's proclamation of emergency measures, however, is more transparent and publicly visible. In addition, if the securitisation audience accepts the need for emergency measures, the securitising actor gains power regardless of the implementation of such measures.

There are ways to increase the chances of securitisation becoming successful, and these are referred to by Buzan et al. (1998) as facilitating conditions (p. 32). McDonald (2008) notices that "dynamics such as the role of "facilitating conditions" and the "audience" are so undertheorized as to ultimately remain outside the [securitisation] framework itself and would benefit from being both brought in and drawn out" (p. 564).[20] In addition, a profound understanding of the targeted audience, its composition, characteristics, and language that appeals to the audience can be an advantage for a securitising actor, as Salter (2010) suggests: "Securitizing moves in the popular setting use a unique language with a particular heritage, history, and heft - fundamentally different from securitizing moves within elite or technocratic settings" (p. 117). It is an important part of securitisation analysis to pay attention to such special securitisation language which is used to convey a message to a targeted audience.

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[20] For more on facilitating conditions see Watson, S. D. (2012). "Framing" the Copenhagen School: integrating the literature on threat construction. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies, 40*(2), 279–301; Floyd, R. (2016). Extraordinary or ordinary emergency measures: what, and who, defines the "success" of securitization? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *29*(2); Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a theory of securitization: Copenhagen and beyond. *European journal of international relations*, *13*(3), 357-383.

Another important constituent part of securitisation process is the absence of speech. When a speech act is discussed, we tend to focus on what has been said and done, analysing the words have been used and the context in which they were said (Huysmans, 2011). The absence of speech, on the contrary, receives less attention, although it can represent a powerful contribution to securitisation (Hansen, 2000). The absence of speech can be seen in two ways: when certain parts of society do not get an opportunity to speak up or when the result of securitisation is the silencing of certain communities. In the first scenario, the absence of speech, when particular communities do not have the right to talk about security, represents a valuable insight into a political setup of society: the exclusion of certain groups from public debate on security issues can shape the securitisation process (Hansen, 2000). As Hansen (2000) describes it: "'Security as silence' occurs when insecurity cannot be voiced, when raising something as a security problem is impossible or might even aggravate the threat being faced" (p. 287).

In the second scenario, the absence of speech is an outcome of securitisation: a part of society loses an opportunity to express their opinions to the government or the public in a meaningful way as the desired result of securitisation processes. In this case, securitisation processes can be used to silence political opponents and marginalise parts of society that people in power see as dangerous to their cause. In other words, the absence of public debate over an issue at stake can be seen as a successful result of securitisation: the securitising actor does not need to worry about a possible opposition group anymore. Thus, the absence of speech in securitisation can play a vital role in shaping the securitisation rhetoric.

Securitisation's consequences can be negative as well, as Lazaridis and Wadia (2015) note, "The clamour for greater securitisation has not created a safer European society. Rather, it has created a society which permanently lives in fear of real or imaginary threats" (p. 12). Securitisation can work not only as a unifier for society, but it can also cause tensions with neighbours and result in a fall-out in relations (Zaiotti, 2009). The securitisation language would be different in each case; nonetheless, it is paramount to reveal the patterns that have been used to successfully securitise an issue as they can be used again.

A few scholars point out that the Copenhagen School's theorising is too focused on the outcome, not the process of securitisation, thus re-emphasising the importance of success in securitisation, as well as perpetuating the dichotomy of successful/unsuccessful securitisation (Wilkinson, 2007; McDonald, 2008; Roe, 2012). The literature on the issue of failed securitisation attempts is rather scarce (Salter, 2010), with a few noticeable exceptions such as Wilkinson (2007), although she sees a failed securitisation attempt as instrumental to the strengthening of a successful securitisation attempt of a non-state actor and does not go into much detail why one attempt failed and another succeeded. Åtland and Ven Bruusgaard (2009) present another interesting account of a failed securitisation on the example of the *Electron* incident, when a Russian trawler *Electron* was caught fishing illegally in Norwegian waters. They highlight that the result of securitisation greatly depends on the ability of securitising actors to move an issue from being politicised to being securitised (Åtland & Ven Bruusgaard, 2009). In addition, it is important to note that the analysis of the failed securitisation attempt is harder to trace: when the securitisation move is successful, it is easier to trace the relationships between the speech act and the audience response as there is a result in a form of political change.

In the case of unsuccessful securitisation, the relationships between speech acts and the audience are more obscure and non-linear, as there may be no response and no change in politics. This makes the judgement of what was done wrong rather problematic, as it could be the fault of either securitisation actor or improper staging of the threat. A few scholars call for a better understanding of the process of securitisation and less bias towards successful securitisation (Abrahamsen 2005; Bourbeau 2011; Roe 2008; Salter 2008, 2010; Vuori 2008). Salter has been working on a new matrix tool to move away from successful/failed securitisation dichotomy, but unsuccessful/failed securitisation remains largely under-theorised (Salter, 2008, 2010).

3.5 Critique and Further Development of the Copenhagen School

The Copenhagen School has been criticised for being methodologically biased towards the application of European concepts such as society, identity, and security (Barthwal-Datta, 2009; Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Wilkinson, 2007). It is an important observation, known as the orientalist critique of the Copenhagen School. The majority of the places in the world which are facing conflicts and might be of interest to securitisation theory application are, mostly, non-Western, such as the Middle East, Asia or Africa.[21] Wilkinson (2007) argues that the societal sector is the most vulnerable to such mistreatment and prone to miscalculations based on the "Westphalian straitjacket thinking" (p. 11). The definitions of society, identity, and nation and their respective theorising would influence how securitisation framework is applied. How society (a part of which essentially constitutes a securitisation audience) is understood in a particular context will ultimately shape how the process of securitisation is portrayed and understood in a given country. Securitisation can challenge and restrict other policies within the same country, especially those aimed at more liberal/democratic agenda (Leonard, 2009).[22]

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[21] For an excellent overview of European security dynamics in the CS see Huysmans, J. (1998). Revisiting Copenhagen: or, on the creative development of a security studies agenda in Europe. *European journal of international relations*, *4*(4), 479-505.

[22] For the conceptualisation of religion within the CS see Sheikh, M. K. (2014). The religious challenge to securitisation theory. *Millennium*, *43*(1), 252-272.

Vuori (2008) notes that the democratic bias greatly influenced the main concepts of society, politics, and security that securitisation theory uses. Thus, the question a researcher should ask when securitisation as a theoretical framework is being discussed: does the usage of Western concepts imply the pre-existence of a democratic framework in the analysis? Subsequently, if securitisation theory is to be applied to a non-democratic state, should the understanding of society, public sphere, and context be changed to reflect the conceptualisation of these securitisation constituents by a given state? For example, Huysmans and Buonfino (2008) outline the case of the UK parliamentary debates on the issues of terrorism/counterterrorism and its links to questions regarding immigration and asylum seekers. They brilliantly show the process of public securitisation of immigration and asylum-seeking concerns, illustrating their case with speeches of members of parliament, clearly showing the sequence of securitising moves and moves aimed to counter those securitisation attempts. Huysmans and Buonfino (2008) conclude that “the findings suggest that there is considerable reluctance within the political elite to introduce or especially sustain the connection between migration and terrorism too intensely in public debate” (p. 766). It brings us to the question: what if the UK had not had a framework for opposition to express opinions publicly, would migration have been securitised in the relation to terrorism? Was it the possibility of a debate that prevented such securitisation from happening? Although it might be not possible to fully answer these questions, the application of securitisation framework in a non-democratic context is analytically challenging.

A few scholars have noted that securitisation theory is biased toward Western concepts of society and security but at the same time argued that securitisation theory’s application in non-liberal settings is possible (Jackson, 2006; Kent, 2006). For example, Vuori (2008) showed that securitisation theory can be applied in non-liberal circumstances in the example of the Peoples Republic of China, while Kent (2006) applied securitisation theory to Cambodia. Febrica (2010) argues that in the case of Singapore, “a soft authoritarian regime”, a counterterrorism agenda was used to gain public endorsement of the “war of terror”, as a demonstration to the citizens that the government is counterterrorism proactive (pp. 573-576). During this campaign officials made a call for the public to be “vigilant” and citizens supported the campaign, but in the background the Singaporean government strengthened the law on detention and increased internet surveillance (Ibid). This went almost unnoticed by the general public, and, according to Febrica (2010), as in the case of Singapore, the society’s support during the “war on terror” campaign did not prevent the government from the oppression of political opponents afterward. Securitisation theory offers a possible explanation of a securitising actor’s motives to use the terrorism threat as an umbrella for other threats. Even if the threat might not be necessarily real, political opposition might be framed as a threat in this context without being an immediate or even potential threat to the country but merely to the regime (Carrera, 2006; Malik, 2015).

In addition, the Copenhagen School has been critiqued for being too simplistic about complex security problems (Watson, 2012; Wilkinson, 2007). It is not only state, but also non-state actors that may have competing or clashing agendas reflected in different securitisation moves, which, in turn, may or may not be successful. Tracing all securitisation moves and their consequences has proven to be a difficult task. Wilkinson (2007) notes that even if a securitisation move is unsuccessful on its own, a few unsuccessful securitisation moves united may contribute a successful securitisation move, however this result might not be intentional or desired. The nature of political reality is rarely linear, with many events happening at the same time, including different actors with various agendas being involved. Thus, a few parallel processes of securitisation are possible.

Contrary to the convenience of simplicity offered by the Copenhagen School, according to Wilkinson (2007), securitisation may be a restrictive analytical tool, overlooking important events and data that do not fit into its framework. However, this undertheorising can be overcome, as she concludes: “the incorporation of a less linear conception of the relationship between securitizing actors and referent objects to reflect the possibility of their mutual and simultaneous constitution should not present any significant difficulty” (p. 22). Rethinking the linearity of time as presented by the CS is useful as the acceptance of the possibility of a few securitisation processes happening at the same time allows an observer to trace securitisation rhetoric at different levels of analysis.[23] In my thesis I am looking at securitisation process at domestic, regional, and international levels, so these securitisation processes can be parallel or consequent. Thus, it is important to be clear on the possibility of them being parallel within the securitisation framework.

Another way of applying the securitisation principles that need to be mentioned is how the threat of terrorism is used to securitise other policies. For example, we can see the threat of terrorism mentioned in the relation to health issues (Hough, 2015), immigration and the refugee question (Bourbeau, 2011; Doty, 1998; Rudolph, 2003; Van Munster, 2009; Watson, 2009), or environment (Hough, 2015; Trombetta, 2008). Lenz-Raymann (2014) shows how securitisation theory can be used for studying the securitisation of Islam in Central Asia, where the terrorist threat was one of the main reasons for such securitisation. Eroukhmanoff (2015) calls such securitisation a remote securitisation, highlighting that securitising actors can be thousands of miles away from a security issue, but it does not prevent them from securitising it if they have enough political power and legitimacy. On the example of the Sahara, Lacher (2008) shows that the results of counterterrorism securitisation do not necessarily serve the purpose of more securitisation. Thus, the threat of terrorism has been analysed not only as a threat having been securitised but also as a threat that can help to securitise other issues.

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[23] For the critique of inexplicit conceptualisation of time in the Copenhagen School’s see, for example Balzacq, T. (2010). A theory of securitization: origins, core assumptions, and variants. In T. Balzacq (Ed.), *Securitization Theory: how security problems emerge and dissolve* (pp. 1–30). http://doi.org/10.4324/9780203868508; Salter, M. B., & Mutlu, C. E. (2013). Securitisation and Diego Garcia. *Review of International Studies Review of International Studies Review of International Studies*, *39*(6), 815–834. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210512000587.

3.6 Summary

As I showed in this chapter, securitisation theory is an analytical tool that can be used to shed some light on how perceived threats can become security threats and lead to political change. The Copenhagen School offers a new way of seeing security, as a social construct, as an arena where different interests meet and either collide or assimilate, bringing political change. Buzan et al. (1998) advocate for securitisation being a theory that can move our understanding of security beyond the neorealist perspective, allowing to incorporate more aspects into security analysis. Securitisation theory suits the aim of this thesis– it provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for the analysis of the terrorist threat and allows the study of the consequences of the terrorist threat presence and development in the political sphere.

Securitisation theory helps to see beyond emotional responses to the terrorist threat, there is no need to choose whether to see the terrorist threat as a temporary threat or the only threat democracies fail to defeat. Denying exclusivity to any threat, securitisation theory helps to see patterns in the political sphere, as well as the political moves of certain figures that can tell a lot about where the state is headed and how it treats its own people. The terrorism sphere is naturally highly politicised and can be used to win the electorate or gain public support for the actions of an existing government. Securitisation theory allows us to follow such actions which are aimed to win over the electorate and bring in new policies.

Securitisation theory can help to analyse Russia's unique political set up in ways which differ from an ordinary policy analysis. The analysis of securitisation processes would allow us to understand the power balance within the political sphere more clearly – as securitising agents should possess enough power to be successful and be able to move a security issue beyond normal politics. Browning and McDonald (2011) call for more nuances in security studies scholarship, and this thesis contributes to the expansion of securitisation theory application. In a way this thesis challenges the existing underlying assumption of securitisation theory, namely the presence of the liberal democratic framework when securitisation analysis is being carried out. The case study of Russia will show that securitisation theory has more implementation capacity than only in liberal democratic states and it can be applied to different political regimes with minor adjustments. These adjustments might include, but not be limited to, a more rigorous approach to media sources and documents, and also following Hansen's (2000) warning regarding and including the absence of speech in securitisation analysis.

In this thesis I will trace the securitisation rhetoric regarding the terrorist threat in Russia and analyse how it changed and evolved over time. I use the original securitisation theory approach to define a speech act, as an illocutionary act, thus official government reports, media releases, and public speeches are considered to be "done in saying" (Wæver, 2015, p. 122). For the analysis, I use both Russian and English sources, drawing upon both official and unofficial sources, as well as semi-structured interviews conducted in January – September 2016 in Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. By applying securitisation framework at different levels of analysis (domestic, regional, and international) throughout this research, I will show how the terrorist threat was used by the Kremlin to solidify Putin's power and strengthen its grip on society domestically, increase Russia's influence regionally, and change how Russia is seen internationally.

The next chapter is devoted to the securitisation analysis of the formative years of the terrorist threat in Russia. It discusses how the terrorist threat became paramount in Russia's political life, how it was securitised and what consequences this securitisation brought, both politically and socially. Chapter 4 analyses main terrorist events in Russia, such as the apartment bombings in 1999, the Nord Ost hostage crisis (2002), and the Beslan Massacre (2004). I will show how the Kremlin changed the Russian domestic political climate appealing to the threat of terrorism, which would become a foundation for the securitisation of the terrorist threat in foreign policy.

Chapter 4 Domestic Securitisation: The Emergence and Development of the Chechen Terrorist Threat in Russia

In the last chapter I discussed securitisation theory, its origins, developments, and the significance of the theory for the analysis of terrorist threats. Securitisation theory allows us to analyse security threats in the political space, their formation and representation, and consequent changes. The securitisation framework helps not only to locate security threats but also identify securitisation actors and audiences that participate in securitisation processes: a unique feature that allows the incorporation of a social aspect into security analysis. Having argued in the previous chapter that securitisation theory is a suitable tool for the analysis of counterterrorist security discourse in Russia, this chapter starts a securitisation analysis of the terrorist threat in the Russian Federation.

The first step in answering the question of how the securitisation of the terrorist threat changed Russia, would be to look at the emergence of the terrorism threat in the country (both as an actual threat and as a perceived threat staged by the Kremlin). Securitisation theory, which has been discussed in Chapter 3, is used to analyse key terrorist events in Russia in order to show how the threat of terrorism has been presented by the Kremlin. I will examine how the terrorist threat became a significant part of Russian politics and how the Kremlin started to portray the Chechen terrorist threat as one of the main threats to Russia. This chapter covers the history of Chechen terrorism and Russian responses to it to illustrate why the historical context of the Chechen conflicts was useful for securitisation purposes. In addition, this chapter identifies the main peculiarities of the Chechen-Russian conflicts and their importance for the further securitisation of the terrorism threat in Russia.

The chapter starts with a short overview of historical events and the cultural peculiarities of Chechnya in particular and the North Caucasus in general. These details are essential for the understanding of the long-term conflict between Chechnya and Russia and the feasibility of the Chechen terrorist threat for securitisation purposes. Then the chapter proceeds with identifying and discussing the securitisation rhetoric in Russia after the 1999 apartment bombings. This was an important moment because it was when the Chechen terrorist threat started to be actively transformed from being portrayed as a separatist conflict to becoming a securitised one. The chapter continues with the discussion of how the securitisation rhetoric was delivered by the Kremlin, its development and changes after the terrorist acts in Moscow and Beslan that shook Russia to the core. The chapter concludes with the consequences of the terrorist threat securitisation on the domestic level, with a particular focus on legal and social changes in Russia.

4.1 Actors, Audiences, and Aims of Domestic Terrorist Threat Securitisation

In order to trace securitisation moves, one needs to pay attention to three unalienable parts of securitisation: a referent object, a securitisation actor, and a securitisation audience (Buzan et al., 1998). A referent object represents an official reason, “an excuse”, for securitisation. Something precious is in danger, and there is a need for emergency measures to protect it (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). The referent object for the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat in Russia is the future of the country. The Kremlin’s rhetoric regarding the situation in Chechnya has consistently linked Russia’s future survival as a state to the outcome of the terrorist situation in Chechnya, and to a certain extent in North Caucasus (Alekseev, 2000; The Kremlin Transcripts, 2000c). The Kremlin’s rhetoric emphasised that Russia’s fate would depend on how the terrorism threat was handled. The link between the Chechen terrorists and a more significant threat from Al Qaeda and Afghanistan served to illustrate not only the immediate danger to Chechnya but also to demonstrate a potential outcome of the threat (Alekseev, 2000). Thus, the survival of Russia is portrayed to be at stake, so the Kremlin’s rhetoric was delivering the message that if the public does not want to end up like Afghanistan, then they should support the Kremlin's hard line of counterterrorism.

In the case of the terrorist threat securitisation in Chechnya, the Kremlin is the main securitising actor. The Kremlin, as a collective representing the official political power in Russia, can be named as the securitising actor insofar as it "claims a need for and a right to treat it [an issue] by extraordinary means" (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 26). The Kremlin, often represented by Vladimir Putin, expressed the need and had the right to treat the terrorist issue by extraordinary means, as this chapter will discuss. It has to be mentioned that in this thesis the Kremlin is synonymous to the current mainstream Russian government (thus it might exclude the opposition's view) and is used to describe the leading force behind the formation of Russian politics.

During the Chechen campaigns, the Kremlin targeted two types of audience: domestic and international. The domestic audience included people within the Russian Federation; meanwhile, the international audience can be primarily seen as foreign policy leaders, both Western and post-Soviet. The domestic audience's support for the securitisation of terrorism that the Kremlin sought gave the Russian government a mandate to deal with the Chechen situation any way authorities seemed fit. This chapter progresses to discuss how it was done in detail, showing that public opinion about the Kremlin's counterterrorist response has changed over the years. The international audience in the Chechen matter is represented by foreign leaders and a drastic change in their perception of the Russian response to terrorism can be seen after 9/11 (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019; Mabee, 2007). This chapter touches on the rhetoric targeting the international audience to illustrate the omnipresence of the securitisation process. The main focus of the discussion in this chapter is, however, the terrorist threat securitisation on the domestic level.

The domestic audience of the terrorist threat securitisation was targeted in the Kremlin's portrayal of the situation in Chechnya, and the rhetoric implied the need to invoke emergency measures at some point. Vladimir Putin, chairing a Security Council meeting in 2000, was clear about the importance of the crisis in Chechnya for Russia. He said: "[Chechnya] has not just fallen out of Russia's legal and governmental orbit… [It] has fallen out of civilization, both Christian and Muslim" (The Kremlin Transcripts, 2000a). Thus, he emphasised that the events in Chechnya were not only outside of Russia's legal scope but also, presumably, violated the basic precepts of human civilization. While somewhat dramatic, this statement illustrates the way the situation in Chechnya has been portrayed to the domestic audience, steering public opinions in the direction of seeing Chechnya as the source of chaos and trouble. Later in the year, in July 2000, Putin, in his annual address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, stated: "The situation in the [Chechen] republic has become so difficult that its territory has become a platform for the expansion of terrorism into Russia" (The Kremlin Transcripts, 2000b). Putin has been clear and open on what the Kremlin sees as the cradle of the terrorist threat in the Russian Federation.

The platform for invoking emergency measures for the fight with terrorism was developed rather gradually and also portrayed in the foreign media. In July 2000, Putin gave an interview to a French newspaper Paris-Match, where he elaborated on the situation in Chechnya. He emphasised that Russia was on the forefront of the fight with international terrorism, which aimed to spread beyond Afghanistan's border and take over Central Asia and the Middle East (The Kremlin Transcripts, 2000c). Putin stressed the need for Russia to be strong in the face of the enemy and suggested that the West should be thankful: "Europe should be grateful to us and it should bow to us in recognition of our fight against international terrorism, which we have been conducting, unfortunately, single-handedly so far" (Ibid). He also touched on the religious conundrum in Chechnya, highlighting that

Chechnya was under the destructive influence of foreign Islamist radicals. Thus, the Kremlin was singling out the threat of terrorism as extremely dangerous for Russia and its neighbourhood before the 9/11 attack, as well as naming Chechnya as the weakest but the most critical point in Russia's fight with extremist Islamic movements. Later in the year, Putin, in an interview with Larry King in September, named the collapse of the Soviet Union and Russia's political and economic problems that followed as the main reason why the Kremlin overlooked the formation of the crisis in Chechnya (Niknikolay, 2008). In the interview Putin was open about the feeling of surprise the Kremlin experienced when the situation in Chechnya had started to unravel, he also emphasised the connections between the problems in Chechnya with foreign mercenaries, Sunni religious fundamentalism, and Afghanistan (Ibid). Thus, the Kremlin saw events in Chechnya as being rooted in the absence of Russian government in the North Caucasus region: something that showed that Chechnya's de facto independence was a mistake in the Kremlin's evaluation of the situation. Thus, as it can be seen from Putin's public appearances in the Western media, the rhetoric of Chechnya being the source of Russia's insecurity and the fear of terrorism had been presented to influence public opinions not only domestically but also abroad.

The aim of securitisation of the terrorist threat by the Kremlin is to gain more power and use the terrorist threat instrumentally to achieve political gains. The main objective of securitisation is to receive a political mandate for emergency measures, thus gaining power and resources that securitising actors can use any way they deem appropriate. This thesis argues that the ultimate aim of securitisation of the terrorist threat at all levels is to put Russia back on the global chessboard as an equal player, and counterterrorism is a venue the Kremlin exploits to achieve international recognition. This chapter, which focuses on the domestic level of that grand securitisation process, argues that the main aim of the securitisation of terrorism domestically is to gain political power and resources to be able to bend domestic laws and reduce political opposition for the sake of counterterrorism. This chapter proceeds to outline the history of the Chechen conflict that made the Chechen terrorist threat feasible for securitisation purposes.

4.2 The Chechen Conflicts: A Historical Overview

The application of securitisation framework is mainly retrospective, because a set of political actions of securitising actors and audiences is required for the discussion of the results of a securitisation campaign. Thus, a certain knowledge of history and context is needed to analyse securitising attempts (McDonald, 2008). Historical analysis not only helps our understanding of how an issue became a security threat, but also how a staging of the threat was accepted or rejected by a securitisation audience, whether they decided to approve emergency measures and to support the government in its threat elimination activities, or not (Balzacq, 2010b).

The North Caucasus region plays an important role in Russian history, being "of immense geopolitical and strategic significance due to its frontier location between Europe and Asia" (Kemoklidze, Moore, Smith, & Yemelianova, 2012, p. 1612). The term "North Caucasus" was coined during the time of the Russian Empire; thus, it reflects the political reality of that period. In this thesis, the latest political agreement on the North Caucasus composition is used: it consists of seven autonomous regions within the Russian Federation, namely Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygea (Akkieva, 2008). Many of these regions are experiencing territorial disputes and internal conflicts which have fuelled regional instability and tensions throughout the years (Robert & Ware, 2009).

The Chechen terrorist threat has played a significant role in Russian politics, feeding into unresolved tensions in the North Caucasus region. Various militant groups, including but not limited to the Chechen and Dagestani warlords' militias, have been portrayed as a constant security threat both to Russia and the North Caucasus region since 1994 (Lapidus, 2002; Remington, 2009; Stepanova, 2005). North Caucasus terrorists are well known for drugs and human trafficking, illegal arms sales, and money laundering (Baev, 2003; J. Russell, 2005). Two of Russia's biggest terrorist attacks are connected to the North Caucasus: the Moscow Theatre Crisis, also known as the 2002 Nord Ost siege, and the Beslan Hostage Crisis, also referred to as the Beslan school siege or the 2004 Beslan massacre. Alleged connections between the Chechen resistance and Afghan terrorists complicate the security situation in the region and facilitate the manipulation of the Chechen terrorist threat for securitisation purposes (B. Williams, 2015). Thus, the Chechen terrorist threat had been rooted in the history of criminal activity, which allowed the Kremlin to use it for its advantage.

The understanding of historical premises allows a more coherent analysis of securitisation actors, considering their preceding political actions and contextual nuances (Bacon et al., 2013). Chechnya, for example, has been called Yeltsin's big mistake, and some authors claim that it was his pride that prevented a peace agreement in 1994, fuelling and intensifying following conflicts (Wood, 2004). Without the knowledge of such nuances, the analysis of securitisation would be incomplete if not impossible: the staging of a threat is a complicated process with no templates for success or failure. In addition, the capability of certain political figures to securitise an issue is partially rooted in the history of their political actions (Buzan et al., 1998). Hence, the historical and cultural context helps to understand why certain securitisation actors were involved and why they made their specific decisions. As a result, securitisation rhetoric is inseparable from the context in which it was presented.

Moreover, the presenting of an issue as an existential threat requires the issue to be relatable for a securitisation audience (Balzacq, 2005). It is impossible to simply point at someone or something and call it a threat; it has to be conveyed to people in a way that they would relate to. This is so they can endorse the government when it invokes emergency measures. Chechnya's history made it a perfect candidate for being the existential threat: the Chechens had been resisting Russian rule for a long time, they had never wanted to be a part of Russia, and they represented a culture that is rather alien to the Russians, both religiously and culturally.

This chapter does not seek to analyse counterterrorism policy development during the Soviet era, although, similar strategies existed (Omelicheva, 2009). Some of these strategies were called counterinsurgency actions and mainly concerned the war in Afghanistan. Soviet counterinsurgency strategies have received considerable attention in relevant literature devoted to the analysis of the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan.[24] Nonetheless, while this chapter focuses upon the independent years of the Russian Federation, the Soviet legacy cannot be disregarded. It is useful to bear in mind that the Soviet security tradition was bequeathed to Russia, as well as to the remaining republics of the former Soviet Union, especially in the form of military equipment, army structure and traditions, and professional military education. Russia did not become a completely new country overnight, and for many years after the dissolution of the union, all post-Soviet countries had to deal with the Soviet legacy, learning when to reject or keep Soviet military, educational, and social traditions. Thus, it is important to remember that the Soviet legacy continues to influence post-Soviet leaders' decisions on an everyday basis (Bacon et al., 2013).

The discussion of how the Chechen terrorist threat has been securitised and has evolved in Russia requires the analysis of the main terrorist events and the Kremlin's respective responses. Such a brief historical analysis is necessary to understand Russia's path to the securitisation of the terrorist threat, and why it was the North Caucasus (especially Chechnya) that was used for the image of the enemy. The North Caucasus region has been and still is one of the Russian Federation's most prominent political challenges (Baev, 2003). The Kremlin's perception of the terrorist threat and its counterterrorism strategies were generated as a response to the North Caucasus disagreements.

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[24] See, for example, Freedman, R. O. (1991). *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet policy since the invasion of Afghanistan*. CUP Archive; Reuveny, R., & Prakash, A. (1999). The Afghanistan war and the breakdown of the Soviet Union. *Review of International Studies*, *25*(September 2000), 693–708. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210599006932. For a securitisation theory analysis see Stritzel, H., & Chang, S. C. (2015). Securitization and counter-securitization in Afghanistan. *Security Dialogue*, *46*(6), 548–567. http://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615588725.

4.2.1 The North Caucasus: the cradle of Russian counterterrorism

Chechnya is a mountainous region in the North Caucasus bordering Georgia to the south, Ingushetia to the west, Dagestan to the east and the province of Stavropolskiy Kray to the north. The Chechens, with their own unique culture, have lived in or near their territory for centuries, and have been in close relationships with the Ingush,[25] and they respect each other to this day (Gammer, 1994; German, 2003). The North Caucasus region, despite several attempts at Christianising and secularising (during the period of Soviet rule), is predominantly Muslim. Islam in Chechnya is mainly represented by Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam, which has been challenged within the religion itself (German, 2003).[26]

The Chechen-Russian conflict has been and still is one of the most persistent and violent security issues that the Russian Federation has faced (Ibid). While extensive military operations on the ground are currently dormant, Chechnya remains a focus of Russia's attention: a constant source of unrest and instability, Chechnya has been central to the development of the Kremlin's understanding of terrorism and its counterterrorism strategies. The history of Chechen opposition to Russian rule goes back several centuries. In the 18th century the majority of the Chechens were Muslims, and they revolted against Russian

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[25] For more on their relationships see Avtorkhanov, A. (1992). The Chechens and the Ingush during the Soviet period and its antecedents. in Marie Bennigsen Broxup, ed., *The North Caucasus Barrier*, pp. 147–94. New York; Pavlova, O. S. (2012). Value orientations of Chechen and Ingush people: Sources and determinants. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, *2*, 78–87. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2012-31258-011&site=ehost-live&scope=site%5Cnhttp://os_pavlova@mail.ru

[26] For more on Sufism see Sultanova, R. (2015). *From shamanism to Sufism: women, Islam and culture in Central Asia*. Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.

"infidel" pressure when Sheikh Mansur, who led the Chechen resistance movement in 1785-1791, called for a return to the ancestors' traditional way of life. This meant living in accordance with the Koran and, subsequently, the introduction of Sharia law (Dunlop, 1998). There is a suggestion that Sheikh Mansur was more knowledgeable in religion than in the art of war, so the resistance under his leadership did not succeed against the Russian invasion (Cheterian, 2008; Dunlop, 1998; Moore & Tumelty, 2009). However, he strengthened Islam in the Northwest Caucasus region, where people were formally Muslim but continued to practice paganism alongside Islam. Sheikh Mansur's influence led to deeper religious education for the Chechens. Thus, he was successful in uniting highlanders (not only the Chechens but also the Dagestani people) against Russian expansionism by promoting Islam as a common ground for consolidation (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). Hence, Islam reached Chechnya in the late 18th century, which was rather late compared to other Caucasian states such as Dagestan or Azerbaijan (Walker, 1998a). Sheikh Mansur went on to become a prominent figure in Chechen history. Russian forces eventually captured and imprisoned him, and he died in captivity (Dunlop, 1998). Sheikh Mansur became a symbol of martyrdom and leadership, and his death, as his deeds, are still remembered and highly respected by the Chechens (Moore & Tumelty, 2009).

