

“Make no mistake—this was a terrorist attack”:
Examining the discursive construction of terrorism in
Canada

by

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Abstract

‘Terrorism’ has been a mainstream discussion since the early 2000s. Though much academic and government research has been produced on the subject, consistent and appropriate application of the term seems to be elusive. As a result, the modern incarnation of the word carries baggage of the event that inspired its political appropriation and relies on synonyms to maneuver the limitations of legal definitions. I use critical discourse analysis to explore how terrorism and terrorist identity have been discursively constructed in the *2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* and its predecessors. My analysis suggests that this series of reports strategically manipulates Canadian readers by artificially inflating the ‘terrorist threat’ and securitizing policies and Canadians themselves. The ‘war on terror’ narrative persists as the difference between ‘political’ and ‘legal’ terrorism becomes increasingly unclear. These findings indicate the need for further discursive analysis of the politicization of terror in Canada.

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1 Chapter: Introduction

Discussions around terrorism have been a prominent feature of Western political and media discourses in the last 15 years. What, however, do we mean when we use this word? ‘Terrorism’ seems to be defined according to the needs of each country (Department of Justice, 2015; Zeidan, 2004), raising concerns about the international “conceptual consensus” of its legal definition (Young, 2006, p. 27). A limited understanding of the discursive construction of terrorism may be leading us to uncritically accept the political narratives being produced. In Canada, for example, there appears to be a disconnect between Canadian political discourses on terrorism and the legal definition of terrorism provided in Canada’s *Criminal Code* (1985). Prior to *The Anti-terrorism Act* (2001), events that we now consider terrorism were prosecuted based on the criminal activity(ies) they comprised, such as murder, kidnapping, or conspiracy. Given that many modern iterations of anti-terrorism legislation were prompted by the events of September 11, 2001 (Mazer, 2003), they were also formed within the “spectacle of terrorism” (Giroux, 2006, p. 25) promulgated by the G. W. Bush administration in the United States.

Our understanding of reality is a social construction based on the way we talk about ideas and concepts, and it is influenced by how we interact with the ideas and concepts presented by others (Burr, 2015). An event like September 11, 2001, is shaped by the language, sounds, visuals, and other methods we use to create meaning. This meaning-making, or semiosis, is how we discuss, understand, and interpret the world, and so our social constructions are also necessarily discursive constructions. Therefore, our understanding of a concept like terrorism is incomplete if we do not critically explore the

ways in which discourse has, to some extent, contributed to the production and thus construction of our understanding of terrorism. To examine how terrorism has been discursively constructed in Canada, I will use a critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework and supporting tools to analyze public reports the Canadian government produces about the terrorist threat to Canada. First, however, it is important to understand the Canadian context of terrorism discourse.

1.1 Definition and Conceptualization of Terrorism in the Canadian Context

Prior to September 11, 2001, Canada did not have a legal definition for terrorism, nor was terrorism a consideration within the *Criminal Code*. Previous to Bill C-36, *The Anti-terrorism Act* (2001), one could not be charged with having committed a ‘terrorist act’; instead, “most acts of terrorism were already punished as serious crimes” (Roach, 2012a, p. 534). For example, members of the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), a Canadian terrorist organization in the 1960s and 1970s, were charged with kidnapping and murder following the October Crisis (Front de libération du Québec, n.d.); these charges were laid within the boundaries of the *Criminal Code* as it existed prior to the inclusion of ‘terrorism’ as a crime. Similarly, while the Air India Flight 182 bombing in 1985¹ is widely considered “Canada’s deadliest terrorist attack”, those accused of the act were charged with murder and conspiracy (Air India Flight 182 bombing, n.d.).

¹ According to the Canadian Encyclopedia entry on this event, Sikh separatists were “agitating for a Sikh homeland...to be carved from the northern Indian state of Punjab”. Following a deadly attack on separatists by the Indian army in June 1984, thousands of Sikhs protested in Canada, some calling for violent revenge. The Flight 182 bombing followed a year of “militancy” by separatists in Canada and increasing bilateral violence in India. Two British Columbia Sikh separatists were charged with murder and conspiracy following a 15-year investigation of the bombing and were acquitted in 2005. A third accused was convicted of manslaughter for building the bomb (Air India Flight 182 bombing, n.d.).

While *The Anti-terrorism Act* (2001) was seen as Canada's contribution to a burgeoning international legal effort to combat terrorism, it was a controversial bill. The distinguishing feature of terrorism in Canada's law, as in the laws of many other countries, is that terrorist acts have a religious or political motive. According to Roach (2012b), "the criminal law has traditionally not required proof of motive and took [sic] the position that no motive could justify or excuse crime" (p. 99). Regardless, the *Act* was passed on December 24, 2001 to comply with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 that required member states to report their plans to combat terrorism by the end of the year (Mazer, 2003).

Canada's *Anti-terrorism Act* (2001) places the burden of proof on law enforcement to find that a terrorist act was committed "in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause" (*Anti-terrorism Act*, 2001, 83.01(1)(b)(i)(A)). This clause was introduced to appease concerns that the *Act* could be used to target any kind of political dissent, and it requires evidence that the individual had a particular motivation. This remains a controversial aspect of the *Act*. While the United Kingdom's equivalent legislation also requires proof of a motive, the United States and the European Union do not have any motivational requirement for terrorism listed in their legal definitions (Department of Justice, 2015). In fact, the Canadian definition suggests that an act is not one of terror if a "purpose, objective or cause" is not conclusively established. A clear divide exists between political responses to and legal definitions of terrorist acts, as evidenced following the January 2017 shooting at the Centre culturel Islamique de Québec (see Leblanc, 2017a and Leblanc, 2017b for examples of the linguistic tension in this case).

The *Combating Terrorism Act* (2013) notably reinstated provisions for preventive detention and investigative hearings that had expired in 2007 under a sunset clause. The enactment added grounds to arrest persons found to be harbouring a terrorist or potential terrorist, and it also included amendments to the *Criminal Code*, *Canada Evidence Act*, and *Security of Information Act*. It also introduced new provisions about leaving Canada to participate in the activity of terrorist groups, to facilitate terrorist activity, to commit an offence for a terrorist group, or to commit an offence that is a terrorist activity. These four amendments to sections 83.18, 83.19, and 83.2 of the *Criminal Code* include the same directive: “Everyone who leaves or attempts to leave Canada, or goes or attempts to go on board a conveyance with the intent to leave Canada, for the purpose of committing an act or omission outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would be an offence... is guilty” (*Combating Terrorism Act*, 2013). Interestingly, this appears to be an example of guilt for a crime that has not been committed; if even an attempt to leave the country becomes a criminal act, then a substantial burden of proof must be on law enforcement to justify such a detention.

Finally, the *Anti-terrorism Act* of 2015 was widely criticized for the additional power it gave to police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Agency (CSIS) and for the limitations it appears to place on free speech (Watters, 2015). It includes several new offences, such as encouraging others to participate in terrorist acts, distributing terrorist propaganda, and looser restrictions for preventive detention. It also allows increased sharing of personal information and gives CSIS the ability to intervene in a terrorist plot if they believe it will “reduce the threat” (*Anti-terrorism Act*, 2015). These three *Acts*, in which definitions of terrorism and terrorist activities shift and expand, appear to

increasingly favour securitization² at the expense of civil rights and liberties. It stands to reason, then, that the definitions of terrorism provided in these *Acts* influence how we talk about terrorism and construct the identity of a terrorist.

1.2 Research Objective

My objective for this research is to investigate how the Canadian government talks about terrorism—in particular, I would like to know how terrorism and terrorists are discursively realized in a political context and what sources the government uses to construct this discourse. To do this, I am focusing the bulk of my research on the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada (Report)*. However, since this is the fourth edition of the report, I use the three previous versions—two of which were produced under different federal government leadership—to conduct an intertextual analysis of people, events, and documents that were named and suppressed. This analysis allows me to explore how these texts are connected to one another; all meaningful texts are intertextual, as they implicitly and explicitly refer to earlier and current discourses, and they often influence future texts (Fairclough, 1992c).

Critical discourse analysis is an appropriate approach for examining not just the language used, but also how texts “have causal effects upon, and contribute to changes in, people (beliefs, attitudes, etc.), actions, social relations, and the material world” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 8). I have selected Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional framework to guide my analysis as it helps us understand the linguistic choices in the text, the discursive context in which the text was produced, and the sociocultural context

² See 5.2.7 Securitization for more information.

that influenced its production. Therefore, I aim to address the above objective with the following research question:

1. How has terrorism been discursively constructed in Canada?

To scope my research, I have decided to focus my efforts on the following three sub-questions:

- a) How does the Canadian government discursively construct ‘terrorism’ in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*?
- b) How has the discursive construction of terrorism evolved since the first edition of the report in 2013?
- c) What is the discursive construction of terrorist identity in the reports?

1.3 Significance of the Research

This study is about the discursive construction of terrorism within a document published by the Canadian government. If Fairclough’s (1989, as cited in Lemke, 1995) assertion that ideology is a language-based alternative to violence is correct, then identifying the construction of deeply held beliefs in texts may be one way to recognize politically accepted but problematic discourses of terrorism in Canada. While understanding the historical approach to these terms and the events that have shifted their definition is important, it is equally important to examine what role the Canadian government has played in defining a terrorist. Already, we can see that it has led to the creation of a two-tier legal system in Canada—one for criminal acts, and one for terrorist acts—and that an insufficient understanding of terrorism has developed internationally.

The quote, “Make no mistake—this was a terrorist attack” that I use in the title of my thesis has been an ongoing muse for this work. It was said by Prime Minister Trudeau

in a January 2017 speech (The Prime Minister's House statement on the terrorist attack in Quebec, 2017) following a shooting at a Quebec mosque, in which the assailant killed six people. However, the assailant has not been charged with any terrorism-related offences (Page, 2018). By examining what we know about terrorism historically and the political influences that led to our current Canadian legislation, we can better understand how Canada has subsequently constructed 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' in a political context and for what purpose.

Finally, it is in the public's best interest to understand how government-produced products promote certain ideologies that are inherently manipulative. It is useful to be aware of the circumstances in which a Canadian might be labelled a 'terrorist' by their government, or how the government decides if an event should be called 'terrorism'. Identifying the ideologies that are discursively constructed in documents like the *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (Public Safety Canada, 2017), and situating them within the broader historical context of terrorism, is an important part of understanding how these discourses Other³ some populations and silence others—regardless of citizenship. This CDA approach attempts to shed new light on the problems with Canada's current construction of terrorism.

1.4 Organization of the Study

This chapter is followed by seven additional chapters. Chapter 2 provides an historical literature review of 'terrorism', beginning with the origins of the term and proceeding with the Canadian definition of the term. It also examines some of the key periods of

³ See 5.2.6 Ideological squaring and Othering for more information.

terrorism activity since the Second World War. This chapter is useful for understanding the historical impetuses for the word itself, and for recognizing how the application of the word has evolved based on political context.

Chapter 3 is my theoretical literature review, which begins with a discussion on manipulation. I summarize the available CDA scholarship related to the terrorist identity, much of which focuses on the media's perspective, and research about Western terrorism policy, which largely consists of European- and American-produced narratives and speeches. I also identify my research gap here based on the lack of literature that examines Canadian government discourses about terrorism from a CDA perspective.

Chapter 4 presents my theoretical framework. Here, I outline why CDA and systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) form the basis of my framework and simultaneously provide the methodological context needed to guide my research.

Chapter 5 explains my methods for conducting this research. I describe my data, data collection, and analysis methods, including descriptions of the specific tools within CDA and SFL that I employed to analyze my data. This chapter also includes researcher reflexivity, in which I acknowledge the bias that exists in my study and describe what I have done to minimize the impact of that bias on my research.

Chapter 6 presents my findings. It begins with the key discoveries from my transitivity analysis, which addresses the first level of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework describing the text. I provide a brief summary of the findings before examining the intertextual references in the reports in order to understand the discursive practices that influenced the document's production. This analysis aligns with the second dimension of Fairclough's framework. As I interpret the intertextual analysis,

I consider how it aligns with my findings from the transitivity analysis.

Chapter 7 discusses my analysis of the reports. This discussion begins by highlighting the key findings of my analysis, and I situate those findings within the sociocultural context of terrorism discourse. The discussion is the third and final level of Fairclough's framework, which explains the discourse practice within its sociocultural context. I have opted to structure this discussion around my research questions in order to clearly identify how the implications of my analysis met the objectives of the study.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes my research. Here, I summarize the study by providing an overview of my objectives, approach, analysis, and results. I end by recognizing the limitations of my study, which leads into potential avenues for future research.

2 Chapter: Historical Literature Review of Terrorism

‘Terrorism’ is an inherently subjective word; many of us are familiar with the cliché that ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’. Since this makes it a difficult subject to talk about with any consistency, it is useful to first attempt to establish a common understanding of the word and its derivatives in the context of this study. For my purposes, I felt it was important to understand not only what ‘terrorism’ means from a modern, Western perspective since my research is based on recent Canadian discourse, but also to understand the historical context within which the word was created and has since evolved. It is not possible to conduct a comprehensive examination of this history here, so this review will attempt to explain some of the key concepts and events that may have contributed to the current usage of the word ‘terrorism’. To do this, I will begin by looking at the historical origins of the concept, followed by a brief summary outlining the challenges associated with defining it. I will then provide a high-level overview of terrorism in the 20th century with a particular focus on the term’s use after September 11, 2001.

