2 European urban (counter)terrorism's spacetimematterings

More-than-human materialisations in situationscaping times[1]

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Introduction: European urban (counter)terrorism posthumanised

Since 2004, public spaces in European cities have been hit by more than 10 major terrorist attacks, killing hundreds of people; injuring thousands; causing lingering trauma, grief, and mourning; and generating a variety of commemoration practices and memorials. Whilst trying to come to terms with recent acts of urban terrorism, governments, security agencies, and local communities are bracing themselves for further attacks – now seemingly written into our daily neoliberal risk-managed lives and urban environments as to-be-expected – as well as even harsher counterterrorist interventions and potential political recuperations. What is noticeable in 2022 is that more and more of these terrorist attacks, including the counterterrorism measures and infrastructural tools that precede and follow such violent events, involve hitherto underspotlighted more-than-human phenomena.

When everyday objects, such as vans and kitchen knives, are transformed into weapons of terrorist violence and metal gates and concrete boulders suddenly appear in urban environments, they, as phenomena, (re)configure social, physical, and imaginary spaces in more-than-human ways. To gain a better understanding of these intricate (re)configurations and (re)materialisations, the multi-layered impact of (counter)terrorist events must be examined in tandem with the intra-actions between human and more-than-human agential phenomena, including the urban spaces that they are embedded in and co-constituted by. CTS, we argue, is therefore in need of a critical theoretical intervention that makes space for such a holistic critical posthumanist analysis.[2] Such an analysis builds on – but also moves beyond – said discipline (see Jackson, 2005, 2016; Jarvis, 2006; Breen-Smyth et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2009; Stump & Dixit, 2013; Dixit & Stump, 2016), whilst interrogating some of its main claims, assumptions, and critiques.

Despite being a quite recent field, CTS has a rich and complex history. Consisting of various schools and approaches since the 1980s and gaining enormous impetus after 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror, CTS is largely characterised by its conceptualisation of terrorism as a multi-layered phenomenon. In contrast to more orthodox terrorism studies (see Horgan & Braddock, 2012), CTS approaches

terrorism and counterterrorism as partially socially constructed material phenomena, impacted by geopolitical power relations. Owing to this poststructuralist taking into account of power, CTS focuses on thinking through crucial onto-epistemological questions (what type of violence is (counter)terrorist violence exactly? how do we come to construct knowledge about (counter)terrorist violence?), which, from a self-reflective point of view,[3] require contextual analyses (see Stump & Dixit, 2013). Moreover, partly rooted in the Frankfurt School's critical theory tradition (Jackson et al., 2009),[4] CTS is overtly critical of the ways in which the label 'terrorism' is applied and acknowledges the often Othering, dehumanising impact of (counter) terrorism (also see Puar & Rai, 2002; Khalid, 2011). Lastly, it also problematises anti- and counterterrorist approaches and measures – and specifically those that are militarised in nature (see Al-Kassimi, 2019). Because of the foregoing foci, CTS preserves what we regard to be the emancipatory function of critique cherished by Frankfurt School thinkers Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and consorts – something we, as critical theorists with backgrounds in philosophy, feminist theory, anthropology, history, and law, are equally invested in.

Explicitly expanding on these critical theoretical takes on the disciplines of CTS (see Buck-Morss, 2003; Puar, 2007; Butler, 2009; Brown, 2015), we acknowledge the importance of a strong power analytics and the consideration of the intersecting roles of gender, race/ethnicity, and other (de)humanising identity categories. Equally important for our analysis are the intertwinings between the ontological, the epistemological, and the ethico-political. Although discussions about the accentuation of the epistemological within CTS are quite widespread (see Joseph, 2009), the interconnections between, respectively, the epistemological and the ontological, and these two levels and the ethico-political, are not. And this is exactly where critical new materialisms – and philosopher-physicist Karen Barad's agential realist philosophy – come into play.

Baradian agential realism: agential phenomena, intra-action, and spacetimematterings

Barad's (1996, 2003, 2007) agential realist framework highlights the aforementioned issues of power, (de)humanisation, ethico-politics, and contemporary (counter)terrorism's – and the world's – more-than-humanness. Barad's queer(ing)[5] posthumanist philosophy, moreover, offers us the critical new materialist[6] conceptual-methodological tools needed to unpack our empirical findings with regard to European urban (counter)terrorism. Agential realism is rooted in theoretical physics, poststructuralism, and Donna J. Haraway's (1988) situated knowledges-based take on science and science studies. For Haraway (1988, p. 583), this critical theoretical undertaking revolves around "limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object". Acknowledging the entanglements between the epistemological and the political, Haraway argues for a feminist objectivity-laden philosophy. She moreover theorises 'objects' – the dehumanised, the exploited, and the non-human – as agency-possessing phenomena, whilst burning down the modern Western construct of a particular (read: white, male-identifying,

able-bodied) human subject as the sole actor and legitimate knowledge-producer. Additionally, "arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body", Haraway (p. 589) criticises the totalising "god trick" or the alleged all-encompassing perspective of the Western scientist distancing themselves from their research 'object'. For Haraway, *all* knowledge is situated, to be brought back to an embodied knowledge-producer, and thus, tainted by the world, which fully overlaps with Barad's (2007, p. 185) concept of "knowing in being".