At the beginning of the 19th century, General Aleksey Yermolov proposed a plan for integrating the North Caucasus region into the Russian Empire, emphasising the danger of the Chechen tribes that he believed would oppose Russian rule (Wood, 2004). He was convinced that the Chechens were the inevitable enemies of the Russian Empire and he proposed using the hardest methods against them (Dunlop, 1998). Chechnya was later annexed by the Russian Empire during the expansion southward at the time of the conquest of the Caucasus in 1817–1864. Yet as Galeotti (1994) notes, "the Chechens have a history of stubborn independence" (p. 69), so they never reconciled with the existence under the

Russian Empire's rule. Later on, the continuous resistance would become so embedded into Chechen culture that it would become a part of Chechen identity.[27]

In the 1920s the Russians tried to apply the "divide and conquer" concept to the North Caucasus region. The campaign was partially successful because the people of the Northern Caucasus believed the promise of religious freedom and respect for their national interests and decreased their level of resistance (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). However, the Chechens were more dogmatically religious than their fellow North Caucasus ethnic groups and tried to rebel at the beginning of the Soviet Union's formation, but the attempt failed. When Stalin came to power he decided to anticipate the next rebellion. As Stone (2006) explains it:

> During World War II, Stalin decided the Chechen people as a whole were guilty of collaboration with the Germans and in February 1944 deported the entire Chechen nation to central Asia amid great suffering and loss of life. (p. 244)

Some 200,000 Chechens died on the road to Central Asia. Many families were separated, and many failed to settle. Several Chechen leaders were executed under Stalin's orders, thus a few attempts of unifying the North Caucasus for new resistance were prevented (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). The failure was unsurprising considering how scattered the North Caucasus peoples were during the Soviet era. According to Moore and Tumelty (2009), the end of Soviet rule denotes a "reawakening of ethnic identity" (p. 81) for the North Caucasus region. The North Caucasus nations started a struggle to deliver their grievances both to the newly formed Russian Federation and the international community.

The Chechen identity is partially built on being different from both the Russians and other nationalities of the Caucasus region, except for the Ingush (Gammer, 1994; B. Williams, 2015). Although the Soviet period resulted in a generation of non-ethnic Russians who speak Russian better than their native language, the Chechens preserved their language, and 98.1% of Chechnya's population in 1989 claimed Chechen as the language of everyday use (Walker, 1998b). The relocated Chechens did not forget their homeland and the majority of them returned to Chechnya as soon as they could in the 1960s (Galeotti, 1994). The feeling of belonging and national identity is strong in Chechnya, as the Chechens who had been exiled to Central Asia remembered and preserved their history and culture the best they could.

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[27] For an overview of the formation of the North Caucasus see Akkieva, S. (2008). The Caucasus: one or many? A view from the region. *Nationalities Papers*, *36*(2), 253–273. http://doi.org/10.1080/00905990801934348. For classic readings on the Chechen history see John Baddeley's *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus,* 1908, London 1999; see also Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: tombstone of Russian power*, New Haven 1998.

As one might notice, the history of Chechen-Russian relations is full of resistance from the Chechen side and the brutal military force used by the Russians to suppress it (Wood, 2004). After the collapse of the Soviet Union a division occurred between the Chechens and the rest of the North Caucasus. The Chechens became radically religious over the years, gravitating towards Islamic domination in both legal and private sectors, whereas the rest of North Caucasus inhabitants pursued a more secular path towards autonomy (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). Thus, several Chechen generations grew up seeing the Russians as oppressors (Tishkov, 2004). The Chechens never welcomed Russian rule and never made peace with Russia's attempts at regional domination. When, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Chechens ended up in the Russian Federation their resistance to Russian rule was not over.

4.2.2 The First Chechen War (1992-1994). A campaign to restore constitutional order

The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in fifteen new republics, and each republic, especially the Russian Federation due to its size, inherited enclaves of minority nationalities as well as industrial complexes and pipelines. The scattered character of enclaves was the result of the Soviet policy aimed at relocating peoples within the Soviet Union for various, mostly political, reasons. In 1991, several enclaves expressed a desire for a greater degree of sovereignty. Most of the claims resulted in limited autonomy being granted and the enclave's inclusion into the Russian Federation (Stone, 2006). For example, Tatarstan demanded more rights within the Federation, and it was granted the status of a constituent republic in 1994 (Wood, 2004). Thus, Tatarstan's claim for greater independence was satisfied. The major failure of this policy appears to be Chechnya, where was no negotiation regarding the claims for independence. Also, in 1991, Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet general, started a movement for the independence of Chechnya (Hollis, 1994). During the USSR's last days, Dudayev had taken strategic hold in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, and conducted the first elections, which he predictably won (Wood, 2004). Immediately, he declared Chechnya's independence from the Soviet Union and, correspondingly, the Russian Federation. Russia, as the successor of the Soviet Union, with Boris Yeltsin in power, refused to accept Chechnya's secession and sent troops to reinforce Russian rule in Grozny. President Yeltsin announced a state of emergency in Chechnya in order to stop the illegal actions of Chechen leaders and restore constitutional order (Yeltsin, 1991). However, the implementation of a state of emergency failed and Russian troops were withdrawn in 1992. During the same year Chechnya refused to sign the Federation Treaty[28] and became *de facto* independent (J. Russell, 2007).

Chechnya has always been an important constituent part of Russia; it is an oil rich region with a Soviet-era pipeline passing through it, thus there is an economic background behind the Kremlin's concerns regarding Chechnya's secession (Hollis, 1994; Marten, 2012). Also, Russia sees Chechnya as a key player in gaining more influence in the North Caucasus region. If the Russian government allowed Chechnya to secede, it may have created a precedent; an example for other ethnicities and autonomies within the Russian Federation. Russia could not afford to lose the Caucasus because if either Chechnya or Dagestan gained independence, Russia might face disintegration (Felshtinsky & Litvinenko, 2007; German,

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[28] The treaty was designed to reinstall the Kremlin's power over the territory Russia inherited from the Soviet Union (J. Russell, 2007).

2003). In addition, it is one the most sensitive borders Russia has, as Tsygankov (2010a) notes "Increasingly, Russia also faced threats of instability and terrorism in the south. It also had to confront the instability of borders with countries outside the former Soviet region and the emerged issues of illegal immigration and narcotics trafficking" (p. 115). Thus, if Chechnya became independent it could drastically affect the Russian Federation's integrity.[29]

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a unique chance for Chechnya to become independent (J. Russell, 2007). Charney (2001) argues that Chechnya was *de facto* independent during the time gap between the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a comparatively stable Russian government, from 1991 to 1993. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union the Kremlin has been consistently dismissive of Chechnya. In 1994 Yeltsin refused to conduct peace talks himself, sending Pavel Grachev, then Minister of Defence, to Chechnya. According to Ljudmila Alekseeva's interview with Vladimir Svarcevich, who was the only journalist allowed to attend the meeting of Grachev and Dudayev, the Chechen leader wanted a peaceful resolution of the conflict (Alekseeva, 2014). However, the negotiations failed, despite the alleged desire of the Chechen side not to start military actions. Svarcevich recalls Grachev and the rest of the Russian negotiation team being extremely confident that in a case of military conflict Russia would win within two or three months without any problems (Ibid). Many thought the conflict would be short-lived, as Stone (2006) quotes Grachev: "a couple of hours and a parachute regiment would suffice to end Dudayev's reign" (p. 244), but instead it evolved into a long, full scale war of the Russian army against Russian citizens. Thus, the Kremlin's initial strategy to quickly and effortlessly bring Chechnya back under Russian rule was unsuccessful.

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[29] However, the claim that Chechnya's secession could have forced the Russian Federation's disintegration is contested. For example, Tishkov (2004) argues that Chechnya's secession was not a threat to the Federation, but it was portrayed as such by the Russian government that lacked the understanding of the situation in Chechnya. Wood (2004) notes that the Kremlin's reasons for the First Chechen campaign were more economic than political.

The Russian Federation lacked the capacity to reinforce central power in Chechnya in 1994, being preoccupied with more pressing economic and social problems.[30] While Yeltsin's government was too busy dealing with maintaining order in Russia, Chechnya was *de facto* autonomous for three years, which was partially the result of a power vacuum that evolved after the dissolution of the USSR (Hollis, 1994). Also, the struggle for power between Yeltsin and Gorbachev and the uncertainty in Russia's political realm added complexity to the situation in Chechnya. During the years of Chechnya's autonomous existence, Russia imposed economic sanctions and Chechnya's economy quickly deteriorated. Consequently, the quality of life in Chechnya dramatically decreased in comparison with the Soviet era (Pokalova, 2015). Given the poor efforts of Dudayev to rule the country during these years, Chechnya turned into a criminal paradise for various illegal activities (Wood, 2004). Warlords started to tear the country apart: they maintained private armies, acquired and traded weapons, and tried to expropriate as much as they could (Marten, 2012). Chechnya turned into a corrupt and unstable place, with warlords living by their own codes of conduct; expropriation of property, kidnapping for ransom and blackmailing started to be the sources of income for warlords (Sakwa, 2005).

The non-Chechen population, mostly ethnic Russians, fled, leaving everything behind after warlords had started to confiscate property and threaten their lives (Marten, 2012). With the majority of engineers and other highly qualified workers leaving, Chechnya's industrial production begun to collapse, warlords gained more power, and chaos reigned in Chechnya (Dunlop, 1998; Wood, 2004). The Chechens learned a new way of life, inseparable from a militarised conflict, and eventually were ready to sacrifice a lot for one cause – the independence of their homeland that was seen as the solution for all problems. The clan system, the traditional Chechen society's composition, merged with the criminal parts of society and formed a new, more adaptable resistance (Galeotti, 2002). This resistance amalgamated both the traditional customs of blood feuds and the criminal underground business (Ibid).

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[30] For an analysis of Russian military strategies in Chechnya and why Russia did not succeed in reinforcing its rule there by military means see Kramer, M. (2005). Guerrilla warfare, counterinsurgency and terrorism in the North Caucasus: the military dimension of the Russian−Chechen conflict. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *57*(2), 209–290. http://doi.org/10.1080/09668130500051833

The exile of the ethnic Russians during the conflict could have been used by the Kremlin to justify tougher military decisions against the Chechen rebels, but the Russian government did not use it. The First Chechen War was consistently called an operation to restore constitutional order and until the Nord Ost Siege, which will be discussed below, the Russian government continued to emphasise that the Chechens were, in fact, still Russian citizens, so they should be treated accordingly ("A Meeting with the Members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission," 2002).

During the first Chechen-Russian conflict, the Russian government consistently underestimated the resistance, made presumptuous media statements, miscalculated the resistance's military capacities, and underrated the desire of the Chechens to be independent. For example, during the Battle of Grozny the Russian army failed to take the capital and suffered more than a thousand casualties (Stone, 2006, p. 244). It is worth noting at this point that many Chechen rebels and warlords had, in fact, Soviet and later Russian army military training, which contributed to the Chechens' ability to withstand Russia's military might. Burger and Cheloukhine (2013) argue that the knowledge of Russian military strategy, equipment, and tactics was a clear advantage that the Chechen resistance had at the beginning of the conflict. Dudayev had held high military rank in the Soviet army and one may consider him as a moderate, Soviet-educated leader (Walker, 1998b). Thus, both sides of the conflict had a lot in common.

President Yeltsin was the first high ranking Russian official who referred to the Chechens as "bandits" and "criminals" (Dunlop, 1998, p. 11), creating a platform for the narrative that the Chechens are negatively different from the rest of Russia. In his commentary regarding a military operation in Dagestan[31] in 1996, Yeltsin called the Chechens “criminals (…) mercenaries (…) professional bandits (…) fanatics”, making a strong statement that they should not exist “in the state where there is authority, in the state where there is power” (Spvkgn, 2011). However, the narrative had been politicised but did not start the securitisation of the Chechen threat yet, as the government kept calling the Chechen conflict an operation to restore constitutional order, thus the issue remained in the realm of existing political channels that could have been used to deal with the issue. The rhetoric around the Chechen conflict intensified but had not been transformed into the securitisation rhetoric.

The need for resolution of the Chechen-Russian conflict coincided with the re-election of Yeltsin for the second term. However, the Chechens were disappointed that Yeltsin remained in power and successfully fought to take back the capital of their homeland, Grozny. It was an embarrassing defeat for Russian forces and Yeltsin sent retired General Alexander Lebed to conduct peace talks. General Lebed made concessions and agreed on a truce agreement (Stone, 2006). Thus, in Moscow in 1997 Boris Yeltsin and Aslan Maskhadov, as the newly elected President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, signed the peace treaty (Kramer, 2005). In their interview after signing the agreement Yeltsin talked about how important it was for Russia to finish the four hundred years history of conflict while Maskhadov highlighted that the signing of the treaty was “against all foes” (Catharsis, 2010). Despite such good intentions the short interwar period did not differ from the war time period significantly. The domestic economy was ruined and the introduction of Sharia law by Maskhadov did not decrease the level of organised crime (Gakaev, 2005). Thus, Yeltsin had started the narrative of the Chechens being the "bad guys", giving way to political speculation on the matter but not crossing the line to securitisation. However, the existence of the Chechen "bandits" narrative made the threat of the Chechen terrorist feasible for securitisation.

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[31] For more on Dagestan’s insurgency see O’Loughlin, J., Holland, E. C., & Witmer, F. D. W. (2011). The changing geography of violence in Russia’s North Caucasus, 1999-2011: regional trends and local dynamics in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Eurasian Geography and Economics, 52(5), 596–630. http://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.52.5.596.

4.3 Staging the Terrorist Threat. The Period of the Second Chechen War (1999-2009)

4.3.1 The 1999 Apartment bombings and its consequences

A significant development of the Chechen threat can be traced back to 7 August 1999, when Shamil Basayev and Ibn al-Khattab led the Chechnya-based Islamic International Brigade (IIB), an Islamist group, to annex Dagestan, hoping to liberate it from "Russian occupation", which triggered a series of events. They wanted to create a caliphate that would no longer be under Russian control but if Russia lost Dagestan, it would lose a significant part of Caspian Sea territory (Shermatova, 1999). As Volkov (2009) highlights:

> The aim of the separatists was to take control of oil-rich Dagestan, gain access to the Caspian sea and start building an Islamic Caliphate in the Caucasus. At that moment, Russia was on the verge of losing a substantive part of the Caucasus and of gaining an expanding terrorist enclave on its southern borders. If the geostrategic ambitions behind the terrorist attack had succeeded, further territorial disintegration of the Russian Federation would only have been a matter of time. (p. 105)

At the same time a series of bombings happened in Moscow, Volgodonsk, and Buinaksk (Dagestan) which were later referred to as the 1999 apartment bombings. In the immediate aftermath of the bombings, Chechen terrorists were blamed for killing hundreds of civilians (Schaefer, 2010). I argue that the reaction of the Russian government to the apartment bombings can be seen as the first major securitisation move. The move targeted the public attitude towards the "Chechen question" (*Chechenskyi vopros*), aiming to change it from seeing Chechnya as a separatist conflict that could be solved within the existing legislation to seeing it as an emergency situation. The move aimed to justify a need for an urgent military response to the threat of Chechen terrorism.

A long story of gradual transformation of the Chechen resistance from a separatist movement to a terrorist stronghold in the eyes of the Russian public was fuelled with the apartment bombings in August 1999. The first explosion occurred on 31 August 1999 in one of the shopping centres in Moscow, with more than forty people injured (Stepenin & Gul’ko, 2000). On 4 September, a bomb detonated in Buinaksk, Dagestan, in Russian military quarters. The explosion occurred late in the evening, causing more casualties than if it had happened during working hours when the majority of military personnel were on duty away from the quarters (Ibid). On 9 and 13 September, two apartment buildings were blown up in Moscow, at midnight and 5 am respectively, with the timing of the explosions amplifying the number of casualties (Ibid; Soldatenko & Petrachkov, 2002). A day of mourning was declared on 13 September, but President Yeltsin did not make a public appearance after the bombings. Vladimir Putin, as the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation (colloquially referred to as the Prime Minister), was the one who talked to the press (Bulanova & Novoselskaya, 1999). The media immediately claimed that the Chechens were responsible for the bombings (Soldatenko & Petrachkov, 2002; Stepenin & Gul’ko, 2000).

Putin was assigned the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation (the Prime Minister) position on 9 August 1999, right after Basaeyev and al-Khattab invaded Dagestan. President Yeltsin publicly announced Vladimir Putin as his successor, saying that Putin was capable of “consolidating the society” (“The President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin’s TV address on 9 August 1999,” 1999, para. 2). Putin was not known to the Russian public at the time and according to an opinion poll from 18 August 1999 almost a half (47%) of respondents said they could not yet judge Yeltsin’s decision to appoint Putin, 27% did not approve the appointment, 18% did not have an opinion on the matter, and only

8% answered that they approve the appointment of Putin (Fund «Obsshestvennoe Mnenie», 1999a). In addition, to the question "Have you known or heard about Vladimir Putin until his appointment to the post of the Prime Minister or did not know?" 6% answered that they had known about Putin, 18% had known or heard something, 2% did not have an opinion, and overwhelming 74% had known nothing about Putin (Ibid).

Yet despite being relatively unrecognised in Russian politics and society, Putin's response to the deteriorating situation in Chechnya had changed public opinions drastically, making him more visible on Russia's political arena. The 1999 bombings were crucial for Putin's political career (Baev, 2006). The statement he made during the press conference in Astana in 1999 became a symbol of Putin's attitude towards terrorism as well as Russia's intolerance of terrorists: "We will chase terrorists everywhere. If in an airport, then in the airport. So if we find them in the toilet, excuse me, we'll rub them out in the outhouse. And that's it, case closed" ("Putin at the press conference in Astana 1999," 1999; Baev, 2004, Lanin, 2005).[32] However, this was not to be the only instance of Putin showing his uncompromising position against terrorists. He consistently talked about the *Chechenskyi sled* ("Chechen trail") in the 1999 apartment bombings and the need for a solution to the situation in Chechnya (Schaefer, 2010). Thus, from the early stages of his ascendance to presidency, Vladimir Putin had to deal with, and had been associated with, Chechnya and the threat of terrorism.

Another opinion poll on 17 November 1999, showed that a majority of 66% approved Putin's statements about Chechnya, 7% did not approve, 15% did not know what statements he had made, and 12% found it difficult to answer, (Fund «Obsshestvennoe Mnenie», 1999b). Thus, public opinion showed an increase in Putin's recognisability as a politician, as at least

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[32] Various translations of the degrading verb for "to kill" and the noun for "toilet" have been used to translate Putin's speech, see https://russiapedia.rt.com/of-russian-origin/mochit-v-sortire/ for more on the origin of this phrase.

73% of respondents knew about the statement he had made. The approval of his Chechen rhetoric shows that not only was Putin’s political visibility increasing but also was the support the Russian public showed to the assertive solutions of the Chechen terrorism issue.

Despite no direct evidence of the connection between the 1999 apartment bombings and Chechen separatists (or at least the lack of publicly available evidence), the apartment bombings triggered the resumption of the military conflict between Chechnya and Russia (German, 2003; Stone, 2006). It is worth noting that there are more radical takes on the reasons for the apartment bombings. For example, some believe that the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) was behind the bombings, triggering the second Chechen military campaign and, subsequently, ensuring a solid start for Putin’s impressive political career (e.g. Litvinenko & Felshtinsky, 2007; Marten, 2012; Satter, 2016; Wood, 2004). In their book *Blowing Up Russia: Terror from Within*, Alexander Litvinenko and Yuri Felshtinsky (2007) argue that the 1999 apartment bombing operations were a ‘false flag’ designed to launch Putin’s career. The book’s distribution in Russia was abruptly stopped when the FSB seized copies of the book for disclosure of state secrets (“*FSB zaderzhala tirazh knigi "FSB vzryvaet Rossiju"*”, 2003). In 2006, Alexander Litvinenko, a known whistle-blower on Putin’s regime, died under mysterious circumstances from an unknown cause which later was identified as polonium poisoning. The poison was allegedly administered by FSB affiliates (Owen, 2016). In 2015 the book was banned in Russia and included in the Federal List of Extremist Materials (*“Federal'nyj Spisok Jekstremistskih Materialov,”* 2015). The Kremlin’s severe reaction to such accusations provokes concerns regarding the validity of the claims made in the book. Undeniably, if the 1999 apartment bombings had been executed by the FSB it would have had a tremendous effect on the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat. However, it is unknown whether the FSB participated, and these speculations cannot be included into the current securitisation analysis as a securitisation move. Regardless, whoever was responsible for the 1999 apartment bombings, the Chechens were blamed for the explosions, rightly or wrongly. As the result of the situation, at the end of 1999 Yeltsin resigned, designating Putin as the acting president (Stone, 2006). Putin immediately sent Russian troops to Chechnya.

4.3.2 The paradigm shift: militant Islam and martyrdom

During the Second Chechen War the Kremlin's rhetoric regarding the essence of the Chechen-Russian conflict changed remarkably. As opposed to the First Chechen War, referred to as a campaign to restore constitutional order, the Second Chechen War was constantly labelled as a counterterrorism campaign (Campana & Légaré, 2010; German, 2003; Moore, 2007; Sakwa, 2005; Snetkov, 2007). Russia's actions during the Second Chechen War built upon the results of the previous conflict, incorporating already existing military strategies and tactics (Schaefer, 2010). However, simultaneously Russia started to build a new approach to dealing with conflicts and violence on the governmental level which drastically reformed the Russian approach to the conflict during the Second Chechen War. Russian counterterrorism started to reflect more adaptable thinking from the Russian government: less reliance on the conventional Soviet-era techniques, more trust in the flexibility of strategies.[33] The Kremlin started to exhibit a more long-term approach to conflict resolution, including both political and economic solutions (Pashin, 2002).[34]

The Second Chechen War is characterised by the increased importance of Islam as both the unifier within the Chechen resistance and the characteristic that detached it from the rest of the Russian Federation (Kipp, 2005). According to Moore and Tumelty (2009), the Chechen resistance movement was disorganised during the Second Chechen campaign, and the introduction of Sharia law could have gained more support for the resistance within

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[33] For more on Soviet counterterrorism strategies see Omelicheva, M. Y. (2009). Russia's counterterrorism policy: variations on an imperial theme. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *III*(1), 3–10.

[34] For more on economic solutions see Holland, E. C. (2016). Economic development and subsidies in the North Caucasus. *Problems of Post-Communism*, *63*(1), 50-61.

Chechnya. Given that Russia did not recognise Chechnya's secession, officially Chechnya should have conformed to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Regardless of the legal ambiguity, the Maskhadov government adopted Sharia law, which allowed the Chechens to have their own legislative framework without the Kremlin's interference (Maskhadov imposes Sharia rule in Chechnya, 1999). However, warlords were uncontrollable and unpredictable, and even though Maskhadov tried to establish a new order, it did not change the situation in Chechnya (Hughes, 2005; Ware, 2005).

During the Second Chechen War the resistance solidified around Islamic values, grown both from within and brought by external actors mostly educated in Afghanistan. The resistance partially found its distinctive ideology in religion (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). One might argue that Chechnya followed the Afghan path to radicalisation, which is characterised by persistent guerrilla movements and lack of government control over the state's territory (J. Russell, 2007). This might suggest that Islam was not the main reason for the Chechen resistance, but a way to gain support from the Islamic community outside Chechnya. In addition, the adherence to Islam such as the introduction of Sharia law in the country may have represented an attempt to control the chaos in war-torn Chechnya. However, the Russian side did not see religion as an alternative way to bring internal peace to Chechnya. The Kremlin saw religion as a danger, as in the case from Afghanistan where the resistance opposed the Soviets and based their movement on religious rhetoric (Cassidy, 2003). Thus, Islam, particularly the militant Islamic ideology that Afghan fighters brought with them, would later become a significant feature of the Chechen terrorist movement, and one of the focuses of the Russian counterterrorism strategy.[35]

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[35] For an excellent comparison of Soviet military strategies in Afghanistan and Chechnya see Cassidy, R. M. (2003). *Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya: military strategic culture and the paradoxes of asymmetric conflict*.

However, while Islam has been in Chechnya for a long time, it became a prominent feature of the Chechen resistance only during the First Chechen War. As Walker (1998a) argues “it was only *after* the [First Chechen] war broke out that Islam began to become an important theme for the Chechen resistance movement” (p. 4, italics in the original). During the First Chechen War, it was only Dudayev and his commanders who accepted the rhetoric of militant Islam; later the majority of rebels in Chechnya started to use Islamic symbols (Moore, 2012). Dudayev and his commanders wore clothes similar to those of the Afghan insurgents and chose *mujahidin* as the symbol of their movement (Walker, 1998a). For example, Shamil Basayev, an infamous Chechen warlord, allegedly had contacts with Al-Qaeda and used Osama Bin Laden’s resources to support his militia, including training camps for new soldiers and the expansion of his network (Bhattacharji, 2010; Hahn, 2011; Light & Allison, 2006). Undeniably, military culture shapes a country’s counterterrorism responses (Moore, 2007). The military culture started to change Chechnya during the conflict with the Russian Federation, thus changing both the resistance and the Kremlin’s response. After several attempts to attract attention from the West, the resistance realised that proclaiming democracy and secularism would not bring in international support. As a result, they turned to the Islamic world in the search for allies who would support their fight for independence.

The Chechen resistance accepted *jihad* as a concept, but the alleged connection between Al-Qaeda and the Chechen resistance might be rather questionable. M. Williams (2015) emphasises that the claim of such connection might have been used by the Kremlin to strengthen Russia’s position in the North Caucasus, and Hahn (2008) highlights the loose nature of such connection. The *mujahidin* symbolism was used by the Kremlin to create a distinctive image of the threat; Wahhabism and Chechen terrorism were presented as an attempt to infiltrate “Russia’s Islam” (Hill, 2002; Wood, 2004). As German (2003) notes, “The Kremlin has constantly justified its campaign on the grounds that the country is defending itself against the threat from extreme Islamic terrorists" (p. 161). Thus, the portrayal of the enemy was based on the distinguishing image of the Chechen terrorist threat. However, the Chechens incorporated not only external attributes of a *mujahidin* such as appearance but also favoured a strategy of martyrdom.

The concept of sacrifice for the greater good was not new for the Chechens, as the story of Sheikh Mansur refusal to surrender to the Russians is still remembered. However, radical militant Islam promises an afterlife in paradise for true Muslims who died for *jihad.*[36] Once adopted, martyrdom became a salient feature of the Chechen resistance. Moreover, for Russian military forces martyrdom became one of the most challenging features of the Chechen resistance. For the Russians, the idea of dying for a cause and killing as many civilians as possible was a radical change to traditional ways of warfare (Cassidy, 2003).

In the early 2000s, a significant divide occurred within the Chechen resistance: traditional supporters of Sufi Islam opposed the new Salafi followers (Moore & Tumelty, 2009; Moore, 2012). It was a defining moment in Chechen history, which Moscow used to its advantage. The Kremlin supported the First Chechen War defectors, but it resulted in a high level of violence within Chechnya. The pro-Russian Chechens were opposing the Salafi-oriented Chechens on the grounds of serious accusations regarding their betrayal of traditional Chechen values and way of life (Moore & Tumelty, 2009). The common understanding is that Salafism and Wahhabism are intolerant of Sufism; although there is room for different interpretations of the links between them (Woodward, Umar, Rohmaniyah, & Yahya, 2013). Ultimately, this division caused major difficulties for the Chechens, as there was no unanimity regarding what independence meant for the Chechens as a nation.

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[36] However, it is not the only reason for jihad, see, for example Euben, R. L. (2002). Jihad and political violence. *Current History*, *101*(658), 365; Euben, R. L. (2002). Killing (for) politics: jihad, martyrdom, and political action. *Political Theory*, *30*(1), 4–35. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3072484

A possible concession from Russia, such as granting autonomy to Chechnya, might have reduced the tension, although the Chechen-Russian conflict is fuelled by the desire of the Chechens to have a sovereign state, not autonomy within the Russian Federation. However, the Chechens have not stopped trying to incorporate religion into legislation. In 2017, the Chechen Parliament approved wearing hijabs in schools, a decision which defies the federal law prohibiting any type of religious outfits in schools ("*Vyderzhit li nasha Federacija chechenskie obychai?*", 2017). *Nezavisimaya gazeta* asks "can our Federation handle Chechen traditions?" implying that the rest of the Russian Federation is significantly different from Chechnya, and such open disdain towards federal legislation could be a threat to Russia's unity (Ibid, para.1). Thus, Chechnya remains a part of the Russian Federation but relentlessly seeks more freedom and autonomy.

4.3.3. The Chechen threat in the media

At the beginning of the Second Chechen War, a gradual amalgamation of terrorism and the Chechen conflict into one narrative took place in the Russian media (Snetkov, 2007). Russian officials and the media started to use the words "terrorism" and "the Chechens" interchangeably, and the Kremlin tightened its grip on the media (Angermüller, 2012; Robertson, 2019; Sheets, 2000; Wood, 2004). As Baev (2004) argues "the very notion of terrorism has become synonymous with Chechnya" (p. 337). This fusion created a strong association between the Chechens and terrorism, a connection that would prevail in the media for many years to follow.

In 2002, at a meeting with the members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission, Putin would mention that the appeasement of the first Chechen conflict was a disgraceful and humiliating move for Russia, although Russia did everything it could to solve the Chechen problem ("A Meeting with the Members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission," 2002). However, during the press conference after the 10th summit of the

European Union – Russia, Putin played down the narrative, emphasising that the Chechen conflict had been financed and provoked by external forces and not all the Chechens were responsible for it ("Excerpts from the transcript of a News Conference following Russia-European Union Summit," 2002). In addition, he emphasised that Chechnya was not the only place where Russia was fighting terrorism, and that it was prepared to fight it "everywhere" (Ibid). In 2005 at the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly Putin would conclude "I am convinced that today, terrorism represents the main danger to the rights and freedom of mankind, and to the steady development of states and peoples" ("Speech at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2005). Thus, the narrative has been adapted for different audiences and the external connections of the Chechen resistance have been brought up when necessary to highlight the international character of the Kremlin's counterterrorism image.