2.1 The Origins of Terrorism

The philosophical roots of terrorism can be found in writings about tyranny by Aristotle, Plutarch, Thomas Aquinas, and others; they discuss whether the killing of an unjust ruler for the common good is defensible. This ‘bottom-up’ approach to political or religious protest was generally embraced and often celebrated by ancient Greek and Medieval authors (Laqueur, 1978). Brutus, for example, is lauded for his role in assassinating Julius Caesar and stopping his dictatorial ascent (Plutarch, n.d.). Organized assassination groups, such as the Sicarii and the Assassins, followed this example of resistance to

autocratic rule (Laqueur, 1978). Though the language for ‘terrorism’ did not yet exist in these contexts, we might assume that these examples point to tyranny and the acts perpetrated by a tyrant as acts of terrorism. However, these protestors used assassination as a means of overthrowing a group with different opinions based on their own political agendas; perhaps they are terrorists as well.

Tyranny and assassination are two of many concepts that can intertwine with ‘terrorism’, such as sanctioned murder (like the death penalty or war), genocide, guerrilla, mass shooting, massacre, vigilantism, rebellion, nationalism, and revolution. I will not expand on these concepts here, but one can see that these terms share some common ground; Henderson (2001) provides additional context for a few of these terms as they relate to terrorism. To add to this tangle of terms, Rubin and Rubin (2008) acknowledge that many governments have committed acts that could be considered terrorism, but for the purposes of their book chose to distinguish between non-governmental terrorism and ‘state repression’. We may also use modified terms like ‘state terrorism’ or ‘state-sponsored terrorism’. This distinction between ‘terrorism’ and ‘state terrorism’ is a construct that other authors on this subject have implicitly enforced (Henderson, 2001; Law, 2009; Chaliand & Blin, 2007), which may, in certain circumstances, serve an ideological purpose of constructing state-sponsored terrorism as an action that ‘we’ do to ‘them’ to achieve discursively justified political aims⁴. While I will not focus on state-sponsored terrorism because it is outside of the scope of my study, it is important to acknowledge that the meaning of ‘terrorism’ should not be redefined based on the qualifiers we assign to it to serve a particular purpose or narrative.

⁴ This recalls van Dijk’s ideological square, which I will describe in Chapter 5.

Though political violence is a steadfast presence in history, Rubin and Rubin (2008) assert that more recent examples of political violence intentionally use “deliberately organized and ideologically justified terrorism by nonstate actors as a political philosophy and as a strategy for seeking to gain political power rather than merely as a by-product of political struggle” (p. 3). They further suggest that both mass politics, in which the general public decides how a country is led, and ethnic nationalism, in which one ethnic community feels superior to or threatened by another, contribute to terrorism as a political strategy. Historically, we might look to Anthony Babington and Guy Fawkes, both Catholics attempting to assassinate Protestant monarchs, as two early examples of terrorism as a political strategy (p. 6). Despite this, the language did not exist to call them ‘terrorists’.

It is not until the French Revolution in the 1790s that the term ‘terror’ becomes a “consciously formulated aspect of ideology” (Rubin & Rubin, 2008, p. vii) to describe strategic massacring by revolutionaries to obtain power for the good of the common people. Originating from the Latin verb *terrere*, meaning ‘to frighten’, the period of 1793–1794 during the French Revolution became known as “The Terror” or “The Great Terror” in reference to the violence and repression exhibited by the Jacobins. The word ‘terrorist’ was first used in 1794 to refer to the Jacobins and their supporters, “who advocated and practised methods of partisan repression and bloodshed in the propagation of the principles of democracy and equality” (Terrorist, n.d.). Similarly, ‘terrorism’ referred to “[g]overnment by intimidation as directed and carried out by the party in power in France during the Revolution of 1789–94; the system of the ‘Terror’ (1793–4)” (Terrorism, n.d.). These terms have evolved since they were first developed to talk about

a specific political strategy used during a specific period of time; while Western society has developed a collective understanding of what terrorism might entail, we have so far failed to clearly define it.

2.2 Defining Terrorism

Many in the Western world assume that we share an understanding of the concept of terrorism when we see it in use. Typically, this popular understanding aligns with the Oxford English Dictionary's broad definition of terrorism (Terrorism, n.d.):

The unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims; (originally) such practices used by a government or ruling group (frequently through paramilitary or informal armed groups) in order to maintain its control over a population; (now usually) such practices used by a clandestine or expatriate organization as a means of furthering its aims.

This definition suggests that terrorism can be practiced by both those with power and those without it, though it concedes that modern usage typically refers to “unofficial”, “unauthorized”, and or “clandestine” organizations as perpetrators of terrorist acts rather than governments. Therefore, we might assume based on this definition that modern usage of the word ‘terrorism’ does not include that which we consider ‘state terrorism’, thus requiring the adjectival modification and possibly implying that state-sponsored terrorism has different aims than “terrorism”. We cannot necessarily say that this definition is incorrect in its reflection of popular usage, but that does not mean that it is not problematic. Noam Chomsky notes that “[w]hereas the term was once applied to Emperors who molest their own subjects and the world, now it is restricted to thieves

who molest the powerful” (as cited in Henderson, 2001, p. 5). Chomsky proposes a broader definition of terrorism as “the threat or use of violence to intimidate or coerce (generally for political ends)”, regardless of who is issuing the threat (as cited in Henderson, 2001, p. 5). While this characterisation is suitable for conceptualizing terrorism, it falls short of the requirements for a legal definition and is arguably too broad to serve most political purposes. This is perhaps why there is no internationally accepted definition of the term; even after reviewing 109 definitions of terrorism from a variety of arenas, Schmid (1984) concluded that none would universally satisfy the interests represented by those arenas (as cited in Vertigans, 2015). Saul (2006) rightly states is concerning: “In the absence of a definition of terrorism, the struggle over the representation of a violent act is a struggle over its legitimacy. The more confused a concept, the more it lends itself to opportunistic appropriation” (p. 3).

The challenge of defining terrorism becomes particularly apparent when one considers the myriad frames and perspectives with which one can view it. Even within a government, definitions can vary; Maxwell (2003) points to three federal American statutes and regulations that each provide a different definition of terrorism. Kegley (1990) notes that “in addressing terrorism we are dealing with a value-laden subject that resists precise definition and whose description is often motivated by the desire to condemn, not to offer detached analysis” (as cited in Cunningham Jr, 2003, p. 6). As such, Cunningham Jr (2003) notes that we tend to think of terrorism from the perspective of counterterrorism—typically in terms of legal, military, and political responses. On the other hand, terrorism typically occurs as a reaction to something else; focusing on the strategic response does not acknowledge how terrorism may relate to other enacted forms

of violence, physical or otherwise. In this sense, terrorism is a form of communication; while Henderson (2001) qualifies the action of a terrorist as a message requiring a response, I suggest that it may also be considered a response within an existing conversation.

Overall, academics seem to agree that definitions of terrorism are contextual. One could argue that no single definition exists because the word is frequently used subjectively to condemn the actions of others while excusing one's own behaviour (Whitbeck, 2004, as cited in Bhatia, 2009). This explains the disparity that is often found when comparing the legal codes and government policies that various nations have created to address terrorism. Of course, concerns about terrorism pre-date 2001. The World Trade Centre explosion in 1993 prompted the first attempts at American antiterrorist legislation, though domestic terrorism was ostensibly a more serious threat to the United States in the 1990s (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996). A 1986 article referencing the US bombing of Libya refers to a "terrorism craze" prompted by the US' "pseudopatriotic narcissism" (Said, 1986, as cited by Collins, 2002, p. 156).

When we consider the ways in which terrorism has been discursively constructed in recent years, though, we must first acknowledge the contextual environment in which a post-September 11, 2001 media functions; while the government might be considered the creators of a message, it is the media who control the way the message is presented and therefore the direction of the narrative. On the day of the attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, the news media repeatedly attributed the attack to "an act of war...the equivalent of Pearl Harbour—or worse. And there was much talk about the need for a military response" (Nacos et al., 2011, p. 3). In essence, the media played a

defining role in establishing the counterterrorism policies and military response that the Bush administration would later adopt.

2.2.1 Definition of Terrorism in Canada

I do not aim to provide a new definition of terrorism through the course of my research; instead, I hope to show how complex the term is and why it is so difficult for states to reach a consensus on its use. I will conduct my analysis based on the denotation that is used in the Government of Canada's *Criminal Code* (1985⁵). It does not directly define 'terrorism', but instead defines 'terrorist activity'⁶. In sum:

- It is an act or omission that is committed for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause with the intention of intimidating the public, or a segment of the public, with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act; and
- It intentionally causes death or bodily harm by the use of violence, endangers a person's life, causes a serious risk to public health or safety, causes substantial property damage that would lead to harm, and/or causes serious interference with or serious disruption of an essential service, facility or system, whether public or private, other than as a result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to result in harm.

⁵ The *Criminal Code* has been amended several times since its creation in 1985, and the definition provided here was added when the *Anti-terrorism Act* was passed.

⁶ For a complete definition, see Appendix B.1, *Definition of a Terrorist Act in the Criminal Code of Canada*.

Further, a terrorist act can include a conspiracy, attempt or threat to commit the above, or being an accessory after the fact or counselling in relation to the above, but does not include an act or omission that is committed during an armed conflict.

I have alluded to the fact that terrorism is defined differently in Canada than in other countries. In the United States, for example, terrorism is defined as involving (Department of Justice, 2015):

acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State....intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; influence the policy of a government by intimidation; or...affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping. (emphasis mine)

It seems apparent that Canada's legal definition of terrorism is much more restrictive, since proof of a political, religious, or ideological motive is required. By contrast, no evidence of a particular agenda is required to label an act as terrorism in the States.

Abroad, the *British Terrorism Act* seems to align more closely with Canada's definition, while the European Union uses a definition similar to the United States' interpretation (Department of Justice, 2015). This raises the question of whether we can still have productive global discussions about who is, or is not, a terrorist if no unified definition is available.

2.3 Modern Terrorism

The Corpus of Contemporary American English⁷ (COCA) shows a surge of frequency of the wildcard search term ‘terroris*’ from 2001–2006, ranging from 147 words per million in 2005 up to 282 words per million in 2002. The trends found in the Corpus of Historical American English⁸ (COHA) pale in comparison but show that the average of 9 words per million in the 1960s grew to 45 words per million in 1972 and gradually increased to a peak of 100 words per million in 1985. In fact, of the top 5 years with the most frequent representation of the search term terroris* in the COCA, only 1985 is not from the 2000s. Based on this information, I will primarily focus on the 1970s–1980s and 2001–2005 as contributing timeframes to the modern discursive construction of terrorism in a European and North American context. First, however, we will consider how Middle Eastern events in the 20th century with a nexus to Western influence also provide important historical context to the modern construction of terrorism.

2.4 Terrorism in the Middle East

The end of the Turkish Ottoman Empire after the First World War was tangled with a mix of assurances from British occupying forces that could not all be guaranteed: they promised the Jews settling in Palestine that they would have an independent state; they sought to maintain alliances with Arab nations by promising them sovereign homelands; and they secretly worked with the French to maintain their respective spheres of

⁷ COCA is a corpus that contains more than 560 million words across multiple genres of text and speech produced from 1990–2017 (Davies, 2018). Linguists commonly use COCA and other corpora to analyze variation and change in language. My use of COCA was to identify periods of time when the use of words beginning with ‘terroris-’ (with the intent of primarily identifying the words ‘terrorist’ and ‘terrorism’, as ‘terror’ or ‘terrorize’ can be used in a wider variety of contexts) notably increased in frequency.

⁸ COHA is a corpus that contains more than 400 million words from the 1810s–2000s (Davies, 2010). As with COCA, COHA is useful for analyzing language change, but over a longer period of time.

influence throughout the region (Henderson, 2001). The end of the Empire combined with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, in which the British government stated their support for the creation of a Jewish homeland, increased Jewish emigration to Palestine (Law, 2009). According to Law (2009), many of these emigrants were motivated by Zionist beliefs of Jewish nationalism and state sovereignty. Tensions grew between the British, Arabs, and Jews over the next 30 years, and Britain began to lose interest in protecting Palestine. Arabs there, frustrated by the delay to their own independence, were ready to protect the state that Britain had promised to them (Henderson, 2001; Law, 2009). Two ethno-nationalist Jewish groups, the Lehi and the Irgun, resorted to terrorist attacks in an attempt to make British forces and Palestinian Arabs withdraw from the region (Law, 2009). The United Nations' 1948 proclamation to partition part of Palestine into a Jewish state (Israel) was met with increasing hostility from Arab countries (Rubin & Rubin, 2008; Henderson, 2001).