As addressed in *Meeting the universe halfway* (Barad, 2007, p. 185), "knowing in being" equals situated knowledge production, accentuating how theorising about the world always already takes place *within* the world as a "material engagement" (p. 55) with the latter. This underlines the ethico-political responsibility knowledge-producers possess in Baradian agential realist philosophy: there is no room for post-truth claims or relativism here. Researchers are never mere bystanders, and their knowledge claims, therefore, always need to be well-rooted in worldly matter. This stands in contrast to many contemporary academic disciplines, within which it is still considered unnecessary or even counterproductive that researchers acknowledge the situated nature of their analyses.

Taking inspiration from Haraway (1988), Barad (2007), and Braidotti (2013) – but also from our own ethnographical field and other research work – we have, therefore, decided to weave three self-situating short vignettes into this chapter. In this context, non-human and more-than-human agential phenomena – to put it in Baradian terms – such as concrete bollards and affective experiences do not simply constitute the background for our analysis of (counter)terrorism. Rather, they are at the heart of the agential realist approach conceptualised here. Barad brings in three notions that are of importance to our posthumanist intervention: 1) *Agential phenomena*, 2) *intra-action*, and 3) *spacetimemattering*. It is important to know that these three notions are upheld by Barad's agential realism, which brings together the philosophies of critical realism (or the idea that there is a materially real and accessible world out there) and social constructivism (or briefly put, the belief that that world is only accessible in mediated ways, implying that power relations and other socio-political factors influence knowledge production about said world).[7]

Rather than being seen as a passive substance, matter in agential realism refers to "phenomena in their ongoing materialization" or "a stabilizing and destabilizing process of iterative intra-activity" (Barad, 2007, p. 151). Embodied material beings start out as interconnected *phenomena* – and not 'objects' versus 'subjects' – before becoming separated through agential cutting (p. 158) or boundary-making practices that create differences and distinctions. Moving away from the subject/object split, Western individualist metaphysics, and anthropocentrism, agential realism concep-tualises the world as consisting of multiple *intra-acting*[8] agency-possessing phenomena, which can only be understood by looking at the material-discursive practices by which they are co-constituted. This has major implications for our understanding of both the role of the researcher and the research phenomenon. As Barad puts it, "'We' are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity" (2003, p. 828).

To make matters more concrete in the view of our CTS (and CSS) intervention, an agential realist approach to (counter)terrorism rejects the idea that there is a pre-existing, easily markable 'terrorist subject' out there, identifiable via certain – often highly racialised and ethnicised – embodied identity characteristics, planning and/or carrying out a clearly definable 'terrorist act'. Rather, perpetrators, accomplices, suspects, victims, weapons and environments used, audiences, (counter)terrorism experts, nation-states are seen as mutually constitutive and intra-acting agential phenomena and emerge as part of "specific material (re)configurations of the world" (Barad, 2007, p. 206). And these (re)configurations, pushed forward by agential cutting practices, never take place in a power-free vacuum, nor can they be analysed as disconnected from one another. These agential realist considerations go beyond the mostly epistemology-based discussions held so far about Othering in CTS, CSS, and critical theory. They are, contrastingly, ethico-onto-epistem-ological[9] and point at how ontological, epistemological, and ethico-political questions cannot be separated from one another when discussing complex (counter)terrorist phenomena. The ways in which past terrorist acts committed by perpetrators perceived as white, for example, are often not immediately labelled as violent state-undermining terrorist acts – the 2021 Capitol Insurrection in the US being a good example – impacts the ways in which (counter)terrorism experts, victims, potential perpetrators, and presumed-guilty-but-innocent 'perpetrators' experience, see, and get to occupy a space in the world. An agential realist approaches matters of (counter)terrorism more holistically by situating them within the world and contexts in which they co-emerge from. And more importantly, such an approach tries to do so with nuance, care, and ethico-political attentivity.

Agential realism also disrupts the taken-for-granted progressive linearity of time and that with the agential realist notion of *spacetimemattering*.[10] This is in line with many other queer(ing) theories – a strand of thought Barad specifically started highlighting in their more recent work (see Barad, 2010, 2015). Inspired by quantum physics and Derridean hauntology (Derrida, 1994) that philosophises about the absent, the ghostly, and the erased impacting the present, Barad (2010, p. 261) refers to the "spacetimemattering of the universe". Pointing at how the past, present, and future "are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity" (p. 261), agential realism is said to unmoor time from its classic definition as a simple "succession of evenly spaced individual moments" (2007, p. 180) and, by doing so, places it in an intra-active relation with space, the material world, and various processes of (re)materialisation. The following is per Barad:

> Temporality is produced through the iterative enfolding of phenomena marking the sedimenting historiality of differential patterns of mattering. As the rings of trees mark the sedimented history of their intra-actions within and as part of the world, so matter carries within itself the sedimented historialities of the practices through which it is produced as part of its ongoing becoming. . . . Time has a history.
>
> (p. 182)

Time (i.e., time's successive flows) and temporality (i.e., the collectively experienced passage of time as past, present, and future) are attributed a spatial–material concreteness that is non-linear and points at eerie intra-actions between past, present, and future: like the tangible rings of trees, the wounds of past horrors are all around us, seen through the queering, disruptive process of spacetimemattering. And that what is now in theory still the future-in-its-virtuality is always already making itself felt in the present. This pushes us to conceptualise acts of remembering *otherwise* – as memories for Barad (2010, p. 261) stand for the patterns of "sedimented enfoldings of iterative intra-activity". This implies that remembering traumatic events, for example, affectively forces us to be thrown back into the past from within the present, thus again troubling linearity.

The aforementioned agential realist notion of spacetimemattering is of particular interest to us because it can assist with unravelling the non-linear and anticipation-charged interconnections between the European urban (counter)terrorist cases that are discussed in what follows. Zooming in on these events through the queer(ing) idea of spacetimemattering, it becomes clear that these cases affectively anticipated each other and are more materially related to one another than first expected, thereby disrupting past, present, and future times; material space; and even socio-political context. Given the fact that this disruptive process of spacetimemattering, like its overarching agential realist framework, is rooted in Haraway's (1988) situated knowledges, we have been inspired to creatively connect our case studies' analysis via a set of vignettes. The interweaving of these vignettes not only emphasises the multiple situated perspectives that this piece embraces, it also gives expression to the authors' embodied knowledge-making entailed in ethnographic field work. Our methodology is best described as "sensory ethnography"; that is, "a process of learning through the ethnographer's own multisensory, emplaced experiences" (Pink, 2015, p. 96). The vignettes included account for the ethico-political commitments, the complex research terrain that is urban (counter)terrorism, and the affective relationships and raw emotions (see Ellis, 1995) that situated researchers are confronted with.

European urban (counter)terrorism's queer(ing) spacetimematterings: Birmingham ←→ Nice ←→ Berlin ←→ . . . ←→ Birmingham

On 11 December 2016, British tabloid *The Sun* reported an atmosphere of "festive fear" (Lockett, 2016, n.p.) at Birmingham's popular German Christmas market. In response to a wave of attacks against soft targets in Europe by individuals and groups associated with the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the organisers had adopted a range of new security measures. The most noticeable aspect of this security update was a number of crude concrete bollards and metal gates from the UK's national barrier asset.

Addressing the security update, a police spokesperson tried to reassure the public by emphasising that the "installation of the bollards formed part of the original security plan and is not a result of any new or specific intelligence" (Lockett, 2016, n.p.).

Figure 2.1 Pictures of bollards and metal gates
Source: Karcher, 2019

10 December 2019

Finally green light from the University Ethics Committee for my interviews with visitors and staff at the German Christmas Market in Birmingham. However, soon afterwards a big blow: after months of positive conversations, the organisers decide that they don't want to collaborate with me. This is because they fear that my questions about security arrangements and the perceived risk of terrorist attacks have the potential to unsettle visitors. Whilst this fear was probably always there, it clearly reached a new height after a recent violent attack in London on 29 November is treated as an act of terrorism.

Since I am not allowed to interview people, I limit myself to participant observation during market visits with my family. This year's market is similar and different from those of my childhood in rural Germany. There is the familiar smell of roasted almonds and Gluehwein, but there are metal barriers, concrete bollards, and armed police officers. To my surprise, visitors seem to be walking around them with ease. We are trying to go with the flow. As we are entering the busiest parts of the market, the crowd gets so dense that I start to feel anxious. I regret bringing my baby daughter.

A few days after our visit, I learn that the market organisers had decided to openly encourage visitors to join a community effort to 'defeat terrorism'.

Following advice by Counter Terrorism Policing, visitors were told: 'Put security at the top of your festive list' [see Figure 2.1]. This didn't change their stance on research interviews though.

To understand the significance of these security measures, together with the affective micropolitics of fear[11] and the interiorisation of events-to-be-expected – linked to what we in this piece call 'situationscaping times' – we must make some leaps in space and time. In what comes next, we zoom in on four important moments and locations that are, when analysed through an agential realist perspective, eerily interlinked: 14 July 2016 in Nice (France), 19 December 2016 in Berlin (Germany), and 17 and 18 August 2017 in Cambrils and Barcelona (Spain).