The Chechen terrorist-related speech acts conveyed a message that if nothing is done about Chechen terrorism, Russia might cease to exist, thus elaborating on the Chechen terrorist threat as the existential threat to Russia. Campana and Légaré (2010) aptly summarise:

> The image of the enemy was constantly being reconstructed, mixing real events and imaginary information. The vague concept of the "evil international terrorism" came to embody all opponents to Russia's rule. Moreover, the discourse was very much a reflection of the political changes in the Russian society, since the strengthening of the "immune/power system" of the country had to be reinforced to fight against the "contamination" of "terrorism/separatism/wahhabism." Federal rhetoric that concocted a myth of "normality" wanted to compel the Chechen population to accept the state of violence as routine akin to Russian people's acceptance of the brutal counterterrorism operation as a necessity for the survival of their country and the regime. (pp. 57-58)

Chechen terrorism became the representation of the "evil" international terrorism, highlighting that Russia's enemies not only encroaching on Russia but have already infiltrated its borders (Campana & Légaré, 2010). A strong link between the Chechens and terrorism was formed during the second Chechen-Russian conflict, and it was used to compel the Russians that the Chechens are the problem, posing them as the threat to the mere existence of Russia (Sheets, 2000).

The Moscow Theatre Crisis (2002) and the Beslan Hostage Crisis (2004), which I will discuss further below, significantly influenced how the Chechen terrorist threat was portrayed in the Russian media. According to Valentin Sobolev (2009) speaking on behalf of the National Security Council of the Russian Federation, the Chechen terrorist threat should be seen as a part of a bigger terrorist threat to come. He sees it as the beginning of the fight: “Chechen terrorism continues to be one of the primary instruments of international terrorism operating in Russian territory and even represents a sort of testing ground for the use of cutting-edge technologies in terrorist acts” (p. 248). Thus, the Chechen resistance was portrayed not only as the ultimate threat to Russia’s survival, but also as a part of a bigger evil to come. On top of the threat staging, questionable military choices, and ample public responses, the Kremlin altering the rhetoric regarding these terrorist acts considerably contributed to the securitisation of the terrorism threat in Russia.

The political success of Vladimir Putin is closely connected to the Chechen conflict (White, 2006). He started his career as Prime Minister with a promise to win the Second Chechen War (J. Russell, 2007). Despite the defeat of Russian forces during the First Chechen War, Putin committed to winning the second conflict. As Sakwa (2005) aptly sums up “In Russia, the demonization of all shades of Chechen resistance, intensified since the apartment bombings of Autumn 1999 and reinforced by the sieges of Dubrovka and Beslan, helped maintain support for Putin’s hard line and uncompromising policy in Chechnya” (p. 239). Putin’s presidency started with a military conflict, which seemed to be relatively solvable with Russia’s military might at the time. As Baev (2003) aptly notes: “Putin does not fancy a ‘war presidency” - but he is fairly much stuck with it, and the second term would hardly make much of a difference" (p. 42), highlighting that Putin's presidency was strongly tied with the unresolved conflict in Chechnya. During his first presidency (2000-2004), Putin could not deliver the victory he promised, so his second term in the office proceeded with the same Chechen rhetoric, continuing the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat.

It was not only politicians who produced and endorsed the securitisation rhetoric but also some academics and even allegedly independent media supported the Kremlin in its counterterrorism advances in Chechnya. *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (NG) was an independent newspaper, and its participation in the securitisation rhetoric's dissemination indicates how all-encompassing the securitisation of the threat became if an independent newspaper followed the Kremlin's lead. Alexandr Ignatenko, Ph.D., a Russian expert on Islam and Islamisation, and a member of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy (the Council was one of the founders of Valdai Discussion Club), wrote for NG criticising an American counterterrorism approach of blaming Bin Laden for his terrorist activities (Ignatenko, 1999a). Ignatenko strongly opposed any rumours that Bin Laden could have acquired nuclear weapons from the Russian black market or Russian military forces (Ignatenko, 1999a). In his second piece for NG, "The phantom, created by the CIA-2", he went even further and blamed the US for creating a phantom of Bin Laden that they get to use instrumentally to influence other countries' foreign policy choices, especially Russia's (Ignatenko, 1999b). Ignatenko (1999b) argues that the US placed in and then removed the phantom of Bin Laden from Chechnya to undermine Russia's counterterrorism operation in the region, delegitimising the Kremlin's counterterrorism operation in Chechnya, trying to influence Russia's domestic affairs. Nonetheless, he argues, Russia is under a real terrorist attack and is forced to continue to fight terrorists in Chechnya and beyond. Thus, it is not only terrorists that are out there to threaten Russia at home, in Chechnya and other regions, but also there are international forces who might try to prevent Russia from fulfilling its counterterrorism agenda.

Another example of NG publishing articles that endorsed the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric is a professor from Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Alexandr Konovalov (2000), who wrote for *Nezavisimaya gazeta:* "we [Russia] need very active foreign policy efforts to explain that Russia is fighting terrorism in Chechnya, [fighting] one of its most dangerous types - radical Islamism, which threatens both Western Europe and the United States" (para. 16). He emphasised that the Chechen conflict could be one of Russia's hardest challenges since the Second World War, accentuating the importance of the fight with terrorists. Next year, Valerij Kadohov (2001), a member of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, wrote for NG that the resolution of the Chechen conflict was the question of Russia's survival, and it was not only paramount for Putin as a politician, but also for Russia's future. He reinforced the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric, arguing that the conflict in Chechnya had challenged the Federation's basic principle of territorial integrity, contesting the foundation of Russia (Ibid). In addition, he emphasised that the Russian authorities should prevent the Islamisation of the North Caucasus, paying attention to the spread of Wahhabism (Ibid). Thus, the rhetoric portraying the Chechens as an existential threat continued to develop. The reflection of the Kremlin's rhetoric in the Russian media helped to disseminate the message that terrorism is here to stay, and Russia has to fight it until the threat has been eliminated.

This chapter will proceed with the discussion of the main terrorist events that influenced the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat in Russia: the Moscow Theatre Crisis and the Beslan Hostage Crisis. Since Russia had not experienced terrorist attacks on such a scale before it was unprepared. Military forces were not ready to handle a full-fledged hostage situation in the middle of Moscow and nor did Russian special forces know how to perform a rescue operation in a place full of civilians (mostly children) in Beslan. The attacks were unexpected, bold, and left the Russian government in a difficult position of balancing its responses. Counterterrorism legislation was tested, resulting in a growing understanding that the law might not reflect the terrorism challenges Russia was facing, preparing the public for the need of emergency counterterrorist measures.[37] The apartment bombings of 1999, the Nord Ost Siege, and the Beslan Massacre are by no means the only terrorist events that happened in Russia. One can name the Moscow Metro bombings (2010) or the Domodedovo International Airport bombing (2011) among other attacks associated with the Chechen terrorist that are not discussed in this Chapter. The primary reason for that is that these attacks happened after the terrorist threat securitisation rhetoric had been formed: the Russian society had already been conditioned to see the Chechens as bad guys by then (Robertson, 2019). Thus, in order to get to the roots of how such securitisation became possible, one needs to look at the first, the most formative attacks on the Russian soil, the attacks that can explain how the Kremlin developed and refined its securitisation rhetoric. These attacks are the Moscow Theatre Crisis (2002) and the Beslan Hostage Crisis (2004).

4.3.4 The Moscow Theatre Crisis (2002)

The Moscow Theatre Crisis (also known as the Dubrovka Crisis) began on the 23rd October 2002 when a group of unidentified militants seized the House of Culture of State Ball-Bearing Plant Number 1 in Moscow. More than nine hundred people, both personnel and those who came to watch a sold-out musical, Nord Ost, were held hostage inside the building (Kolesnikov, 2009). The siege's media coverage was extensive and emotional, with the military personnel in charge of the counterterrorism operation preventing journalists from getting too close to the theatre of actions (Soldatov & Borogan, 2002). The attackers were led by Movsar Baraev, who had allegedly been sent there by Aslan Maskhadov. The terrorists released a video where one of the female suicide bombers explained the reasons behind the attack ("Gunmen release chilling video", 2002). She talked about Russia's atrocities in Chechnya, the children and elderly who died in vain, and the blood that had been shed on Chechen soil. She made a point of Chechnya's right to choose its own fate and demanded the independence of Chechnya and an immediate withdrawal of Russian forces. She also claimed that the taking of hostages was their last resort in communicating the grievances of the Chechen nation.

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[37] For a detailed overview of the Russian counterterrorism law development see Vasin, S. (2009). *Efforts of Russian Ministries in implementing measures to prevent acts of terrorism*. In G. Schweitzer and M. Fox (Eds.)*, Russian views on countering terrorism during eight years of dialogue: extracts from proceedings of four workshops (pp. 257-267)*. National Academies Press.

On October 24, in an emergency meeting with Nikolai Patrushev, head of the Federal Security Service, and Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov, President Putin highlighted that the terrorist threat came from Chechnya as well as from abroad, which clearly illustrated how Chechnya has been portrayed at the national level by the Kremlin:

> The first information we had from the representatives of the terrorists who took the hostages in Moscow last night came from abroad. This reconfirms that *this terrorist outrage can be considered one of the biggest* to be carried out on a national as well as an international scale, and that it was planned in foreign terrorist centres. The plan was formed there and the executors of this plan were to be found there too. There's no doubt that *these are the very same criminals who have terrorised Chechnya* for years and who are today calling for an end to military action. These are the people who have sown death and destruction *both inside and outside the boundaries of Chechnya* and who want to spread the violence further (AP Achieves, 2002, emphasis added).

Thus, Putin emphasised that not only were the Chechens dangerous and prone to violence but also that the terrorist threat was bigger than just a random act of violence, further emphasising that the Chechen terrorists had support from some unnamed external sources that were hostile to Russia. This is an example of a Chechen terrorist threat securitisation move exercised at the highest political level.

The actions of the Russian military have been widely scrutinised in the media. During the Nord Ost Siege there were a few negotiation attempts, the terrorists released a few hostages occasionally and did not seem to be responding to any further negotiation attempts. (Burban et al., 2006; Dunlop, 2014). It is still unclear (and will likely remain so) whether or not the Russian government planned to respond to the terrorists' demands. Russia's policy towards Chechnya had been consistent on the denial of Chechnya's secession. Thus, the discrepancy between terrorists' demands and Russia's unwillingness to fulfil those demands evidently appeared. A stalemate faced by the Russian government during the siege put its preparedness for emergency situations to the test.

It is important to note that the Moscow Theatre Crisis was portrayed as an outstanding example of teamwork of Russian military forces, regardless of casualties. In his TV documentary, "Lubjanka Obyknovennyj terrorizm" (*Lubjanka. Ordinary terrorism*), Sergey Medvedev (2003) shows how the counterterrorism operation was carried out by FSB special forces (*spetsnaz*) and by Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the elite, most highly-trained military professionals in Russia. The actions of military personnel during the siege were portrayed as necessary and they were claimed to be heroes. However, such TV programmes were released months after the siege, whereas during the siege the Kremlin was not vocal about strategies or possible solutions for Dubrovka. Thus, the public was kept uninformed about what to expect and how the authorities were handling the situation (Burban et al., 2006). It is important to add that the TV documentary by Medvedev was sponsored by Channel One, the extremely popular Kremlin-owned television channel. Research shows that most people in Russia aged four and above watch Channel One at least once a month (*Telesmotrenie v 2016 godu*, 2016). As Mickiewicz (2019) argues, the central television network is particularly important to the Kremlin's dissemination of its rhetoric because many viewers are exposed to it and they are unlikely to look for other sources of information.

In the aftermath of the siege Putin addressed the nation, thanking all Russia's citizens for their stamina and solidarity, and simultaneously reiterating that the enemy "is strong and dangerous, inhumane and merciless, it is international terrorism. Until it is defeated everywhere in the world people will not feel safe" ("Obrashhenie Putina k narodu posle Nord

Osta," 2002). He called Chechen insurgents "armed bastards" and highlighted that Russia again showed that "it is impossible to put Russia on its knees" (Ibid). In the speech, Putin apologised that they could not save all hostages, although he quickly moved on to the terrorist threat that had to be eliminated (Ibid). From a securitisation analysis point of view, the official Presidential address after the Nord Ost Siege was a paramount moment to reiterate how dangerous the terrorist threat was for Russia.

There is a salient feature of the government's response to the Nord Ost terrorist attack: the Kremlin preferred to solve conflicts by military means. The Kremlin's intention to use military force was clear during the Beslan Siege counterterrorism operation too. In the Nord Ost case, *spetsnaz* stormed the building, thus intentionally trying to solve the issue using force, creating a dangerous situation for the hostages (Dunlop, 2014; Soldatov & Borogan, 2002). Burban et al. (2006) argue that negotiating options were not explored and this unconditional military response was unnecessary. However, this uncompromising military approach helped the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric, portraying the Chechens as irrational killers without a moral compass versus Russia's military forces who acted within the law. Such a juxtaposition allowed the Kremlin to add to the image of the Chechens as untrustworthy and ultimately deadly.

4.3.4.1 Public responses to Dubrovka

Interestingly, the most consistent and evidence-based investigation of the Dubrovka counterterrorism operation was conducted by a group of civil activists (relatives of those who died during the rescue operation). The results of the civil investigation may be used to illustrate a few peculiarities regarding the Dubrovka rescue operation; though one has to bear in mind the limitations of methods used to obtain the data, as the investigation was unofficial (Burban et al., 2006, p. 2). Nonetheless, the report called "*Nord–Ost. Neokonchennoe rassledovanie*" (Nord Ost. Unfinished Investigation) by Burban et al. (2006) contains the data gathered by the activists and it concurs with the inconsistencies of the rescue operation mentioned earlier. For example, Burban et al. (2006) mentioned that “no authorized persons or professional negotiators had been invited to the process” (p. 16). In addition, the report mentioned an intentional provocation of the terrorists or come up with a better plan to rescue more hostages (Ibid).

Nevertheless, public dissatisfaction which provoked the independent investigation was not reflected in the official media. As Snetkov (2007) points out, *Rossiiskaya gazeta,* an official newspaper of the government, appeared to focus more on the interviews with military professionals and emergency response workers than with the survivors of the siege. Thus, the Kremlin filtered the information that was shared with the public in the media, and the activists’ investigation received little attention. Even though the activists tried to battle the official version of the Nord Ost events, they did not have access to the media, so their voices have not been heard. Thus, the Kremlin protected the securitisation process from exposure, supporting the image of Russia as an unforgiving counterterrorism fighter.

However, despite the confusion in the media, which was later recognised as the weakest part of the Dubrovka counterterrorism operation, the Kremlin was satisfied with the public response:

> The main conclusion to be made is that the overwhelming majority of citizens supported the action that was carried out, which attests to *the consolidation of all segments of society* in opposing attempts to destroy the Russian Federation and supporting the struggle against extremism and its ultimate form, terrorism. (Kolesnikov, 2009, p. 100, emphasis added)

Thus, the ultimate goal of the securitisation of the terrorism threat was achieved: Russian society was united against the image of the enemy. They were ready to fight it and to follow the Kremlin’s lead, as the Kremlin was seen as the only player that could protect and save Russia.

The rapid development of Russia's terrorism narrative after Nord Ost follows the securitisation theory pattern: the Russian government's rhetoric notably changed, building upon the Second Chechen War. As Snetkov (2007) argues, rhetoric suggesting "all Chechens are terrorists" (p. 1356) appeared after the Dubrovka siege, altering how the Chechen question was portrayed in the media. At the beginning of the Second Chechen War, the Chechen insurgency was depicted as the "bad guys" and the Russian government saw Basaev invading Dagestan as overstepping boundaries, but Chechens were not labelled as the source of terrorism back then. In an interview for ORT[38] in January 2000, Putin referred to the Chechen rebels as "not following the laws of the Russian Federation by using terrorist tools against the Russian army" (Elb0rracho, 2000; Hill 2002). In addition, Putin admitted during the interview that there was insufficient media coverage of the Chechen conflict and emphasised the need for Russia to be "firm but not cruel in how it treats the Chechen people" (Elb0rracho, 2000).[39] However, after the 9/11 and the Moscow Theatre Crisis, during a meeting with the Presidential Commission for Human Rights in December 2002, Putin's answer to a question about the situation in Chechnya reflected the change in rhetoric:

> Russia has done everything to solve this [the Chechen] problem and it took a very dangerous and difficult step that exposed it to national humiliation and in fact *put it on the brink of the further disintegration of the Federation* when it practically recognised the independence of Chechnya. […] In fact what happened was a supplanting of notions. They continued to talk about the fight for independence, but in fact had embarked on the next stage: *an attack on Russia so that the Caucasus would break away with the aim of creating a caliphate*. […] So, it is not about Chechnya. *They continue to use the independence of Chechnya as a cover* and to sound off on human rights using the slogans of democracy to achieve the goals that have nothing in common with democracy. We cannot allow that to happen. *We will not allow our country to be broken up*. This will not be. ("A Meeting with the Members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission," 2002, emphasis added)

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[38] ORT is one of the main TV channels in Russia.

[39] Kolesnikov (2009) mentions the absence of coordination and information sharing between the counterterrorism headquarter and the media as the main drawback of the campaign.

Thus, Putin's speech emphasised a change in the official rhetoric, and the establishment of the Chechen issue as the "us versus them" narrative. The arguments outlined above sought to point towards an intensive securitisation of the terrorism threat, with a particular focus on Chechnya as the source of "evil". Kolesnikov (2009) argues that "those who killed the children in Beslan and seized the planes for the attacks on the United States are *entities of the same breed*" (p. 249, emphasis added). In other words, the Chechen terrorist threat became continuously associated with international terrorism, highlighting the dangerous nature of anything connected to the Chechens (Robertson, 2019).

However, at the same time Putin denied the Chechens agency in the conflict, implying that they wanted to leave the Russian Federation because they were being manipulated by external forces, for example their Afghan counterparts ("A Meeting with the Members of the Presidential Human Rights Commission," 2002). Thus, the Chechen resistance was ultimately serving international terrorist organisations' purposes (Ibid). Snetkov (2007) concludes that:

> whilst in 2002 the terrorist threat was still largely presented in the official press as a discreet and manageable problem, largely connected with the developments within Chechnya, by 2004 it was presented as a much greater threat, possibly threatening *the very existence of Russia*, or even the 'civilised' world" (p. 1363, emphasis added).

Hence, the Chechen terrorist threat had been in the process of transformation into an overarching threat for Russia (Snetkov, 2007).

4.3.5 The Beslan Hostage Crisis (2004)

The Beslan School Siege intensified the securitising discourse. On 1 September 2004, a school in the town of Beslan, in the Republic of North Ossetia, was taken by thirty two armed people (Kesaev & Totoonti, 2007). The insurgents took more than a thousand civilians hostage, including children, their families and relatives, teachers, and others who came to celebrate the beginning of a new academic year, one of the most well attended events in post-

Soviet schools (Kesaev & Totoonti, 2007; Snetkov, 2007). The hostages had been in the school building for three days when two explosions occurred, and Russian military forces stormed the premises. Sobolev (2009) argues that Beslan for Russia was “comparable in its scope, severity, and consequences with the events of September 11” (p. 248).

Russia appeared to be genuinely concerned about the international security developments: after the events of 9/11 Putin addressed his condolences in a TV speech, particularly emphasising that Russia “directly knows what terrorism is”, “it is a challenge to humanity”, and that terrorism is “the plague of the twenty-first century” (“President Vladimir Putin made a statement on terrorist attacks in the United States,” 2001). He accented the importance of solidarity in the face of new challenges and explicitly portrayed Russia as a potential ally in this fight. Baev (2003) notes that the US and Russia “have been hit the hardest” (p. 30) and thus developed more aggressive policies to respond to terrorism.

For Russia, Beslan became a milestone in the securitisation of the terrorist threat. Putin stressed the main securitisation points in his public address after Beslan:

> But what has happened now, this crime committed by terrorists, is unprecedented in its inhumanness and cruelty. This is not a challenge to the President, parliament or government. It is *a challenge to all of Russia, to our entire people. Our country is under attack* […] What we are dealing with are not isolated acts intended to frighten us, not isolated terrorist attacks. *What we are facing is direct intervention of international terror directed against Russia*. This is a total, cruel and full-scale war that again and again is taking the lives of our fellow citizens. (Chernyshev2033, 2004, emphasis added)

Thus, the securitisation rhetoric continued to form a core of Putin’s speech, as he kept reiterating the existentiality of the threat. He would go on emphasising how important it was to stay united in times of crisis and to support each other. Putin dramatically emphasised Russia’s unpreparedness for such terrorist events: “We showed ourselves to be weak. And the weak get beaten”, (Ibid). There are parallels between Putin’s speeches after the Nord Ost and

Beslan: both deployed the narrative in the same manner, highlighting the existentiality of the threat, the call for unity, and his gratitude for the nation’s response.

According to Kesaev and Totoonti (2007) the Beslan attack resulted in 331 dead, 783 wounded (pt. 1) and, as Milashina (2005) aptly sums it up, “this is all we know about what happened” (para. 1). Two commissions were formed to investigate the Beslan Crisis, and each came up with different results. Here it is important to mention that two commissions were formed by people with different agendas. The Russian Parliamentary Commission, headed by Aleksandr Torshin, a deputy speaker of the Council of Federations, represented a pro-government view of the events. The second commission, the North Ossetian Parliament Commission, led by Stanislav Kesaev, a deputy speaker of the North Ossetian Parliament, committed to conduct an independent investigation of what happened in Beslan. With this in mind, a few interesting points can be shown on the base of these two reports. First, the North Ossetian Parliament Commission’s report (hereinafter the Kesaev report) is structured around inconsistencies of the official version of the events. The report is based mostly on witnesses’ reports as the commission conducted many interviews (Kesaev & Totoonti, 2007). Thus, first-hand data was available, but the government had no interest in either acquiring these data nor in asking questions regarding certain aspects of the Beslan events (Milashina, 2005). Hence, the deliberate avoidance of certain topics in the “in-house” report might signify that government officials possessed more information than they shared and that they might have tried to cover up the unpleasant truths. The presumably lowered numbers of casualties reported, the absence of transparency, as well as the uncertainty of the number of terrorists and non-disclosure of their identities were mentioned in the Kesaev report (Kesaev & Totoonti, 2007). Regardless of the availability of the report online, it did not reach a wider audience. The authorities treated the Beslan activists in the same way they had treated the Nord Ost research group, with the absence of any interest in their findings.

Second, the Kesaev report concluded that the performance of the Russian forces engaged in the counterterrorism operation in Beslan was unsatisfactory, whereas the Torshin report acknowledged the Beslan counterterrorism choices as “mostly positively evaluated” (Torshin, 2006, p. 131). Such distinction between two reports emphasises the discrepancy between the government’s understanding of the Beslan counterterrorism operation as acceptable and reasonable and the reluctance on the part of Russian society to accept the government’s view. It highlights the fact that the securitisation process was ongoing, and Russian society had more opportunities to voice their disagreements than they do now. Regardless of these dissatisfactions, the Kremlin found a way to protect the securitisation rhetoric, launching an official investigation on the Beslan Crisis. It showed the public that the government was interested in finding out what went wrong during the Beslan counterterrorism operation. Yet it also showed that the absence of concrete results allows us to see it more as a smokescreen for the regime’s miscalculations than a real attempt to shed some light on the Beslan events.

4.3.5.1 Public responses to Beslan

An opinion poll conducted a year after the Beslan Hostage Crisis asked respondents to evaluate if Russian special services and law enforcement agencies became more effective after the Beslan and Nord Ost attacks. Almost a third of respondents (27.61%) answered yes (more effective), 7.58% answered no (less effective), and overwhelming 53% said that they could not see any significant change (“Public opinion poll (VCIOM) 2005. Question 26,” 2005). Thus, even though the public discontent was rather obvious in the immediate aftermath of the Beslan Crisis, it remained rather contained to the activists and the people who looked for answers. The comparison between two the Beslan reports shows that the second major Russian counterterrorist operation was not a huge success, but the absence of significant public dissatisfaction indicates that the general public had been kept in the dark

(Wood, 2004). The Russian public was kept uninformed about the investigations into the Beslan Crisis and even when the activists conducted their own investigation, it did not receive much public attention.

Attempts by the Russian government to conceal the scope of civilian casualties after both attacks showed a good knowledge of the securitisation audience. The Kremlin was concerned with public opinion regarding the Beslan operation, which reiterates the importance of the audience for securitisation (Snetkov, 2007). The government needed to show its competence to the public, not the absence of capacity to deal with the terrorists. As the poll above shows, the Kremlin was rightfully afraid, because over half of the Russian public did not see any improvements with the government's actions after Moscow and Beslan. There was a risk that the public could have rejected a government that was not capable of handling a terrorism situation without sacrificing its own people. Thus, the concealment of casualties was a rational choice that helped to support the terrorist threat narrative without distracting the audience from the main points of the securitisation rhetoric. As Robert and Ware (2009) note, the Kremlin used the Beslan terrorist narrative to its advantage:

> These proposals [the centralised appointment of regional governors] were presented by President Putin in response to the Beslan school tragedy, as a means for reducing corruption and increasing security throughout the Russian Federation. In fact, it appeared that these proposals had been long in the making, but their presentation as a response to a hostage crisis in the North Caucasus served to sharpen questions about their efficacy and propriety in connection with regional problems of extremism and terrorism. (p. 3)

Thus, the Kremlin appealed to the existing public dissatisfaction with some government improvements but waited for the right moment to present them. Furthermore, the Kremlin's concerns about public opinion indicate that the success of securitisation attempts was not guaranteed or expected; it was carefully crafted and nurtured by securitisation moves that were accurately formed. As it has been shown in this chapter, the securitisation rhetoric has been consistent from the beginning of the Second Chechen War, with slight variations occurring to tailor it to a specific situation.

The Russian government succeeded in portraying Chechen terrorism as an existential threat to the Russian Federation by a consistent media campaign reiterating the message that ‘Chechen’ means ‘a terrorist’. As Wood (2004) notes:

> The Russian media had played a key role in conveying something of the horrors of the 1994–96 war; this time, the authorities have not made the mistake of allowing them freedom to operate, and have closed down or replaced the editorial teams of the two most critical sources of news, NTV and TV6. A striking contrast between the current war and the previous one has been the manner in which Russian official discourse has permeated journalistic commentary, *to the point where ‘terrorist’ and ‘Chechen’ have become virtually synonymous*. This has had poisonous social repercussions: generalized antipathy to ‘persons of Caucasian extraction’ has often flared up into outright xenophobia, resulting in both official and spontaneous public persecution not only of Chechens but also of several other peoples from the region. (p. 30, emphasis added)

The narrative that Chechens are terrorist has been noticed by both politicians and scholars, as was the negative association between terrorism and Chechnya. This negative association of the Chechens with an enemy that is about to destroy Russia is an essential part of the Kremlin’s securitisation rhetoric. Lord Rea spoke to the House of Lords in 2002, emphasising the narrative:

> the Russian Government would like us to believe that the Chechen war is part of the world-wide war against terrorism. There is a widespread mythology in Russia, which is encouraged, I think, by the government, that most Chechens are terrorists or thieves; it is similar to beliefs about the Roma in central Europe. The Chechens are Russia's "bad object". (Hansard, 2002)

Thus, as it can be seen in Lord Rea’s apt summary, the message from the Kremlin about the connection between terrorism and Chechnya resulting in the Chechens being seen as the “bad guys” was formed successfully. It has been noticed not only by the domestic audience but also by international observers and discussed in the House of Lords. Shinar (2019) emphasises another essential dimension of the Kremlin's post-Second Chechen War terrorism securitisation rhetoric: it has been grounded not only in the Chechen wars but also in Chechnya's religious history. He aptly notes:

> Russian popular stereotypes of the Chechens had been manipulated in such a way as to replace a generally positive perception of the noble and free mountain man into, first, a dangerous and bloodthirsty criminal, and then into a crazed and fanatical terrorist of Islamic fundamentalist persuasion. (pp. 132-133)

Hence, the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric was effective in portraying the Chechen terrorism as an existential threat to Russia, as well as giving a face to an image of a terrorist who represents that existential threat.

Of course, there were journalists like Anna Politkovskaya (*Novaya gazeta*) and Andrei Babitsky (*Radio Svoboda*) who attempted to do fair and objective journalism, and who tried to show a balanced picture of what was happening in Chechnya, but their influence was small. In addition, Anna Politsovskaya was killed in October 2006, and her death sent out the message that open and unbiased journalistic reporting on Chechnya could be not only dangerous, but deadly (Richter, 2008). According to a screenshot of Intellipedia, which was one of the documents leaked by Edward Snowden, Politkovskaya's email address was allegedly hacked by the FSB, as the malicious software that was used was not available in public domain, shortly before she died (Biddle, 2016). The message was received by Russian journalists and they have not been as outspoken about the Chechen situation ever since. Hence, the media portrayed the Chechen resistance as the Kremlin wanted it to be represented, there was almost no one left to challenge the official stance on the issue. The conflict in Chechnya resulted in the restriction of media freedom, impacting the coverage of the situation in Chechnya on the grounds of state security (Robertson, 2019).

The Moscow Theatre Crisis (2002) and the Beslan Hostage Crisis (2004) resulted in a drastic change in the view of the Russian public, as well as in Russia's domestic policy. The Kremlin successfully utilised both attacks as a justification for staging Chechen terrorism as threatening the survival of Russia. It is necessary to mention that there were definitive changes in the Chechen approach to the conflict after Beslan and the death of Basaev: the Chechen resistance rhetoric has transformed significantly from delivering national separatist grievances to advocating for the creation of an Emirate, covering the whole of the North Caucasus. Decreased support from the local communities and the killing of Basaev, the Chechens' inspirational leader, resulted in the resistance going underground and the number of attacks decreasing (Burger & Cheloukhine, 2013; Moore, 2012). Even if the Kremlin's counterterrorism campaign might not have been directly responsible for the de-escalation of the conflict, the de-escalation itself was an achievement that played into the securitisation rhetoric. It showed that even unprovoked/unplanned events could be used to strengthen securitisation rhetoric at almost no cost to a securitisation actor. Whether a counterterrorism mission was a success because the counterterrorist actions were effective or because a combination of other factors took place is a rather common dilemma in evaluating the success of counterterrorism missions in general. Similarly, the Kremlin presented the de-escalation of the conflict as their success, although it could have been a range of different factors that contributed to such an outcome. Nonetheless, the Kremlin saw an opportunity to strengthen its line on being a successful counterterrorist actor and took it.

4.4 The Results of Terrorist Threat Securitisation on the Domestic Level

4.4.1 Legal changes

When analysing how the threat of terrorism was securitised in Russia and how the Kremlin tightened its grip on civil liberties, it is paramount to mention the changes in counterterrorism legislation that were made after the Nord Ost and Beslan attacks. These changes are indicative of successful securitisation because they show that the emergency measures that were introduced have been normalised through incorporation into legislation (Balzacq, 2008). On the 21st of November 2002, less than a month after the Nord Ost Siege, Putin signed a Federal Law N 144-FZ "On the introduction of an amendment to the Federal Law on Combating Terrorism". Among other changes, the amendment introduced a change into the process regarding the treatment of terrorists' bodies after a counterterrorism operation. According to the new amendment, terrorists' bodies would not be given back to relatives for funeral procedures but would be buried the way the government deemed appropriate and the place of burial would not be released to anyone, including said relatives ("Federal Law N 144 - FZ On the introduction of an amendment to the Federal Law 'On Combating Terrorism,'" 2006). The amendment could be seen as random and unimportant but, in the Chechen cultural context, which is closely related to Islam and its values, a proper burial is an essential part of getting an afterlife that one deserves.[40] The Russian government changed the counterterrorism legislation and denied alleged terrorists a proper burial without a clear strategic goal, but with an intention to show and exercise power over its citizens. In addition, the amendment contributed to less transparency over counterterrorism procedures and reiterated the power of the government over Russian citizens even after their death.