Military activities, referred to as 'terrorism' by Rubin and Rubin (2008), became a political strategy for Palestinian leadership in the mid-1960s. Rubin and Rubin (2008) list four rationalizations for this decision: first, terrorism was a justified response to the criminal actions of Israelis; second, Israel was a weak and unstable country that would fall if hit hard enough, and the publicity from the attacks would raise awareness and garner Western sympathy; third, terrorism was the means to an extremist end of eliminating Israel, and abandoning terrorism was correlated with abandoning Palestine's justified goals; and fourth, failed military efforts left terrorism as the only viable path to success. Terrorist groups included Fatah, founded by Yasser Arafat in 1959 to "wage war against Israel by any means possible" (Law, 2009, p. 218), and the Palestinian Liberation

Organization (PLO), which Arafat subsequently “commandeered” beginning in 1969 (Law, 2009, p. 220). Despite many successful and high-profile terrorist attacks, including the death of 11 Israeli Olympians at the 1972 Olympic Games, Palestinian terrorism led by Arafat was not formally recognized by the international community; instead, Arafat presented himself as a revolutionary, and the United Nations recognized him and PLO as “the sole representatives of the Palestinian people” (Law, 2009, p. 226). As PLO’s activities and attacks spread throughout the Middle East and Western Europe, Israel struck back in 1982 and destroyed much of PLO’s infrastructure in Lebanon, where Arafat was based. As Arafat gradually came to accept Israel’s right to exist, the more militant wing of PLO formed Hamas, which condoned the use of violence in its pursuit of an Islamic Palestinian state (Henderson, 2001). Though Arafat signed an agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to renounce violence and establish a Palestinian governing entity, it did not stop the terrorists. Hamas and Islamic Jihad introduced suicide bombings to spread their message. As I have shown above, however, both Israelis and Palestinians used terrorist activity as a control tactic in the context of Palestine; Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by a right-wing Israeli (Rubin & Rubin, 2008; Henderson, 2001). While these attacks were only waged in the Middle East, these organizations sought to expand their influence.

2.4.1 Al-Qaeda

The significance of September 11, 2001 as a turning point in American military and political strategy cannot be understated. According to Rubin and Rubin (2008), Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four planes and flew three of them into the two World Trade Centre towers in New York City and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., killing nearly 3,000

people. This event “focuses intense scrutiny on international terrorist organizations in the United States, Europe, and beyond” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 285). However, the extreme views that led to these attacks are still fairly young, having been formed in the 20th century. It has been suggested that the teachings that began in the Muslim Brotherhood⁹ have evolved to affirm that modern society resembles a time before Islam and “requires a revolution to make it properly Islamic” (Rubin & Rubin, 2008, p. 238).

While ‘jihad’ is interpreted in many ways, its literal translation from Arabic is “to strive” or “to make an effort” and does not necessarily have a violent connotation (Kushner, 2003, p. 195). However, as with many other terms, some groups have appropriated the word to suit a political or economic agenda (Karim, 2004). Kushner (2003) references a 1998 fatwa¹⁰ issued in the name of the International Front for the Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders. In it, Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda, and four other figures call for Muslims to “kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military” as an “individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it” (as cited in Kushner, 2003, p. 132). Groups like Al-Qaeda cleared the way for a new type of radical strategy that focused on international terrorism. bin Laden reasoned that Western targets were responsible for keeping ‘non-Islamic’ regimes in power, and that killing only non-Muslims would be more popular among potential

⁹ According to Law (2009), Hasan al-Banna (the Muslim Brotherhood’s founder) “believed that the Western world was on the brink of collapse; all it needed was a push from those acting out the will of Allah” (p. 283). Law (2009) cites the group’s credo as Benjamin and Simon (2002) presented it in *The Age of Sacred Terror*: “God is our objective; the Quran is our constitution; the Prophet is our leader; Struggle is our way; and death for the sake of God is the highest of our aspirations” (p. 283).

¹⁰ As defined by Kushner (2003), “A fatwa is a ruling or decision by an Islamic cleric. A fatwa can be a ruling on anything, and fatwas are issued by Islamic clerics all the time on everyday religious subjects, such as dress and behaviour. Fatwas on everyday subjects rarely receive mention in the non-Islamic press. Much more controversial are fatwas calling for the death of ‘heretical’ Muslims or non-Muslims” (p. 130).

supporters than killing Muslims (Henderson, 2001). bin Laden's vision for terrorism has become well known in the West, but as I outline below, the attack on September 11, 2001 was far from the first instance of terrorism in the United States or other Western countries.

2.5 Western Terrorism, 1970s–1980s

According to Law (2009), Japanese military victories during the Second World War and the United States' "increasingly vocal denunciation of European empire-building" (p. 180) led to a surge of anti-colonial and independence movements around the world. As Asian and African countries gained independence, Western countries used "frequently brutal efforts to oppose these movements, such as in Algeria and Vietnam" (Law, 2009, p. 254). To Marxists, this was an example of imperialism, and anti-colonialists used this apparent oppression to their advantage. Students, the working class, and others who felt left behind by a capitalist system or frustrated with a lack of social change were drawn to these "highly ideological readings of contemporary developments" (Law, 2009, p. 255). These adherents resisted American imperialism embodied by the war in Vietnam where, under the pretext of preventing anti-colonial forces in the region from joining the Soviets in the Cold War, 50,000 Americans, 400,000 South Vietnamese, and 1 million Viet Cong and North Vietnamese died (Henderson, 2001; Carlton, 2018; Vietnam War, 2014). Better known North American groups and individuals from this period include the Black Panther Party, the Weather Underground Organization, and the Unabomber (though Maxwell, 2003, disputes his inclusion due to his mental illness); in Europe, the German Red Army Faction was fairly prolific, and Carlos the Jackal notoriously stormed a

conference of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Austria in 1975 (Henderson, 2001).

Despite many nationalist battles being resolved through the events of the First and Second World Wars, tensions between minority ethnic groups and the state in which they lived led to “terrorism [as a] strategy of choice for nationalist groups” (Kushner, 2003, p. 360). In Ireland, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) fought for equal rights for the minority Catholics; several militant groups in Armenia were formed for varying nationalistic purposes; the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) was founded “to establish a Kurdish state and self-rule in southeastern Turkey” (Kushner, 2003, p. 209); Basque nationalists in Spain formed the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) to attack the Spanish government’s centralizing policy; and in Canada, the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) demanded political independence for Quebec (Rubin & Rubin, 2008; Henderson, 2001).

Of course, this period of socialist and nationalist upheaval did not go unnoticed by Western leaders. As noted above, the COHA identifies a peak in the frequency of the search term terrorism* in 1985. In order to understand why, I referred to Maxwell’s (2003) book that documents important speeches and statements made about terrorism by political leaders.

2.5.1 1985

Maxwell (2003) states that in July 1985, President Reagan of the United States made a speech that accused five nations of terrorism. The three weeks leading up to this speech had been particularly fraught; the June 14 Trans World Airlines Flight 847 from Cairo to Rome had been hijacked by two gunmen in mid-June, and the primarily American passengers were held hostage for two weeks. The gunmen were later tied to Hezbollah, “a

Shiite Muslim militant group and political party” (Kushner, 2003, p. 372). In a second event that June, a bombing perpetrated by Sikh terrorists resulted in the deaths of all 329 people on Air India Flight 182, the vast majority Canadian (Maxwell, 2003).

Reagan’s (1985) speech condemned Libya, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, and Nicaragua as forming “a new, international version of ‘Murder, Incorporated’” (as cited in Maxwell, 2003, p. 74). He goes on to say, “[t]hese terrorist states are now engaged in acts of war against the government and people of the United States. And under international law, any state which is the victim of acts of war has the right to defend itself” (p. 75). This speech draws notable parallels to ones issued by President G. W. Bush following September 11, 2001; by representing the United States as “peaceful”, “civilized”, and “democratic” in opposition to the “criminal”, “fanatical”, and “communist” terrorist states (pp.72–75), and by equating terrorist attacks to war, Reagan is effectively setting the stage for the discursive construction of the ‘war on terror’ 16 years later. Notably, Jackson (2005) states that the fear of so-called ‘Islamist terrorism’¹¹ that emerged in the 2000s has its roots in the 1980s, when political officials began to call acts of violence ‘terrorism’ that were previously called ‘hijackings’, ‘bombings’, ‘assassinations’, and ‘kidnappings’. This linguistic decision reclassified these acts and artificially increased the perceived threat of terrorism, which Karim (2004) argues was an intentional choice following the end of the Cold War. As the threat from Eastern Europe

¹¹ Karim (2014) rightfully highlights inconsistencies in the way many adjectives are used in media and politics to talk about those who profess to follow Islam and commit acts of terror. Not only is the use of these terms in the context of terrorism ambiguous, it is “ideological manipulation” (p. 169); for one, other forms of politically motivated exploitation of religion touched upon in this review, such as Christianity and Judaism, do not have the same synonymity with terrorism (Karim, 2014). While I attempt to avoid using these ideological expressions in my own writing, I may include them in single quotation marks when they are used in the literature I am reviewing.

diminished, a “threat vacuum” (Esposito, 1992, as cited in Karim, 2004, p. 112) emerged. To fill this hole, “a number of academics began to present Muslims as the new major threat to the West” by proposing that Islam and Western values were irreconcilable (Karim, 2004, p. 112).

2.6 Constructing the War on Terror: September 11, 2001

Jackson (2005) used critical discourse analysis to examine the language of counter-terrorism as it was constructed in the United States following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. I have chosen to follow his example of eschewing the more colloquial usages of ‘September 11’ and ‘9/11’, which serve to “erase the history and context of the events and turn their representation into a cultural-political icon where the meaning of the date becomes both assumed and open to manipulation” (Jackson, 2005, p. 7). Jackson argues that the discursive construction of these attacks enforced a particular political, military, and cultural understanding in order to normalize a military response. First, America is presented as the primary victim of the attacks, though the United States government and the media could have portrayed the event as an ‘international tragedy’ given the number of people from other countries who died. Second, the political response goes beyond calling this an act of terror, instead constructing the attacks as an ‘act of war’. Third, the language used to talk about the attacks recalled the familiar narratives of Pearl Harbour, the Cold War, and globalization. Finally, the Bush administration mounted a sustained campaign to portray only one interpretation of the event: as an “unprovoked and treacherous attack on an innocent and peaceful nation” (p. 31).

This portrayal of September 11, 2001 as an act of war meant that officials needed to meet the international standards of ‘just war’ before retaliating. Generally speaking, a

just war is understood to have fair objectives, such as self-defence against an enemy or humanitarian aims to assist an oppressed group; is legally declared and broadly supported by similar nations; it is conducted with the safety of civilians in mind; it should not create a greater evil than the one it is trying to combat; it should succeed in the shortest time period possible to minimize suffering; and it should be a last resort after all non-violent options have been attempted (Jackson, 2005, citing Walzer, 1992). Jackson (2005) argues that the war on terror was discursively constructed within these boundaries, meaning that the language used to frame the events of September 11, 2001 was politically strategic to shape a particular understanding of the attack and endorse an appropriate response. Since it was presented as a defensive war as defined in international law, most American allies considered the American military attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 a justified act of self-defence (Jackson, 2005).

The media supported this narrative and played a defining role in establishing the counterterrorism policies and military response that the Bush administration would later adopt. The media's speculation surrounding the attacks, potential perpetrators, and the appropriate American reaction intersected with the public's dependency on the media to provide information during a time of crisis and to help restore a sense of normalcy (Lachlan et al., 2009). Canadian media was also influenced by these narratives, stoking a fear of foreigners and promoting a national identity built on 'Canadian values' that Othered minority communities (Eid & Karim, 2011). The 24-hour news channels broadcast narratives of fear and vulnerability in the use of video and image following September 11, shaping a "spectacle of terrorism" (Giroux, 2006):

[F]ear is now being used as a powerful force that flaunts an indifference to social justice while simultaneously working to distance audiences from any sense of critical engagement. Violence...has become fundamental to a deliberate strategy of representation, marked by an excess of hyper-real visual displays of violence, in which the spectacle is central to a species of political rebirth that puts life back into a social order... (p. 25)

Media discourses highlighted the need for patriotic bipartisanship, the United States as a victim fighting an enemy, and largely unquestioning coverage of the Bush administration's 'terrorist threat alerts' (Nacos et al., 2011; Giroux, 2006).

Part of what has made the 'threat of terrorism' so pressing has been the sense of impending danger constructed in its narrative. Fear of a terrorist attack has become rationalized and normalized in American discourse, though this fear began long before September 11, 2001. As was previously discussed, this discourse began in the 1980s in association with other acts of violence happening in the United States and abroad that reclassified other types of crimes more generally as 'terrorism'. So began a long fascination with terrorism in the media and popular culture—many books, movies, and television shows began to adopt terrorism as a central theme, further contributing to the urgency felt by viewers. By 1987, 68–80 per cent of the American public considered terrorism a 'serious' or 'extreme' threat, even though only 17 total deaths in America could be attributed to terrorist activities until that point (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996) compared to 20,096 murders and nonnegligent manslaughters in 1987 alone (Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, 2017).

As Jackson (2005) notes, framing September 11, 2001 as the dawn of ‘a new age of terrorism’ was not inevitable; this was certainly not the first instance of a plane hijacking (the Trans World Airlines Flight 847 hijacking and the Air India Flight 182 bombing I mention above are two examples from June 1985), nor was it the United States’ first encounter with al Qaeda. With that in mind, this event could have been framed as part of an ongoing conflict between al Qaeda and the United States. However, one could argue that part of the impetus for this framing was to distract citizens from the fact that American intelligence agencies had poorly handled the information that could have prevented the attack (Zegart, 2007). In order to accomplish this, the event must be constructed as ‘unprecedented’ or unpredictable. Additionally, constructing this as a ‘new’ threat provided additional political resources to the Government that would not have been available otherwise (Jackson, 2005). This framing has been particularly successful as the association between Islam and terrorism continues to dominate security discourses (Eid & Karim, 2011).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an historical overview of terrorism. By beginning with tyranny and progressing to the French Revolution, we saw that the ideology of terrorism originated as a socially driven rebellion against a political state, typically in the name of equality or justice. While an initial assessment of the events of September 11, 2001 might lead us to conclude that this terrorist attack was, indeed, ‘new’ and ‘unprecedented’, a review of key historical events suggests that this was not an inevitable conclusion. I then explored some of the problems associated with defining terrorism before examining notable terrorist motivations and groups. The 20th-century context of key events laid the

groundwork for a discussion on September 11, 2001 and how it has shaped terrorism discourse for nearly 20 years. This overview provides important context for understanding how we talk about terrorism today and how political discourses have shaped our understanding. The next chapter will build on this background as I review the existing CDA literature related to terrorism and terrorists.