Nice ←→ Paris ←→ Nice: emergency state declarations-turned-laws

After months of successive extensions of the state of emergency [*état d'urgence*][12] in France in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 and in the capital of neighbouring Belgium on 22 March 2016 (see Gouvernement.fr, 2015), then-President François Hollande announced that the measures would be lifted on 26 July 2016. However, right after the Bastille Day fireworks display in Nice on 14 July 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drove a 19-tonne cargo truck into the celebrating crowds on the popular Promenade des Anglais, causing the death of 86 people and the physical and psychological wounding of hundreds (News
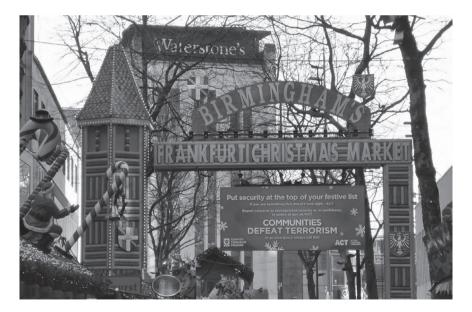

Figure 2.2 Display at Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market on 14 December 2019
Source: Da Silva, 2019

Wires, 2021). In the aftermath of the attack, France's state of emergency was pro-
longed by another three months. This meant that a suspected link to terrorist beliefs
and/or acts was reason enough to place someone under house arrest, effectively
legitimising the typical pre-deterministic labelling acts an agential realist perspective
is out to problematise.

Hollande's state of emergency declaration also implied that special security zones,
curfews, warrantless house searches, and detainments of suspects could be enforced.
The declaration was extended multiple times, until it finally ended in November
2017. The newly elected President Emmanuel Macron, however, soon introduced
an anti-terror law (Nordstrom, 2017), which, *anno* 2022, has been fully ratified. The
so-called "4140 law on the prevention of terrorist acts and intelligence" (LOI n°
4104, 2021) could be regarded as France's own Patriot Act.[13] It not only normalises
the controversial measures associated with the emergency state by enshrining them
in law;[14] it also enables authorities to close places of worship that are considered
'radical'.

The French case illustrates that (counter)terrorism can be analysed as a spacetime-
matter-queering phenomenon that challenges our linear understanding of temporal-
ity and context. France's first state of emergency declaration took place during the
decolonisation-driven Algerian War in 1955 – a war in which the Algerian National
Liberation Front was immediately (and conveniently) branded as the sole 'terrorist'
party. Looked at through a temporalities-disrupting agential realist perspective, the
ongoing erasure of France's own colonial ghosts should also be regarded as part of the
complex (de)humanising assemblage that is France's current anti-terror legislation: it
is the party in power, or rather the nation state with the most geopolitical power, that
decides what counts as terrorist violence and what does not. Pushing the queer(ing)
spacetimemattering idea even further: At the time of the 2015 Paris and 2016 Nice
attacks, the 4140 law was still very much a future-in-actualisation that, seen from a
2022 perspective, depended on these then past attacks. But these phenomena also
anchor a set of potentially dehumanising anti-terror measures into the legal founda-
tions of the French state, getting everyone used to the idea that similar attacks are
bound to happen in the future and that certain 'terrorists-in-becoming' need to be
stopped in their tracks.

The November 2015 attacks, fortified by the Nice event, also operate at the
back of another highly controversial emergency state declaration: the French
sanitary state of emergency [*état d'urgence sanitaire*], dating from the start of the
COVID-19 crisis (see Binder et al., 2020). Putting the prime minister and Par-
liament in charge, this state of emergency – now an actual law (see LOI n°
2021–1040, 2021) – gives the French head of state the power to respond to public
health crises with a range of measures including lockdowns, quarantine rules,
and limitations on the freedom to assemble in public. Critical observers regard
this pandemic law as an extension of France's current anti-terror legislation (see
Stetler & Kempf, 2021), further underwriting the already ongoing hypersecuriti-
sation processes.

Birmingham ⟷ Berlin ⟷ Birmingham: situationscaping times

In his work on counterterrorist city planning, Jon Coaffee (2020) describes the complex safety-driven processes that have led to the securitisation of Western cities and, whilst doing so, discusses an interesting recent shift: whereas securitisation processes of urban environments in the aftermath of 9/11 were mainly "reactive, defensive and focused upon target-hardening and public reassurance" (or put differently, "anti-terrorist" in nature), more contemporary measures could be regarded as "projecting a more thoughtful, proactive and offensive approach" (or "counterterrorist") (p. 78).

Indeed, over the years, security infrastructures in many public spaces have become less intrusive and more appealing. Coaffee's pioneering work draws our attention to major changes in the design and implementation of security infrastructures in public spaces. In many contexts, it is possible to make a clear distinction between anti-terrorist and counterterrorist measures. However, we should not make the mistake of assuming that the 'anti-to-counter-evolution' is a linear process. Our agential realism-rooted research suggests that anti- and counterterrorist measures co-exist, overlap, and intra-act with each other – often in ways that exceed the intentions of urban planners. Moreover, most anti- and counterterrorist measures have one important thing in common: they imagine a future based on violence in the past. What this means in practice becomes clear if we take a closer look at the security arrangements in Nice, Berlin, and Birmingham.