On the 6th of March 2006, six months after the Beslan terrorist attack, a new law on terrorism was adopted. It was called the Federal Law N 35-FZ and it is currently the main legal document forming the Russian counterterrorism strategy. This law specified that the FSB would be responsible for counterterrorist operations within Russia ("Federal Law N 35 – FZ On Counteraction of Terrorism," 2006, article 15, part 1). In addition, the National Antiterror Committee (NAC) was created, with the Director of FSB appointed as the Director of NAC ("Presidential Decree N 116 from 15.02.2006," 2006, part 1). Thus, a decision to create a new governmental body to fight terrorism in the aftermath of two significant terrorist attacks resulted in the consolidation of power in the Kremlin, with no meaningful change in the management of counterterrorism operations. As Dawisha (2014) highlights, there is little difference between Putin and the FSB in terms of understanding what course Russia should take – they support each other and act as one. The Federal Law N 35 is currently used as the main counterterrorism law, with some minor amendments being made throughout the years. In addition, Stepanova (2006) argues that counterterrorism legislation's changes were aimed at suppression rather than prevention of terrorism, emphasising the militarised nature of the Russian approach to fighting terrorism. By increasing the number of government agencies that could participate in a counterterrorism campaign the Kremlin boosted its military resources and gained a legitimate reason to use it as the regime deemed fit.

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[40] See, for example, Abdirasulova, G., Alymbaev, N., Alisheva, A., Isaeva, G., Kolodzinskaja, G., Syromjatnikov, A., & Jeratov, R. (2017). Answers to questions. The right of a person to a decent burial. Bishkek.

The threat of terrorism is inseparable from how the Kremlin sees the future of domestic policy, and Putin plays a paramount role in how the Russian public perceives the threat. Baev (2003) reiterates: "The threat of Chechen terrorism has been instrumental in strengthening the Kremlin's control over Moscow" (p. 36). It is also worth mentioning that the solution for the terrorism threat had been highly connected to Putin, both as a person and a politician, in the eyes of the public. In 2007 Putin was named as the leading counterterrorism politician: according to the poll conducted on the 25th of March 2007, at the end of Putin's second presidency, 35% of respondents believed that Putin was the best politician to be entrusted with the terrorist problem solution, and even if 12% of said respondents were not satisfied with Putin's decisions as president they still believed that he was the one capable of eliminating the terrorism threat ("Public opinion poll (VCIOM) 2007. Question 40," 2007). As for the other respondents, 22% could not name a politician they would trust with counterterrorism solutions. Yet Sergey Ivanov, then-Minister of Defence, gained the trust of 11% of respondents when Dmitriy Medvedev, who would become President in 2008, received only 4% of respondents' endorsement (Ibid). Thus, Putin became an increasingly authoritative figure in the counterterrorism sphere, well known for his uncompromised approach to the fight with terrorism.

4.4.2 Societal changes

One of the objectives of this thesis was to examine the societal consequences of terrorism securitisation in Russia. A distinctive feature of securitisation theory is the inclusion of society into security analysis. Thus, the securitisation analysis builds upon not only political or legislative changes but also shows social changes that follow successful securitisation moves (Balzacq, 2010a; Wæver, 2015; Wilkinson, 2007). A securitising actor changes not only a political set up in a country, but it also creates a particular securitisation audience and consequently changes society (Balzacq, 2010a; Hansen, 2000). By doing so, the composition of society changes and those who belong to the securitisation audience or share official views on the security threat gradually form a new, "entitled" community. Those unsupportive of the official government face obstacles in voicing their opinions or could be pushed away from the political arena.

The Russian public faced major changes when oppositional thinking became drastically discouraged, and compliance with securitisation rhetoric was actively encouraged. The rhetoric based on "us versus them" mentality worked not only for the unification of society against a threat but it also led to the homogenisation of Russian society (Shevtsova, 2006). The securitisation rhetoric united and empowered the supporters of the regime and belittled those who preferred to stay neutral or oppose it. For example, the allegations against Aleksei Navalny, which purportedly were fabricated because of his oppositional political activity, or the trial of the punk band "Pussy Riot", whose performance "violated" an Orthodox Cathedral, can be seen as the price pro-Kremlin activists have to pay for mere existence in Russia (Weiss, 2013). The threat of real jail time deters possible opposition activity, preventing the public who might be interested in the political life from active engagement in politics. The securitisation of the terrorist threat helped to normalise such punitive measures from the Kremlin against its citizens in the eyes of the Russian public.

The securitisation of the terrorist threat has resulted in civil society becoming more homogenous and inactive over the years, allowing the Kremlin to tighten its grip on civil freedoms. For the sake of counterterrorism, a few laws were accepted, and these laws were claimed to reduce foreign influence on Russia's domestic political and civic space (Barkovskaya, 2017). However, they resulted in a crackdown on civil society at the same time. The changes came gradually, with the Kremlin slowly but steadily passing more laws to gain further control over peoples' rights and freedoms. Often such changes in the legislation officially normalise the practices that are already part of everyday life in a given country (Balzacq, 2008). For example, a significant amendment to Federal Law N 82-FZ "On Public Associations" was made in 2012 and was called Federal Law N 121-FZ, affected more than just one law, it altered the family of laws related to public associations, including non-commercial non-profit organisations participating in the political and non-political life of Russia.

Federal Law N 121-FZ, which later would become known as the law on "foreign agents", stated that the main reason for the amendment was to counteract terrorism by obliging non-commercial organisations, receiving foreign financing, to register as foreign agents (*Federal'nyi Zakon N 121-FZ O vnesenii izmenenij v otdel''nye zakonodatel''nye akty Rossijskoj Federacii v chasti regulirovanija dejatel''nosti nekommercheskih organizacij, vypolnjajushhih funkcii inostrannogo agenta,* 2012, article 21.6.9). Russian officials denied the negative connotation being an intentional part of the law, highlighting that such connotation is obsolete and is a remnant of the Cold War era that should be abandoned (Burke, 2012).

The new law restricted the activity of non-commercial organisations significantly. In addition to being included in the list of “foreign agents”, these organisations would have to submit their paperwork more often in comparison to non-foreign agent organisations (Ibid). Thus, the initial amendment was introduced to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism. This made it an essential step in counterterrorism efforts being incorporated into legislation, normalising counterterrorism measures. However, the law did not specify a share of foreign capital that was required for an organisation to be listed as a foreign agent, so even a small grant from a foreign donor could result in legal procedures against non-commercial organisations. Also, article 16 of Federal Law 121-FZ requires an authorised government body to report back to the State Duma on the political activity of registered foreign agents (*Federal’nyi Zakon N 121-FZ O vnesenii izmenenij*, 2012, article 16). Thus, the law affected many organisations in terms of their finances, but it also made a political statement. This made the law rather significant for both the government and the organisations falling under the new legislation. Even if initially the law was focused on encouraging counterterrorist activities, it became a tool to trace non-commercial organisations’ political affiliations and activities. Moreover, as Kumar (2015) mentions, Federal Law N 121-FZ is connected to the Kremlin’s fear of colour revolutions, so an implied outcome of the law would be to prevent the Russian organisations from getting international financing that might facilitate regime change in Russia. The introduction of the law on “foreign agents” resulted in a significant decline in non-governmental, non-profit activity, which considerably set back the development of Russian civil society (Barkovskaya, 2017).

However, the application of Federal Law N 121-FZ was contested by a few Russian organisations that had been issued warrants for their organisations’ absence of compliance with the law. Besidea, Fund "*Kostromskoj centr podderzhki obshhestvennyh iniciativ*" and the Russian Federation's Commissioner for Human Rights joined forces in launching an official complaint, asking the court to rule out the amendments made by Federal Law 121-FZ as unconstitutional. The result can be seen in the Decree of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation of 10.04.2014 N 10-P, which stated that Federal Law N 121-FZ is in absolute compliance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation. This is because the right to create an association is not absolute and can be restricted by the state for the country's protection:

> the right of everyone to gather and the freedom of activity of public associations is not absolute and, as follows from articles 17 (part 3) and 55 (part 3) of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, may be restricted by federal law to the extent necessary in order to protect the foundations of the constitutional order, morality, health, rights and legitimate interests of others, ensure *the country's defense and state security.* (*Postanovlenie ot 8 aprelja 2014 g. N 10-P. [the Decree of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation of 10.04.2014 N 10-P]*, 2014, part 2, emphasis added)

Thus, it can be seen that the securitisation of the terrorist threat has dramatically affected the Russian legislative system, normalising the threat of terrorism and influencing people's ability to exercise their freedoms and rights.

The next law that built on the previous legal changes was law N 129-FZ, which was introduced in 2015 and could be seen as a follow-up law. This law became known as the law on "undesirable organisations" as it aimed to prevent the activities of organisations labelled undesirable because they might pose a threat to national security (Luhn, 2015). Slightly different from the law on "foreign agents", the law on undesirable organisations allowed the Kremlin to gain control over commercial organisations that could "possibly harm" Russia's national interests, both domestically and abroad. The law was introduced following the Crimean economic sanctions: a Russian official who proposed the law, Aleksandr Tarnavskij, claimed that the law was intended as a response to the Crimean economic sanctions from the

West (Nazarec, 2015). Thus, the law on foreign agents was supposed to deal with non-commercial organisations and civil society, and the law on “undesirable organisations” resulted in the Kremlin’s increased control over the commercial sector.

The trend continued in 2017 with a new addition to the family of the laws mentioned above: Putin signed Federal Law N 327-FZ in November 2017, extending the law on “foreign agents” to media companies, namely radio, television, and newspapers (“*Zakon o smi-inoagentah podpisan Putinym*”, 2017). Federal Law N 327-FZ aims to trace a media company’s budget, and if it includes foreign funds, then the company has to register as a foreign agent and might be subjected to additional extensive checks (Pinchuk & Lowe, 2017). Hence, if not censorship, then extensive control and monitoring will be the future for both Russian and foreign media companies who want to work in Russia (Polyakova, 2017). Besides, this law limits possible sponsorship opportunities for opposition media outlets in Russia. That is because it would now be more difficult for them to get any financial support to stay afloat. Eventually, if they get such support, they risk being added to the list of foreign media agents, thus giving the Kremlin a legal reason for censorship. Ultimately, they might face the possibility of being squeezed out of Russia’s media space.

This tight control over civic rights and freedoms began when the Kremlin launched its international counterterrorism campaign: the Kremlin gradually gained public support for minor changes using securitisation rhetoric (Snetkov, 2007). When these laws are analysed together, it is possible to see the trend of the Kremlin restricting civil freedoms, leaving less space for the Russian people to express their will. The Venice Commission reviewed the Federal law N 121-FZ together with other federal laws of the same family and concluded that they “mutually reinforce the chilling effect on the exercise on freedom of expression along with freedom of association” (Bilkova, Paczolay, Sorensen, Thorgeirsdottir, & Velaers, 2014, p. 28). Barkovskaya (2017) argues that the connections many non-governmental organisations had built before the law on “foreign agents” are now lost and might be irreparable under the current Russian government. Thus, counterterrorism efforts and legislation change in Russia have been playing an essential role in the Kremlin’s political decisions (Bacon et al., 2013). Counterterrorism has been a way for the Kremlin to push for domestic policies that would be in favour of the regime, not only allowing the Kremlin to gain more power domestically but also simultaneously changing Russian society.

4.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the formative years of the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat, focusing mainly on the Kremlin, namely Vladimir Putin and his administration, as the main securitisation actors, and the Nord Ost and Beslan terrorist attacks as the events that changed how the Russian public saw terrorism. The example of the Chechen terrorists being staged as a threat to Russia’s survival illustrates the process of securitisation: firstly, there was the transformation of a politicised issue into a securitised issue when the second Chechen campaign was proclaimed to be a counterterrorist operation. Secondly, the Chechen terrorist threat was staged as existential by portraying its danger in the Russian media. Then securitisation actors were seeking the securitisation audience’s approval for extraordinary politics aimed to deal with the Chechen terrorist threat. Emergency measures aimed at fighting the terrorist threat resulted in legislation changes. The face value of these changes was the creation of a new counterterrorism agency but *de facto* they contributed to the consolidation of the Kremlin’s power. The social sector has been significantly affected as well, facing major restrictions on civil rights and freedoms. I argue that the securitisation of the terrorist threat was successful, and the changes in counterterrorism legislation and the society that allowed the consolidation of power in the Kremlin can be seen as the indication of such success.

The aftermath of the Second Chechen-Russian War was the time when Russia stepped up its major counterterrorism actor game on the international arena. The Second Chechen War brought significant changes and developments to Russian counterterrorism and, ultimately, to the development of the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric (Moore, 2007). The Kremlin continued building its counterterrorism profile after the Dubrovka and Beslan events, even though not all counterterrorism actions and strategies have been considered successful (Kolesnikov, 2009). It is important to reiterate that Russia's counterterrorism strategy is rooted in the responses to the Chechen wars' challenges. The Second Chechen War, filled with militant Islamist rhetoric, made Russia reconsider its rather open bragging approach in dealing with the Chechen separatism, which in turn resulted in the refinement of the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric.

The history of Chechen-Russian relations is essential for an understanding of the persistent resistance of the Chechens to Russian rule. They have never wanted to be a part of Russia (and the Soviet Union before that, as well as the Russian Empire earlier) and continue the struggle for independence. The Caucasus (and particularly Chechnya) has been and continues to be a source of political difficulties for Russia: up to the Second Chechen War the disputes in the Caucasus were solved predominantly by military might (Baev, 2003). This approach saw some changes when the Putin administration became more focused on portraying the Chechens as the enemy, creating a new narrative in the Russian political sphere. The new narrative was transformed into the successful securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat, bringing change to politics, legislation, and society. The Kremlin formed a new powerful social image of evil terrorists being the Chechens, which was used by the Kremlin to justify the changes in counterterrorism legislation and the creation of more military capabilities within the government.

Changes following the securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat became possible not only because counterterrorism is a sphere where the state is the main player but also because the war on terror has been institutionalised since the events of 9/11. Strategies aimed to prevent terrorist attacks became embedded in the legislation of many countries (Howell & Lind, 2010). The securitisation of the terrorist threat became possible in Russia partially thanks to the changes that followed 9/11, which brought a new way of making politics. There is no domestic or international politics without a counterterrorism doctrine anymore and the Russian government has been developing its own way of utilising the terrorist threat for the Kremlin's purposes. The existential threat from the Chechen terrorism, combined with a broader threat from international terrorists, became the basis for significant domestic political changes in Russia.

The next chapter discusses the evolution of the securitisation rhetoric in the Eurasian region. The Kremlin's fight with terrorism begins to focus more on regional security and less on making case by case decisions, as during the active military phase of the Chechen wars. The understanding that the Chechen-Russian conflict is irresolvable by military means has changed how the Kremlin sees the region. The next chapter will show that the Kremlin has not stopped securitising the terrorist threat at the domestic level but continues into the Eurasian region, linking the Chechen terrorist threat and the terrorist threat from abroad, with the ultimate aim to restore Russia's prestige domestically and abroad.

Chapter 5 Regional Securitisation: The Terrorist Threat across Eurasia

Having argued in the previous chapter that the terrorist threat securitisation narrative was used by the Kremlin to alter domestic policies, this chapter broadens the analysis of securitisation of the terrorist threat beyond Russia's domestic politics. It looks at the regional level to show how the Kremlin followed the securitisation pattern in the broader context of the Eurasian region. The objective of this chapter is to discuss the Kremlin's usage of the terrorist threat to bolster Russia's counterterrorist image in Eurasia. To do so I continue to use the securitisation framework to analyse the Kremlin's security rhetoric regarding the region and to show how Russia's line on counterterrorism has influenced the perception of the terrorist threat in the Eurasian region.

The analysis of securitisation rhetoric in the post-Soviet space in general, and in the Eurasian region in particular, is the focus of this chapter. I will start with a discussion of the definition of Eurasia and its importance for Russia and move on to the analysis of the Kremlin's securitisation language in the Eurasian space and how it shapes the perception of the terrorist threat in the region. I will look at the ways the Kremlin forms the securitisation rhetoric in Eurasia, focusing on different regional integration ideas being used, such as Eurasianism, the threat of Islamic extremism, and a shared desire of Eurasian political elites to stay in power. I will discuss how above-mentioned regional integration ideas helped the normalisation of the fear of terrorism in the absence of significant terrorist events in the region.

Further, I will focus on the main regional security-related initiatives that were created in the region. For that purpose, main Eurasian regional integration organisations are discussed, namely the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). This part seeks to address how the Eurasian regional organisations have been affected by the securitisation of the terrorist threat and how they became a platform for Russia's comeback as a regional, and ultimately a global counterterrorism actor. Moreover, the chapter will proceed by discussing the legislative changes that the securitisation process brought to the region, focusing on the main alterations that indicate the success of securitisation in Eurasia.

5.1 Audiences, Actors, and Aims of Regional Terrorist Threat Securitisation

The security situation in Eurasia represents a conundrum of traditional and non-traditional security threats, combined with internal political rivalries and oppositions. Bigo (2000) mentions the possibility of external and internal threats being intertwined and influencing each other, creating a particular context that leads to the understanding of threats in a given space. The Eurasian region represents such a security space, making it an interesting case of quasi-democratic development where political elites play an essential role. When Eurasian states became independent after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, they claimed to be moving towards a democratic form of government (Omelicheva, 2015). However, twenty-five years later, a full democratic transition has not been achieved. The study made by Freedom House in 2015 shows that Eurasian countries exhibited a drastic weakening of their intentions to adhere to democratic principles (Habdank-Kołaczkowska, Csaky, & Roylance, 2015). The report states: "Since 2000… the number of such [consolidated authoritarian] regimes has more than doubled, and Eurasia's average democracy score has fallen from 5.40 to 6.03 on a 7-point scale" (Habdank-Kołaczkowska et al., 2015, p.1). Thus, during the last twenty years, Eurasian leaders deserted inclusive politics and democratic reforms, becoming more repressive towards their populations. Vuori (2008) notes that in non-democratic settings, the securitisation audience can be represented by the elites, or political circles close to the government. In non-democratic societies, the elites represent the moving force behind political change, and it is often connected to the elites' personal and economic wellbeing (Yakovlev, 2016).

From the analysis of the regional context, we can see that the securitisation audience for regional securitisation consists of Eurasian political elites, as well as a broader Eurasian public; including an ethnic Russian population and Russia's nationals living in the post-Soviet space. In the regional context, the set of inter-regional political, cultural, and economic ties formed a particular securitisation audience, with the result that the Kremlin primarily aimed its securitisation rhetoric at the Eurasian political elites. The ruling elites of Eurasia, mostly represented by presidents and their closest family members and allies, is the audience that Russia is seeking to convince regarding the imminent terrorist threat in the region. Eurasian political elites can influence the implementation of the securitisation rhetoric, so the Kremlin aims to deliver the securitisation rhetoric to them.

Some Eurasian governments, especially in Central Asia, see terrorist groups not only as dangerous adversaries but also as possible political rivals, someone who can take their place if given an opportunity (Lain, 2016). As Lain (2016) argues, "Not only is there a perception that such groups present a 'breeding ground' for radicalisation and extremism, but they may also present an alternative power base to the dominant political structures" (pp. 388-389). While in Russia there was no doubt that the Chechen insurgents would not succeed in overpowering the Kremlin, in Eurasia political elites are incredibly protective of their political and economic achievements, and do not want to take risks of losing their positions (Chernykh & Burnashev, 2005; Cummings, 2002).

Thus, Eurasian political elites' perception of the terrorist threat is based on the mix of real and perceived threats. Chernykh and Burnashev (2005) illustrate this using the example of Central Asia: "[t]he authoritarian nature of Central Asian regimes promotes the securitization of the fight against international terrorism in order to justify limiting political and economic freedoms, strengthening power structures, and maintaining existing regimes" (p. 141). From the political elites' point of view, the counterterrorism agenda can be seen as instrumental in suppressing political opposition. As a result, counterterrorism cooperation with Russia presents an opportunity for an additional legitimisation of the elites' political power consolidation.

A broader Eurasian public, consisting of ethnic Russians, Russia's nationals, and pro-Russia Eurasian people in the post-Soviet space, can be seen as an extended supporting audience for the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric. The Kremlin receives significant support across Eurasia from such extended securitisation audience, the support that should not be underestimated. For example, the Eurasian Development Bank's report shows that the Eurasian countries that are in the Eurasian Economic Union, apart from Georgia and Ukraine, would choose Russia as the country they would help, both militarily and politically, as their first choice (*EDB Integration Barometer*, 2017). The support of Russia's counterterrorism agenda by a wider Eurasian audience might not directly influence political elites' decisions, but it creates a particular atmosphere of trust in Russia's decisions that helps the Kremlin to deliver securitisation rhetoric to a sympathetic audience. Besides, the post-Soviet countries share the fatigue of being a "bad democracy": it is becoming a new formative beacon of their foreign policy agenda (Lukin, 2019). Unsurprisingly, the question of stability and security in the Eurasian region, which Russia casually puts within its counterterrorism agenda, remains paramount for any current and future regional developments.

In the case of regional securitisation, the Kremlin remains as the main securitising actor. Rather often the Kremlin can be represented by different officials travelling on official business, such as ministers and ambassadors. In addition, the Kremlin can be represented by business allies, such as corporations making business in Eurasia (for example, RosAtom which has joint ventures in Kazakhstan), but their participation is harder to trace. Such instances might be the examples of non-public securitisation happening behind closed doors. This thesis primarily focuses on public securitisation; however, it is crucial to recognise the possibility of non-public securitisation, even if its details are beyond the scope of this project.

The main aim of the terrorist threat securitisation in Eurasia is to broaden Russia's political influence in the Eurasian region. Using the securitisation approach to foster the fear of terrorism in Eurasia, the Kremlin works toward unifying the regional political elites under its counterterrorism umbrella. The securitisation of terrorism remains utilitarian, aiming to achieve political goals: gaining more power and resources while being subjected to less political and legal scrutiny. In the Eurasian framework, Russia stands a chance of achieving that goal by using its experience of being a superpower, having a sympathetic audience, and military might for regaining regional influence (Lukin, 2019).

5.2 What is Eurasia?

An analysis of regional trends and developments raises a question of how one defines a region. There are different approaches to regional security, starting with defining the region using geography, politics, economic cooperation, or history as guiding tools.[41] In the case of Eurasia, defining the region is a complex issue, as the region has a rich history of divisions and unifications. The term Eurasia is rather difficult to narrow down, having been used both as a term to describe a land mass consisting of Europe and Asia in a geographical sense and the region of the post-Soviet countries in a political sense (Brubaker, 1994; A. Gleason, 2010). The term Eurasia is relatively well known and is used mostly as a synonym for the post-Soviet states (Nation, 2007; Charap, 2019).[42] The Eurasian region has been historically important for both Russia's security and global politics. For example, in the beginning of the 20th century Sir Halford Mackinder, paraphrased by Sperling (2003), was convinced that the Eurasian region was important for the global politics as he notes here:

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[41] See, for example, Mansfield, E. D., & Milner, H. V. (1999). The new wave of regionalism. *International organization*, *53*(3), 589-627; Fishlow, A., & Haggard, S. (1992). The United States and the regionalisation of the world economy; Solingen, E. (1998). *Regional orders at century's dawn: global and domestic influences on grand strategy*. Princeton University Press.

[42] After the dissolution of the USSR the Baltic states usually are excluded from the Eurasian framework, due to their membership in the European Union. Despite the fact that the Baltic states are part of another union formation, they are often considered as being of paramount interest to Russia in the military sphere,

> developed the geostrategic formulation recognising that international politics encompasses the globe […] the state that controls the Eurasian heartland controls the periphery, and the state that controls the periphery controls the world […] The international system described by Mackinder remains operative in the still-important military sense: states remain defined by their territoriality and the existential threat posed to them by a direct military attack by another state. (p. 3)

There was no debate regarding who controlled Eurasia during the times of Soviet rule: the USSR dominated the region, and all the power over constituent republics belonged to Moscow (Ziegler, 2014). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the situation in the region changed and the post-Soviet space was left with a power vacuum. The collapse of the planned economy shattered the economies of newly formed post-Soviet republics, and uncertainty reigned, leaving the Eurasian region disorganised and confused.

The lack of leadership after the USSR's breakdown resulted in a few attempts of rethinking regional integration. It is important to note that the differentiation between various integrational ideas in the region may be difficult, as different terms often substitute each other, overlap or are so vague that they hardly explain anything. For example, Nation (2007) mentions that the understanding of Eurasia in the US is close to "a kind of limbo to which Russia has been wilfully consigned" (p.6), which illustrates the absence of a universal definition of Eurasia. Mackinder understood Eurasia, as "Eurasia proper (with its European appendage), the Greater Middle East along the southern flank, the inner Asian region including post-Soviet Central Asia as well as Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, and significant parts of South and East Asia" (Nation, 2007, pp. 6-7). Thus, for him, Eurasia proper was a

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particularly regarding the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) deterrence, as well as the Eurasian region is crucial to the European security and the successful NATO expansion into eastern Europe (Sperling, 2003).

concept that explained broad regional connectivity. However, for the purposes of this thesis I follow a more pragmatic approach of defining Eurasia, aptly summed up by Abbott Gleason (2010) who defines Eurasia as “what we may anachronistically call “Soviet space” in these terms” (p. 27). While alternatively, Laruelle (2015) argues that the term Eurasia is a positive concept when used to define the region:

> The term “Eurasia” largely attained greater visibility for want of something better: it expresses conveniently, and in a rather intuitive way, the historical space of Russia and its “peripheries.” The term is not free of presuppositions, as it assumes a minimal geographical, if not geopolitical, unity between post-Soviet countries, or at least part of them. (p. 1)

Hence, defining Eurasia is not an easy task, but the fluidity of the concept allows Russia to conceptualise Eurasia the way the Kremlin sees fit, producing extensively inclusive rhetoric.

Untangling the security situation in the Eurasian region can be a difficult task, as the region is rather under-theorised and has not been in the focus of consistent analytical thought. For example, Gussarova and Khon (2017) argue that “Russia’s role and influence in Kazakhstan and Central Asia both on national and regional security has been largely mythologized and not been properly and honestly discussed. Different fears and phobias still influence the decision-making process” (p. 24). In addition, it is important to mention that the Eurasian region and Central Asia shall not be used interchangeably, as Central Asia is part of the Eurasian region. Historically, the term Central Asia has been used to describe five countries: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan (Mccauley, 2016).

After the collapse of the USSR many scholars were sceptical about the future prospects of the newly formed post-Soviet republics and a greater Eurasia, highlighting the inevitable challenges that Russia and the region will face in the era of independence. As Dawisha and Parrott (1994) argue, in the case of Russia’s authoritarian political course “the desire for a new "gathering of the Russian lands" is likely to be part of the ideological basis of the regime, which would threaten the independence of several new states to which ultranationalist Russians currently lay claim" (p. 282). Dawisha and Parrott (1994) reiterate the unstable positions of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, and their subordinate political position in relations to Russia and Russia's possible attempts to regain control over these newly formed states. Later, Umbach (2000) supports a pessimistic take on the future of post-Soviet states, arguing that the deterioration of Russia would worsen the security situation in the region and it would affect the West; therefore, cooperation could be the answer for many regional security challenges.[43] The essence of Umbach's argument is that Russia would not be able to pursue political and economic goals without concessions to the existing world order and also without playing by the current rules of international politics.

In 2018, Umbach's sentiment is still valid, pointing out the necessity of regional cooperation for Russia's survival. Not much has changed after Mackinder's insights into the Eurasian region's importance. As Willerton and Cockerham (2003) note, "all Moscow-based politicians endeavoured to maintain Russian influence in Eurasia" (p. 187). However, the sudden disruption of existing links between former Soviet countries and the need to significantly restructure existing economies in order to become self-sufficient left the region without Russia's close attention at the beginning of the independence period. President Yeltsin did not show a lot of confidence in the reestablishment of the regional dominance the USSR once had, and the Russian line on the region has not always been consistent. Tsygankov (2010a) notes that right after the collapse of the USSR Yeltsin had shown an indifferent approach to Eurasia. He disregarded its problems and needs, as well as possible security consequences of such dismissal for Russia: "Russia's leaders were initially dismissive of the region's [Muslim world] significance. […] Despite the growing instability in Afghanistan and central Asia, he [Yeltsin] also refrained from any serious involvement in the region, leaving the stage to Iran and Turkey" (p. 74). Such reluctance to engage with the region can be explained by Russia's absence of capabilities to deal with regional problems because it was preoccupied with internal difficulties and did not have the resources to spare (Reppert, 2003).

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[43] For more on regionalism see Aldis, A., & Herd, G. P. (Eds.). (2003). *Russian regions and regionalism: strength through weakness*.

Despite the interim political and economic problems, Russia inherited the vision of the Eurasian region as the paramount part of its near abroad policies from Soviet times (Gwertzman 2009; Nation, 2007). Putin's approach to the formation of Russia's policy towards its near abroad is based on the understanding of the Eurasian region as an essential part of Russia's influence. In addition, approximately half of the citizens of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan exhibit an interest in the creation of a regional union of some kind; not necessarily a revival of the USSR, but a new integrational project (*Eurasian Monitor 6*, 2006).

It is necessary to look at the development of security threats in Eurasia in order to discuss the terrorist threat securitisation in the region. Millar and Wegren (2003) emphasise the constructed nature of the security issues Russia faces "As the reality of [national security] decline has made clear, Russia was not as secure as was previously assumed by friends and foes alike, but in matters of security, *perception is reality*" (p. xxiii, emphasis added). In the Eurasian framework, the perception of security threats is significantly more complicated than it was within Russia. This is because any failure or loss of prestige can not only damage Russia's image domestically but also it can greatly influence how Russia is seen internationally (Millar & Wegren, 2003). Thus, Russia tries to counteract perceived threats and uses the threat of terrorism as a way to improve its position in the Eurasian region to regain and expand its political influence.

5.3 Staging the Terrorist Threat

The Eurasian region is a crossroad for a variety of security threats related to different international actors, from China to Chechnya (Sultanov, 2007). However, Eurasian countries have not seen terrorist events of the 9/11 scale. Why, then, are they interested in counterterrorism? I argue that the Kremlin's counterterrorism agenda is instrumental for Eurasian regimes as it allows for the justification of power consolidation and a way to fight the criticism of abandoning the democratic path of development. Hence, the securitisation of the terrorist threat finds a favourable ground in Eurasia.