3 Chapter: Theoretical Literature Review

Certainly, interest in terrorism and terrorists is plentiful in academia and has even led to the establishment of terrorism studies as a field of research. Discourse analysts have also begun to express interest in the contributions that language have made to the way terrorism is discussed and constructed; as Jackson (2005) explains, “Language and practice...are inextricably linked; they mutually reinforce each other; together they co-constitute social and political reality” (p. 9). Jackson (2005) identifies four layers of text surrounding terrorism: the public narrative, the legislative policies, the institutional communications related to counter-terrorism efforts, and the visual and symbolic representations of the counter-terrorism campaign. Currently, these layers of discourse appear to build towards justifying a political or military response; Zulaika and Douglass (1996) argue that once the word ‘terrorism’ is used to define an event, ‘counter-terrorism’ becomes the only logical outcome (see also van Dijk, 2006).

Research on terrorism within critical discourse studies is a small but growing niche; many studies focus on the US’ role in developing modern terrorism discourse or the media’s role in constructing a particular narrative. For the purposes of this literature review, I have chosen to focus on three areas of study that will contribute to a well-rounded inquiry as it relates to this thesis. Before exploring these areas, I will begin with an article by van Dijk (2006) that I believe captures the reason why an objective definition of terrorism has proven elusive since 2001. This will be followed by a discussion of relevant studies that primarily focus on the methods used to construct terrorist identity with some exploration on how it relates to national identity. Finally,

research on discursive political responses to terrorism and counterterrorism will illuminate some of the issues that have emerged from these approaches.

3.1 A Word on Manipulation

While considering the challenges of defining terrorism and the findings of the following studies, it may be useful to keep van Dijk's (2006) paper on manipulation in mind. In it, he presents a strong case for manipulation as "a discursive form of elite power reproduction that is against the best interests of dominated groups and (re)produces social inequality" (p. 364). He offers an example specific to terrorism, suggesting that once individuals have been persuaded to believe the public discourse on terrorism, they have already been manipulated; these attitudes may be ingrained to the point that they will act accordingly, such as by blindly supporting counter-terrorism initiatives. This manipulative process can be done through generalization, as seems to have happened following September 11, 2001—the public's emotions related to this event were generalized to broader concerns and ideologies about terrorism and security. This can lead to mass public support for restrictions on civil liberties, as evidenced by the Patriot Act¹²; van Dijk (2006) reasons that "citizens are manipulated into believing that such measures are taken in order to protect them" (p. 370). Of course, the real motivations of those in power are often cleverly disguised as collective benefit and national safety; any potential drawbacks are discursively minimized with techniques such as euphemisms, metaphors, nominalization, or vague language.

¹² It is interesting to note that, in similar circumstances following an act of terror, Prime Minister P. E. Trudeau's invocation of the War Measures Act during the 1970 October Crisis also received overwhelming public support at the time, though it was controversial and engaged civil liberties (Bélanger, 2000).

Van Dijk (2006) proposes four strategies of manipulation: emphasize the authority of the speaker and the inferiority of the recipient; focus on the desired beliefs of the manipulator by presenting arguments and proof that make the beliefs acceptable; discredit dissenting voices; and draw the listener by appealing to their sympathetic ideologies and emotions. This can be accomplished using a variety of semantic and emphatic techniques that emphasize the speaker's power and de-emphasizes the recipient's discourse, recalling van Dijk's (1998) "ideological square" (p. 33). While the following studies do not necessarily refer to manipulation or van Dijk's research, it appears to play an important role in many of the speeches and policies presented here. As such, I think it is important to be mindful of how manipulation may have been the overarching driver of many of the discursive strategies identified below.

3.2 Terrorism and Identity

Past studies on the discursive construction of terrorist identity have focused on victimization (Mythen, Walklate, & Khan, 2009), terrorist group identity-building online (Rothenberger, Müller, & Elmezeny, 2016; Rothenberger & Kotarac, 2014), redefining Muslim identity in light of prominent public discourse (Yildiz & Verkuyten, 2013), and the connection between the publicly constructed identity of religiously motivated terrorists and the use of harsh interrogation practices (Piazza, 2015). The media's role in constructing terrorist identity has been studied in China and Taiwan, where existing tension between the two nations influences media representation (Wang, 2017), and in Flanders and the Netherlands, where framing analysis of the representation of 'Syria fighters' in local journalism found a negative social construction of this group tied to

religious motivations and poor local integration (Berbers, Joris, Boesman, d'Haenens, Koemen, & Van Gorp, 2016).

Ali (2011) combined van Dijk's ideological square and socio-ideological discourse theory with Wodak's discourse-historical approach to analyze western and Arabic media coverage of Saddam Hussein's execution. This methodological combination was used to understand the use and functionality of semantic macropropositions, global superstructures, & microsemantics in the discourse. Ali (2011) points out that most news reports are understood reflexively and intertextually based on our existing ideologies and understandings of certain words, which both helps us comprehend the story and influences how we interpret it. The study found that the English language media addressing a Western audience tends to show support for a 'war on terror', but Arabic language news intended for local audiences does not. This shift recalls van Dijk's "ingroup-outgroup ideology" (Ali, 2011, p. 323), which suggests that the media tailors the message according to what each audience wants to hear. While these findings are an important contribution to the scholarship, the study was limited to only four news sources; a more thorough analysis covering a wider range of Arabic language news media outside the realm of political influence, as Ali's sources had close ties to local governments, might be more revealing.

Carver and Harrie (2017) studied the Canadian media's discursive approach to two shootings: one in Ottawa, Ontario in October 2014 and one in Moncton, New Brunswick in June 2014. The Ottawa shooting was classified as a terrorist event, while the Moncton shooting was not. Their research examined how the Canadian media used the label of terrorism and whether the legislated definition of terrorism influenced the use

of the label of terrorism in the media. When considering the framing of each event, the researchers found that the Moncton shooting was framed as ‘fear’ and ‘shock’, but not risk; the Ottawa shooting, on the other hand, was framed as ‘risk’ and ‘fear’. They also studied the texts for heuristic cues, which attribute social issues to generalized explanations that are in line with the dominant societal view of the issue; in this case, media language suggesting that the Arab and Muslim worlds are uniquely prone to political violence highlights a particular narrative, which is also the narrative that a typical western audience most readily believes (Carver & Harrie, 2017).

The identity of each shooter in Carver and Harrie’s (2017) study was approached differently by the media. Perhaps due to Ottawa’s proximity to a recent and alleged ISIS event in Quebec at the time, the media focused on the Ottawa shooter’s conversion to Islam, his radicalization, and a supposed desire to travel to Syria (though, in fact, he wanted to travel to his father’s birthplace of Libya). The Prime Minister’s Office largely supported this narrative. The Moncton shooter, on the other hand, was not associated with terrorism; the media used terms like ‘criminal’, ‘gun nut’, and ‘anti-establishment’ to describe him. In fact, hardly any mention of his religion was made in the news coverage of the event; when it was, it was used as a way to humanize him and identify him as a ‘typical Canadian’—that is, a Caucasian Canadian. Ironically, the media suggests that mental health issues were to blame in the Moncton shooting—a discussion that was mostly silenced for the Ottawa shooting in which mental health was a confirmed factor. Rather than relying on the legal definition of terrorism in Canada when reporting, the researchers found that media coverage defaulted to a politically convenient interpretation of the word as used by government representatives (Carver & Harrie, 2017).

Carver and Harrie's (2017) study highlights some of the resistance the general Canadian population might feel towards labelling someone a terrorist. While it is perhaps easier to question the loyalties of an immigrant facing terrorist allegations (Thurairajah, 2011), there may be some hesitation to apply the same label to a non-immigrant Canadian. The desire to define terrorism, and the subsequent challenges in doing so, may stem from a perceived need to establish a collective identity of Self that is in opposition to a terrorist Other (Herschinger, 2013). In this sense, we can see that establishing the terrorist identity is closely linked to our understanding of national identity—in order to be identified as an Other, they must be constructed as the opposite of the Self. Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart (1999) explain how this process takes place: "The national identity of individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a national collectivity...is shaped by state, political, institutional, media and everyday social practices, and the material and social conditions which emerge as their results, to which the individual is subjected" (p. 29). In other words, these practices encourage acts of inclusion and exclusion that lead to our understanding of national identity as 'sameness' and non-conforming practices as 'difference' (Wodak et al., 1999). It may be that our national identity is challenged when a 'fellow Canadian'—that is, someone who is typically Caucasian and Christian, as we saw in Carver and Harrie's (2017) research and Leblanc's (2017a, 2017b) reporting above—commits an act of violence that could be classified as terrorism. We may perceive that one is not officially a 'terrorist' until they are so labelled by a political leader, regardless of the law, but leaders often have their own agendas to fulfill when they choose to use or eschew this term.

3.3 Terrorism and Politics

As I have already alluded to, critical analyses of the “spectacle of terrorism” (Giroux, 2006) and Western terrorist policy are plentiful within the realm of terrorism studies. A number of critical discourse analysts have chosen to focus their efforts on speeches made by American leadership, such as Graham, Keenen and Dowd’s (2004) discourse-historical analysis of George W. Bush’s call-to-arms speech for the war on terror and Lazar and Lazar’s (2007) similar approach to analyzing speeches by American presidents that advance the “New World Order” (p. 45). The former argued that “such texts, while often posing as ‘revolutionary’, ostensibly function as reactionary forces to preserve the status quo of a particular group” (Graham, Keenen & Dowd, 2004, p. 201); the latter claimed that numerous linguistic strategies used in presidential speeches since the Cold War have positioned the United States as both above the law and a “global policeman” that mitigates the use of violence in the name of justice, peace, and self-defence (Lazar & Lazar, 2007, p. 51). Both of these tactics seem to have operated in favour of advancing the spectacle of terrorism, as the following research supports.

Similarly, studies on counter-terrorism discourse and foreign policy as it relates to terrorism have been of interest to researchers. Baker-Beall’s (2014) examination of the discourses surrounding the European Union’s (EU) ‘fight against terrorism’—a criminal justice-based approach distinct from the United States’ ‘war against terrorism’, which had a militaristic focus—found that the EU’s approach played a role in establishing what ‘common sense’ means for counter-terrorism strategies following September 11, 2001. Their discourse analysis highlighted the main strands of the ‘fight against terrorism’ discourse that constructs the terrorist ‘other’ as found in over 50 European Council

documents. These included the securitization of migration policy, the belief that the EU's 'openness' makes it a target of terrorist threats, the idea that terrorism has both an 'internal' and 'external' security requirements, and the notion that terrorism prevention requires addressing the "root causes" leading to acts of terrorism (Baker-Beall, 2014, p. 219). These themes led to identifying three key components to the 'fight against terrorism' discourse: terrorism as a criminal act; terrorism as perpetuated by a non-state actor; and terrorism as a "new" and "evolving" threat (Baker-Beall, 2014, p. 220).

According to Larsen (2008), "the basic difference between the EU and the US on this issue has been the EU's tendency to frame the problem of terrorism as an economic, political and social problem" compared to the US' "[focus] on terrorism as a military threat that could and should be addressed by military means" (as cited by Baker-Beall, 2014, pp. 227–8). Interestingly, Britain, under Prime Minister Blair's leadership, appears to have followed the American approach instead of the EU's in their legitimization of the war on terror. Kettell (2013) examined Blair's changing discursive strategy from 2001 to mid-2007 and found that the changes were problem-driven as a result of "tensions between practical developments and the discursive claims made about them" (p. 263). Along with a fascinating examination of the discursive challenges associated with the invasion of Iraq and the search for 'weapons of mass destruction', Kettell (2013) notes how the London bombing in 2005 shifted "to promote the virtues of strong leadership and interventionism via an increasingly elevated emphasis on the importance of values and ideas as key weapons in the fight against terrorism" (p. 273). Blair's stance was that action meant maintaining Britain's role as a global leader and Western ally, building on the discourse that failure was directly linked to not fighting hard enough for

implementing the West's 'shared values' in the nations of concern. While he eventually became an unpopular leader, his discursive framing of strong leadership, national security, and humanitarianism have persisted in the years since he left office (Kettell, 2013).