7 January 2021

This is my first visit to Nice since I was 16, and I find myself carelessly strolling down the Promenade des Anglais with my eyes locked on the fascinating fireworks display. Never would I have imagined that I would one day return to this iconographic walkway for the purpose of ethnographic fieldwork.

The sight of an asphalt painting and the sound of ambulance sirens flood my mind with chaotic thoughts about urban vulnerability and trauma, whilst the waves mercilessly crash onto the shore. The infrastructural reorganisation of the Promenade and the military presence highlight the intangible affective traces of violent loss and grief that have not lost any of their affective resonance, despite all the mourning and passing of time.

In Nice, authorities planted 400 palm trees, meant to fortify the landscape whilst simultaneously beautifying it and accentuating its vitality (also see Coaffee, 2020, p. 91 and following). Four kilometres of double-wired security cables fixed on reinforced concrete foundation transformed the Promenade des Anglais, and 190 anti-intrusion bollards were furthermore installed, all whilst fitting out the Promenade's entrance areas with retractable anti-ram bollards (Chantreau, 2019).

The concrete bollards and metal gates at the German Christmas market in Birmingham were introduced in the aftermath of the Nice attack. Such counterterrorism

Figure 2.3 Security bollards at the Promenade des Anglais, Nice, France

Source: Dimcheva, 2021a

Figure 2.4 Soldiers from Opération Sentinelle at the Promenade des Anglais, Nice, France

Source: Dimcheva, 2021b

measures tend to be designed to prevent violent attacks in a future that is imagined on the basis of violent events in the past – underlining the same spacetimematter-queering pattern as discussed in the French anti-terror legislation case earlier. As this statement by British police in *The Sun* illustrates, the past and future-in-its-virtuality of terrorism are inextricably linked:

> Whilst UK agencies have been extremely good at preventative intelligence opera-tions against jihadist groups, other European equivalents have been less successful, sadly. . . . This means the entire continent is vulnerable to attack, as we have seen in France, Germany and Belgium, but particularly in the run-up to Christmas.
>
> (Lockett, 2016, n.p.)

Eight days after this article was published, the anticipated and, as prescribed by the 'situationscaping times' paradigm,[15] *to-be-expected* violence materialised. Situation-scaping, as used here, refers to concerted efforts to prevent violent events in urban environments and to minimise the impact of actual attacks. It is furthermore con-nected to a neoliberal type of control society bringing about a certain affective poli-tics. Situationscaping measures and times – as it also tells us something more about our liquid or uncertain life conditions right now (see Bauman, 2000) – go beyond what is conventionally understood as counterterrorism measures, as these meas-ures operate on both macropolitical (*institutional and infrastructural*) and micropolitical (*affective*) levels.

On 19 December 2016, Anis Amri drove a lorry into crowds at the Breitschei-dplatz Christmas market, killing 13 people and injuring dozens. Located in one of Berlin's main shopping districts and flanked by two busy roads, the Breitscheidplatz is one of the German capital's most visited places. Concrete bollards or other bar-riers would have mitigated the attack, but there were no such measures in place. In response to the Berlin lorry attack, police increased their armed presence at the 2017 Birmingham Christmas market. This, they emphasised, was "not a response to any specific threat, but a precaution" (BBC, 2017, n.p.). In 2017, the organisers of the Breitscheidplatz Christmas market also adopted a range of new security measures, including 100 concrete blocks and additional security staff. Most of the traders were back. When asked by a journalist whether he felt more secure now that the market was secured by barriers, one of the vendors responded, "What's the use of bollards if someone comes here with a backpack and blows himself up?" (Bachner, 2017, n.p.). Indeed, whilst public spaces in Berlin and other European urban cities are now better secured against vehicle rammings, it remains difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate the risk of attacks involving explosives, firearms, and knives.[16]

To tie the earlier examples together with our proposed paradigm of situationscap-ing times, whilst resilience-focused urban planning can, thus, reduce the risk of cer-tain attacks (think of vehicle rammings), it cannot stop terrorism and its existentially experienced affective force. The affective micropolitics of fear, triggered by the idea that terrorists could strike at any second, has a noticeable impact on urban spaces in Europe – and can be seen as one of the motors behind these situationscaping times. On the one hand, there was a noticeable desire and effort to return to business

as usual. On the other, citizens were encouraged to "remain vigilant" (Mallinson, 2020, n.p.) and to increase their efforts to examine unattended luggage:

> [W]hen an item has been hidden from view deliberately or has visual clues suggesting it may be hazardous – wires, circuit boards, batteries, adhesive tape, liquids, putty-like or unusual substances – or has been found after a suspicious event; an immediate and focused response is required.
>
> (loc. cit.)