The Eurasian elites have been preoccupied with staying in power, supporting such regional balances of power that will not disrupt the status quo. Thus, the regional cooperation has to be analysed from the perspective of 'who would gain what' from such cooperation. As Sperling (2003) notes, the region was not ready for cooperation in the security sphere: "Whereas amity has become the contextual hallmark of interstate relations within a wider Europe, enmity remains the hallmark of a large number of bilateral relationships in Eurasia" (p. 11). The driving force of cooperation is the desire to keep the existing balance of power in the region, with the current political elites in place.

Drawing upon the regional incapacity for meaningful cooperation, Collins (2009) calls it the virtual nature of integration in Eurasia: the states are ready for integration only if such integration favours the elites. If there is nothing for the regimes to gain, either power or wealth, they might, if not sabotage, then at least impede regional cooperation. Collins (2009) highlights that "Patrimonial authoritarian leaders are most likely to pursue regionalism in security affairs when it promotes their overarching goal, political survival, without threatening rent-seeking" (pp. 256-257). Even though the intention of the regimes for cooperation could be present, as well as that they might realise cooperation could bring in more opportunities. The desire for personal wealth and regime security would guide their adherence to regional cooperation (K. Collins, 2009). From the securitisation theory perspective, such pre-existing atmosphere of mutual distrust and the desire of the elites to keep existing regimes in place creates an opportunity for Russia to exercise its counterterrorism agenda at the regional level, not only by utilising the existing security threats but also using non-traditional security threats such as the threat of terrorism (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). In this scenario, Russia gains the international recognition it desires, and the Eurasian elites gain more power in their positions. This section will proceed to discuss the securitisation language that Russia developed over the years of securitising the terrorist threat and the ways the Kremlin used that language to stage the terrorist threat in Eurasia.

5.3.1 Russia's securitisation language in Eurasia: Eurasianism and the Russian World

When securitisation analysis is discussed, one cannot avoid a conversation about the language that securitisation actors use to convey their messages to a targeted audience. Every securitising actor forms their securitisation rhetoric on a particular set of topics and the ways to address them, the set that helps to facilitate the delivery of such securitisation message (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Such securitisation language has been found by Russia as well, as it can be seen in a few recurring themes that come up in the Kremlin's discussion of the Eurasian security situation.

The concept of Eurasia/Eurasianism has been on Russia's political agenda since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1993 Andrey Kozyrev, the first foreign minister of Russia under Yeltsin, declared "the former Soviet region the sphere of Russia's vital interests, and the continuation of a military presence in regions where Russia had traditionally been dominant" (Tsygankov, 2010a, p. 76). Thus, after a few years of turmoil in the newly formed Russian Federation, the Kremlin returned to the re-establishing of dominance over the Eurasian region, ignoring the West's discontent with such reorientation of Russia's foreign policy (Nation, 2007). The Kremlin has been rather consistent about the Eurasian region's importance to Russia ever since, building various types of cooperation in the region (Götz, 2017). In order to understand the importance of Eurasia in the Kremlin's securitisation of the terrorist threat, it is paramount to look into what Eurasianism means to Russia and how the concept has been used in securitisation rhetoric.

The idea that Russia's natural sphere of interest and influence transgresses beyond the state's boundaries is reflected in the concept of Eurasianism and represents Russia's "rightful" claims for the post-Soviet territories (Klubkov, 2015; Makarychev, 2015). Russia sees these territories as its sphere of influence with a possibility of reintegration of the territories into the Russian Federation. Eurasianism is the concept that shows how the post-Soviet states are viewed by Russia in its attempts to influence the region (Makarychev, 2015). At the Valdai discussion club in 2013 Vladimir Putin said: "Eurasian integration is a chance for the entire post-Soviet space to become an independent centre of global development, and not periphery for Europe or for Asia" *("Zasedanie mezhdunarodnogo diskussionnogo kluba «Valdai»"*, 2013, p. 13). In making this comment, Putin reinstated the Kremlin's desire to unite the post-Soviet states, the interdependence between Russia and former Soviet republics, and the need to find new ways of regional integration. However, one should not conflate Eurasianism, which Makarychev (2015) aptly describes, with the Eurasianism or Neo-Eurasianism advanced by Aleksandr Dugin. Dugin was an outspoken right-wing Russian nationalist, who explains Eurasianism as an imperial revival of Russia.[44] As Tsygankov (2003) emphasises, Eurasianism is not a rigid concept but a fluid one and should be seen as a spectrum of ideas united by Russia's quest to develop its identity and role in Eurasia. However, for securitisation analysis, Eurasianism can be seen as the medium for the delivery of securitisation rhetoric. The concept of Eurasianism provides a platform for the interpretation of securitisation rhetoric in support of Russia. Thus, it not only provides the framework for the reading of securitisation rhetoric but is also indicative of the larger audience that the rhetoric is targeting.

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[44] See, for example, Umland, A. (2009). Pathological tendencies in Russian" Neo-Eurasianism": the significance of the rise of Aleksandr Dugin for the interpretation of public life in contemporary Russia. *Russian Politics & Law, 47*(1), 76-89; Shlapentokh, D. (2007). Dugin Eurasianism: a window on the minds of the Russian elite or an intellectual ploy? *Studies in East European Thought, 59*(3), 215-236.

Eurasianism allows the analysis of Russia's choices through seeing Russia as a divided nation which seeks to become whole again, implying that *Russkiy Mir* (the Russian World) transcends geographical borders, uniting like-minded people (Makarychev, 2015). Putin's rhetoric regarding *Russkiy Mir* is often protective of the Russian population living abroad (Morozov, 2015). However, that rhetoric is flexible on explaining what *Russkiy Mir* is and who those people are and why they need protection. The concept of *Russkiy Mir* can be seen as uniting in a few aspects: in language terms (speaking Russian), in sharing common history (being born in the Soviet Union), in sharing common religious belief (being a follower of the Russian Orthodox Church) (Lutsevych, 2016). As can be seen rather clearly, with such a flexible notion of *Russkiy Mir,* Russia can potentially interfere with the affairs of all the Eurasian countries. This is because all the countries have enclaves of Russians, Orthodox Christians, common history, or all of the above (Ibid). In 2017, during his visit to Central Asia, Putin said: "[Eurasian integration] is absolutely natural and useful for everyone. One language of communication - Russian, common infrastructure, a very high degree of cooperation since the Soviet times. To not cherish or use it would be just silly!" (Latuhina, 2017). Therefore, the idea of a common nation that happened to be separated after the disintegration of the USSR remains on the Kremlin's agenda, tying together people from different countries and backgrounds under one concept.

The concept of the Russian World and the Soviet past has been traditionally used for Russia's power projection in the Eurasian region, via soft power, cable television, radio and newspapers, as well as for delivering securitisation rhetoric (Sherr, 2013). The dominance of the Russia language and a shared Soviet past are the common denominators that allow Russia to exercise a certain level of control over the security narrative's dissemination in Eurasia (Gussarova, 2017; Sherr, 2013). Russian presence in the Eurasian media space influences how Eurasian nations see possible threats. The importance of media and other means of delivering the securitising message is difficult to overestimate. According to the research conducted in Kyrgyzstan by Toktosunova (2016), 44% of the respondents identified the media and the Internet as their primary sources of information about religious and radical organisations (p. 20). According to Gussarova (2017), the proficiency of Central Asian states' citizens in the Russian language is very high, for example 87.1% for Kyrgyzstan's population and 99% for Kazakhstan but it also shows a tendency of decline (p. 11). Hence, Russia might be slowly losing its Soviet era-related influence in both language and culture. According to Gussarova (2017), Russia did not put enough finances into the promotion of the Russian language, so the Kremlin might face a need to readjust the securitisation strategy accordingly.[45] As Malashenko (2013) argues, only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan still represent large audiences for Russian media, other Eurasian countries focus on producing content in their own languages. Nonetheless, as Gardels and Medavoy (2009) argue, "In the information age, success is not merely the result of whose army wins, but also whose story wins" (p. viii). Thus, despite a possible decline of the Russian influence in Eurasia in comparison with the period of Soviet rule, Russia still has significant influence over security situation in Eurasia. The securitisation of the terrorist threat allows the Kremlin to gain more power in the region. The following section discusses the way the Kremlin has been staging the terrorist threat in Eurasia, fostering the fear of terrorism in the region as part of the Russian securitisation of the terrorist threat.

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[45] For example, for the discussion on the Kremlin's incapacity to play the Crimea scenario in Kazakhstan see Morozov, V. (2015). Kazakhstan and the "Russian World": is a new intervention on the horizon? *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*, (363), 1–6.

5.3.2 Fostering the fear of terrorism in Eurasia

In the absence of significant terrorist events of the 9/11 scale in Eurasia (excluding Russia), there is the need to frame the terrorist threat in such a way that the targeted audience would accept the demand for bypassing existing political channels and the launch of urgent measures to combat the threat. Thus, fostering the fear of terrorism in Eurasia is part of the Kremlin's securitisation process. It creates an atmosphere of living in fear, full of constant worry about the future. Also, the fear of terrorism gives the Kremlin a unifying goal, something that the Eurasian states can officially agree on and pursue. The following section will discuss the shapes the securitisation rhetoric takes in order to deliver the Kremlin's central message: the terrorist threat is already in Eurasia, and the Eurasian states need to ally with Russia and stay united to survive. The main themes of the securitisation rhetoric are the threats from the Islamic State, radical Islam, and the proximity of Central Asia to Afghanistan, a constant source of undefeated terrorism.

5.3.2.1 The fear of Islamic State

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), the Islamic State (IS) or DAESH (this acronym is widely used in the Russian media), is a terrorist organisation following Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam, seeking the creation of a Caliphate that all Islam believers should adhere to (Roggio, 2014). With Russia's engagement in Syria, the global terrorist threat might be more prominent and visible in the region than had been previously believed. The threat of ISIS has not escaped Eurasia: there are reports of people from the Eurasian region fighting in Syria: in 2017, President Nazarbayev said that it could be more than 5000 people from former Soviet republics fighting in Syria ("*Nazarbaev: v Kazahstane lishenie grazhdanstva predosterezhet ot terrorizma*", 2017). Considering these figures, the terrorist threat in Eurasia appears to be more credible than it has even been, and Eurasian leaders cannot disregard this security threat. Recent reports indicate that new fighters were recruited from Eurasia, where recruiters targeted, among others, migrants from Central Asia who face hardship in Russia (Lacinak, 2017; Tuleev, 2016). ISIS recruiters purported the promotion of a better life for Muslims under the Islamic State and promised a decent life in Syria for labour migrants from Central Asia (Lacinak, 2017). The recruitment efforts proved to be alluring for youth who struggle with immigration restrictions, lack of jobs and security, and low earnings (Lacinak, 2017; Tuleev, 2016). In Eurasian countries, ISIS recruiters follow the same scheme. Such open ISIS recruitment plays into the Kremlin's line on counterterrorism: the threat directly affects the Eurasian population, so the Eurasian states should be worried about it (Sultanov, 2007).

Bringing in the Islamic State added an international dimension to Moscow's regional choices, although the international threat from ISIS is not the only terrorism-related concern in the region. The terrorist threat from the Islamic State might not pose an immediate threat to the Eurasian states' territorial integrity, but there is a possibility of domestic terrorist groups in the Eurasian region being inspired by ISIS. This can be seen in the example of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who declared its loyalty to ISIS and adjusted its ideology accordingly, transforming the movement from fighting against the authoritarian regime towards advocating for an Islamic Emirate in Central Asia (Marcin et al., 2015). Thus, already established terrorist movements could serve as the platform for the development of the terrorist ideology in the region – a threat the Eurasian region cannot disregard. An increased terrorist presence and influence in the region feeds into Russia's securitisation rhetoric and its uncompromised approach to fighting terrorism.

However, there are concerns about the credibility of terrorist threats, especially in the absence of significant terrorist attacks in the Eurasian region (excluding Russia), like 9/11 or the Nord Ost and Beslan terrorist attacks in Russia. Statistics show that the Eurasian states have not been affected by terrorism as much as Russia. In the Global Terrorist Index Report

2016 Tajikistan was ranked number 56, Kyrgyzstan 84, Belarus 86, Kazakhstan 94, and Uzbekistan 117, while Russia was ranked number 30 (pp. 94-97). Thus, the terrorist threat in the Eurasian region has instances of terrorism-related events, as well as the perceived dimension of the terrorist threat. The combination of both these dimensions allows the Kremlin to alter its securitisation rhetoric and engage Eurasia in the fight with terrorism by playing on the prevention of terrorist attacks.

5.3.2.2 The fear of radical Islam

Another security concern adding to the increased fear of terrorism in Eurasian countries would be the fear of Islamic radicalism infiltrating Central Asia, an essential part of Eurasia which is predominantly Muslim. Rapid development of Islam after 1991 combined with low Islamic literacy after the USSR's dissolution created a religious vacuum, and this vacuum could have been filled with different types of religious believes (Standish, 2017). In the case of Islam, it might be not its most peaceful teachings that could have filled the vacuum. Eurasian governments have started to exercise more control over religious organisations in the Eurasian space to prevent Islamic radicalism from spreading. For example, in some Eurasian countries religious organisations need to be officially registered with the government in order to perform their functions, for example in Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan (*Religija i konfessii v Belarusi*, 2014; *Federal'nyj zakon ot 26.09.1997 N 125-FZ (red. ot 05.02.2018) "O svobode sovesti i o religioznyh ob'dinenijah*", 2018; *Zakon Respubliki Kazahstan ot 11 oktjabrja 2011 goda № 483-IV «O religioznoj dejatel'nosti i religioznyh ob'edinenijah» (s izmenenijami i dopolnenijami po sostojaniju na 22.12.2016 g.)*, 2016). The registration of religious organisations in Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan builds on the Soviet past, where the registration of every type of activity was necessary and civil society was heavily restricted (Gessen, 2017). Marinin (2015) highlights the negative impact of such religious restrictions on the creation of a more peaceful religious environment. These restrictions might have provoked the public to look for alternative, secret religious teachings, and eventually be more susceptible for extremist strands of Islam (Ibid).

Increased control over religious freedoms combined with Russia's emphasis on the danger of ISIS teaching spreading into Central Asia highlighted that the region has no expertise in counterterrorism, especially rehabilitating former terrorists and/or religious radicals. Marinin (2015) highlights the constructed aspect of the terrorist threat and argues that the Kazakhstani government "overestimates the threats to national security and uses such policy [of religious organisations registration] as a pretense to supress all the objectionable [thinking]" (p. 14). Kazakhstan, for example, admitted that the government has not been successful in terrorists' rehabilitation ("*Nazarbaev: v Kazahstane lishenie grazhdanstva predosterezhet ot terrorizma*", 2017; Sultanov, 2007). Moreover, as Omelicheva argues in her interview with Putz (2015), eventually Central Asian regimes can use the Islamic State threat to ask for Russian help in the security sphere. Thus, the regional settings give Russia more opportunities for securitisation, especially after the Syrian campaign where Russia showcased its military capabilities in fighting terrorism.

Thus, the crackdown on Islam and religious organisations that we see in Eurasia might be less related to an actual threat emanating from religion and more to the elite's perception of the threat, which highlights the perceived dimension of the terrorist threat (Heathershaw & Montgomery, 2014). In addition, Marinin (2015) argues that "the problem of radical organizations is largely exaggerated in Central Asia" (p. 14), which points towards an additional agenda behind an eager fight with such organisations. Crosston (2006) argues that the religious aspect in terrorist threat perception played an important role in how the region sees threats, and has been portrayed to favour the political elites' reading of it:

> The tendency has been to focus on how the threat of Islam is exaggerated by the governments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, thus justifying their own repressive measures to ensure a longer, tighter grip on power. In addition, Islamic radicalism within the region seems to always be

> judged according to whether or not a true threat can emerge that may actually topple or overthrow an existing government. 'True threat' is thus being defined in an extremely narrow and immediate way: only as a revolution-starter and with objectives to establish an Islamic theocratic state. (p. 43)

Religion plays as an important role in the region's security situation as it did during the Second Chechen War, adding more nuances to the securitisation of the terrorist threat. The threat of radical Islamic teaching adds to the volatile security situation in the region, and as a result Central Asian states might be incapable of solving the security situation in the region without external help (Choo, 2003). Russia is ready to provide such external help.

Despite the increase of official control of religious organisations in Eurasia, the perception of the terrorist threat and its connection to Islam remains to be a controversial topic in the Eurasian security sphere. Lenz-Raymann (2014) argues that the revival of Islam in Central Asia resulted in more and more people in Central Asia who are interested or follow non-official Islamic teachings (those not supported by the Central Asian governments). Central Asian states often conflate terrorism, extremism, and Islamization, or use them interchangeably, adding to the confusion around the terrorism topic in the region (Heathershaw & Montgomery, 2014; Lain, 2016). The terrorism threat perception in the region is uneven, people are unsure what terrorism or extremism really mean and how to differentiate them. It is a favourable scenario for Russia, as it dominates the regional media space and can influence public opinion in the 'right' direction (Gussarova & Khon, 2017).

However, it is worth mentioning that some states have started to work on untangling the terrorism-Islamization-extremism conundrum. For example, in 2016 the Kazakhstani government created the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society which would deal with religious and civil society issues. According to one of the Ministry's employees, they aim to create open platforms to educate people on how to be vigilant and reject potential indoctrination into extremist teachings (Krivosheev, 2016). The Ministry is engaged in cybersecurity and policing the online communications of religious groups, as well as monitoring religious literature and even students coming back home after studying abroad (Mosunov, 2017). Thus, the creation of such a governmental body, following the compulsory religious organisations registration, shows power consolidation in the government and an increased tendency to limit freedoms for the sake of counterterrorism.

5.3.2.3 Fear that Central Asia would turn into a new Afghanistan

Another focus of Russia's security attention in the Eurasian region is the proximity of Central Asia to Afghanistan. For a long time, Central Asia has been a concern for Russia's threat perception in the region: a 2007 survey of Russian foreign policy priorities stated that "paramount importance was to build cooperation with the Central Asian countries in combating new challenges and threats to security - terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking and cross-border crime" ("*"Vneshnepoliticheskaja i diplomaticheskaja dejatel'nost' Rossijskoj Federacii v 2007 godu". Obzor MID Rossii*", 2008). However, often Central Asia has been portrayed not only as a supporter in improving regional security but also as the source of instability (Feigenbaum, 2011). In 2017, in Putin's written address to the participants of the 43rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Security and Special Services of the CIS, he stated that "the main danger for the CIS countries comes from international terrorist organisations operating in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa" (Evdokimova, 2017), implying that terrorists have already infiltrated the region.[46] Spearling (2003) argues that Central Asia would become a breeding ground for terrorists:

> Central Asia […] will serve either as a sanctuary for terrorism against the West or as a staging ground for its eradication, and may become transformed into a region defined by weak state structures and ethnic irredentism or by strong states with democratic institutions. (p. 4)

Eurasia's proximity to the Middle East's conflicts and Afghanistan is troubling for Eurasian security actors. The Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric connects the security situation in the Eurasian region to the geographical vicinity of Afghanistan (Chernykh & Burnashev, 2005;

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[46] This argument is also supported in the report *Terrorism in Kazakhstan in 2011-2012. IA Regnum* (2012).

Lenz-Raymann, 2014). The threat from Afghanistan is a recurring theme in the Eurasian security sphere, and it indicates not only the immediate terrorist threat but also a more general sense of unrest and trouble. As Tsygankov (2010a) mentions, after Akayev was forced from office in Kyrgyzstan and the Andijan events in Uzbekistan in 2005, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov "blamed the involvement of 'outside extremist forces' from Afghanistan, including the neo-Taliban, and supported the use of force to suppress the protests" (p. 159). The threat from Afghanistan plays an important role in the political life of Central Asia, and it became a synonym for the looming danger of the terrorist threat in a similar way as the North Caucasus became emblematic for Russia's domestic terrorist threat.

The importance of a security connection between Afghanistan and Central Asia for Russia's securitisation rhetoric in the region is difficult to underestimate. As Cooley and Heathershaw (2017) note, "following the events of 9/11 and the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan, the region [Central Asia] was securitised as a critical front in the Global War on Terrorism" (p. 6), highlighting the importance of Central Asia for counterterrorism. Crosston (2006) notes the crucial importance of Central Asia to the US, but sceptically evaluates the US presence in the region, arguing that it is the way for the US to prevent other players from influencing the region: "After 9/11 the security relationship was flipped upside down, as it was the United States that needed Central Asia when it came to its own immediate national security" (p. 28). Reppert (2003) assessed Russia's future in dealing with complicated internal and external security concerns rather positively, paying attention to the perspective of US-Russia relations becoming more optimistic as two countries can become closer allies in the fight against terrorism. However, this has not happened yet, and as it can be seen from the discussion on the Syrian counterterrorism campaign in Chapter 6, this scenario might be not the most likely to be played out in the future.

The Afghanistan threat was politicised in the USSR, and the trend continues, as Afghanistan is still a source of instability in the region that is used by the Kremlin to its advantage. As Lemon and Schottenfeld (2016) note, Russia's increased military presence in the Eurasian region is believed to be connected to Russia's concerns of terrorists' infiltrating the region. They aptly note "The moves [of military buildup] are part of Russia's goal to assert its influence over the entire region". The Afghanistan question is closely connected to the situation in Chechnya, where the resistance assimilated a lot from the Afghan culture, including terrorist warfare skills (Moore & Tumelty, 2009; Moore, 2012). According to Vasin (2009), terrorism in Russia reached the nationwide level and has close connections to international terrorist organisations, thus a state has to approach the development of counterterrorism strategies in a systemic and coordinated manner, and regional security would be one dimension of this cohesive approach. Afghanistan and the Caucasus region are instrumental in the Kremlin's construction of the external terrorist threat to Eurasia (Chernykh & Burnashev, 2005, "*Shojgu nazval glavnuju ugrozu v Central'noj Azii dlja bezopasnosti Rossii,"* 2018).

While the rest of Central Asia has been relatively untouched by the terrorist activity, not seeing major terrorist events, for Kazakhstan this situation changed in 2011, after the West Kazakhstan attacks, which mark the end of terrorism-free Kazakhstan, and have been linked to a more restrictive religious legislation (Marinin, 2015). De Haas (2015) argues that terrorism can become the number one threat in Kazakhstan, portrayed as endangering not only national security but also the socio-cultural balance in the country. Hence, stricter control over religious organisations from Eurasian governments might have created a favourable environment for the spreading of religious teachings that have not been "officially approved". Many non-traditional religious groups have been considered close to extremist and terrorist groups by Eurasian governments (Marinin, 2015). As the result of the Western

Kazakhstan attacks, the Kazakhstani government is using the fear of Islamic radicalism for its own purposes (Ibid).

However, Kazakhstan was shocked in 2016, when a group of armed men robbed two arms shops and then attacked a national guard base in Aktobe (Mirovalev, 2016). The attackers are believed to be the followers of a non-traditional Islamic sect (Ibid). Standish (2017) argues that this terrorist attack in Kazakhstan changed the status quo for Eurasia: “For the Kazakh government, the episodes were a crude wake-up call that extremism had firmly planted its roots in the country and was growing”. This attack was shocking for the public and humiliating for the Kazakhstani government, showing its inability to make control over the terrorist situation. Kazakhstan has been promoted by the Kazakhstani government as the most stable and reliable country in Central Asia, with its 70 percent Muslim population being unaffected by extremist teachings (Standish, 2017). Kazakhstan is the largest Central Asian country and aspires to be a leader in Central Asia (Kasabekov, 2011). The change in how Kazakhstan sees the terrorism threat means a significant change for the region. Kazakhstan joining the fight with terrorism alongside its main security ally, Russia, would undeniably alter the perception of Russia as the security guarantor in Eurasia. This is because it would show that Kazakhstan looks up to Russia’s counterterrorism experience and guidance.

The presence of terrorism-related instances in Eurasia helps to ground the Kremlin’s securitisation rhetoric, as it helps to move the threat of terrorism from public debate to the security realm, creating a facilitating condition for the securitisation of the threat (Buzan et al., 1998). Considering the entangled security situation in Eurasia, the Kremlin had to adjust its securitising rhetoric to fit the Eurasian region. There had been numerous attempts to rethink the region, and they brought about different regional integration ideas, such as the

Eurasian Union[47] which was criticised as a Russian endeavour to fulfil its imperial ambitions or the Central Asia Union that aimed to connect Central Asian states but never succeeded (Chernykh & Burnashev, 2005; Laruelle, 2015).[48] Apart from these attempts that failed, a few regional integration projects saw the light and incorporated security as part of their agendas. I will proceed to show how the Kremlin has been modifying the securitisation rhetoric to use/suit major regional integration projects.

5.3.3 Russia's usage of regional cooperation platforms for securitisation purposes

In a situation when Eurasian political elites are scared of the terrorist threat and worried for their own future, counterterrorism cooperation with Russia becomes a win-win solution. Cooperation in the security sphere could be the common ground for the Eurasian states to develop regional cooperation in Eurasia, and the absence of significant democratic development brings the sense of unity and an "us against the world" mentality that the Kremlin can build on (K. Collins, 2009; Lukin, 2019). Under the current regimes, regional cooperation might progress only if it helps those regimes to thrive, or at least not hinder their agendas (K. Collins, 2009; Nourzhanov, 2009). Counterterrorism cooperation could be a way for Eurasian political elites to secure their future political and economic positions by eliminating possible political threats, while for Russia the goal would be more power and prestige in the region. Thus, as Silaev and Sushentsov (2017) argue, "security issues in the post-Soviet space cannot be settled without Russia's involvement and its final say" (p. 4). The securitisation of the terrorist threat by the Kremlin is not only beneficial for Russia but also brings in advantages for Eurasian regimes (Baev, 2006c).

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[47] Not to be confused with the Eurasian Economic Union, which followed a rather similar idea but was introduced to the region as an economic union that would benefit the whole region, not only Russia.

[48] For more on regional security right after the dissolution of USSR see Kassenova, N. (2010). Central Asian regional security cooperation: constraints and prospects. In M. Hartog (Ed). *Security sector reform in Central Asia: exploring needs and possibilities* (pp. 93-102*)*. Centre for European Security Studies (CESS).

It is important to discuss multilateral institutions in Eurasia, to establish the context and internal dilemmas that Eurasian states face. The complexity of Eurasian regional integration and the volatile political situation constrained the Kremlin's opportunities for delivering securitisation rhetoric, although the establishment of new institutions to facilitate integration was promising. However, as Kay (2003) argues, regional cooperation remained reflective on the existing power dynamics in the region: "Multilateral institutions matter in Eurasia, but multilateral cooperation is highly contingent upon power relationships" (p. 125). However, for securitisation purposes regional cooperation organisations should be seen more as platforms for Russia to compellingly present the securitisation case and for the political elites to respond.

One of the latest regional cooperation attempts is the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The history of the EAEU might be short but the creation of the union reflects the trend to increase regional cooperation, although Eurasian countries try to avoid an open formation of political alliances. The Eurasian Economic Union treaty came into force on 1 January 2015.[49] The union includes the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. Thus, during these years, the region has been undergoing the process of integration, starting from the economic sector. Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan form the core of the union (Boguslavska, 2015). Initially, this union was created as an economic alliance; however, some level of political integration is believed to be underway as well, as political will is required to make economic integration happen (Jarosiewicz, Fischer, & Bakunowicz, 2015). Jarosiewicz, Fischer, and Bakunowicz (2015) claim that the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union was fundamentally about politics, and the union, as all other attempts of regional integration, was critiqued as being a project to resurrect the Soviet Union under

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[49] The creation of the Eurasian Economic Union is the third step in the process of gradual regional consolidation, based on the Common Economic Space (formed on 1 January 2012), which, in turn, evolved from the Customs Union (effective from 1 January 2010).

Russia's guidance. Stronski (2015) argues that the fate of the EAEU is to become another alliance that exists on paper but is incapable of changing the dynamic in the region.

However, the countries in the Eurasian region could be used to illustrate the concept of regional security by Buzan et al. (1998), who see regional security as "the sum of national securities or rather a particular constellation of security interdependence among a group of states" (p. 45). Different countries bring various security issues to the union and these security issues may overlay and multiply and might create a more volatile security situation instead of constructing a more stable internal environment. The post-soviet states' national security interests are intertwined, as the countries share both the Soviet legacy and modern security challenges in the region (K. Collins, 2009).

However, the challenges the EAEU faces do not prevent the Kremlin from using the EAEU as a stage to deliver securitisation rhetoric. In 2017, at the International Forum on China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, Vladimir Putin spoke about the importance of Eurasia and the EAEU, emphasising security as the first thing that the Eurasian people need:

> Russia does not simply view the future of the Eurasian partnership as the mere establishment of new ties between states and economies. This partnership must shift the political and economic landscape of the continent and bring *peace, stability, prosperity* and a new quality of life to Eurasia. Understandably our citizens need *security*, confidence in the future and the opportunity to be productive and improve the wealth and well-being of their families. It is our common duty and responsibility to ensure they have these opportunities. In this respect, the greater Eurasia is not an abstract geopolitical arrangement but, without exaggeration, *a truly civilisation-wide project* looking towards the future. ("Belt and Road international forum. Transcript," 2017, emphasis added)

Putin highlighted that peace and security come first in Russia's perception of Eurasia and that it is Russia's duty to provide it. Considering that the EAEU was created as a purely economic alliance, Putin's speech takes it to the next level, beyond just cooperation in the economic sphere. His speech also shows how the Kremlin sees Eurasia, not as an abstract geopolitical concept but as a project in the making.

In addition, the Kremlin uses any opportunity to highlight the importance of the terrorist threat. For example, in the meeting with the heads of the EAEU countries, alongside a discussion on cooperation in the education sphere, Putin called for more attention to fighting against the financing of terrorism, even though these two themes seem to be rather irrelevant for each other ("*Putin: v EAJeS dolzhny udelit' vnimanie bor'be s finansirovaniem terrorizma*", 2018). Hence, Russia is consistent in the securitisation of the terrorist threat in the region and the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric comes in many forms of security discussions. The EAEU does not have joint military forces as it was created as an economic alliance; however, the Kremlin's usage of the EAEU's platforms for the security rhetoric dissemination shows the multidimensional approach to securitisation that Russia takes. Undeniably, the EAEU will play an important role in the development of China's Silk Road Economic Belt initiative. The EAEU countries are part of other Eurasian regional organisations, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation; thus, they have other venues to take actions in joining Russia's counterterrorist fight in Eurasia.