Research on Morocco's elite discourse on terrorism has also contributed pertinent findings to critical discourse studies on terrorism. Terrorism discourse in Morocco began to emerge after September 11, 2001, but even more so after the 2003 Casablanca bombings and Moroccan citizens' involvement in other attacks, such as Madrid in 2004 (Bartolucci, 2010). However, public speeches on terrorism are often not available; the Moroccan government rarely speaks on the topic under the assumption that their silence will minimize the problem. Bartolucci suggests this may be because the government does not want to admit that terrorists could emerge from within the country since this could weaken Morocco's development model and authoritarian leadership, though this seems quite speculative. When the government does make public statements, however, it does not distinguish between fundamentalism and terrorism—essentially conflating discourses on radicalism, extremism, Islamism, and terrorism (Bartolucci, 2010). This conflation is not unique to Morocco, and it often serves to highlight either the ignorance or the political self-servitude of the speaker (Karim, 2014). Discussions on homegrown terrorism, and indeed terrorism without a perceived connection to Islam, seem to be largely muted in Canadian politics and its media coverage; one wonders what the impetus would be for a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to all forms of radicalism and extremism not currently being addressed in Canada.

Bartolucci's (2010) study includes a discourse-historical approach to terrorism, clarifying that "...understandings of 'terrorism' are shaped by a temporary and constructed hegemony of understanding of 'what terrorism is' and the global 'War on Terror' paradigm, interacting with other discourses on security, threat, religion and identity" (p. 119). To that end, discussion around terrorism has been largely uncritical; challenges to the assumptions and cultural biases that accompany terrorism discourse have been slow to emerge. It is these assumptions that are used to justify military intervention (and in 2017 in the United States, proposed 'travel bans' on citizens of countries with a large Muslim population from entering the US), but our understanding of terrorism has been rather consistently applied across genres and spaces; to call the events of September 11, 2001 'terrorism' has become so natural that it is uncontested (Bartolucci, 2010).

Several linguistic strategies are used to shape political discourse. Bhatia's (2009) study uses a corpus of political discourses employed by the Bush administration from 2001 to 2004 using critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, membership categorization analysis, and discourse as metaphor (see Bhatia, 2008, for a similar analysis of the Bush administration's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism). Metaphor, in particular, "introduces to political discourse the paradoxical combination of clarity and ambiguity necessary to present a biased and ideological representation of the world as impartial and objective" (Bhatia, 2009, p. 280). One of the most well-known metaphors used to justify US military action was the supposed presence of 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMD) in Iraq, which was co-classified with terrorism as a threat (Fairclough, 2005, as cited in Bhatia, 2009); the term 'WMD' is only used when nations

on the ‘axis of evil’ possess them, despite the fact that many countries own nuclear weapons. This led to a second metaphor, ‘good versus evil’, used to justify the Iraq invasion and search for WMDs. Once it became clear that there was a lack of evidence for the presence of WMDs, the government turned to an emotional appeal for the good of liberty, freedom, and democracy—necessarily suggesting that Iraq was neither good, free, nor democratic (Bhatia, 2009).

Finally, the metaphor of barbarism is evidenced in President Bush’s statement that “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists...there is no middle ground”. Here, Bush polarizes the world and again highlights the nature of the us vs. them dichotomy; as controllers of the narrative, the Bush administration is allowing only one truth—that allied countries must choose to support the United States—to be considered valid (Bhatia, 2009). While I had many issues with Bhatia’s approach and method in this study, I did find this metaphor analysis insightful. English speakers may not realize the extent to which metaphors are used in everyday conversation and how their use influences the interpretation of a message. It is therefore important to identify their presence in political discourse and analyze the ‘representation of the world’ it portrays.

3.4 Conclusion

This literature review has covered the key research areas of interest to critical discourse analysts studying terrorism, including the construction of terrorist identity and political policy and discourse on terrorism. These studies demonstrate the value that a CDA approach offers in identifying ideological constructs in language. The media has been a strong focus of research to date, specifically on the role they have played in perpetuating manipulative discourse and trumpeting harmful ideologies on terrorist identity. The

studies presented here largely focus on terrorism as it has been constructed since 2001, since it is this usage that will primarily be considered in this thesis. Having also considered the historical usage of the word, we now have a solid foundation for understanding the social and historical events that have led to our current understanding of the word.

The terrorism policies and statements of several governing bodies have been analyzed, such as those of the US, Britain, the European Union, and Morocco. However, I was not able to find a parallel study within the field of critical discourse analysis that examines Canadian political documents related to terrorism. This is the gap I aim to address in this thesis. In the next chapter, I outline how I plan to accomplish this by presenting my theoretical framework.

4 Chapter: Theoretical Framework

We have seen that terrorism as a research subject has received renewed interest in the last 15 years, and the research within critical discourse studies that was reviewed in the previous chapter demonstrates that CDA adds a valuable perspective to the literature. As I have stated, my intent with this thesis is to examine the discursive construction of terrorism and terrorists within a Canadian context. To do this, I will use CDA for my theoretical framework, with a particular focus on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework as both theory and methodology. I will begin this chapter by defining a few key terms, then describing the history of CDA and its contributing theories. I will conclude by discussing the three-dimensional framework and the specific benefits it offers.

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

While CDA has come into its own as a field within the social sciences, it is unlike other disciplines in that it does not have a fixed research approach; instead, CDA can be considered "a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda" (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011, p. 357). The commonality between these approaches is the theoretical position that language and society are inextricably linked; discourse is shaped by social structures, relations, and identities, but it also shapes them. Discourses can help to produce or expand power relations, and therefore the ideological use of language that allows those in power to maintain it. CDA's aim is to make these ideologically significant aspects of discourse more transparent to the lay

person (Fairclough et al., 2011). In order to understand CDA, ideology, and power, we must first define how we use these terms.

For my purposes, ‘critical’ is understood as “the use of rational thinking to question arguments or prevailing ideas” (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 358)¹³. Similarly, Machin and Mayr (2012) consider ‘critical’ to be a means of “‘denaturalizing’ the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences and taken-for-granted assumptions in texts” (p. 5). This allows us to understand not just what the speaker or author is doing in a text, but *how* they are doing it. A critical approach to discourse analysis allows us to reveal tactics that seem normal at first glance, but in reality hide ideologies that strategically shape how a person or event is characterized (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Additionally, I consider ‘discourse’ to mean “a form of social practice” that connects “a particular discursive event to the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it” (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 357). In other words, discourse is understood as the network of political, social, and linguistic conditions that make a text or utterance acceptable within a particular context, and CDA gives us a sense of how language is used to share knowledge, establish social organizations, and wield power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Many CDA researchers use this understanding of discourse to study the consequences of “social and discursive processes” with a focus on how language constructs “cultural categories that legitimate and perpetuate inequalities” (Lin, 2014, p. 215).

¹³ One way I have taken a critical approach with this research is through the use of researcher reflexivity, which I address in Chapter 5.

A key concept within the CDA framework is that of ‘ideology’, which emerged from Althusser’s work on the subject and was further developed by Volosinov (Fairclough et al., 2011; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). While ideology is generally understood to mean “a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8), CDA is interested in its disguise within discourse, such as with the use of metaphor, analogy, or group categorization (van Dijk, 2009). This leads to its embedding as a collectively accepted—and often biased—representation of a subject (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough’s (1989) view of ideology is as a language-based alternative to physical acts of force and violence; that is, that ideological discourse serves to legitimate or disguise the inequities it contains (as cited in Lemke, 1995).

Finally, Machin and Mayr (2012) define ‘power’ as “privileged access to social resources...which provides authority, status, and influence to those who gain this access and enables them to dominate, coerce and control subordinate groups” (p. 24). Power concerns not only the interpersonal dynamics of the interactants, but also the control over how texts are produced and distributed. While power is typically considered a feature of public discourse that helps to preserve social inequalities, it can also be a tool of resistance and protest (van Dijk, 2011).

CDA’s theoretical background draws from the work of a few principle researchers. One influential theory that is central to the CDA methodology is Bakhtin’s theory of intertextuality. Intertextuality is perhaps most concisely defined by Bazerman (2004), who characterize it as “the relation each text has to the texts surrounding it” (p. 84). Bakhtin is often credited with defining the concept, if not with coining the word; his

term *dialogism* views all forms of expression as part of an ongoing chain of expressions in which new statements accept earlier utterances and anticipate future responses (Bazerman, 2004). In other words, writing is “a reading of the anterior literary corpus” and the text is “an absorption of and a reply to another text” (Kristeva, 1984, p. 39). Bakhtin incorporates the idea of text as social action by recognizing a text’s role in history: “Not only the meaning of the utterance but also the very fact of its performance is of historical and social significance” (Bakhtin & Volosinov, 1978, as cited in Allen, 2011, p. 16). Kristeva (1984) used Bakhtin’s dialogism and concept of heteroglossia—the idea that words are never our own and that language contains many voices—to coin the term *intertextuality*. Though Kristeva’s focus was on literary theory, later theorists further developed the social aspect of intertextuality for use across many genres (Fairclough, 1992b; Fairclough, 1992c; Selzer, 1993; Allen, 2011). What has remained consistent is the idea that intertextuality is “the sum total of all the voices drawn by a writer into his or her developing text and as all the voices heard by readers in the experience of that writing” (Selzer, 1993, p. 176).

Fairclough relies on intertextuality as a way to analyze the blending of discourses (Titscher et al., 2000). As I outlined in my historical literature review, I felt it was important to develop some understanding of the history of terrorism before conducting my own analysis on recently published Canadian political reports on the subject. While this was partially to inform myself in preparation for my research, it was also acknowledgement that the concept of terrorism has a past that writers implicitly and explicitly draw from when constructing a text. Therefore, intertextuality is a useful way to understand the four reports I will analyze not only as a continuation of historical voices

on the subject of terrorism, but also as a blending of the discourses contained within those four reports.

In sum, critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the “linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures” (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 146). As the above overview demonstrates, CDA draws on a number of different theories that form the basis for these principles: that language use “reproduces and transforms society and culture” (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 146); that language use is ideological; that historical context is necessary to understand discourses; and that discourse can be used to both contain and gain power. This general understanding of CDA applies to several methodologies within the discipline, but I have selected Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework for this study. Next, I will describe this approach and explain why I selected it.

4.2 Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Framework

According to Fairclough (1995), CDA is an analytical framework “for studying language in its relation to power and ideology” (p. 1). Fairclough’s (1995) approach to CDA considers how ideologies become naturalized, how these naturalized ideologies inform interactions, and how interactions are informed by agreed-upon ideological practices. This method depends on certain assumptions, mainly that speech is a social action that depends on certain social structures, and that these structures both presuppose and are produced by action (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework incorporates social theory, practice theory, and linguistics to study the structure of social practices and the ways in which social actors attempt to achieve their ideological outcomes within these practices. In other words, an instance of discourse is

“simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 4). The strategy for using this three-layer model of social reality is to connect microlinguistic analysis—that is, an analysis of the linguistic aspects of a text—to discourse practices and social structures at the intermediate and macro levels, respectively (Lin, 2014). Analysis using the three-dimensional framework is not necessarily a linear progression, but rather a recursive process of description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 1992a). Figure 1 is my adaptation of Fairclough’s (1992a) three-dimensional framework, which illustrates how these three dimensions of discourse will interact in my study.

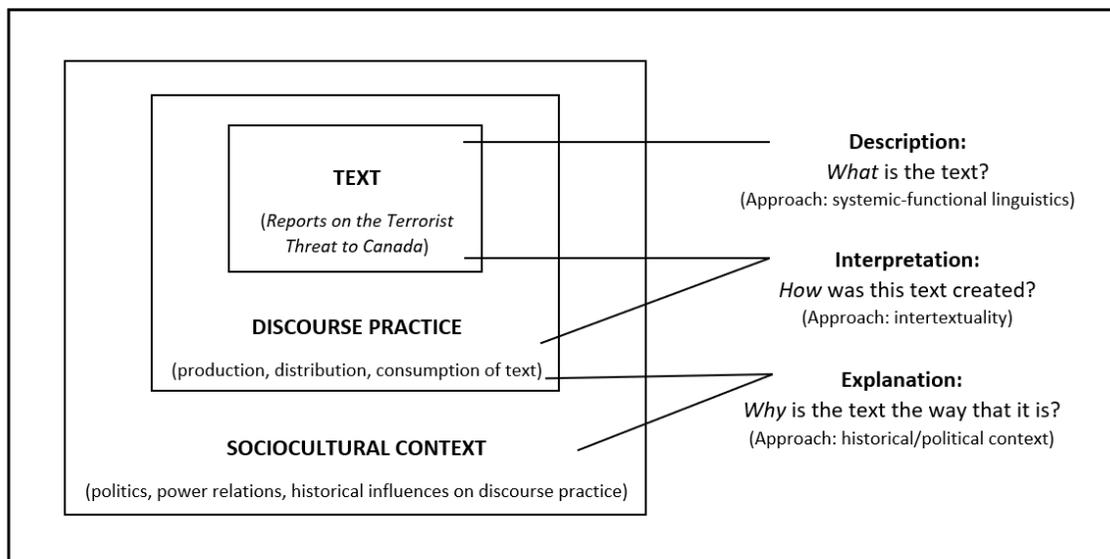


Figure 1 Adaptation of Fairclough's (1992a) three-dimensional framework.

To further clarify Figure 1, I will briefly summarize the three dimensions of the framework (Fairclough, 1992a), and in that summary highlight how I will address that level of discourse in my research.

- Text: in my study, ‘text’ refers specifically to the written product. My text is comprised of parts of the four reports on the terrorist threat to Canada. In short, I

aim to find out *what* the text is—how has language been used to construct it? According to Fairclough (1992a), analysis of a text may include some combination of examining the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, or structure; I will follow his example and use systemic-functional linguistics for this task. This analysis is critical to answering my first research question, as I aim to find out how the government discursively constructs terrorism in the 2017 *Report*, and it will also address my question on terrorist identity.