Such instructions for citizens are typical of what we see as today's neoliberal manifestation of a control society[17] in which the problematic rhetoric of self-disciplining, hyperresponsibilising, and a resilience-rooted bouncing back (see Evans & Reid, 2013; Bracke, 2016) are the norm. In such a neoliberal control society, cities and the subjects residing in them apparently need to be constantly constructed as hyperresilient, hyperaware, and hyperfearful. What could potentially be the future is thereby imported into the present, queering spacetime.

In such constantly disruptive situationscaping times, contemporary neoliberal control society's ever-accelerating drive for hypersecuritisation, thus, goes beyond an "anticipatory [counterterrorist] logics such as prevention, preemption and prediction" (Krasmann & Hentschel, 2019, p. 182). In this situationscaped environment, citizens are constantly made (hyper)aware of potential destabilising attacks that could strike at any moment and are, therefore, surrounded by an affective, intangible micropolitics of fear that engenders and reinforces macropolitical securitisation interventions. A good example of this can be found when taking a closer look at Nice's so-called Major Risks Text Messages [*Alerte SMS Risques Majeurs*] system which informs subscribed citizens about major events, such as imminent natural disasters and terrorists attacks (see *Agence de sécurité*, 2022). This again illustrates how potential attacks are already anchored into our urban environments through anti- and counterterrorism measures and city planning, various terror alert systems, surveillance, and other tools of control, until violence – anticipated by affective fear – finally materialises itself.

Situationscaping times-driven hypersecuritisation is no recipe for success: enhanced video surveillance and a city centre ban on vehicles of over 3.5 tonnes from the Nice city centre did not prevent the actual 2016 truck attack from happening, for instance. In the week prior to what is now regarded as a "premeditated, organised and rehearsed attack" (Bouchard, 2018, p. 608), Lahouaiej-Bouhlel was filmed multiple times whilst driving onto the Promenade des Anglais's pavement. And queering spacetimematter once more, this aspect of failure in the Nice case is reflected in the Berlin one: according to several police reports, Amri was "inspired and fascinated" by Lahouaiej-Bouhel's attack (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021a, p. 156). Amri spent several months exploring potential targets in Berlin. Although there was extensive evidence that he was planning an attack (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021a, p. 153), authorities failed to act. A parliamentary inquiry concluded that no individual could be blamed for this failure. Rather, it was the result of a complex intra-play of individual errors of judgement and omissions as well as a shortage of resources and

other structural problems facing Germany's security agencies at the time (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021b).

Alcanar, Barcelona, and Cambrils ←→ Berlin: intra-acting human and more-than-human phenomena

A significant part of the literature in orthodox terrorism studies is built on the assumption that "terrorist organizations may be viewed as rational decision makers that chose value-maximizing solutions" when it comes to the selection of targets (Asal et al., 2009, p. 261; Hoffmann, 2001). Understanding (counter)terrorism in a critical posthuman and new materialist manner forces us to recognise the limitations of our Western (post)modern conceptualisation of the subject-as-solely-human: humans are but a part of the many worldly agential phenomena. This does not mean that we should abandon the idea of human accountability and responsibility. Rather, an agential realist approach – rooted in situated knowledges and knowing in being – can serve as the theoretical foundation for a more realistic and nuanced understanding of the more-than-human assemblage that drives (counter)terrorist efforts. Our research suggests that human actors are, in the end, but one of the many agential phenomena and factors shaping terrorist violence. To show why this is important, we want to make one more leap in time and space and zoom in on two violent events in Spain before returning to Berlin.

On 16 August 2017, an explosion in a house in the Catalan town of Alcanar killed two people and injured a third. Initially, the Spanish authorities did not suspect that these events could be related to terrorism. Eventually, it was discovered that the three victims were members of the so-called Ripoll terror cell, using the house as their base. Here, they were making triacetone triperoxide (TATP), an extremely sensitive explosive. The Ripoll cell allegedly had between 80 and 120 kilos of TATP – a quantity that no other jihadist commando in Europe had ever managed to obtain before (Baquero & Sànchez, 2017). However, when the three men were handling the TATP, which they eventually wanted to load onto vans and detonate at strategic locations in Barcelona and possibly in other locations in Spain and France, it is assumed that they accidentally triggered an explosion.

News of the explosion spurred the remaining members of the Ripoll cell into action. On 17 August, Younes Abouyaaqoub received a phone call whilst he was driving a rented van along a road about an hour from the centre of Barcelona (Reinares & García-Calvo, 2018). Abouyaaqoub is said to have driven his white Fiat Talento van onto the pedestrian promenade of Barcelona's La Rambla approximately 90 minutes later, attempting to hit as many people as possible. In the early morning of 18 August, five other men affiliated with the cell attempted to carry out a similar attack in the Catalan town of Cambrils, but they were not able to find a big enough crowd. News sources about the order in which events in Cambrils unfolded differ, but eventually, the five men got out of their car and started attacking people with large knives and an axe they had bought four hours earlier. These events – which lasted until the police shot the attackers – in the end led to one death and several injured victims.