Another example of the post-Soviet integration of the region is the Commonwealth of Independent States, which is a loose confederation of nine member states[50] and two associate member states,[51] all of which are former Soviet republics. The CIS does not represent much as a regional integration project, having too many members with too many conflicting agendas, however from the securitisation point of view the CIS is important, as it represents a platform for the Kremlin to deliver the securitisation message to its audience – the heads of governments of Eurasian states and their political elites, as well as a wider Russian audience in the post-Soviet space. The CIS is the space for Eurasian leaders to come together and discuss security problems (Levchuk, 2011). Russia has claimed the leadership position in the

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[50] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

[51] Turkmenistan, Ukraine

CIS from the beginning, however stating that the actions of the CIS members should not be against Russia. It can be seen how Russia reaffirms that in the decree regarding cooperation within the CIS from September 1995 signed by Boris Yeltsin:

> on the territory of the CIS our [Russia's] vital interests are concentrated in economics, defence, security, and the protection of Russians' rights, the provision of which is the basis of national security; […] When developing relationships with partners in the CIS, it is important to be firmly guided by the principle of not harming Russia's interests. […] [Russia's main goal in the relationship with the CIS is] the strengthening of Russia as the leading force in the formation of a new systems of political and economic relations in the post-Soviet space. ("Strategic Course of Russian Federation Policy toward CIS States", parts 1, 3, 4)

Thus, even if a certain degree of cooperation outside of Russia's control was inevitable, the Kremlin made it clear that future cooperation on the post-Soviet should be under Russia's guidance. However, despite a strong start after the USSR's collapse, throughout the 90s Russia was too preoccupied with internal problems and did not invest a meaningful amount of attention to the CIS. Nonetheless, the CIS remains the broadest (however fragmented) political alliance in the post-Soviet space. The CIS Legislation website counts more than 40000 legal documents of 11 member states available, with more than 4500 legal documents under the international relations category (CIS-Legislation, 2019). The CIS member states might not get along well all the time (Georgia withdrew in 2009 following the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and Ukraine denounced its participation after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 but did not complete the withdrawal process), but the CIS remains in the orbit of Russia's attention as a platform for exercising its regional ambitions (Charap, 2019).

In recent years, the CIS continues to serve as a regional forum for the CIS members and the Kremlin has been using it to push forward its counterterrorism agenda. In 2015, during the meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the CIS, Putin, was vocal about the danger of the terrorist threat to the post-Soviet space, and emphasised the importance of the region to Russia, calling the CIS and the Central Asian region home: "We cannot allow them [ISIS fighters] to use the experience they received in Syria later in our home" *(“Ob itogah zasedanija Soveta glav gosudarstv Sodruzhestva Nezavisimyh Gosudarstv,”* 2015, para. 14). Presidents of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan expressed their concerns regarding the terrorism threat in the region; they articulated their readiness to cooperate more to prevent the spread of terrorism and extremism (Ibid). Putin highlighted the interdependence between Russia and the post-Soviet space and the willingness of Russia to fight terrorism in the region. He emphasised that the threat of terrorism is a contemporary problem that needs urgent solutions: “the situation in Afghanistan is close to critical, terrorists of different kinds are gaining more and more influence and do not hide plans for further expansion into the Central Asian region” (Ibid, para. 14). Thus, Putin delivered all parts of the securitisation message, highlighting the need to stand together in front of the threat, as well as the sense of urgency that the terrorist threat entails.

The CIS is more than just a discussion forum for CIS member states; it has its counterterrorism agency. ATC (The Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Center) was established in 2000 to combat terrorism and extremism by the member states. CIS ATC is a permanent body under the CIS command, and the head of the centre since 2006 has been a Russian Federations’ representative Colonel General of Police Andrey Novikov (“Head of CIS ATC,” n.d.). Undeniably, CG Novikov is a decorated policeman; however, the absence of change in the leadership of CIS ATC is remarkable. Novikov’s second in command, Major General Sergey Dudko, is the representative of the Republic of Belarus, yet he studied in the Russian Federation and graduated from Military Academy of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (“Deputy Head of CIS ATC,” n.d.). Thus, the head of CIS ATC has been the representative of the Russian Federation for more than ten years (his term has been extended again till 2021). Novikov does not shy away from public appearances and interviews, and his public speeches are in line with the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric. In his speech at a Get-Together of the Senior Executives of the Anti-Terrorism Units of the Security Agencies and Special Services of the Commonwealth States "Issyk-Kul Antiterror-2018", Novikov explained how the scenario for the counterterrorism exercise would look like in 2018:

> Following the analysis of the developing operational situation we have decided while elaborating a plot of the joint anti-terrorism exercise to focus on the key problems which as agreed with the partners pose a real threat to security of both the Kyrgyz Republic and the Central Asian region in general. Among those we see the attempts of international terrorist organization ISIL to establish a new foothold in the region to form a so called caliphate, to plant new "sleeper cells" and invigorate the existing ones. (Novikov, 2018)

Thus, as it can be seen from the speech, the threats from the Islamic State and the caliphate have been shaping regional security: counterterrorist specialists are not only talking about the terrorist threat, but it has been incorporated into their training and they are prepared to act to fight it. Novikov, the voice of the Kremlin in CIS ATC, does not fall short in delivering the securitisation rhetoric to the Eurasian political leaders.

In September 2018, while speaking at the conference on Countering Illicit Arms Trafficking in the Context of Fighting International Terrorism in Moscow, Novikov reiterated the presence of the terrorist threat in the region and connected it to the importance of stopping illicit weapon trade for counterterrorism, giving an example of the attacks in Aktobe in 2016 (Statement of A. Novikov at the opening of the Get-Together of the senior executives of the Anti-Terrorism Units of the security agencies and Special Services of the Cis member-states "Issyk-Kul Antiterror-2018", 25 September 2018, Cholpon-Ata, 2018). He emphasised that the terrorist threat is not just an alleged threat looming over horizon somewhere in Afghanistan, but terrorists are ready to strike: "For the Central Asian region, activity of international terrorist organizations based at the southern border and ready to implement the plans to expand their area of influence" ("International conference on countering illicit arms trafficking in the context of fighting international terrorism, WTC, Moscow," 2018). Unsurprisingly, the conference was sponsored by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, the securitisation rhetoric of the Kremlin is echoed in the CIS ATC, supporting Russia's securitisation narrative in the region.

In addition to spreading the rhetoric, CIS ATC contributes to the Eurasian political elites' sense of exclusivity for the Kremlin. During the Cyber-Anti-Terror 2016 exercise organized by the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center and State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus in 2016, Novikov emphasised the elitist nature of security in the region: "The issues of collective security in contemporary conditions shall be viewed in the context of close cooperation of *the interested parties only*" (Novikov, 2016, emphasis added). Thus, the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric reaches the targeted audience: the urgency of the fight with terrorism was delivered, and so was the support of the exclusivity of the CIS ATC cooperation, reiterating the importance of the Eurasian region to Russia.

One of the Eurasian region's main regional security organisations is the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Since 1991 Russia has been involved in several conflicts within the region, including the Tajikistan civil war from 1992-1993, with the clashes continuing till 1997, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, still ongoing since the beginning of the 20th century, and the Andijan Massacre in 2005, to name a few. Russia's level of participation in these conflicts and the Kremlin's responses to these conflicts varied significantly, and strongly reflected Russia's foreign policy priorities at the time.

The Collective Security Treaty was renamed in 2002 into the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and was announced as a military alliance.[52] As Allison (2004) argues, the organisation proclaimed rather ambitious goals from the beginning: “to address new threats and challenges through a joint military command located in Moscow, a rapid reaction force for Central Asia, a common air defence system and ‘coordinated action’ in foreign, security and defence policy” (p. 471). The stated aims raised a fair question as to whether the organisation would be capable of delivering the results. G. Gleason and Shaihutdinov (2005) argue that the CSTO, in spite of the ambitious goals, is an “instrument for coordination of national militaries” (p. 281). Thus, the Collective Rapid Deployment Force (CRDF), which is managed by the CSTO and represents a Russian-led regional military formation, aimed to respond to emergency situations in the region (G. Gleason & Shaihutdinov, 2005).

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[52] The history of the CSTO started in 1992 when the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan signed the Collective Security Treaty. The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the

The CSTO Charter resembles the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) examples, as member states agree not to interfere into each other’s domestic affairs (Hayrapetyan, 2016). Following the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 it became clear that Russia’s interference in neighbouring countries would not necessarily produce a response under the CSTO, as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)[53] was the only international body on the ground (Fawn & Nalbandov, 2012). The rules may vary for the other member states in similar situations, but the war in Georgia showed the limitations of possible CSTO involvement in a military conflict in the region if Russia is involved in said conflict. Hence, Russia’s position in the regional security sphere has remained unchallenged, and, as Nazarbayev highlighted, is paramount for the CSTO’s functioning (Zajnetdinov, 2011). In 2018, the chairmanship in the CSTO went to Kazakhstan, and Nazarbayev already outlined the aims for this year: increased cooperation in the sphere of military-technical procurement, participation of the CSTO in the

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Republic of Belarus joined in 1993, but Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan left in 1999, with Uzbekistan joining again in 2006 and withdrawing in 2012.

[53] For more on the role of OSCE in the Eurasian region’s security see Hopmann, T. (2003). The OSCE role in Eurasian security. In J. Sperling, K. Sean, & S. V. Papacosma (Eds.), *Limiting institutions? The challenge of Eurasian security governance* (pp. 144–165). New York: Manchester University Press.

formation of a global system for countering terrorism, as well as joint response to cybercrime and drug trafficking (Sozaev-Gur'ev, Zabrodin, & Surkov, 2017). In addition, the CSTO members officially supported Russia's position in Syria and condemned the international interference into Syria's affairs and attempts to achieve political goals via "colour revolutions" (Ibid). The President of Belarus, Alexandr Lukashenko, highlighted that the CSTO members are the closest allies: "there is no one closer than those sitting at this table" (Ibid). Thus, it can be seen that the CSTO members support Russia's position on regional security and the counterterrorism agenda.

In his interview to Mir broadcasting company in April 2017, Putin shared Russia's vision on the CSTO goals and achievements. When he was asked what Russia gains from the CSTO partnership, he replied:

> Russia has a vital interest in maintaining stability in the post-Soviet space […] there are threats today that do not stop at borders but are trans-national in nature. They include terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking, and we can fight these threats effectively only if we combine our efforts. ("Interview to Mir broadcasting company," 2017)

He highlighted that terrorism represent the main threat above all: "The biggest threat is terrorism, and the terrorist threat coming from Afghanistan is very serious", emphasising the interconnectedness of the Eurasian region and reiterating the dangers Afghanistan's geographical proximity and the Taliban pose to the region. He highlighted the danger of terrorism: "We are conscious of the great danger this [terrorism] poses to our own country, the Russian Federation". Putin also accentuated the danger of fighters in Syria coming back to the Eurasian region, concluding that "the threat is therefore very real and very serious […] we will do *everything possible* to minimise it" ("Interview to Mir broadcasting company," 2017, emphasis added). Hence, he delivered the main points of the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric: the imminence of the terrorist threat, the need for urgent measures to counteract the threat, and Russia's position as the defender of the Eurasian region. The connection of regional security to the situation in Afghanistan was also not random, providing the reference for the existentiality of the terrorist threat. In addition, he highlighted the international and regional importance of the Syrian campaign, and Russia's leadership in counterterrorism ("Interview to Mir broadcasting company," 2017).

The 2016 strategy of the CSTO outlines the CSTO's goals until 2025 and these goals are formed around the idea of unification and the merger of member states' national security capacities, promoting the "standing together" motto of the organisation, thus creating a platform for the securitisation of the terrorism threat by Russia (*Strategja kollektivnoj bezopasnosti Organizacii Dogovora o kollektivnoj bezopasnosti na period do 2025 goda*, 2016, part 5.1). In his 2017 interview Putin specifically highlighted this aspect of the CSTO cooperation "We have proposed joining forces on a global scale. I made this call at the UN […] At the regional level, we can achieve this, and, as we can see, we are doing so quite effectively" ("Interview to Mir broadcasting company," 2017).

Following his speech, the CSTO conducted a joint military exercise "Military brotherhood 2018" in three stages. One of the stages was devoted to dealing with a crisis in Central Asia occurring as the result of a terrorist attack (CSTO Press Center, 2019). In addition, the CSTO's memo mentioned that this exercise took into account the Syrian counterterrorism experience, which could have been provided only by the Russian military forces (CSTO Press Center, 2019). Such a scenario falls into the framework of the Kremlin's staging of the terrorist threat to Eurasian leaders and grounds the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric in the regional institution such as the CSTO. Another stage of "Combat brotherhood 2018" aimed at practicing the use of CSTO military force in non-CSTO countries following a UN mandate (following the preceding year's exercise on the same theme). Regardless of the CSTO's active attempts to acquire an international dimension, including non-CSTO members, its peacekeeping forces have not participated in any significant peacekeeping operations (Stefanovich, 2018). Thus, the CSTO joint exercises were aimed to practice the use of the CSTO joint military forces in solving alleged regional security problems that might as well be more Russia's foreign policy concerns. It is hard to imagine any of the CSTO countries getting a UN peacekeeping mandate without Russia's support.

However, even if Putin's optimism regarding the effectiveness of the CSTO is not supported by everyone, the organisation plays a vital role in the distribution of the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric (Sperling, 2003). The CSTO is entangled with regional problems, not only in the security sphere, and provides the Kremlin with a platform to ensure the CSTO members rely on Russia's help with security concerns:

> regardless of being ineffective, incoherent and tottering, CSTO is still a legal mechanism for its member states to be allied with Russia and be covered by its nuclear shield. On the other hand, leaving the CSTO is fraught with major economic and political hazards for its members, as each of them has a huge dependency on Russia. (Hayrapetyan, 2016, para. 27)

Thus, while the CSTO might be a security alliance still in the making, it is an important platform for the Kremlin's promotion of its counterterrorism goal. As it was discussed before in this chapter, the Kremlin had to alter its securitisation rhetoric to fit the regional framework of threat perception, and the CSTO represents a way of delivering this rhetoric to its intended audience.

The next security cooperation organisation to be discussed is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which was created in 2001 and could be seen as an expansion of the "Shanghai Five".[54] The SCO allows a few countries to hold an observer status[55] as well as a dialogue partner status.[56] Thus, the SCO might be a platform for cooperation for almost all the states in the Eurasian region, apart from Turkmenistan, the only non-member Central Asian state which, however, attends the organisation's gatherings as a "distinguished guest" (Cabestan, 2013, p.423). The SCO has a distinctive international dimension, possibly representing a wider range of interests than the CSTO. Cabestan (2013) sums up the differences between the SCO and the SCTO rather simply: "[…] the CSTO is a military alliance, the SCO, in spite of its strong security dimensions, is not" (p. 428).

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[54] Included the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, later the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Republic of India joined in http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/

[55] States with an observer status in 2018 are: the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Mongolia http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/

One of the main aims of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is to promote regional cooperation, as it was proclaimed in the first statement after the organisation was established (*Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 2001, p.1). Started as a rather broad-spectrum organisation with many different goals and areas of possible involvement, the SCO later became perceived as an organisation primarily focused on security issues in the region (Choo, 2003). The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism states that the SCO members are "[a]ware that terrorism, separatism and extremism constitute a threat to international peace and security" (2001, p. 1). The SCO became known as the organisation fighting the "three evils": terrorism, separatism, and extremism (K. Collins, 2009; G. Gleason & Shaihutdinov, 2005). However, the SCO's agenda includes not only regional cooperation, but also implies the compliance of its members in the non-interference in each other's affairs: the SCO Charter states that the organisation follows the rule of "non-interference in internal affairs, non-use or threat of use of military force, and renunciation of unilateral military superiority in neighboring areas" (*Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, 2001, p. 2). Such disputed political affairs are, for example, China's role in Xinjiang Province or the silencing of political opposition in all member states (Mackerras, 2015). Thus, the advancement of proclaimed goals of the SCO can be impeded by internal security problems in member states.

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[56] States with a dialogue partner status in 2017 are: the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the Republic of Turkey, and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/

The SCO represents a conundrum of political wills and ambitions mixed in one regional organisation, which at times makes it difficult for the organisation to function. Each member state is pursuing its own agenda in the region, making the SCO less coherent and capable of addressing security tensions in the region (Albert, 2015). From one side, the SCO can be seen as a platform for China to pursue its regional goals, as it is not particularly welcomed in the region, especially in Central Asia, and perceived as being capable of annexing territory if given an opportunity (Choo, 2003; Mackerras, 2015). From the other side, some argue that the reason for the creation of the SCO was a joint attempt of Russia and China to counteract the American influence in the Eurasian region (Choo, 2003; Kay, 2003). However, the SCO can also be seen as a platform for Russia to counter China's growing influence in the region, a system of checks and balances (Kay, 2003; Kerr & Swinton, 2008). Some scholars argue that the SCO was never a priority for Russia, but a mere tool to show its interest in regional integration without actually committing to extensive political cooperation, leaving Russia some space for possible future political and/or military manoeuvres (Cabestan, 2013; Kerr & Swinton, 2008). Nonetheless, the SCO represent a platform for teamwork for many regional political actors, even though all of them possibly have a hidden agenda.

However, Russia's vision of the SCO might change after the sanctions following the annexation of Crimea that targeted the Russian economy. The isolationist politics of the West might result in an unexpected consequence of increased regional integration in Eurasia, if Russia overcomes its prejudices and the constant fear of being challenged in the post-Soviet space and regains its influence in Eurasia (Trenin, 2007). If Russia could get over its Soviet nostalgic mentality regarding the power balance in the region, the SCO may have become a stronger, more coherent player in the region, as Sino-Russian relations in Central Asia significantly shape the SCO's agenda (Albert, 2015).

Eurasian states are concerned with China's power, and these concerns can greatly impede regional integration (Choo, 2003, Albert, 2015). Cabestan (2013) emphasises that the fear of China also influences the security situation in the region: "China knows as well as its SCO partners that multilateral intelligence cooperation through the RATS [Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure] cannot become optimal because of the deep suspicions each member-state has against its immediate neighbors" (p. 431). Thus, one would have assumed that security agenda should, in theory, trump the states' concerns and unite them in the fight of the greater terrorist threat, but it appears that the regional counterterrorism cooperation is still highly dependent on the pre-existing regional dynamics. Guided by the fear of China (even if irrationally), Central Asian states would prefer to cooperate with Russia than with China in many respects. Eurasian states realise the necessity and inevitability of cooperation with China but would defend their national interests more vigorously if China is involved (Crosston, 2006). For example, intelligence sharing, as one of the parts of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (RATS SCO) agreement, has not advanced the actual sharing of information. Central Asian states do not trust each other, undermining regional security (Crosston, 2006). However, as Collins (2009) elaborates, the RATS cooperation might not be crystal clear at times, but it has significantly increased since 2002 in comparison with the first decade of the organisation's existence.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation keeps facing difficult security situations in the region. As Cabestan (2013) aptly notes: "while 9/11 for a few months raised questions over the SCO's relevance and very existence, the increasing challenges, both domestic […] and international […] faced by Central Asia have again since 2005 enhanced the security dimension of the SCO" (pp. 424-425). Hence, SCO members face not only domestic threats, but are brought together by the need to face regional threats, even if member states do not truly trust each other. Chernykh and Burnashev (2005) argue that “a major reason for the formation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was this commonality of approaches to securitizing international terrorism” (p. 140). Thus, the SCO is tightly connected to the threat of terrorism in the region. As time passes and post-Soviet countries are moving away from the Soviet legacy, both in political and economic senses, it becomes more obvious that the post-Soviet space has its own problems and would have to deal with the existing regional tensions sooner rather than later. However, mutual distrust greatly hinders member states’ intentions to engage in regional cooperation in general, and counterterrorism activities within the SCO framework are rather scattered.

Despite the political tensions the SCO faces, Putin uses every opportunity to deliver the securitisation rhetoric in the Eurasian region, as he did during the SCO meeting in 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan. He welcomed India and Pakistan to the organisation and highlighted that the development of the SCO means a lot for Russia, as it “will undoubtedly help it become more powerful and influential in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres” (“Speech at the SCO meeting in expanded format,” 2017). He reiterated the terrorist danger coming from Afghanistan and Syria, and emphasised the need for unity in front of such powerful enemy:

> The SCO has always rightly prioritised security and stability on the external borders of its member states. An unprecedented surge in terrorism and extremism all over the world has given this task special importance. […] it is only possible *to defeat this evil* by joining honest and constructive *efforts of all countries* in strict compliance with international law. The fight against terrorism should be system-wide and uncompromised. Along with eliminating social and economic causes of terrorism and extremism *we must do our best to neutralise the terrorist ideology.* (“Speech at the SCO meeting in expanded format,” 2017, emphasis added)

Thus, the SCO, as well as the CSTO and other regional organisations discussed in this chapter, represents a platform for the distribution of the securitisation rhetoric aimed to help Russia to become a powerful regional actor in Eurasia, and eventually re-gain its international influence.

It is important to note that above-mentioned regional security organisations include the Russian Federation as a member: the CSTO can function without China but the SCO has Russia as a member state. G. Gleason and Shaihutdinov (2005) argue that collective security organisations created after the collapse of the USSR by newly independent CIS countries were meant to be rather decentralised and not unilaterally managed. However, not only the CSTO and the SCO have Russia as a member, but also the Commonwealth Independent States Anti-Terrorism Centre (CIS ATC) is supervised by a long-standing Russia's representative Colonel General of Police Andrey Novikov. Thus, Russia's grip on one of the most important regional security organisations, as well as Russia's power consolidation in the Eurasian region, demonstrate that Russia is a dominant player in the Eurasian region's security sphere. As Sperling (2003) argues, "contemporary Eurasia cannot be considered multipolar in any meaningful sense" (p. 13). The CSTO and the SCO can be seen as relatively multipolar because they incorporate different regional players, and there is potential for security cooperation in Eurasia (Manoli, 2003). However, it can be seen that Russia dominates the Eurasian security sphere. From the securitisation perspective, both the SCO and the CSTO serve as platforms for Russia's securitisation rhetoric dissemination and give the Kremlin access to Eurasian political elites and a broader Eurasian public, which allows the Kremlin to improve its security position in Eurasia and regain recognition as an important international player.

5.4 The Results of Terrorist Threat Securitisation on the Regional Level

The success of the terrorist threat securitisation on the regional level is evident in legislative changes that appeared after the Kremlin's securitisation activity in the Eurasian region. As shown in the previous chapter, legislative changes are illustrative of successful securitisation when the securitisation rhetoric results in the normalisation of the threat (Balzacq, 2005, 2008). It is impractical to analyse changes in all Eurasian states' legislative systems, so I show changes in Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan as the core players in the latest Eurasian integration attempt, the EAEU.

Russia, Belarus[57] and Kazakhstan each have a comprehensive counterterrorism legislative system which is independent of the CSTO, the SCO, and the EAEU agreements. Fundamentally, it means that states recognise an act of terrorism to be a crime and that all individuals and organizations convicted of terrorism should be prosecuted in accordance with a criminal code (Kovač, 2007). Member states utilise an approach that criminalises all forms of terrorism (both domestic and international) and take measures to fight terrorism. They deny terrorists access to financial resources, weapons, and sanctuary of any kind (Federal Law N 35 – FZ On Counteraction of Terrorism, 2006; Law 244-V On Counteraction of Terrorism, 2014; Law No.77-Ç On The Fight Against Terrorism, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 3, there are many definitions of terrorism; however, the Eurasian countries accepted quite a similar approach to counterterrorism legislation, following Russia's path. Counterterrorism laws in these countries are not completely identical; nevertheless, there are many similarities.

After the collapse of the USSR the discussion of terrorism started in Russia, which was the first Eurasian country to adopt such a law, with the title "On Counteraction of Terrorism". The first edition of this law appeared in July 1998, and one year later a similar law was passed in Kazakhstan, and in 2001 in Belarus. The Russian law on ‘antiterrorism’ refers to terrorism as “the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing the adoption of a decision by state power bodies, local self-government bodies or international organisations connected with frightening the population and (or) other forms of unlawful violent actions” (*Federal Law N 35-FZ ‘On Counteraction Terrorism*, 2006, p. article 3 point 1). Russia’s definition is more succinct than that of Belarus or Kazakhstan. Thus, the states protected themselves in advance for all intents and purposes; simultaneously, they created an opportunity for labelling political opponents as terrorists but omitted to recognise state terrorism. Kazakhstan and Belarus accepted the same definition but altered the definition in slightly different ways. Kazakhstan’s definition of terrorism focuses more on the purpose of terrorism, which is to harm people, damage property and the state (*Law 244-V On Counteraction of Terrorism*, 2014, article 1.5). The difference of the Belarus definition is that terrorism is called a phenomenon, instead of an act of violence. By accepting this new form of definition, the Belarusian government undermined the approach to criminalising terrorism by shifting the focus from terrorism being understood as an action to terrorism being represented as a phenomenon. The new definition caused dissatisfaction among the Belarusian public (Charter’97, 2012). The main reason for the public anxiety was that the new definition created a legal precedent and provided an opportunity for the Belarusian government to easily manipulate this vague definition to diminish or eradicate its political opponents by deeming them to be associated with acts of terrorism (Ibid).

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[57] For more on Belarus see Korosteleva, E., Lawson, C., & Marsh, R. (Eds.). (2003). *Contemporary Belarus: between democracy and dictatorship*. Routledge.

Besides providing definitions of terrorism, significant parts of the counterterrorism laws in each country are devoted to spelling out procedures for a counterterrorist campaign, how it should be carried out, which government body is responsible for it, and the chain of command. In all three countries, the national security body is responsible for the fight against terrorism. During a counterterrorism campaign, all citizens (both military and civilian) should comply with orders of a person in charge, irrespective of the possible differences in military ranking (‘Federal Law N 35-FZ On Countering Terrorism’, 2006; ‘Law No.77-Ç On the Fight Against Terrorism’, 2002; Law 244-V ‘On Counteraction of Terrorism’, 2014). Thus, counterterrorism legislation gives the governments unlimited power over the military and civilians, part of Russian legislation that other Eurasian states have embedded into their legislative systems. In the light of the increased securitisation of the terrorist threat by Russia, such devotion of the Eurasian states to Russia’s path of counterterrorism shows both agreement and understanding between Russia and Eurasian states.[58] As Cooley (2015) argues, non-transparent regional cooperation on the basis of perplexing and often misleading agreements and treaties might be used to tighten the grip on the remaining freedoms in the region (p. 56). The Eurasian states might be following Russia’s example in restricting rights and freedoms of their populations. Apart from the overall decline of Eurasia’s interest in democracy, the securitisation of the threat of terrorism resulted in the decrease of civil rights and freedoms in Eurasian states. For example, in 2016 (with updates in 2017), Kazakhstan has adopted a so-called Law on Payments, which legally forced non-governmental organisations to report any foreign funding, and non-compliance is punished by hefty fines (Law N120-VI from 25 December 2017, Article 29). The same amendment outlined that any publications made by NGOs with foreign financing must declare said financial help in every publication release an NGO does. Thus, Kazakhstan has followed Russia’s footsteps in restricting civil society space, as the law adopted by the Kazakhstani government is remarkably similar to the Russian law on foreign agents. Kazakh NGOs do not need to register as foreign agents and bear the stigma, but the same control from the authorities take place, nonetheless.

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[58] For a brilliant account of post-Soviet states following Russia’s legislation changes regarding media and extremism see Richter, A. (2008). Post-Soviet perspective on censorship and freedom of the media: an overview. *International Communication Gazette*, *70*(5), 307–324. http://doi.org/10.1177/1748048508094291

5.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the Kremlin's securitisation of the terrorist threat at the regional level. It showed the complicated nature of the Eurasian security interconnectedness, as well as the success of the Russian attempt to re-establish Russian dominance in Eurasian security. As it can be seen, the Eurasian region represents an interesting conundrum of rather different countries united by a common Soviet past, all facing similar economic and political differences but consistently following their own agendas. This chapter illustrated how the Kremlin has altered the securitisation rhetoric to fit the Eurasian framework, by calling for regional unity and solving security problems in Eurasia together, in the framework of different regional cooperation organisations. The rhetoric was aimed at improving historical interconnectedness that was left off after the USSR collapsed, as well as fostering the sense of emergency in relation to the terrorist threat. The Kremlin carefully presented the imminent danger of the terrorist threat by appealing to the threat of radical Islamic infiltration of the region, as well as the terrorist threats that originated in Afghanistan and the danger of the returning ISIS fighters.

It was argued that the securitisation audience in Eurasia is represented primarily by political elites, although a broader Eurasian audience can play a role in securitisation rhetoric, especially in the framework of supporting Russia as a security player in the region. However, political elites play a paramount role in the Eurasian region, retaining power and influence despite the proclaimed democratic development. Many politicians in Eurasia have been in power since the Soviet time, meaning that they tend to look favourably at Russia's assertive approach to fighting terrorism in the region (Baev, 2006c). Seeing terrorist formations as possible political rivals, Eurasian political elites are prepared to follow Russia's counterterrorism approach in order to legitimise their own power consolidation.

This chapter also discussed different regional cooperation initiatives in order to show that all of them have been utilised by the Kremlin to deliver securitisation rhetoric. Regional organisation like the Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation were analysed to show how they have been used as platforms for the terrorist threat securitisation. Despite being rather different in their goals, all these organisations were utilised by the Kremlin in its quest for regaining regional influence. In addition, the chapter showed some legislation changes in Kazakhstan and Belarus that followed Russia's example of counterterrorism legislation. The question of the terrorism definition, as well as changes to expand resources and power available under the umbrella of counterterrorism, show the readiness of the Eurasian countries to follow Russia's path on counterterrorism and their support of Russia's securitisation rhetoric. These changes are indicative of the success of the Kremlin's securitisation of the terrorist threat in Eurasia.

The next chapter delves into the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the international level. I will discuss the case of Russia's engagement in Syria, as well as Russia's counterterrorism commitment at the international arena, analysing it from the securitisation perspective. I will show how the Kremlin uses the threat of terrorism to return Russia to the international stage and is building a compelling case of Russia as an equal global counterterrorism player. Exemplified in the case of Syria, Russia's securitisation rhetoric becomes an integral part of Russian foreign policy.

Chapter 6 Securitisation of the Terrorist Threat on the International Level: The Counterterrorism Campaign in Syria

In the preceding chapter I discussed the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the regional level, analysing the Kremlin's securitising moves in Eurasia. I argued that the Kremlin sees the post-Soviet space as Russia's natural sphere of influence, the area that had been unfortunately lost due to the Soviet Union's disintegration. The terrorist threat securitisation in Eurasia is closely connected to major Russian foreign policy objectives and the Kremlin's desire to regain the regional influence Russia feels entitled to. The threat of terrorism is instrumental in the Kremlin's rhetoric regarding the Eurasian region and continues the consolidation of the Kremlin's regime on the premise of the battle with terrorism. However, the Kremlin's counterterrorism ambitions do not end in Russia's near abroad, they go beyond the post-Soviet space in the search of Russia's path to re-claim its international influence.