- Discourse practice: the discursive practice “specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation, for example which types of discourse...are drawn upon and how they are combined” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 4). Fairclough also explains it as a form of social practice concerning the process of producing, distributing, and consuming a text. In the case of the reports I am studying, I consider who produced the reports, the influences that led to the explicit references contained within the text, who the audience for the text is, and how they might interpret it¹⁴. I conceptualize this level of the framework as answering *how* the text was created—what forces led to its existence? I use intertextuality to identify the historicity of concepts (production), how those concepts are transformed for a particular purpose (distribution), and how one reads a text based on the historicity they draw upon to understand it (consumption) (Fairclough, 1992a). This examination will help me address my second research question

¹⁴ As I did not use human participants in this research, I cannot state with certainty how the audience for this text would interpret it, but this is not to say that my interpretation is invalid. I address this further in the section on researcher validity in the next chapter.

concerning the evolution of this discourse across the four reports, but it is also useful for observing patterns in how these reports construct terrorist identity.

- Sociocultural context: this level of the framework “attends to issues of concern in social analysis such as the institutional and organizational circumstances...that [shape] the nature of the discursive practice” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 4). In other words, we can examine how politics, power relations, and historical influences impress upon the discourse practice. Here, I attempt to address *why* the text is the way that it is—how does it fit with other discourses? To do this, I aim to explain the historical and political motives that may have contributed to this particular discourse practice; this analysis began primarily in my literature review and will be expanded upon in my discussion chapter.

As I stated above, Fairclough often utilizes systemic-functional linguistics for text analysis, and I have opted to do the same. An explanation of this form of language analysis follows.

4.2.1 Systemic-functional linguistics

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework may use systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) as its method of text analysis. SFL helps interpret how language is used and how it is structured for use based on the assumption that most, if not all, language use is ideological (Eggins, 2004). It operates under four main assumptions: language is functional; its function is to make meaning; the meaning is influenced by context; and the process of using language is semiotic, which allows people to make meaning by choice (Eggins, 2004). These choices are determined primarily through the semiotic system of language, in which it is generally understood that a particular meaning has been

arbitrarily assigned to a particular representation within a culture. By choosing certain words instead of others, one encodes meaning in the content that will be realized by the listener in a certain way. Therefore, an SFL researcher would question what the function of a particular language choice is and why the speaker did not instead make another choice. A systems analysis of a text considers these choices as a set of possibilities from which one is chosen (Eggins, 2004).

What distinguishes SFL from other forms of language analysis is its assertion that language is both a “social process *and* an analytical methodology which permits the detailed and systematic description of language patterns” (Eggins, 2004, p. 21). In other words, SFL analyses social interactions in relation to their social and cultural context. This can be done on a broader level by considering the context of culture, and more specifically by examining the context of the situation in which the text is produced. Texts produce multiple meanings simultaneously, namely ideational (what the text is about), interpersonal (the relationship between the interactants), and textual (whether the text is written or spoken); these meanings are also known as the metafunctions of language (Eggins, 2004).

4.3 Application

CDA is a theoretical framework that will help me examine reports about terrorism published by Public Safety Canada. As stated above, Fairclough’s descriptive approach to CDA considers discourse at the levels of language, discourse practice, and socio-cultural context. SFL is the method of textual analysis I will primarily use to identify encoded meanings in the linguistic choices made by the author(s) and interpret why these choices may have been made. Examining the historical, political, and social factors embedded in

the production of the discourse are key to understanding how the audience may interpret these texts; this level of analysis requires acknowledgement of the intertextual elements that contributed to the text's creation. While identifying explicit examples of intertextuality in a text is straightforward, Fairclough's framework falls short when it comes to identifying the implicit historical influences present in any text or discourse. I attempted to address this shortcoming with the historical literature review of terrorism in chapter 2. This historical overview also supports my analysis of the sociocultural context to help explain why the text has been constructed the way it has. In the next chapter, I will outline how I have applied the method for CDA analysis suggested by Wodak and Meyer (2001).

5 Chapter: Method

This chapter explains how I collected my data and conducted my analysis. These decisions were informed by my research questions:

1. How does the Canadian government discursively construct ‘terrorism’ in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*?
2. How has this construction evolved since the first edition of the report in 2013?
3. What is the discursive construction of Canadian identity in the 2017 *Report*?

Since the bulk of my research will focus on the 2017 *Report*, I will provide an overview of its contents and explain my rationale for selecting this text. Following this, I will outline my methods for this research, including a description of selected tools and a reflexive look at how my own biases contribute to both the data selection and analysis.

5.1 The Data

The reports that I will analyze in this study are produced as part of a commitment made in *Building Resistance Against Terrorism: Canada’s Counter-terrorism Strategy* (2012).

According to former Minister of Public Safety The Honourable Vic Toews, “When the Government released its strategy in 2012, it was with the understanding that partnership with Canadians is important and that citizens need to be informed of the terrorist threat in as open and straightforward a manner as possible” (Public Safety Canada, 2013, p. 1).

The reports are presented as an update on how the terrorist threat to Canada has changed in the last year. The first two reports were published under a Conservative federal government, and the most recent two reports were published under a Liberal federal government.

The *2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* (2017) is the fourth annual report produced by Public Safety Canada and published on their website. The first annual report was published in 2013; no report was published in 2015. It is available both as html directly on the webpage and as a downloadable pdf. The 21-page document contains only two graphics: a headshot portrait of current Minister of Public Safety The Honourable Ralph Goodale and one map. The text is written in full paragraphs with minimal use of bullet points. The document begins with a Ministerial Foreword, in which The Honourable Goodale explains that the report “takes a clear-eyed view of the dangers to Canada posed by terrorism” (p. 1) before summarizing recent terrorist events and detailing related government actions. An Executive Summary precedes the remainder of the text, which is organized under three main headings: *Terrorism Today*, *Addressing the Global and Domestic Threat*, and *Looking Ahead*. *Terrorism Today* includes the subsections Threats to Canada, Capabilities, and the Global Context, while *Addressing the Global and Domestic Threat* includes the subsections Global Collaboration, National Action, and Community Engagement.

The series of documents are available on Public Safety Canada’s website and are not particularly difficult to find. The intended audience is Canadians, and presumably those who have an interest in how the Government protects “the safety and security of its citizens” (Public Safety Canada, 2017, p. 2). The text consistently emphasizes the government’s obligations to “[keep] Canadians safe and [safeguard] their rights and freedoms” (p. 4). It also provides information on actions the government is taking to fulfill those obligations. Thus, this text appears to have a dual purpose: to provide factual, open-source information on terrorism incidents, groups, and threats; and to highlight

government activities that are actively countering these incidents, groups, and threats in Canada and abroad. While this text claims to be an official, factual report written by the federal government to Canadians about the ‘terrorist threat’ facing the country, it is equally a political marketing piece meant to assuage fears by emphasizing the importance of certain government programs and activities. As a document that represents the government’s position on this sensitive issue, it is important to identify the biases and ideologies that this document may be reinforcing.

5.1.1 Rationale for selection

The *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* has been produced annually since 2013 as a report accessible to the general public to learn about domestic and international developments related to terrorism from the previous year. I selected the 2017 edition of this document for deeper study because it is the most recent version, and I believe it is intended to be representative of the Canadian government’s official stance on terror-related risks to the country. Therefore, it holds authority and considerable power in its representation of the ‘terrorist threat to Canada’. It is reasonable to assume that those who read this document would accept the narratives produced here; Canadians may assume that this report will align with the narratives on terrorism that have been present in other Western political and media sources for many years, and they are likely to find that it does. Analyzing this document will help me understand how the government discursively constructs terrorism and terrorists.

However, I also wanted to know whether this construction of ‘the terrorist threat’ has changed. As there are four issues of this report—two produced under a Conservative government and two produced under a Liberal government—I decided to incorporate all

four reports in my study with an intertextual analysis that would highlight themes that are either politically motivated or consistently associated with terrorism. Below, I will describe in greater detail how I collected data for my transitivity and intertextual analyses before explaining why these analytical tools and others will be used to answer my research questions.

5.1.2 Data selection for transitivity analysis

Based on headings used in the document, I selected sections that were most closely related to the Canadian context (for example, I did not analyze sentences from the section titled, “The Global Context”). After this selection, I identified 54 sentences that evoked Canadians, the Government, or similar groups actively or passively, which resulted in 112 clauses. I identified 60 sentences that evoked terrorists or synonyms of ‘terrorist’ actively or passively, which resulted in 157 clauses. At this stage, I divided the sentences into clauses and eliminated clauses from the data that, while part of a sentence that evoked my desired themes, did not include those participants or was otherwise no longer relevant to my research questions.

At first, I categorized terrorists and Canadians with an extremist connection together, since I thought a Canadian reading the document would be more likely to identify fellow Canadians as terrorists than as Canadians. However, once I began analysing my data, I decided that it may be useful for some of my analysis to distinguish between foreign terrorists and Canadian terrorists. To that end, I have three categories of participants in this data: Canadians, terrorists, and Canadian terrorists. When I use only two categories of participants, I have grouped ‘Canadian terrorists’ and ‘terrorists’ together. My data consists of 230 clauses: 108 about Canadians or their synonyms, 90

about terrorists or their synonyms, and 32 about Canadians associated with terrorism (or a total of 122 clauses about all terrorists).

I decided to organize my data so that every clause is in the active voice. This helped me visualize both passive and suppressed participants so that I could more fully understand the patterns of processes in the text. Organizing my data in this way allowed me to more easily group sentence subjects and associated processes, since not every participant in these clauses is also the grammatical subject of the sentence. While this is the approach I took to facilitate my own analysis of the data, it is not intended to minimize the analytical usefulness of the passive voice; I coded the data in such a way as to recognize when I had manipulated the clause from passive to active, when a subject was carried forward from a previous clause or immediate context, and when I assumed the identity of a suppressed participant based on broader intertextual knowledge of terrorism, politics, and law enforcement (see Table 1). Excerpts of my analysis can be found in Appendices A.1 and A.2.

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Process</u>	<u>Participant</u>
The Government	is enhancing	accountability and transparency
Canada	is also faced with	threats from Canadians
Some individuals	are attracted to	such ideologies
The assailant	drove	a U-Haul truck
Martin Couture-Rouleau and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau	carried out	attacks

Table 1 Examples of transitivity analysis

5.1.3 Data selection for intertextual analysis

Building a thorough understanding of how the government discursively constructs terrorism includes considering what sources and ideas it draws from. To conduct the intertextual analysis of the four reports, I read each report and recorded explicit

references to named terrorist groups and individuals, named terrorist acts or events (excluding ‘plots’ or ‘attempts’, since these terms indicate the acts were foiled or unsuccessful), and named governing documents. In order to narrow my data only to written products, I elected not to include committees, organizations, or working groups, or programs referenced in the reports. I only included examples of terrorist individuals identified as “a gunman”, “an attacker”, “an individual”, or similar when they were closely tied to a specific event, and therefore identifiable in media reporting of the event. I will address how the specification and genericization of those considered terrorists is inconsistently handled between reports. Fractured terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda versus al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, were counted as two distinct groups. Vague references to events (e.g. “recently unfolding events in Iraq in 2014”) are not included. Finally, terrorist acts or events that are listed in a single sentence have been counted as distinct occurrences, and those referenced multiple times have only been counted once per report. An example of this intertextual analysis is found in Appendix A.3.

5.2 Analytical Tools

Transitivity and intertextual analyses are the primary tools I used to begin an investigation of my data, and I describe them below. However, other tools also proved useful in interpreting the findings that transitivity and intertextuality revealed. Much of my analysis was conducted in such a way that the use of these additional tools emerged organically. While I started my analysis with a few extra tools in mind, not all of them ended up being fruitful or noteworthy. Instead, after identifying patterns in my data, I returned to the suite of CDA tools available to help me determine what the patterns signified. I have provided a brief explanation of each of the supplementary tools I used to

contextualize my use of these terms in later chapters. The list below is not exhaustive, as I refer to and define other tools in this method or in the Analysis chapter when they are useful to explain a small finding. However, I consider the tools below the most useful in identifying “implicit or indirect meanings” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 30) in my research.

5.2.1 Transitivity analysis

Eggins (2004) agrees with Halliday’s (1994) assessment that we can use linguistic analysis both to understand “how, and why, the text means what it does” and to evaluate “why the text is, or is not, an effective text for its own purposes” (as cited in Eggins, 2004, p. 329). This involves “an interpretation not only of the text itself but also of its context...and of the systemic relationship between context and text” (Halliday, 1994, as cited in Eggins, 2004, p. 329). My use of systemic-functional linguistics (SFL), specifically transitivity analysis, to evaluate the text will help me to interpret it within its cultural context. Transitivity analysis forms part of the experiential meaning of a text—that is, descriptions of how we interact with and understand the world around us. It helps us situate the text and describe “what is being talked about” (Eggins, 2004, p. 249).

By selecting certain verbal processes over others and choosing to represent participants actively or passively, we construct our experience in a certain way. As language is full of choices, these choices can be composed to encourage a particular understanding of the text we construct (Eggins, 2004). The strategic composition of a text, as we might expect a government to do, recalls van Dijk’s (2006) research on manipulation. It may be helpful to keep in mind that discourses of power, and in this case about terrorism, may foreground collective benefit and national safety and background problems through the use of discursive tools like nominalization—representing verb

processes as nouns—or suppression, which backgrounds a social actor or information from a representation (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Transitivity analysis will help to identify some of these strategic choices and how they construct a particular identity of terrorists and Canadians.