9 August 2021

Summer. I walk through Barcelona's La Rambla. It is my first real trip after experiencing some of the hardest months in the pandemic. The famous promenade is bursting with people, languages, sounds, smells. It is packed. The atmosphere is joyful. For a moment, it seems that the attack that happened here four years ago can only be remembered through the memorial that was erected afterwards. It consists of a metal plaque that reads: "Peace come upon you, oh city of peace." This message was chosen out of hundreds of messages of solidarity that fellow citizens had dedicated to the victims.

   Walking a bit further, however, I come across a couple of heavily armed police officers, reminding me again of what has happened here. And then some more. And more – a continuous reminder of the past, and of what might happen again. A reminder of what this urban space must be perpetually prepared for. Of our fragility.

Prior to its attempted use by the Ripoll cell, TATP was used in a number of terrorist attacks in Europe that were attributed to radical Islamist networks, including the 2005 London tube attacks, the 2016 Brussels attacks, and the Manchester Arena bombing from 2017. Equally interesting is why it was not used in other attacks: TATP was the plan A weapon for the Ripoll cell, but in the end, they had to resort to their plan B, a vehicle ramming. Explosives were also one of the weapons Amri considered when planning his attack in Berlin. He searched for instructions on how to build a bomb online and made numerous reconnaissance trips to popular tourist sights and shopping malls in Berlin (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021a, p. 154). It was only after the Nice truck attack that Amri abandoned that plan and began to prepare a vehicle ramming attack. Amri had access to a gun and could have used this to go to one of the many Christmas markets in Berlin to shoot people. Instead, he used the gun to ambush and kill a lorry driver in his parked vehicle. He then turned on the navigation system on his phone and drove the lorry to the Breitscheidplatz. At about 8PM, the lorry crashed into the stalls with a speed of 49km per hour and drove 60–80m into the market, leaving a trail of destruction (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021a, pp. 168–169).

   As the events in Alcanar, Barcelona, Cambrils, and Berlin illustrate, terrorist attacks and the securitisation measures they provoke and reinforce are the result of complex more-than-human intra-actions, including but not limited to radicalised individuals and networks, security forces, weapons (such as explosives, firearms, knives, and vans), mobile phones, and other electronic devices, as well as bollards, and other material and immaterial counterterrorism measures.

Conclusion: (counter)terrorism posthumanised and the affective micropolitics of fear

As the Spanish, French, German, and British case studies in this chapter illustrate, contemporary urban terrorism co-exists and co-evolves with anti- and counterterrorist securitisation measures. An agential realist approach enables us to

Figure 2.5 Memorial honouring the victims of the 2017 attacks in Barcelona, Spain

Source: Canaan, Wikimedia Commons, 2019

Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Memorial_V%C3%ADctimas_Atentado_2017_(1).jpg)

analyse how the human and more-than-human phenomena associated with urban violence overlap and intra-act with each other. By following the agential lead of contemporary European urban (counter)terrorism's queer(ing) spacetimematterings, we were able to show that there are complex and dynamic links between actual and potential attacks in Nice, Birmingham, Berlin, Barcelona, and Cambris, disrupting more linear temporal understandings of terrorism. In situationscaping times, assisted by a neoliberal type of control society, hypersecuritisation and the affective micropolitics of fear are reaching new hights in these and other European cities.

But whereas the complex interplay between hypersecuritisation and the affective micropolitics of fear can still be tracked and measured to a certain degree,[18] there are phenomena connected to (counter)terrorism that are hard to put into words, or any kind of representationalist form, for that matter: the beautified-yet-fortified Promenade des Anglais in Nice is not only a prime example of hypersecuritisation; it is also a space of grief, of collective and sometimes very personal mourning, of remembrance. Due to situationscaping efforts by local authorities, physical traces of the attack have been erased, and it has become difficult for friends and family to find "their spots" where their loved ones lost their lives (Emsellem, 2021, p. 9). But despite these challenges, visitors have found creative ways to express grief and honour the victims on the Promenade. And these spatiotemporal-queering entanglements matter: as "remembering is . . . an enlivening and reconfiguring of past and future" (Barad, 2007, p. ix), we, as situated knowledges-cherishing researchers, have the responsibility to do justice to the violence of (counter)terrorism in the past to work towards a better future.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 This essay has been written by the *Urban terrorism in Europe (2004–2019): Remembering, imagining, and anticipating violence* team at the University of Birmingham (ERC-2019-STG 851329).
2 Several critical terrorism and security studies scholars have reflected upon the more-than-human. Many of them, however – see, for example, Walters, 2014 and Balzacq & Cavelty, 2016 – work with a Latourian actor-network framework and do not really delve into more critical new materialist conceptualisations of materiality; a strand of thought Barad's philosophy can be argued to be part of. Claudia Aradau (2010) is one of the first CSS scholars to have employed a Baradian agential realist framework. This chapter can be seen as a continuation of underlining Barad's relevance to CTS.
3 CTS is said to rely on two different onto-epistemological methodologies: critical realism, that, in CTS at least, stipulates that the knowledge-producer and object researched are

separated from one another, and reflectivism, which accentuates the opposite. See Breen-Smyth et al., 2008 and Stump & Dixit, 2013. The Baradian agential realist framework employed here is rooted in Harawayan situated knowledges; therefore corresponding to CTS's self-reflective branch.