In this chapter, I will present the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric about the most recent international campaign that Russia has been running: the counterterrorism campaign in Syria. In this chapter, I will discuss Russia's engagement in the international counterterrorism fight, with the Syrian campaign being the example of the securitisation rhetoric the Kremlin uses. I will discuss the securitisation discourse surrounding Russia's actions in Syria and how the terrorist threat has been presented to domestic, regional, and international audiences. I will show how the Syrian campaign has been portrayed in the Russian media and highlight major arguments the Kremlin presented to the domestic audience. It will be seen that the Syrian campaign has been enjoying significant public support. Russia's actions in Syria have been crucial to the securitisation of the terrorist threat at domestic and regional levels, and paramount for the Kremlin's power projection internationally. The campaign has been presented as a massive success for the Russian and Eurasian public, and it considerably increased Putin's domestic ratings.

6.1 Audiences, Actors, and Aims of International Threat Securitisation

The complexity of the securitisation audience at the international level has increased as domestic and regional securitisation audiences have been incorporated into the international securitisation audience by the Kremlin. Domestic and regional securitisation audiences have been included in the securitisation at the international level and represent the base for the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric in international fora. The securitisation audience for the terrorist threat can be seen as a combination of domestic and regional audiences, with the addition of the international political elite. The Kremlin targets domestic and regional audiences, upgrading the terrorist threat securitisation agenda to include a substantial international component, while at the same time expanding its counterterrorism profile at the international level. It also targets domestic and regional audiences by connecting Russia's international counterterrorism campaign in Syria to the safety of audiences in Russia and Eurasia. Because the Syrian crisis does not endanger the existence of Russia or Eurasia in a direct or existential way, the presentation of the terrorist threat from Syria had to be altered. The Kremlin connected the terrorist threat from Syria to the danger of its connections to the Eurasian region and further to Russia, emphasising that Russia cannot afford to let terrorists fighting in Syria come back to Russia or the Eurasian region (Allison, 2013). Putin, in his meeting with the CIS Council of Heads of State, accentuated the danger coming from Syria:

> we considered it *our duty* to take concrete action in the fight against the Islamic State and other radical groups on Syrian territory […] The situation there really is close to *critical*. Terrorists of all kinds are gaining influence and do not hide their plans for further expansion. *One of their goals is to break through into the Central Asian region*. It is important that we be ready for coordinated action to respond to any such attempts. ("Meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State", 2015, emphasis added)

Thus, Putin refocused the perception of the terrorist threat in the Syrian campaign. Moving beyond an existential threat affecting countries far away from Russia, it was portrayed as an imminent threat to the Central Asian region; by doing so Putin addressed a much bigger audience: domestic and international securitisation audiences combined.

In addition, Russia did not forget about its Eurasian allies and the security provider's role in Eurasia: the 2017 talks on the situation in Syria were conducted in Astana, Kazakhstan, showing the importance of cooperation on the subject matter ("*Lavrov: Rossiya i Kazakstan prizyvayut obuzdat' vsplesk terrorizma na Blizhnem Vostoke*", 2017). Russia extensively tried to engage the Eurasian nations into the Syrian campaign. Russian authorities called for the Central Asian states' participation in the Syrian campaign, saying that their contribution would be appreciated, and it could be a good opportunity to promote the SCTO partnership (Kalyukov, Basisini, & Sidorkova, 2017). Thus, the securitisation rhetoric produced by the Kremlin is supported by Russia's foreign policy actions: the Eurasian regimes that are loyal to the Kremlin's counterterrorism agenda receive Russia's support in the region and international exposure. The Syrian campaign for Russia was not only an opportunity to flex its military muscles, proving its superpower status. It was also used to reach a long-term strategic goal on the wave of the Syrian counterterrorism campaign, reinforcing the securitisation rhetoric in the Eurasian region at the same time.

The international political elite, made of international political leaders and international organisations, has been targeted by the Kremlin in an attempt to amass international support for Russia's actions in Syria. For example, Igor Sirotkin, Deputy Director of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Head of Central Office, National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC), in his statement at the UN High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, emphasised the need to cooperate on the counterterrorism agenda even if countries have other disagreements:

> The long-standing practice of the aforementioned gatherings of top-level professionals [the Meetings of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organization] shows that the divergence of views on particular issues of current international agenda and governmental cooperation

> could never be an insurmountable obstacle to find a mutual understanding and establish "alliances" so as to counter global terrorism effectively (Sirotkin, 2018).

Thus, Russia's counterterrorism is not only inviting for international actors, but it also strives to be neutral in terms of political judgement. This trend continues from the securitisation rhetoric at the regional level, where the Kremlin played into Eurasian elites' desire to stay in power to regain control over the Eurasian region.

Putin used international platforms, especially the UN, to convey Russia's position on the terrorism issue and address the targeted audience. In his address to the UN in 2015, a significant part of Putin's speech was devoted to the situation in Syria, highlighting Russia's contribution to the war on terror:

> *Russia has always been consistently fighting against terrorism in all its forms*. Today, we provide military and technical assistance both to Iraq and Syria and many other countries of the region who are fighting terrorist groups […] We should finally acknowledge that no one but President Assad's armed forces and Kurds militias are truly fighting the Islamic State and other terrorist organizations in Syria […] On the basis of international law, we must join efforts to address the problems that all of us are facing and create a genuinely broad international coalition against terrorism. Similar to *the anti-Hitler coalition, it could unite a broad range of forces that are resolutely resisting those who, just like the Nazis, sow evil and hatred of humankind*. ("Read Putin's U.N. General Assembly speech", 2015, emphasis added)

Putin indirectly but rather openly equates the threat of terrorism with the Nazis, highlighting the existential danger that this threat represents.[59] Putin's address at the United Nations General Assembly was a powerful securitisation move: throughout the speech he repeatedly addressed the importance of unity before the enemy, highlighted the imminent danger of the terrorist threat, and emphasised that Russia aims to act solely within the framework of international law and the UN Charter ("Read Putin's U.N. General Assembly speech", 2015).

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[59] The Nazi related rhetoric is not uncommon in Russian politics. For example, on the connection between the Nazi threat, Stalinism and the crisis in Ukraine see Kuzio, T. (2016). Soviet and Russian anti-(Ukrainian) nationalism and re-Stalinization. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *49*(1), 87-99.

The securitisation rhetoric was delivered to all parts of securitisation audience, speaking to domestic, regional, and international audiences. The securitisation rhetoric presented was following the pattern that the Kremlin has been practicing since the apartment bombings in 1999: present an existential threat, call for unity, promise to act within the law. Thus, it can be seen that the Kremlin has been stepping up its expertise in the securitisation process, becoming more and more efficient and smooth in delivering the rhetoric to the targeted audience.

It can be seen from the examples above that the Kremlin remains the main actor in securitising the terrorist threat at the international level. However, at the international level, we can see how the Kremlin has added various representatives of international organisations to the dissemination of the securitising rhetoric. Russian authorities such as Director of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) Alexander Bortnikov, who is also Head of National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC), Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, Russia's representative to the UN Vladimir Voronkov, can be seen as supplementary securitising actors who help to push Russia's counterterrorism agenda forward.

The ultimate aim of the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the international level is to reclaim Russia's great power status internationally. The Kremlin uses the counterterrorism agenda to forward the image of Russia being a capable international actor, who can conduct international engagements, such as the Syrian counterterrorist campaign. The main message that the Kremlin strives to deliver is that Russia is reclaiming its great power capacity, and the rest of the world has to accept it.

6.2 Staging the Terrorist Threat: Russia's Counterterrorism Campaign in Syria

Russia has been building its international counterterrorism profile for quite some time now. An active international presence on discussing counterterrorism can be seen in Russia's strategic engagement with many international organisations. Some of Russia's commitment to the international counterterrorism agenda has been discussed in Chapter 5, focusing on the CIS, the CSTO, and the CSO. These international organisations, although their influence is somewhat limited to the Eurasian space, have been used by the Kremlin to position Russia as the most capable counterterrorism actor in the post-Soviet region. However, as Lo (2003) aptly mentioned, “the key consideration for Putin is that it [Russia] should be a ‘great power’ in the global as well as regional sense” (p. 17). In the discussion of the global fight with terrorism one cannot exclude the United Nations Organisation (UN) and its contribution to member states’ counterterrorism capacities, as Sergei Lavrov (2014) named the UN and particularly the UN Security Council as the primary avenue for Russia’s pursuit of its counterterrorism agenda. Russia has been actively involved in UN counterterrorism activities, contributing both financially and with expertise: in 2017, Russia added 2 million US dollars to the Trust Fund for Counter Terrorism in 2017, which puts it on the 9th place in the donors’ list (UN OCT, 2019). Considering that Russia is still under international sanctions after the annexation of Crimea, this contribution shows the Kremlin’s dedication to the counterterrorism agenda at the international level, regardless of Russia’s difficult economic situation.

In terms of the expertise that Russia supplies to the UN, Vladimir Voronkov was appointed Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which now coordinates 38 UN entities (former Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Forces), provides counterterrorist leadership to the General Assembly, and helps member states to build their counterterrorism capacity (UN Office of Counterterrorism, n.d.). Voronkov is a professional diplomat, who spent more than 30 years in Russian Foreign Service, being involved in different UN bodies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and various UN campaigns on narcotics and crime prevention. However, despite Voronkov’s credentials, his nomination faced some pushback as the US opposed Voronkov’s decision to restrict access of non-governmental representatives to a few sessions at the United Nations High-Level Conference on Counter-Terrorism in June 2018 (Nichols, 2018). A US representative, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed that the Trump administration's decision to cut US financial support to contest Voronkov's choice was partially based on the fact that he is Russian (Nichols, 2018). Instances like this contribute to the Kremlin's feeling of being encroached upon by enemies and also fuel the desire to regain Russia's international influence and its great power status.

Russia's international counterterrorism cooperation stretches beyond its immediate neighbours in the post-Soviet space: in October 2012, Lavrov signed ASEAN-Russia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism, establishing closer ties between Russia and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The declaration emphasised the importance of international cooperation on counterterrorism, noted the enhanced cooperation via Interpol, the SCO, and the CIS, and reiterated the significance of international counterterrorism collaboration based on the UN ("ASEAN-Russia Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism," 2012). Thus, Russia's strong presence in the Eurasian security field is interconnected to the Kremlin's influence expansion to international organisations further from home. In addition, the National Antiterrorism Committee mentions Russia's counterterrorism contribution to the relationships with the EU, the Group of Eight (though Russia has been suspended since 2014), the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and even NATO (National Antiterrorism Committee, n.d.). Sergey Lavrov (2014) argues that Russia's participation in international counterterrorism activities is proactive, essential, and aims not only to eliminate the terrorist threat worldwide but to do it within the standards of international law. He strongly argues against existing international "double standards", calling for international actors to be impartial in denouncing terrorist organisations (Lavrov, 2014). Double standards in counterterrorism can be explained by the absence of universal agreement between countries on what organisations should be in the terrorist list and what entities should be left out (Weinberg, 2005). Thus, the Kremlin highlights that Russian counterterrorism is not only genuinely international but also highly professional, and other countries seek Russia's counterterrorism expertise.

Russia's engagement in the Syrian conflict intended to make the country more visible on the international arena, showing the world that Russia should be known not only for its former military wins and losses, whether it was the Second World War or the Afghanistan campaigns, but also as an active and powerful international actor. Kofman (2017) argues that "In Syria and Ukraine, Russia has shown itself a capable adversary, able to shape the environment in a manner that deters an American challenge" (para. 5). It highlights the importance of the Syrian campaign for the Kremlin's path of regaining international influence, as Russia's influence in global affairs has grown as the result of the Syrian campaign.

In this context, it is crucial to focus on the Russian counterterrorism campaign in Syria. The main arguments of the Kremlin's securitisation rhetoric will be presented: the positioning of the terrorist threat as an existential threat to Russia regardless of the distance from the threat, and the representation of Russia as a capable counterterrorism actor. Furthermore, I will draw connections between the Syrian counterterrorism campaign and the wars in Chechnya, showing some striking resemblances in the Kremlin's approach to presenting the Syrian conflict to the Russian public.

The discussion of the terrorist threat securitisation in Syria should start with a short overview of Russia's involvement in the conflict. The Syrian conflict is the first counterterrorism campaign Russia has mounted on an international level. Counterterrorism rhetoric was paramount to how Russia framed its decision to support the Assad regime for both international and domestic audiences. Russia involved itself in the conflict in Syria in August – September 2015 after the agreement between the Russian and Syrian governments when Russia was granted exclusive rights to the Khmeimim Air Base. Russia received the sole rights to the base, and the Russian military forces were considered a diplomatic contingent (*Protokol k Soglasheniju mezhdu Rossijskoj Federaciej i Sirijskoj Arabskoj Respublikoj o razmeshhenii aviacionnoj gruppy Vooruzhennyh Sil Rossijskoj Federacii na territorii Sirijskoj Arabskoj Respubliki ot 26 avgusta 2015 g.,* 2015). The fight against terrorism, as well as the need for the consolidation of forces to combat terrorism were listed as the major reasons for the Russian military deployment in Syria (Ibid).

The Kremlin's rhetoric surrounding Russia's involvement in Syria has been based on Russia's privileged position of a trusted ally. As Stent (2016) mentions, "Russia has justified its foray into Syria as part of an effort to reduce terrorism by shoring up the Assad regime, which by the summer of 2015 was facing military setbacks" (p. 109). The Russian Parliament unanimously supported Putin's request for an intervention in Syria. Sergei Ivanov, the Head of Administration, said after the Parliament meeting that the intervention has nothing to do with Russia's geopolitical ambitions: "It's only about the national interest of the Russian Federation" ("Russian parliament unanimously approves use of military in Syria to fight ISIS", 2015). Russia was invited to help the Syrian government to fight terrorists, and this privileged position of having the Syrian government's endorsement would form the base of the Kremlin's justification of the necessity of Russian presence in Syria for the domestic audience. The Kremlin presents Russia's engagement in Syria as a consistent, logical and politically strong decision: the invitation from the legitimate Syrian government showed that Russia was and is a trusted ally (Carpenter, 2017; Gambhir, 2015). Putin connected Russia's support for Assad to upholding international law:

> From the outset, Russia has advocated peaceful dialogue enabling Syrians to develop a compromise plan for their own future. We are not protecting the Syrian government, but international law. We need

> to use the United Nations Security Council and believe that preserving law and order in today's complex and turbulent world is one of the few ways to keep international relations from sliding into chaos. ("A plea for caution from Russia," 2013)

Hence, Putin reiterated the message that Russia wants to be seen as a global player acting within the international law framework and highlighted the importance of protecting the Syrian government. Besides, he emphasised that Russia's actions in Syria are the opposite of chaos and will help to improve international politics.

The Syrian campaign started solely on the counterterrorism premise, and Russia faced a lot of international attention from joining the campaign on the Syrian government's side. Some argue that Russia's position is superior to other players. For example, Ted Carpenter notes the supremacy of Russia's position claiming that "Russia's Syria policy is straightforward and coherent, U.S. policy is a contradictory, incoherent mess" (Carpenter, 2017, para. 6). Gambhir (2015) argues that Russia was one of the most capable and important players in Syria, as "Turkey, Russia, and Egypt each have a disproportionate ability to spoil or facilitate counter-ISIS strategies devised by the U.S." (p. 7). However, international reaction was different from various international players, and it was clear that Russia and the West were seeing a possible conflict resolution in different ways. For example, David Cameron called Russia's decision to intervene in Syria "a terrible mistake" ("Cameron condemns Russia's military action in Syria as 'terrible mistake' – video", 2015). Barnard and Shoumali (2015) argue that the war in Syria was turning into a proxy war between Russia and the US, regardless of the consequences. The US and its allies called for better targeted air strikes and the demise of Assad, directly contradicting Russia's position. Unsurprisingly, Russia refused to consider regime change as an option to solve the conflict ("US, allies ask Russia to halt strikes outside IS areas in Syria", 2015). The middle ground position can be shown, for example, by Fisk (2015), who notes that the Kremlin might have its own goals in Syria but so do other international players, and it should be no surprise that the campaign pursues the Kremlin’s other aims. The difference of opinions has not affected Russia’s adamant position to refuse to see regime change as a possible solution for the Syrian situation, which contributed to the Kremlin’s securitisation rhetoric.

6.2.1 The Syrian securitisation rhetoric

Russia’s participation in the Syrian conflict has been presented in a favourable light to the domestic audience, and the West’s reluctance to consider Russia as an equal counterterrorism partner has been confronted. The Russian media called Russia’s actions in Syria “unique”, and portrayed Putin’s decision as right, for both keeping the Russian Army in top shape and reclaiming Russia’s international influence (“*Operaciya VKS v Sirii: Rossiya obrela strategiyu i opyt distancionnoj vojny*”, 2016). The uniqueness of Russia’s position in Syria is exemplified in the works of Russian political analyst Fedor Luk'janov, who argues that Russia’s actions in Syria scare the West because they do not have another solution for the crisis. He continues by saying that if Russia had not interfered in the conflict, Syria would have ceased to exist (“*Luk'yanov: esli by Rossiya ne vmeshalas', gosudarstva Siriya uzhe ne bylo by*”, 2016). In addition, a 2016 Levada poll showed that 57% of respondent believe that Russia is unique and has a special place in history, in comparison with only 13% in 1992 (Levada Center, 2016). Thus, it can be seen that the uniqueness of Russia’s path was gradually reiterated to the Russian public.

Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 has made a significant contribution to the of Russia’s securitisation audience’s feeling of greatness. The argument that Russia would not leave or abandon the Russians living abroad was an appeal to the Russian diaspora, as Russian minorities in post-Soviet countries retained the feeling of belonging to a more exceptional nation (Brubaker, 1994). Sergei Lavrov emphasised: “Rendering comprehensive support to the Russian World is an unconditional foreign policy priority for Russia … we will keep enthusiastically defending the rights of compatriots, using for that the entire arsenal of available means envisioned by international law" ("*Russkij mir na puti konsolidacii*", 2015). The annexation of Crimea reassured Russian society that the Kremlin is more than capable of keeping the Russian people safe, projecting an image of a strong country for the domestic audience. Such rhetoric was later reinforced by Moscow's active military engagement in Syria. The Russian public was presented with the situation in Ukraine being under control, in a similar way to the Syrian campaign.

Moreover, Russia's allies supported the separatist idea of Eastern Ukraine. For example, 77% of Belorussian respondents agreed with the suggestion that the conflict in Eastern Ukraine represents "a popular protest against "illegitimate authorities"" (Padhol & Marples, 2015, p. 222). In addition to the Moscow portraying Donetsk and Luhansk separatists as rightfully seeking autonomy, the Kremlin highlighted that Russia sees through Western economic sanctions and hostility. The argument presented claims that the West runs a smear campaign precisely because Russia is too powerful, and the Western leaders are afraid of Russia regaining its international influence. The Syrian campaign aimed to show Russia's strength to the domestic audience and the world and prove that Russia has gained its superpower capabilities back.

The Syrian campaign aimed to show the domestic and international audiences that Russia is an international actor that can extend its reach beyond its immediate neighbourhood. Any international commentary condemning the annexation of Crimea has been denounced as anti-Russian propaganda in the Russian media. For example, a Russian channel *Rossiya 1* called the Crimean economic sanctions strategy "*davi Rossiu*" ("smash Russia"), implying that the ultimate Western goal is to destroy Russia ("*Rossiya naskvoz' vidit sankcionnuyu strategiyu Zapada*", 2018). This sentiment came from the official press secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Marija Zaharova; consequently, we can conclude that she is sharing the Kremlin's position on the matter. Moscow firmly positioned its foreign policy decisions as reflecting the Russian strength in dealing with international condemnations and simultaneously highlighted that Russia sees through the Western discourse.

Similarly to the media coverage of the Crimea's annexation, the media have been emphasising the positive sides of the Syrian campaign in order to defer any criticism. For example, the media intentionally underlined that Russia had not sacrificed any extra funds to afford the military operation in Syria, it was financed from the Ministry of Defence's budget and did not influence the economic situation in Russia ("*Analitiki: operaciya v Sirii ne prinesla malejshix riskov dlya byudzheta Rossii*", 2016). The Kremlin officials also showed their support, arguing that Russia's actions in Syria are criticised by the West because Western players cannot understand the importance of Russia's mission in Syria, and that confronting Russia would not get Western powers better results in Syria ("*Deputat GD: zapugivaya Rossiyu, Zapad xochet povliyat' na operaciyu v Sirii*", 2016). Thus, possible arguments that could have been used to belittle the role of Russia in Syria were pre-emptively tackled by the Russian media, protecting the Russian audience from seeing the Western critique.

For that reason, the quality of media coverage of the Syrian conflict that the Russian public has been receiving remains a subject of discussion. Some news that could have caused Russian society concern were openly mitigated. For example, TASS, a Russian news agency, reported that in 2015-2017, during the main military campaign, the Russian Army lost 44 people ("*Geroi vojny: poteri Vooruzhennyh sil RF v hode sirijskoj operacii"*, 2018). In contrast, RBK, referring to Reuters's sources, reported that in the Russian forces 300 people were dead or injured in one week, but no officials were willing to confirm the numbers when contacted by the media ("*Reuters ocenil summarnye poteri rossijan v Sirii za nedelju"*, 2018). The Russian government claimed that the information about the Russian Army's losses in

Syria was “fake news” from the very beginning of the campaign (“*Minoborony RF nazvalo vbrosom zajavlenija o gibeli mirnyh zhitelej v SAR”,* 2015). Thus, the media coverage was not only uneven, but also shielded Russian society from sensitive information during the Syrian campaign.

Regardless of the quality of media coverage of the Syrian campaign, the Russian media greatly contributed to the securitisation process, using strong language in support of Putin’s actions in Syria. The Russian media has been constantly presenting the Syrian campaign in a attractive light. For example, Ria Novosti claimed that “The actions of the Russian Air and Space Forces after the invitation from the Syrian government really helped to create a breakthrough in the situation in Syria” (“*Grazhdanskaja vojna v Sirii (2011-2016*), 2016). Sergey Rudskoy (2017), Colonel-General and Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, argues that the 2015 situation in Syria was critical and “threatened Russia’s security”, because IS forces were aiming at the Central Asian and Caucasus regions (“*Situacija v Sirii v 2015 godu ugrozhala bezopasnosti RF, zajavili v Genshtabe*”, 2017). Russian media noted the West’s disbelief in Russia’s abilities to carry out the mission in Syria, but emphasised the response by the Kremlin’s Press Secretary, Dmitrii Peskov, who argues that Russia has a transparent task in Syria: to protect Russia’s national interests and secure it from the terrorists, and support a friendly country in need; both goals Russian forces carried out brilliantly (“*Peskov otvetil na slova Obamy o perspektivah Rossii "uvjaznut' v Sirii"*”, 2016). Hence, the Russian rhetoric on Syria was consistent and emphasised the campaign as a necessary step to shield Russia from terrorism.

6.2.2 Continuity in Syrian securitisation rhetoric: the Chechen issue

The Syrian campaign shown continuity in the Kremlin’s securitisation rhetoric. Bringing together the desire to show control over Russia’s domestic instability in the North Caucasus and the Kremlin’s expertise in using the image of Chechens for political purposes, the Syrian securitisation rhetoric incorporates the Chechen issue. Chechen military forces were sent to Syria and celebrated for their participation in the conflict, notwithstanding continuing troubles in Chechnya, where despite the de-escalation of the Chechen conflict the situation in the North Caucasus region remained volatile (Baev, 2013; Nemtsova, 2014). Hauer (2017) calls the deployment of the Chechen battalion “a highly effective method for the Kremlin to project power at a reduced political cost” (para. 4). The Chechens are a unique force that Russia can use in Syria, as many of them have combat experience from two Russian-Chechen conflicts (Mironova & Sergatskova, 2017). However, the Chechen forces are not only military personnel with combat experience, but also the Kremlin’s way to show that it has the problems in Chechnya under control. Thus, the securitisation of the terrorist threat had started during the Chechen conflicts and it echoes in the Syrian campaign.

In 2015, at the beginning of the Syrian conflict, Ramzan Kadyrov, the president of Chechnya highlighted the Chechen Army forces’ readiness to be deployed to Syria to fight ISIS: "[ISIS] recruiting our brothers, they are preparing to commit terrorist acts against our people aimed at destabilizing the situation in the Russian Federation” (“*Kadyrov predlozhil otpravit' v Siriju suhoputnye vojska RF*”, 2015). For the Kremlin it was also an opportunity to show those Chechens who complied with Russian rule in Chechnya that they were model citizens and were praised for their contribution to national security.

The securitisation of terrorism that had happened in the North Caucasus not only allowed the Kremlin to tighten security Russia-wide, but it also changed how the Russian public sees people from the North Caucasus and consequently how they are treated at the governmental level. Thus, the Kremlin had an opportunity to use the Chechen battalion in Syria in any way it deemed necessary. For example, Mironova and Sergatskova (2017) claim that the Chechen soldiers were of better use in Syria instead of staying in the North Caucasus where they could have become radicalised. Satter (2016) argues that the Russian Secret Service (FSB) created opportunities for radicalised people from the North Caucasus to join ISIS. As it was discussed earlier in chapter 4, the Russian public was proven to be rather sensitive to the loss of Russian lives in terrorism-related events, as the Nord Ost and Beslan events showed. Thus, the Kremlin had to deal carefully with the casualties during the Syrian campaign. The image of the Chechens in Russia is closely associated with terrorism, therefore possible casualties during their deployment could be easier to conceal and probably would not disturb the Russian public as much. This might appear rather immoral, but it fits well with how the Kremlin has been dealing with the number of losses in Syria, having learned that the Russian public is rather perceptive about such information and do not want Russia to lose soldiers in Syria (Hauer, 2017). The Kremlin's decision to send the Chechen military forces to Syria can be seen as a sign of support of pro-Russian choices that the official Chechen government has made. The Chechen's "right" choices were combined with the Syrian campaign having potential to be a message of encouragement sent to the near abroad, reminding the post-Soviet space that pro-Russian choices pay off.

The connection between Syria and Chechnya is reflected in the Kremlin's desire to show that everything is under control in the North Caucasus. The Kremlin's firm line against regime change is believed to be rooted in the fear of a possible replication of an Arab Spring at home (Allison, 2013; Baev, 2013; Charap, 2013; Hill, 2013). The events in Ukraine threatened the Kremlin's regime, bringing the perceived threat of pro-Western revolutions closer to Moscow. The changes happening in Ukraine's political circles were the manifestation of the Kremlin's long-standing concern regarding the ability to control the near abroad (Dyndal & Espenes, 2016; Laruelle, 2016). Putin could not allow the political changes in Ukraine to pose a threat to the Kremlin's regime. In particular, he could not give the impression that Russia might tolerate post-Soviet countries turning pro-West. For example, if

Ukraine surrendered to the Western idea of regime change, Russian society might have started to think about possible changes at home (Satter, 2016). Galeotti (2016a) argued that “if Putin fails to deliver in Ukraine, the possibility of a challenge to his authority from a more radical nationalist agenda is likely to be greater than it was before the start of the crisis” (p. 167). The Kremlin could not let this happen, as Russia’s interference into Ukraine’s affairs has clearly shown. Besides, Russia’s non-interference in Ukraine might have been seen as the betrayal of Russians and of Putin’s regime, which had been built on the idea of bringing back Russia’s superpower status (Sakwa, 2016). However, the Kremlin but might be not able to prevent regime change in the Syrian conflict, and Fiona Hill (2013) aptly calls this approach “Mistaking Syria for Chechnya” (para. 2), emphasising the similarities between the two conflicts. Regarding preventing regime change, terrorism from Syria might pose a more significant threat to Russia, a threat bigger than just violent and destructive terrorist actions, as it potentially can threaten the foundation of the state. Thus, Putin’s support of the Assad regime is the ultimate encouragement of regime preservation, and in a way is self-preservation for Putin’s regime. Putin could not let the Russian public doubt Russia’s might; not in Ukraine, and not in Syria.

With the Syrian intervention, the Kremlin’s securitisation techniques have become more sophisticated, deploying rhetoric targeting the securitisation audience more precisely and building on the existing domestic and regional securitisation rhetoric. Over time, Russian securitisation techniques have become more sophisticated, involving social media and immediate profiting on the securitisation rhetoric. For example, during the Syrian campaign, Moscow has started to use additional dissemination tools such as Facebook, aimed at showcasing Russia’s success in Syria in a moving exhibition. Facebook has been used to share daily updates on Russia’s mission in Syria. However, the Kremlin’s information sharing regarding the Syrian campaign has been targeting domestic and international audiences in different ways: an international English-speaking audience has access to daily Facebook updates using succinct statistics on the war and offering almost no storytelling, just bare facts, while the domestic/regional Russian speaking audiences see long posts praising Russia's increased military might. The Facebook page for the Russian Ministry of Defence publishes 'Syria bulletins'. These bulletins, published daily, provide updates on Russia's actions in Syria, mainly numbers of military encounters and reconciliation activities, for example, counting days when the ceasefire was in place. The information provided in bulletins is thorough, although the sources are not specified, and bulletins are published in English. These bulletins are not translated into Russian on the Facebook page, but they are available on the Russian Ministry of Defence website (http://syria.mil.ru/news.htm). Thus, we can see a clear separation of the information available for the international and domestic/regional audiences; the information segregation is organised not only by the language but also by content. Facebook, a social media network, represents an easy way of receiving updates on the Ministry of Defence's content, but because of the different information presented in two languages, an English and a Russian speaker would receive dissimilar updates on Russia's Ministry of Defence activities, and ultimately on Russia's engagement in Syria.

The moving exhibition of Syrian war artefacts called Syrian Breakthrough consists of various weaponry and military equipment and vehicles, supposedly seized by the Russian Army in Syria (an online version of the exhibition is available at http://syria.mil.ru). The train departed Moscow on the 23rd of February 2019, commemorating Defenders of the Fatherland Day, a Russian holiday celebrating the army and defending the country. The exhibition will visit more than 60 Russian cities, going from Moscow to Sevastopol, then to Vladivostok, then to Murmansk, and then back to Moscow on the 27th of April, to celebrate the Syrian Independence Day *("Poezd s trofejnym oruzhiem sirijskih boevikov otpravilsja po gorodam*

Rossii" 2019). The exhibition train carries 20 carriages with military equipment that has been seized by the Russian Army: a tank T-55, numerous vehicles that have been repurposed by the ISIS, and ammunition and explosives. The exhibition is not limited to Russian and Syrian weaponry; it also contains foreign ammunition and rations, and even a Jeep Grand Cherokee that belonged to a suicide bomber (Ibid).