5.2.2 Intertextual analysis

Fairclough (2003) states that intertextuality is “the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text” (p. 39). However, it is also selective; a text can include elements we expect to see, but it can also strategically exclude elements that may be less convenient or do not suit the narrative (Fairclough, 2003). Like much of government writing, the creation of a report like this is inherently intertextual. Though the text itself might be composed by a handful of authors, it is reviewed by multiple levels of management and ultimately approved at the ministerial level; additionally, it must position itself among the stated priorities of the government, existing policies, and legislation. One might argue that a government document’s goal is to be as intertextual as relevancy will allow. Selzer (1993) confirms this argument with his notion of communication chains, in which each document is developed in response to other documents that require intertextual knowledge to make meaning. This series of four reports could be considered part of a communication chain, then, since they are produced by the same department on the same topic. This will be particularly pertinent in my analysis of the reports as I will be examining the explicit intertextual references it makes.

5.2.3 Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion is the process of identifying words in a text that that pertain to a single theme. The linking of several of these words is called a lexical chain. For example, a

document that uses the words ‘opportunity’, ‘cooperation’, ‘exciting’, and ‘dynamic’ creates a lexical chain that we might categorize as ‘possibility’—and while on its own is not necessarily useful, this theme in a budget summary may suggest that the document is trying to represent potentially unfavourable news in a positive light (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The specific type of cohesion I will be examining is co-hyponymy classification, which is “when two (or more) lexical items used in a text are both subordinate members of a superordinate class” (Eggins, 2004, p. 43). For example, the words ‘strategy’ and ‘battle’ can both be considered subordinate members of the class ‘military’. I used lexical cohesion in my transitivity analysis to identify themed patterns in the types of processes used throughout the *2017 Report*.

5.2.4 Suppression

Fairclough (2003) notes that the information we can obtain from a text comes from both what is present and what is missing. Analyzing a text for suppression is looking for what has been excluded and why (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This can be applied on the level of the text, in which the analyst considers why certain key words or participants are missing, on the level of text production, in which the analyst considers why key events or concepts are missing. This can be difficult to do; we are not accustomed to reading an unfamiliar text and questioning why someone or something is not referenced in it. In my analysis, suppression was used in the transitivity analysis to account for participants who were absent from the text. It was particularly useful for the intertextual analysis to help me identify examples of missing documents and terrorist groups, individuals, and events that one might expect to see based on both the nature of the report and the other intertextual references that are made. Since the intertextual analysis identified features that were

present in some reports and absent in others, it created an evidence-based way to consider how suppression is used to construct a changing narrative.

5.2.5 Presupposition

Presupposition is “a taken-for-granted assumption found in communication” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 222). All language use relies on presupposition; without it, we would need to provide an explanation for every word we use. When used critically, however, presupposition identifies concepts that are presented as an assumed truth that does not require debate (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Presupposition is inherently intertextual, since the speaker is assuming that the listener has existing knowledge of a word or concept. In CDA, presupposition is used to identify aspects of language or meaning that are presented as mutually understood and accepted yet may in reality be quite uncertain. We already know that “language is continually used to foreground certain things and silence others” (p. 153), so analyzing a text for its assumptions can be beneficial. As with suppression, identifying presupposition in a text can be difficult since it requires distancing ourselves from our knowledge of the content and considering the origins of that knowledge. For me, it required several critical readings of the text. I used presupposition in my intertextual analysis to identify how certain concepts in the reports were presented uncontested.

5.2.6 Ideological squaring and Othering

One way the news media can sway our opinions is through “ideological squaring” (Van Dijk, 1993, as cited in Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 78). The square consists of four features: (1) presenting the ‘good’ features of ‘us’; (2) presenting the ‘bad’ features of ‘them’; (3) mitigating the good actions of ‘them’, and (4) mitigating the bad actions of ‘us’. A

similar term to this is Othering, which is typically found in sociological analysis and seems to emerge from Said's concept of orientalism (Silva, 2017; Karim, 2014). I use the two terms fairly interchangeably, since they both refer to the idea of constructing 'them' as different from 'us', and I capitalize 'Other' when I refer to the word as the process or outcome of this construction. Of particular interest to my research is how the ideological square is used to construct Canadian identity; this tool was useful for both my transitivity and intertextual analysis.

5.2.7 Securitization

Securitization is not typically considered a CDA tool, but it is a discursively constructed ideology that Others certain communities and creates boundaries between 'us' and 'them' (Buonfino, 2006). It pertains to a highly politicized process in which individuals become security concerns, thus permitting extreme measures to minimize threats; in other words, "when political actors declare an issue a *security* issue...this move serves to 'inject' security into that issue" (Hughes, 2007, p. 85). As I alluded to in my theoretical literature review, securitization often comes at the expense of civil rights and liberties, such as in the case of securitized immigration policy (Baker-Beall, 2014); when governments associate immigration with a threat to national security, they Other immigrants as dangerous and a menace. For this research, I used securitization to explain the strategic implications of certain patterns in my intertextual analysis.

5.3 Researcher Reflexivity

The intent of researcher reflexivity is for the author to recognize his or her own sociopolitical leanings and acknowledge how those beliefs may have influenced the interpretation of the text (Lin, 2014). Finlay (2002) attests that reflexive analysis is a

difficult and subjective task that involves oscillating between experience and awareness. Hertz (1997) phrases it well: “To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about the experience while simultaneously living in the moment” (as cited in Finlay, 2002, p. 533). Though its application varies between disciplines, it recognizes bias at a basic level and engages in meta-analysis throughout the research at a more thorough level. In its broadest application, researcher reflexivity helps evaluate the quality of the research being produced (Finlay, 2002).

It is important to note that researcher reflexivity is not intended to eliminate bias entirely. Instead, the recognition of one’s bias can lead to more intense insight (Finlay, 2002). Researchers in CDA recognize that a single event can be interpreted in multiple ways, and reflexivity is a way to celebrate these disparate voices rather than dismiss them as biased. Its inclusion can be incorporated in the study’s method and can be as simple as a paragraph recognizing the researcher’s presence and position (Finlay, 2002). However, since CDA scholars believe that all language use and research is prone to bias, this recognition can also be a way of improving the method based on the efforts the researcher makes to reduce this influence. Since I believe that identifying my own subjectivity and the steps I took to minimize it will ultimately contribute to the quality of my research, I wish to consider my own position and the biases that led to this topic, these texts, and my analysis and interpretation.

5.3.1 Acknowledgement of researcher position and bias

I am fortunate to live in a country that experiences relatively little terrorist activity and upholds the right to freedom of expression; I am therefore privileged to be able to write critically about a topic that, as a white Canadian, arguably has very little overlap with my

day-to-day life. My interest in the topic of terrorism and my use of CDA to analyze it is not purely academic; CDA considers social justice and equality one of its aims (Locke, 2004), which means that I believe terrorism discourses in Canada are socially unjust and inadequate. I also agree with the commonly held CDA perspective that all language use is inherently ideological and biased, including my own, and that identifying those ideologies and biases is worthwhile (Machin & Mayr, 2012). With that in mind, I began this research with the belief that all government-constructed terrorism narratives are problematic because terrorism itself cannot be objectively defined; this reveals my bias towards the negative nature of these ideologies.

I took the following steps to address some potentially biased aspects of my analysis:

- To minimize bias about the discursive enactment used by a particular political party, I incorporated analysis that considered documents produced under two federal governments.
- To minimize bias around the frequency of selected patterns I identified in the text, I quantified these findings as a percentage within a category of analysis and included the percentages of all other types within the category. While I did not apply “statistical significance” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 207) in the strictest sense, I am transparent about comparing the percentages to identify potentially meaningful abnormalities.
- To minimize bias around selected patterns I identified in the text, I proposed possible explanations for the patterns that are not innately problematic.

- To minimize critique around my application of the term ‘terrorism’, I used the definition found in the *Criminal Code* as consistently as possible despite my personal belief that it is also problematic.

Though I did approach my analysis with expectations of being able to draw certain conclusions, those expectations were by and large not supported by my analysis.

Regardless, I realize that my analysis was influenced by my desire to find problems in the texts. I also attempt to simultaneously position myself as both researcher and ‘average Canadian reader’; my portrayal of ‘average’ may not be accurate. However, my presence in the research does not discredit the fact that I am part of the Canadian audience for these documents. Instead, as Finlay (2002) points out, my interpretation is one of several that average readers and CDA scholars could take from this text, and these findings will be presented in the following chapter.

6 Chapter: Analysis and Findings

Having set the historical context for terrorism and presented relevant CDA literature on the subject, I then provided an overview of the CDA approach. I explained Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, SFL and transitivity, and intertextuality as methodologies and methods that will serve the purposes of my research. My method chapter outlined my primary text, the *2017 Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*, and the steps I took to gather and analyze my data. I briefly described my selected tools to support my analysis and took a reflexive look at my role as researcher. Now, I will proceed with my examination of the discursive construction of terrorism and terrorist identity in the *2017 Report* and the three earlier reports that were published in 2013, 2014, and 2016. This chapter presents my analysis and findings based on transitivity analysis first, followed by my intertextual analysis, according to the method I outlined. I provide a short summary of these findings at the end of each section; I offer a more thorough discussion in the next chapter.

6.1 Transitivity Analysis

In order to simplify my description of the analysis, I have elected to use the labels 'Canadians' and 'terrorists'. This decision stems from the title of the report: it is a report about the 'terrorist' threat to Canada. 'Canadians', based on participants in the text, may refer to Canadian private citizens, Canada, any level of government or its representatives, the current federal government, Canadian legislation or strategy (a nominalization representative of federal employees or elected officials), or Canadian law enforcement, security, or intelligence agencies. The word 'terrorists' may refer to terrorist-type events, individuals associated with these events, violent extremists, named terrorist

organizations, extremist travellers, tools used for terrorist purposes (nominalization representative of terrorists), countries associated with terrorism, people holding extreme beliefs, or those susceptible to extreme beliefs. In this section, I will share the findings of my transitivity analysis based on processes, participants, and passivization. The ideas presented in my analysis will be further explored in a separate discussion section.

6.1.1 Processes

In transitivity analysis, a process type is “the actions, events or relationships between implicated participants ...[and] may be situated circumstantially” (Eggs, 2004, p. 249).

In traditional grammar, we understand the process as the verb or action of the sentence.

Table 2 summarizes the process type count for each type of analysis. This initial count is useful for identifying notable statistics.

<u>Process</u>	Canadians		<i>Terrorists</i>		<i>Canadian Terrorists</i>		All Terrorists	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>
Material	60	56	38	42	21	66	59	48
Mental	18	17	22	24	3	9	25	20
Verbal	12	11	16	18	0	0	16	13
Relational	18	17	14	16	7	22	21	17
Existential	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1
Total	108		90		32		122	

Table 2 Process count for transitivity data

These counts show that 66% of processes for Canadian terrorists are material. By returning to the text, I can see that 11 of these processes are in the passive voice used to recount an event. A number of processes in the rest of the data—material, mental, and verbal—similarly use the passive voice and recount a past event. For example, in the clause “Martin Couture-Rouleau and Michael Zehaf-Bibeau carried out attacks” (p. 7), “carried out” is a passive material process describing a past event. My intertextual

analysis of events like this one follows in the next section and is an important component of my study; for the purposes of my transitivity analysis, however, I do not believe these passive clauses help me understand how this document discursively constructs the present or potential reality of the terrorist threat to Canada. Table 3 does not include processes from any category that describe past actions, which I believe is a fairer representation of the data for the purposes of my process analysis and research questions. Excerpts of my transitivity analysis can be found in Appendices A.1 and A.2.

<u>Process</u>	Canadians		<i>Non-Canadian Terrorists</i>		<i>Canadian Terrorists</i>		All Terrorists	
	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>%</u>
Material	55	56	31	38	10	50	41	40
Mental	16	16	21	26	3	15	24	24
Verbal	9	9	16	20	0	0	16	16
Relational	18	18	14	17	6	30	20	20
Existential	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	1
Total	98		82		20		102	

Table 3 Process count for transitivity data without simple past processes

6.1.1.1 Material processes

Material processes indicate a concrete, tangible action (Eggins, 2004). Table 3 shows that material processes comprise 56% of all processes for Canadians—16% more often than material processes for all terrorists. This suggests that this document constructs Canadians (and, perhaps more importantly, the government in power) as people of action: rather than saying or thinking something, they do it. Given that this document is a statement on ‘the terrorist threat to Canada’, the Government may be using mostly material processes as a way of reassuring Canadian readers and subtly reinforcing that these actions are necessary to protect Canadians. I conducted a lexical cohesion analysis on these material processes to identify in what sense, if any, the text frames Canadians. I

noticed that a military theme emerged with verbs like ‘launch’, ‘protect’, ‘prevent’, ‘disrupt’, ‘engage’, ‘strengthen’, ‘safeguard’, and ‘challenge’. We also see a less evident collaborative theme—‘work [together]’, ‘include’, ‘assist’, ‘contribute’—reinforcing that Canada is a cooperative and inclusive nation that works with citizens and international partners to accomplish the government’s goal of keeping Canadians safe, and an evolution theme with verbs like ‘evolve’, ‘adapt’, ‘improve’, ‘enhance’, and ‘change’.