4 This Frankfurt School connection is not underlined by all CTS scholars (think of Gunning, 2007). In contrast to Gunning, we follow Jackson et al. (2009, p. 222); scholars that, inspired by the critical theoretical work done in CSS (also see Krause & Williams, 1997), look at CTS as "a critical orientation, a sceptical attitude and a willingness to challenge received wisdom and knowledge about terrorism".

5 In this chapter, queer(ing) is used in the context of disrupting (i.e., the process of *queering*) (spatio-)temporal linearity, whilst simultaneously referring to queer theory's critique of (ab)normalization and (hetero)normativity (i.e., *queer*). Also see Freccero (2007) and Freeman (2010) for a similar queer(ing) dynamic.

6 With the adjective 'critical', we refer to the visionary, emancipatory (see Horkheimer, 2002) focus that is present in many posthumanist, new materialist philosophies infused with feminist, queer, and critical race studies perspectives and, in some, critical theoretical takes on CTS. Because of their focus on power relations and social justice, these critical philosophies stand in contrast with, for example, Latourian actor-network theory (see Latour, 2005). In contrast to more power-aware critical new materialisms (for some examples, see Geerts, 2021a), Latour's strand of new materialist philosophy proposes a problematic flat ontology which presupposes that all worldly phenomena are ontologically equal (see Åsberg et al., 2015, for a flat ontology critique). Although Baradian agential realism and actor-network theory are both posthumanist materialist philosophies, an agential realist perspective enables us to analyse why certain embodied subjects come to matter more than others; adding a much-needed ethico-political touch that is largely missing from actor-network theory.

7 Also see Barad, 1997, where they explain the philosophical origins of agential realism in more detail.

8 In contrast to interaction, intra-action emphasises the co-constitution and becoming of phenomena. For Barad (2007, p. 33), agential phenomena do "not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action", meaning agential realism highlights the non-fixity and relational intertwinement between worldly phenomena – including their environments.

9 The idea of "ethico-onto-epistem-ology" (Barad, 2007, p. 90; Geerts, 2016) points at the interwovenness of ontological, epistemological, and ethical questions when it comes to scientific knowledge production and theorising. Although the notion itself does not include the political, agential realism is a critical new materialist philosophy that reflects upon power and the political.

10 Also see Geerts, 2021b, on the role of hauntology and temporality in the oeuvres of Derrida and Barad.

11 See Massumi, 2015, p. 171 for this Deleuzoguattarian (2005) take on fear; that is, fear as a pre-conscious, more gut-based feeling that can linger and remain with(in) the subject in question for quite some time, enhanced (or diminished) by the subject's environment and encounters.

12 According to the French Constitution (JORF n°0238, 1958), a state of emergency declaration grants special powers to France's executive branch, the president included. There are three ways in which the French Constitution tackles emergency situations: the just-explained state of emergency, the state of siege (Article 36), and the presidential exceptional powers-measure, which has been written down in Article 16 and is only used in very exceptional cases.

13 For a discussion of the Patriot Act and its impact on US politics, see Al-Kassimi, 2019.

14 For a critical examination of these state of security measures and their harsh and often-times illegitimate application, see Human Rights Watch (2016).

15 The agential realist neologism of 'situationscaping' that we propose here builds on a particular city planning and CSS genealogy: it brings together Zelinka & Brennan's (2001)

crime prevention–driven 'SafeScaped city'; Low & Maguire's (2019) 'securityscapes', underlining that securitised spaces are ethnographic objects that involve questions of spatiality and temporality; and Krasmann & Hentschel's (2019, p. 182) 'situational awareness'; and that all held together by a critique of the neoliberal control society's drive towards hypersecuritisation.

16 As if to prove this point, a man opened fire at a popular Christmas market in Strasbourg on 11 December 2018, killing 5 and injuring 12 people.

17 According to philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1995), a society of control has moved beyond the Foucauldian disciplinary society characterised by disciplining discursive regimes and praxes. It is known for extremities and inequalities created by extractive capitalism, power relations and ubiquitous surveillance, and enormous socio-political complexities created through globalisation and digitalisation. In these neoliberal 'situationscaping times', we zoom in on the neoliberal control society complementary to a neoliberal governmental macropolitics that utilises "precarisation [as] an instrument of governing" and forces "the exposed body – human and nonhuman alike – [to become] the standard model of subjectivity" (Gray, 2020, p. 20).

18 And that through an agential realist perspective – but also via other critical new materialist lenses highlighting the more-than-human, power relations, and the intra-actions between the macro- and micropolitical. See Chen, 2012 and Braidotti, 2013.

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