The normalisation of a fear of terrorism in Russia as one of the outcomes of the terrorist threat securitisation has resulted in the decreased sensitivity of Russian people to the terrorist issue. The Kremlin does not need to sugar-coat its securitisation actions on the domestic level anymore, so Syrian Breakthrough has been officially called a military patriotic agitation campaign. Agitation, in that case, was more than just words – Syrian Breakthrough has been joined by mobile recruitment army offices that were hiring recruits for contracted military services. More than a million people visited the Syrian Breakthrough agitation train, and 23000 recruits have signed up for military service ("*Bolee milliona rossijan posetilo peredvizhnuju vystavku «Sirijskij Perelom»*," 2019; "*Poezd s trofejnym oruzhiem sirijskih boevikov otpravilsja po gorodam Rossii*" 2019). The exhibition was organised by the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation following Putin's proposal, bringing the Kremlin an increased exposure of Russia's military might. Syrian Breakthrough has also contributed to the glorification of Russia's assertive foreign policy to the domestic securitisation audience, reassuring them that the Kremlin is working hard to eliminate terrorism both domestically and abroad.

6.3 The Results of Terrorist Threat Securitisation on the International Level

In addition to the increased interest in contracted military service that followed Syrian Breakthrough, the Kremlin has enjoyed increased public support from the beginning of the Syrian campaign. The domestic public reacted to the counterterrorism campaign in Syria rather favourably, supporting Russia's hard line on terrorism. In a 2015 poll by Levada

Center, 30% of respondents said that the involvement in Syria aims to protect Russia's interest in the Middle East and 28% replied that Russian engagement in Syria is instrumental in strengthening Russia's positions in the world (Levada Center, 2015). In addition, 11% fully supported the Kremlin's actions in Syria, 28% mostly supported, and only 3% answered that they do not support Russia's actions in Syria (Ibid). In 2016, 52% of Russians supported airstrikes in Syria as the means to achieve the Kremlin's goal of helping Assad to fight the Islamic State (Smeltz, Goncharov, & Wojtowicz, 2016). Thus, it can be clearly seen that Russian public backed Putin's decision to deploy the Russian forces in the Syrian conflict. According to a 2017 Levada poll, the Russians named the conflict in Syria/fight with IS as the most important event of the year (Levada Center, 2017a). In 2019, the Syrian conflict went down to number 8 in the rankings, outperformed by almost everything: from the opening of the Crimean bridge to Russia hosting the World Cup in football (Levada Center, 2019). Nevertheless, the popularity of the 2019 Syrian Breakthrough exhibition in Russia shows that there is interest among the Russian public in the Syrian counterterrorism campaign.

The showcase of Russia's military capacity is an essential part of the securitisation rhetoric, a way to prove to Russian society that the Russian forces are skilled for a counterterrorism mission. The Russian domestic audience was reassured that backing up the militarisation of Russia was the right choice – such militarisation was presented as a necessary part of the fight against terrorism in Syria ("Read Putin's U.N. General Assembly speech", 2015). Domestic and regional audiences were promised the revival of a stronger Russia in the international arena and received positive confirmation of the choices made (Allison, 2013). According to a June 2017 Pew poll, "the prevailing view among Russians is that their country should stay the course in Syria, keeping Russia's military involvement at its current level (46%)" (p. 4). The Levada Poll at the end of August 2017 showed that among

Russians who follow the Syrian campaign closely (approximately a third of the respondents), 59% want the Kremlin to continue its military activity in Syria (Levada Center, 2017b). Thus, the audience's support reassured the regime that it is going in the right direction.

The Syrian campaign served as a platform for the Kremlin to show Russia's military capabilities and new weapons to the world. The perception of Russia being capable of successfully carrying out the Syrian campaign was paramount for Putin (Shapiro, 2017). This caused some concerns from the international community: at the beginning of the Russian campaign in Syria, foreign observers were alarmed that Syria might become a testing ground for Russia's new weapons ("Russia joins war in Syria: five key points", 2015). However, the Russian public supported the showcasing of Russian military might. For example, the Russian public ranked the improvement of Russia's position in the international arena as the second reason for Russia's engagement in Syria, clearly making the connection between the Kremlin's desire to flex its military muscles and Russia's international image (Levada Center, 2015). In a 2016 poll by Levada Center, 38% of respondents said that Russia's military might, and its nuclear weapons, are the main reasons to respect Russia internationally (Levada Center, 2016). Thus, Russian society supported Putin in his quest to show the world that Russia is a militarily powerful international actor, connecting Russia's engagement in Syria to its improving international image. Shapiro (2017) argues that one of the reasons why Russia intervened in the situation in Syria was "for domestic political consumption. Putin needed to demonstrate to the Russian people that Russia's power had not atrophied under his rule" (p. 8). There is no doubt that there were risks of Russia's failure in Syria, but the Kremlin did everything it could to make sure the failure did not happen, and the result of the campaign has been presented as a big success (Allison, 2013; Baev, 2013). Silayev and Sushentsov (2017) sum up the international benefits of the Syrian campaign for Russia:

> Russia has acquired a new geopolitical status in recent years. *It has reaffirmed its claim to a strong and independent role in international affairs*, which its Western partners put in question after the Soviet Union's dissolution. *The military operation in Syria has helped Russia become a key factor in the post-conflict settlement and has demonstrated Russia's fundamentally new military and political capability*. (pp. 2–3, emphasis added)

The absence of Western support for Russia's mission in Syria has not affected how the Syrian campaign was seen domestically, as the Kremlin enjoyed significant domestic support. The Syrian campaign influenced how the Russian public sees the regime, and the change was in favour of the Kremlin.

Overall, the Russian campaign in Syria has been presented as a win to domestic and regional audiences, as Putin highlighted that Russian forces "defeated the most efficient group of international terrorists" (Ibid). During the announcement of the start of the Russian troops' official withdrawal from Syria in December 2017, Putin noted that the withdrawal would be a sign of the mission's success, but not the end of the fight with terrorism – Russia is always ready to strike again if terrorists reconvene ("*Putin prikazal nachat' vyvod rossijskoj gruppirovki iz Sirii*", 2017). The securitisation of the terrorist threat resulted in the Russian public remaining on high alert about the threat of terrorism. According to a June 2017 Pew poll the terrorist threat is on the rise in the minds of Russian public: 54% of Russians ranked the terrorist threat as "a very big problem", an increase in comparison with Spring 2007 and Fall 2009 (both 48%), but it has not reached the level of post 9/11 Summer 2002, when 65% of Russians ranked terrorism as a big problem (Pew Research Center, 2017, p. 20). Thus, the normalisation of a fear of terrorism resulted in the constant presence of the terrorism threat in the minds of the public, indicating the success of the Kremlin's securitisation campaign.

The fear of terrorism has been carefully nurtured in Russia to allow the prolongation of counterterrorism actions by the Kremlin (Mckew, 2017; Satter, 2016). Russia's success in

Syria projects an image of Russia as a capable counterterrorism actor to both domestic and regional audiences (Allison, 2013). As Allison (2013) argues, Putin sees Russia's success in Syria as a step to regaining Russia's international influence, as the position that is reflected in an "enhanced global status as a central player in this major international crisis" (p. 821). The constant fear of terrorism became the norm in Russia, because the increase in people's perceptions of terrorism as a great threat is indicative of a successful delivery of securitisation rhetoric. The securitisation of terrorism, which had started with the Chechen Wars, gradually changed Russia's political structure and its domestic and regional policies and was finally successfully incorporated into the foreign policy agenda.

The Kremlin's securitisation of the terrorist threat relates to the domestic and foreign policy to the extent that it becomes apparent that it is paramount not only for both but is essential for connecting the two. The Kremlin has not stopped delivering securitisation rhetoric after the announcement of a partial withdrawal of Russian troops from Syria. Putin kept conveying securitisation rhetoric even when the major military deployment in Syria was believed to be close to an end. During Putin's visit to the Khmeimim Airbase in 2017 he noted that Russia's military might is growing, and army personnel performed well throughout the campaign ("*Sirijskaja operacija pokazala vozmozhnosti rossijskoj armii, zajavil Putin*", 2017). During his address to the Federal Assembly in 2018, Putin proudly highlighted that Russia is steadily increasing its military potential and creating new, deadlier and more sophisticated weapons to protect Russia from threats. He stepped up the securitisation rhetoric when he emphasised that this is Russia's way to a more peaceful world:

> We are not threatening anyone, not going to attack anyone or take away anything from anyone with the threat of weapons. We do not need anything. Just the opposite. I deem it necessary to emphasise (and it is very important) *that Russia's growing military power is a solid guarantee of global peace* as this power preserves and will preserve strategic parity and the balance of forces in the world, which, as is

> known, have been and remain a key factor of international security after WWII and up to the present day. (“Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly”, 2018, emphasis added)

By emphasising the continuity of international desire for peace and security after the Second World War, Putin reiterated Russia’s intention to be part of the process of establishing peace in the world, and Syria is the first step on this way. In addition, the Kremlin has a significant amount of knowledge from fighting terrorism in the North Caucasus, so Russia could bring its expertise to the international level. The counterterrorism agenda could be the basis for Russia’s acquisition of international support and recognition, which could have been done to satisfy major international players (Cross, 2006; Umarov, 2014).

There was an assumption that Russia became so intensively engaged in Syria because the Kremlin counted upon a possibility that the US would lift the Crimean sanctions if Russia and the US became close allies in the counterterrorism campaign in Syria (Shapiro, 2017). After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia faced much international attention, the West’s adverse reaction resulted many controversies at the UN and the international arena; many countries refused to recognise Crimea as a new constituent part of the Russian Federation (Charbonneau & Donath, 2014). International discontent resulted in the commonwealth countries, the US, and the EU introducing economic sanctions to punish Russia for its misdeeds, which weakened the Russian economy (Young, 2017). However, contrary to the intended outcome, disagreement with the Western sanctions did not cause public support for Putin to plummet: the Levada Center’s indicator of the public support of Putin showed a significant increase of approval of his actions after Crimea (from 61% to 86%) and the indicator has remained stable since then, showing that 76% of the public approved of Putin’s actions in 2018 (Levada Center, 2018). As Pinkham (2017) argues, “the annexation of Crimea, was an aggressive move to return to a world in which Russia was still an international superpower, filling its citizens with patriotic pride” (para. 9). The annexation of Crimea reassured the domestic and regional audiences in Russia’s capability of being a superpower. For Russian domestic consumption, the annexation of Crimea was portrayed as a big win for Russia. Putin continued to enjoy substantial domestic support regardless of the international repercussions following Crimea's annexation.

However, the Kremlin's post-Crimea calculations turned out to be only partially correct, and the Syrian campaign has resulted in Russia's increased international influence but not in the economic sanctions being lifted (Allison, 2013). The West intended to show that if Russia interfered into another country's politics, such actions would bring serious consequences. Later, the Syrian campaign would build on the sense of patriotism and pride that have been cultivated by the Kremlin before, during, and after the Crimea annexation, reassuring the Russian public that the current assertive foreign policy course aiming to return Russia to its great power status would continue. Russia was holding its position in Syria, thus showing to the world that the economic sanctions following the Crimea annexation are not something that can stop Russia from exercising its superpower role. Russia's involvement in Syria did not influence the Crimean sanctions as the Kremlin had anticipated, but at the same time, the US has not been opposing Russia in Ukraine as much as they could have done (Shapiro, 2017). Russia sees the Syrian campaign as a success, especially combined with an improved international image of Russia and Putin's consistently high ratings (Ibid).

The Syrian campaign was unsuccessful at lifting the economic sanctions, but it was paramount for the consolidation of Putin's regime, and its favourable perception by the domestic audience. The Syrian campaign has been used to influence domestic politics: the announcement of a withdrawal of troops from Syria coincided with the presidential elections in Russia, adding to the favourable image of Vladimir Putin as a capable leader and the only person deserving to be the president of Russia. His "victory" in Syria and the beginning of the withdrawal of the Russian troops unsurprisingly coincided with the presidential elections which he predictably won.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the international community did not support Russia in its foray into Syria. There is a difference worth mentioning between how sceptical international observers were at the beginning of the Russian campaign in Syria in comparison with the praise the Kremlin enjoyed at home. For example, Kalb (2015) argues: "Can Putin succeed where others have failed? It's possible, but unlikely […] Any Russian miscalculation in Syria could therefore severely undermine Putin's political base at home" (para. 3, 4). However, later, the commentary has slightly changed, for example, Hauer (2017) argues that "The Russian intervention in Syria has been, by most accounts, a success" (para. 1).

Nonetheless, some international observers and academics are critical of the claim that the Syrian campaign has been a success as it has been presented to the Russian and Eurasian audiences. For example, Baev (2018) argues that Russia has failed the "Syria test" because the campaign did not result in increased international cooperation in fighting terrorism, which would have been a positive international outcome. On the contrary, Russia's actions in Syria have worsened already uneasy relationships between Russia and the US. The absence of consensus between Russia and the West on the situation in Syria was inevitable: Russia refuses to support regime change, and the West often sees regime change as an inescapable part of Syrian conflict resolution (Charap, 2013). As Putin argued:

> It is alarming that military intervention in internal conflicts in foreign countries has become commonplace for the United States. Is it in America's long-term interest? I doubt it. Millions around the world increasingly see America not as a model of democracy but as relying solely on brute force, cobbling coalitions together under the slogan "you're either with us or against us". ("A plea for caution from Russia," 2013)

Thus, highlighting an increasing gap between Russia and the West, Putin was rather open about Russia's rejection of the Western model of possible interference into states' affairs. Syria is paramount for Russia; it is instrumental in the Kremlin's global campaign for the recognition of Russia's rights to make political decisions and not be subjugated to a UN-led intervention.

Consequently, one of the outcomes of the Syrian campaign was the worsening of the relationships between Russia and the US, following the irreconcilable differences in their understanding of the best solution for the Syrian crisis. Trump's announcement of the withdrawal of US troops from Syria was considered a win by the Kremlin and has been seen as a proof that the Kremlin's hard line on terrorism and military engagement in Syria was successful (Frolovskiy, 2019). Overall, the Syrian campaign served as the Kremlin's exemplification of the terrorist threat as not only looming on the horizon anymore but as already threatening the very existence of the civilized world. This sentiment has been used to portray Russia as an equal international player capable of fulfilling the duties of a superpower.

6.4 Summary

Chapter 6 examined Russia's counterterrorism campaign in Syria and showed how the Kremlin used the threat of terrorism to improve the Kremlin's positions on both domestic and regional levels, with an ultimate goal to regain Russia's international influence. The Syrian counterterrorism rhetoric is based on the imminent danger of the terrorist threat for Russia and the post-Soviet space, which reemphasised the Kremlin's power projection in the near abroad. Constantly reiterating the danger of terrorism, the Kremlin presented Russia's campaign in Syria as a logical continuation of its counterterrorist ambitions and strongly positioned Russia as a superpower capable of carrying out this military campaign. The Syrian campaign brought public support not only for the Kremlin's military solutions but also for Putin himself. This support greatly helped Putin' regime, especially after the Kremlin's decision to ignore the Crimean sanctions and focus instead on showing off the positive military results from the Syrian campaign. The Syrian campaign and Russia's repositioning as an international actor has been strongly supported by the Russian public (Baev, 2013; Rosenberg, 2017).

This chapter has identified major trends in the securitisation rhetoric in Syria: the danger of the ISIS for all types of audiences, the uniqueness of Russia's military capabilities and counterterrorism expertise, both domestically and abroad, and Russia's intent to fight terrorism everywhere. The Syrian securitisation rhetoric included elements based on the Chechen issue, both in terms of the formation of the threat and Russia's expertise in fighting it, and pointed towards the importance of securitisation process, and ultimately showed the prominent position of the threat of terrorism in Russian foreign policy. In this chapter, I drew attention to the patterns that Moscow has been using since the first successful securitisation of the Chechen terrorist threat that had started during the Chechen wars. The persistence of these patterns shows not only the continuity of securitisation process but also the versatility of securitisation, which allows to adapt it to the needs of a securitising actor. This chapter showed that the terrorism threat has been playing a crucial part in Russian foreign policy, and now the threat of terrorism is inalienable from the political course of the Russian Federation. The Kremlin relies on Russia's counterterrorism image to a great extent, for domestic, regional, and international audiences.

Chapter 7 Summary, Conclusions, and Implications for Future Research

This thesis has investigated the role that the threat of terrorism plays in Russian foreign policy and to some extent in domestic policy through the prism of securitisation theory. It has been argued that the counterterrorism agenda is instrumental in Russia's quest for regaining global influence. In this concluding chapter I will bring together the main points of this research. This chapter summarises the research analysis and discusses the implications of this thesis for future research and practice. Regarding future research, I suggest diversifying scholarly approaches to Russian foreign policy analysis. To do so, the inclusion of the analysis of non-traditional threats in Russian foreign policy formation is necessary. In terms of the practical application of this research I argue that politicians, diplomats, and the general public should pay more attention to the ways in which Russia has sought to re-establish its position in global politics as an equal player.

7.1 A Summary of Findings

This thesis has presented a qualitative study of the securitisation of the terrorist threat in the Russian Federation, and also by the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet space and internationally. The literature on Russian foreign policy often highlights Russia's geopolitical/imperial ambitions, and/or the lack of democracy, and/or Putin's character as engines for Russian politics (Leichtova, 2014). The analysis of Russian foreign policy literature revealed the need for a more holistic approach to Russian foreign policy analysis, especially because there is the need for a more neutral, less juxtaposition-based analysis including domestic factors influencing foreign policy formation (Bacon et al., 2013; Galeotti, 2010).

The approach to Russian foreign policy analysis, argued in this thesis, should be expanded to include non-traditional threats into Russian foreign policy analysis. This thesis employed securitisation theory in order to show the analysis of the terrorist threat being used to achieve international influence, alongside the societal aspect of security politics formation. Securitisation theory helped to move our understanding of security threats beyond an analysis of "real" security threats, providing the framework for analysis of different political and societal aspects within security analysis (Bacon et al., 2013; Browning & McDonald, 2011; Buzan et al., 1998). In addition, the securitisation theory framework allowed the study of power consolidation in Russian political circles; it allowed this without falling into the debate about Russia's democratic/non-democratic political structures or the polarised debate of Russia as "Putin's project" narrative (Bacon et al., 2013).

Actors, audiences, and aims of Moscow's terrorism securitisation at the domestic, regional, and international levels can be summarised as follows:

Level of analysis	Actor	Audience	Aim
Domestic	• The Kremlin • Putin	• The Russian public	• To consolidate power in the Kremlin
Regional	• The Kremlin • Putin • Russia's representatives at regional organisations	• The Russian public • Post-Soviet countries' elites and societies	• To re-establish Russia's dominance in the post-Soviet space • To reassure former Soviet republics that Russia cares about them • To encourage Russians living abroad in the importance of Russian-Soviet common identity
International	• The Kremlin • Putin • Russia's Representatives at the UN and other international organisations	• The Russian public • The post-Soviet countries • The post-Soviet elites • International political elite such as leaders of other states or heads of international organisations	• To reclaim great power status • To prove that Russia is capable of doing what superpowers do

Table 1. The aims, actors, and audiences of the Kremlin's terrorism securitisation

As shown in Chapter 4, the securitisation of the terrorist threat had started during the Chechen Wars, when the Kremlin portrayed the threat of terrorism as existential and so threatening to Russia's future that the government would receive an extended range of political powers. Staging the terrorist threat as a threat to Russia's survival, the Kremlin used the Chechen resistance to give Russian society a focus on the enemy. The following escalation in the Chechens' resistance fed into the securitisation campaign that gradually turned the Chechens into Russia's nemesis in the eyes of the Russian public (Moore, 2007). Once such a level of demonisation had been achieved, the Kremlin consolidated resources, forming new government bodies in order to fight terrorism, but the management of these newly formed agencies remained the same. The events of Nord Ost and Beslan were included in the securitisation narrative, provoking changes in Russian politics. Building on the notion of the terrorist threat institutionalisation in Russia and abroad, following the 9/11 events, the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the domestic level resulted in legislation changes (Howell & Lind, 2010). These changes contributed to the consolidation of power in the Kremlin's hands, which pointed towards the conclusion that the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the domestic level was successful.

The analysis of the terrorist threat securitisation at the regional level in Chapter 5 showed how the securitisation rhetoric has been altered to reflect the Eurasian context. The securitisation rhetoric produced by the Kremlin accentuated the terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan and the danger of ISIS fighters returning to their home countries even after ISIS has been largely defeated. It was shown that the Eurasian political elites look favourably at securitisation rhetoric, as it assists their justification of not only the 'stability over democracy' approach, but also the "need" to limit religious and civil freedoms in the name of counterterrorism. Chapter 5 reiterated the importance of context in securitisation analysis, showing how regional security organisations became platforms for the Kremlin's dissemination of securitisation rhetoric. It was shown how the Kremlin altered securitisation rhetoric in order to deliver it at the most influential regional cooperation platforms. This was very clearly seen in major regional security platforms such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, as well as other regional cooperation initiatives such as the Eurasian Economic Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The chapter concluded with the evidence of legislative changes in some Eurasian states which showed their dependency on the Kremlin's counterterrorism choices and their readiness to follow the Russian path in the security sphere.

In Chapter 6 I analysed the case of Syria and argued that the securitisation of the terrorist threat at the international level changed both Russian society and how Russia is seen globally. The securitisation of the terrorist threat in Syria built on these feelings, creating a new "other" in Russian foreign policy. This new "other", however, is not an entirely new concept, as it is the return of the antagonism between Russia and the Western world (Molchanov, 2016). The terrorist threat securitisation in the Syrian case resulted in the strong positioning of Russia as a capable superpower in the eyes of Russian society. The Kremlin's rhetoric accompanying the success of Russian counterterrorism in the Ukraine and Syria encouraged the Russian public to support the growth of Russia's international influence. The counterterrorism agenda capitalised on the expertise Russia had acquired fighting Chechen terrorism. Now, with new experience of fighting terrorism globally, Russia is ready to strongly present itself as a superpower to the world. The intended message from the Syrian campaign to the world was that Russia is an international counterterrorism actor and deserves to be recognised as such. The Syrian counterterrorism campaign showed the Russians and the world that Russia can be thorough, persistent, and well prepared to carry out a counterterrorism mission on a global scale. However, the counterterrorism campaign in Syria has not help to lift the Ukrainian economic sanctions (Allison, 2013). Overall, the securitisation rhetoric successfully reached the international level and gained public support in Russia, which was the ultimate triumph of the terrorist threat securitisation in Russia.

7.2 Contribution to the Field

This thesis has explained how the threat of terrorism brought drastic changes to Russian domestic and foreign policies, by analysing securitisation processes on the domestic, regional, and international levels. The case study of the Russian Federation showed the potential of securitisation theory application in non-liberal states, contributing to the expansion of securitisation theory application. The application of securitisation theory in the Russian case showed that the Russian public's participation in the security agenda is more significant than has been reflected in the Russian foreign policy literature. Moreover, the homogenisation of society that the securitisation analysis highlighted showed the importance of the inclusion of non-traditional security threats into a security analysis. This research moved away from a traditional security threat analysis in order to enlarge our understanding of security threat formation in Russian foreign policy. This study contributes primarily to the literature on Russian foreign policy analysis.

This thesis highlighted a high degree of continuity in Russian politics, thus the official change of presidency from Putin to Medvedev and back had little to no effect on the process of the terrorist threat securitisation. It can be seen that leadership change might not prevent regime consolidation. Russia's hybrid political regime of transitional democracy, which would belong somewhere in the spectrum between a democracy and an authoritarian regime, allowed both leadership change and power consolidation to happen at the same time (Bacon et al., 2013). The leadership change in Russia in the form of the Putin – Medvedev tandem did not undermine gradual regime consolidation and the Kremlin continued to use the terrorist threat to achieve such consolidation. The securitisation analysis presented in this thesis captured the possibility of gradual political change in Russian politics. The analysis of changes in domestic and foreign policy that this thesis has presented points towards the irreversibility of the changes that terrorism securitisation brought; this allows us to conclude that the counterterrorism agenda would play an essential part in Russia's politics in the future. That said, the fourth time of Vladimir Putin as the president of the Russian Federation would likely be somewhat similar to his third time in the office concerning the omnipresence of the counterterrorism agenda. Firstly, the securitisation process has proven to be quite resourceful and effective in changing Russia's political course, becoming one of the ways Russian politics is done. Secondly, securitisation as a process of doing politics became so ingrained in Russia's political system that any attempts of untangling the two would result in a massive power restructuring within the Kremlin's chain of command, which seems unlikely during Putin's time. Thirdly, the success of the Syrian campaign as it has been presented to the domestic audience would likely remain to be one of Putin's grandest actions in the international arena; thus, there is a possibility that securitisation might be used again for further developments of Russia's great power image. Thus, securitisation processes are likely to continue, incorporating and adapting to future challenges Russia faces.

This research emphasised the controversy of the popularity of the current Russian government despite the restrictions of freedoms that can be seen in Russia. The successful securitisation of the terrorist threat at the domestic level required the Russian public to approve and support the emergency measures for the fight with terrorism, allowing the Kremlin to override the existing rules and norms. However, the nature of such acceptance is rather challenging to evaluate: The Russian Federation has the democratic frameworks and institutions in place, but they are dysfunctional, so there is a limited number of avenues that politically active citizens can use to deliver their grievances (Dawisha, 2014). As Lussier (2011) notes, "In the case of Russia, political participation dropped to the extent that a populist political leader was able to rescind democratic rights and institutions with popular quiescence" (p. 322). What Lussier calls popular quiescence is the absence of the Russian public's interest in participating in politics. However, the threat of terrorism served as a unifying factor for Russian society's trust in the ability of the Kremlin to bring the superpower status back to Russia (Baev, 2003b). The majority of Russians, 80% of respondents in March 2018, support Putin's foreign policy (Levada Center, 2018). Thus, one of the conclusions this thesis reached is the discrepancy between how the Russian public sees the Kremlin's foreign policy and Russia's place in world and how Russia is persistently seen by many as being in decline (Goble, 2017).

The Russian case of terrorism securitisation has shown the universality of the securitisation process. Regardless of the regime type and existing or absent democratic political structures, the usage of securitisation allows securitising actors to change normal politics. Doubtless, in more transparent democratic settings, securitisation would be more challenging to implement, but not impossible. The contemporary political inclination to label various aspects of politics as national security opens the doors for securitisation process that exploits that loophole and consequently change normal politics in such a way that emergency measures become business as usual. Furthermore, the Russian case showed that there is potential for more securitisation processes on the post-Soviet space, especially as the result of increased counterterrorism cooperation in the framework of regional organisations.

This thesis also showed that the Kremlin has been not only successful in securitising terrorism at all three levels, but Moscow's expertise in securitisation has increased tremendously since the Russo-Chechen Wars. The effortless usage of sophisticated technologies, the separation of securitisation audiences, and the employment of every ounce of any political crisis for securitisation purposes are indicative that the Kremlin has mastered the securitisation approach to politics. The securitisation expertise has developed through the years of trials and errors and resulted in the Syrian campaign, which would keep adding to the Kremlin's domestic support. Undeniably, Moscow got better at securitisation, achieving their political goals with increased precision. Thus, I believe the securitisation approach will be used by the Kremlin's for an extended period, most like after Putin's fourth term as well. Being embedded into the Kremlin's everyday affairs now, securitisation might become irreplaceable by the ned of his 4th time in office, especially if it is continued to be used at the same intense level.

7.3 Implications for Future Research

This thesis has identified the relative lack of application of the securitisation framework in Russian foreign policy analysis. This thesis's findings could attract attention from both academics and policy practitioners. My study could be of interest to academics and students focusing on a constructivist analysis of Russian foreign policy, as it provides an inquiry into the realm of threat perception in Russia. This thesis challenged the common perception of Russian politics as being backward and history oriented, even though it is undeniable that the Kremlin does not shy away from using history as political leverage (Bacon et al., 2013). Researchers interested in an analysis of non-traditional security threats in Russia might find this thesis useful in their studies.

Policy practitioners, diplomats and the diplomatic services of countries having relations with Russia, and policy makers of any origin might be interested in a more neutral analysis of Russian foreign policy that this thesis provided. This is an analysis which moves beyond a juxtaposition-based approach to Russian foreign policy analysis. In addition, both academics and policy practitioners might benefit from a three-level analysis of the terrorist threat securitisation rhetoric as it is valuable for a comprehensive analysis of Russian foreign policy.

Future research can focus separately on the securitisation of other threats in different sectors, such as the economy or ecology, in order to investigate if the Kremlin follows a similar securitisation approach to any other issue. An extended application of securitisation theory to the case of Russia can help to reveal more about the Kremlin's actions in different spheres. There is a possibility of several securitisation processes happening at the same time, thus it would be an interesting inquiry to analyse a few securitisation processes and compare and/or contrast them. In addition, the application of securitisation theory to case studies of countries in the near abroad and further comparisons between them might be a promising path of research. Moreover, future research can use securitisation theory to look at other semi-authoritarian regimes. This could result in the revelation of the nuances of political changes that might have been overlooked before.

This thesis's scope was limited to consider the Kremlin as the main securitising actor, thus it was focused on the securitisation rhetoric that the Kremlin has produced. Another avenue for future research might be an inquiry into other securitisation actors in Russian politics: pro-Kremlin politicians, opposition politicians, activists and even bloggers. As Bacon et al. (2013) mention, not all securitisation attempts in different spheres of Russian politics were successful. Thus, it would be interesting to investigate what role securitisation actors played in these unsuccessful securitisation attempts and why they failed. It would also address the gap in the literature of failed securitisation (Salter, 2010).

This thesis also emphasised that more research into the emerging discussion of Russia as an equal international player is needed. As I argued throughout this thesis, Russia's quest for global recognition is here to stay, and as a result both academic and political circles can benefit from a better understanding of Russia's political intentions and the methods of achieving international influence. The Kremlin is open about its intent to regain the international influence Russia is entitled to, and we should not disregard this claim. A failure to do so might result in a dramatic worsening of the relations between Russia and the West.

There is a growing number of academics and diplomats/politicians, who can greatly benefit from more research on Russia and its political discourse.

As a final remark I would like to add that this thesis has been able to provide a more nuanced analysis of the role that the terrorist threat plays in the political life of the Russian Federation, as well as an inquiry into Russia's reappearance on the global stage. It is hoped that this research sparks more interest in Russia's quest to reclaim international influence and contributes to future research of seeing Russia's international actions as advancing into the future, rather than going back to Cold War rhetoric. However, it is important to mention that a securitisation approach to the terrorist threat and its influence on foreign policy formation is not unique to Russia. Similar processes have been happening all over the world: Australia, Israel, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom have been appealing to the threat of terrorism to advance questionable political decisions and policies.

The post 9/11 world is impossible to imagine without the threat of terrorism always looming on the horizon. Nonetheless, Russia faces international condemnation when it pursues its foreign policy objective as other great powers do. This discrepancy has guided my research for years, and I would like to conclude this thesis not with a statement, but with a question for the future. The political sphere of the Russian Federation has been irreversibly changed by the securitisation of the terrorist threat, and now the question is not what Russia will do with the terrorist threat but rather what Russia will do without it.

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