Interestingly, the evolution theme spans both Canadian and terrorist processes. While it is usually the ‘threat’ that is evolving, there is one instance where the ‘legal landscape’ is evolving—likely in reference to Bill C-59, which includes amendments to the *Criminal Code* and creates three new Acts related to national security. Similarly, the Government is often framed as ‘adapting’ to the evolving threat; there is one instance in which terrorist groups are adapting, but not explicitly in response to something that has evolved—it is “in an effort to find new ways of committing attacks” (p. 7). Evolution, in its biological context, is a mechanism by which living organisms diversify, often to more complex variations, over an extended period of time (“Evolution”, n.d.). Adaptation is an outcome of evolution in which the organism becomes better suited to its habitat (“Adaptation”, n.d.). When applied to a sociopolitical context, we can understand evolution as the improvement of an approach or concept to make it more sophisticated, and adaptation as the response to something that has evolved. In other words, evolution is the action and adaptation is the reaction. Arguably, then, ‘adapt’ is used to describe terrorist groups above in the same sense as ‘evolve’, and the ‘evolving legal landscape’ is actually adapting to political circumstances. It is also worth noting that the threat is depicted as evolving and the government as reacting to it. This is likely reflective of the

unpredictable and rapidly changing nature of the threat, but it also suggests that Canada is unable to innovate and evolve its approach so that the threat must adapt to it; instead, the threat (and those who perpetuate it) is arguably more powerful in its ability to diversify its approaches more quickly than the government can diversify its defence.

Given that the threat of terrorism seems to hold power over Canada, the lexical chaining of a military theme in Canadian material processes is a logical strategy to maintain a semblance of power. One-third (32%) of Canadian material processes relate to the military theme, which suggests that safety and security are government priorities when discussing ‘the terrorist threat to Canada’. This is unsurprising; the selected clauses reiterate statements about “keeping Canadians safe” and “[ensuring] that Canada remains a fundamentally safe and peaceful nation” nine times. This discursive securitization of the country in the face of the terrorist threat and the metaphorical positioning of Canadian policy and law as a way to ‘safeguard’ and ‘protect’ Canadians seems a bit misleading: “measures in Bill C-59” are upheld as the way to “enhance Canada’s national security”, when in fact it is the actions taken, or not taken, by public servants and the military to enact those “measures” that will affect security. A number of these military-themed material processes seem to be using impersonalized participants (Machin & Mayr, 2012)—that is, the individuals responsible for the action have been replaced by a concept or strategy the Liberal government is using to increase the impact of a statement about security.

As mentioned earlier, we see that material processes comprise 40% of all terrorist processes, of which the military theme is present in 17% of material terrorist processes. Most of these instances relate to terrorists who ‘engage in terrorist attacks’, though we

also see that terrorists ‘mobilize’—something Canadians do not do. The Government also ‘engages’ (mostly with Canadians), but the reader can infer from this context that ‘engaging *with*’ an individual is a positive, collaborative process, and ‘engaging *in*’ an activity is a negative, destructive process. Additionally, the reader knows from context that a terrorist group’s ability to ‘mobilize [individuals] to violence’ is a negative association. If we were referring to our own resources, however, we would laud a military that could ‘mobilize to action’. Compared to the military theme used in Canadian processes, which is largely for good purposes, the theme is used negatively when discussing terrorists.

Since this document is positioned within the broader context of ‘the war on terror’, we would expect to see militaristic language. Interestingly, the lexical cohesion of the military theme is notably different for each participant. For Canadians, it is mostly used to describe political processes as a means to achieve national security; for terrorists, it is mostly used to describe individual or group participation in violent activities. Arguably, the military terms associated with terrorists are more literally applied than the terms used for Canadians, perhaps as a way of distinguishing between military action associated with violence and death—perhaps a more ‘barbaric’ interpretation—and military action associated with diplomacy and democracy—a civilized response. However, the fact that terrorists are 15% less frequently associated with processes in the military theme compared to Canadians may suggest that this document does not want to position terrorists as a threat that cannot be countered by Canadian forces. This perhaps relates to the repeated reassurance noted above that the government will protect Canadians and Canada. Additionally, the fact that twice as many material processes for

terrorists are in the passive voice compared to Canadian clauses may suggest that, while terrorists have been ‘doers’ in the past, Canada has successfully reduced the degree to which terrorists can be effective actors. This discursive interpretation of the military theme reflects the often complicated and controversial discussions surrounding the role the Canadian military should play in countering domestic and foreign adversaries.

6.1.1.2 Mental and verbal processes

Mental and verbal processes present the participant with less agency; that is, they do not accomplish a tangible action (Eggins, 2004). We see that mental and verbal processes are used slightly more frequently (8% and 7% more often, respectively) when representing terrorists. Mental processes relate to thought, and verbal processes relate to speech (in this context, it frequently refers to recruiting tactics), but neither results in tangible action. Combined with fewer material processes, this document may be representing terrorists as less capable of action. As noted by Machin and Mayr (2012), mental processes suggest busyness with no outcome, and verbal processes similarly position terrorists as talkers, but not doers. This positioning of Canadians as agents of change with material processes and terrorists more so as sayers and sensors further enforces the idea that Canadians are more powerful and more capable than terrorists. The document claims that terrorists have largely been focusing on online propagandist efforts; this, in addition to explanations about radicalization, supports the higher number of verbal and mental processes I found for terrorists (‘plan’, ‘inspire’, ‘encourage’, ‘radicalize’, ‘attracted [to]’, ‘aspire’, etc.).

While the majority of processes about Canadians are material, some are also deeply embedded and therefore deceptive. One notable example is the following statement: “...the Government is strengthening security and protecting rights by

proposing updates to keep pace with changing threats, the role of technology and an evolving legal landscape [by modernizing, establishing, and making legislative updates]”. This sentence portrays the government as very busy and successfully accomplishing a number of actions. However, when we break this sentence down, we see that the entire sentence hinges on “proposing”, which is a verbal process; as noted above, a verbal process is not a tangible action. It suggests that if the Government did not propose these updates, they would not be strengthening, protecting, or keeping pace. In fact, it is not possible to strengthen security or protect rights by proposal alone, which is the opposite of what this sentence seems to suggest; its true meaning is abstracted and, again, the participants are impersonalized. What’s more, if these legislative updates do not pass, the Government can claim (another verbal process) that their political opponents are against stronger security and the protection of Canadian rights.

Of the 25 mental and verbal processes attributed to Canadians, 44% correspond to a law enforcement theme with verbs like ‘suspect’, ‘inform’, ‘witness/see’, ‘charge’, ‘convict’, and ‘sentence’. As with the military theme, a law enforcement theme suggests a focus on the protection of Canadians. However, these processes are typically passivized in order to emphasize the recipients of the process and suppress the active participant responsible for the process (e.g., “there are just over 190 extremists...who are suspected of engaging in terrorist activity”, p. 3). Further, almost all of the processes that indicate a criminal offence are hypotheticals used in the same sentence in which returning extremist travellers (RETs) “*may be charged and convicted* of a terrorism offence and *sentenced* to prison” (p. 19, emphasis added). While law enforcement rightfully considers RETs suspicious, this report seems to suggest that they are often unable to turn this suspicion

into a conviction; of the approximately 60 RETs in Canada, only two were charged with “having travelled abroad to engage in terrorist activities” in 2017 (p. 3). The report does not indicate whether the individuals were later convicted, which is arguably the most significant part of the legal process. This highlights a possible disconnect between what law enforcement believes (mental processes) and any evidentiary result of this belief (verbal processes related to a legal conviction).

The mental and verbal processes attributed to all terrorists paint a different picture. Of 40 mental and verbal processes for terrorists, context suggests that 70% could be categorized in a ‘propagandization’ theme. Mental processes in this theme include ‘inspire’, ‘lead [to terrorism]’, ‘motivate’, ‘attract’, ‘adhere’, ‘compel’, ‘radicalize’, and ‘espouse’; verbal processes include ‘recruit’, ‘promote’ ‘spread [a message]’, ‘exploit’, and ‘legitimize’. As I stated earlier, there were 41 material processes for terrorists, of which 17% related to a military theme; no other prominent theme emerges. Therefore, that 70% of mental and verbal processes relate to the creation of and engagement with a particular message is significant. By using more mental and verbal processes than material processes for terrorists, and by emphasizing the role that terrorist propaganda plays in radicalizing individuals, this document concedes multiple points:

- as previously stated, it constructs terrorists as less powerful actors than Canadians;
- despite this lack of *material* power, terrorists do wield considerable *mental* and *verbal* power that, based on its frequent representation in this document, must merit ample concern from the government;

- it introduces an apparent duality in Canadian identities, implicitly distinguishing between those who are swayed by processes of propagandization and those who are not (and, naturally, those who are included in references to ‘we’ and ‘Canadians’, and those who are not); and
- it highlights the disparity between few Canadian processes committed to countering the radicalization process and many Canadian processes committed to countering threats of physical violence.

As we have already seen, there is an underlying military theme that seems to permeate processes about Canadians, many related to fighting ‘the threat’ and protecting Canadians. However, this emphasis appears to be disproportionate to what ‘the threat’ really is based on the transitivity analysis of terrorist processes—individuals gaining access to and believing in terrorist messaging. This is not to say that the document does not mention terrorist ideology or the counter-radicalization resources available to RETs and others; both are stated explicitly. Regardless, it is difficult to argue that the main focus of the data in question is anything other than the terrorist threat as it relates to a physically violent act. It is notable, then, that relatively few Canadian processes broach the topic of radicalization when the terrorist processes used in this document seem to de-emphasize the tangible capabilities of terrorist groups and stress their successes in inspiring new followers.

6.1.2 Participants

When writers discuss an issue, they encode meaning such as who is responsible for what actions, who causes what things to happen, and who is affected by what actions and statements. Whereas writers use processes to encode doings, sayings, and feelings related

to an issue, they similarly use active participants to encode the agency of doing, saying, and feeling and passive participants to be affected by that agency. The combination of this encoding with the other lexical choices a writer makes (such as adjectives and adverbs) depicts a particular perspective of reality about the issue being discussed.

In SFL, the grammatical subject, direct object and indirect object of a sentence can be generally referred to as the ‘participants’ of a process (Eggins, 2004). Each process type (e.g. material, mental, verbal) has a unique way of labelling these participants, however. Instead, I will use the terms ‘active participant’ to indicate the grammatical subject of a sentence and ‘passive participant’ to indicate a direct or indirect object. Table 4 shows the active participants of particular interest. This data is slightly more granular than the analysis of processes; while I had grouped ‘those holding extreme right-wing views’ and ‘individuals (potential terrorists)’ with ‘terrorists’ for the purposes of the process analysis, these two categories of participants seemed to appear often enough to merit distinction. Active participants that are not included in this table and the ensuing analysis are non-human in nature, such as events, objects, and concepts.

<u>Active Participant</u>	<u>Count</u>
Canadians	85
Terrorists	55
Canadian terrorists	10
Individuals (potential terrorists)	20
Those holding extreme right-wing views/right-wing violence	7

Table 4 Active Canadian and terrorist-related participants

The active participant ‘Canadians’, as with the processes analysis, includes citizens, governments, law enforcement, and others. Interestingly, 48% of these participants are an explicit mention of Canada, the Government of Canada (GC), or we (in reference to the GC); only 9% of participants are Canadians in the sense of non-

terrorist citizens. Perhaps this is not entirely surprising, given that these clauses are from a government product. However, considered in combination with the high number of material processes, it may indicate an ideological pattern that positions the GC as able to control terrorism through their actions. Canadians, on the other hand, are given relatively little agency. Instead, they are often presented as a beneficiary of the government's actions—often in the context of safety or their protected rights and freedoms.

Interestingly, we see that Canadians as active participants are represented negatively ('terrorists', those with 'extreme right-wing views') or, at best, neutrally ('individuals'), 37 times in the data—over five times more frequently than positive representations of Canadians. As I mentioned above, the text offers conflicting views of what a Canadian is. We can assume that most people reading the report will generally identify with positive representations of Canadians—including several references to 'we' that typically evoke the Government of Canada, such as its efforts to 'modernize' or 'enhance' security and intelligence laws and 'strengthen' accountability and transparency. Based on the dichotomy formed out of the American response to September 11, 2001 that was discussed in the literature review (e.g. "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists"), the reader must align themselves with the actions of the Canadian government—the 'we'—and adopt the identity the government promotes to avoid positioning themselves as 'against' the good that the government is doing. This "ideological square" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 33) equally applies to the negative representations of Canadians whose actions align them with terrorists.

However, while I am using the word 'terrorist' to generalize this category of individuals, it is not a word that the document uses to describe them. Instead, this report

calls them ‘Canadian extremists’, ‘violent extremists’, and ‘returning extremists’. On two occasions, specific Canadians are individualized, or named (Machin & Mayr, 2012), in relation to the Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu attack and the Parliament Hill attack in 2014; both were killed by police during the events. Even though the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the GC have publicly called both events terrorist attacks, this document places them in the context of having had their passports seized like other ‘extremist travellers’, suggesting that their domestic attacks were prompted more so by their inability to leave the country than by an ideological motive. Even in these two instances, arguably the best examples of a united political and law enforcement response on the topic of terrorism, the named individuals are contextualized as ‘extremist travellers’, not terrorists.

In fact, no individual is called a ‘terrorist’ in this document. The word ‘terrorist’ is used as a noun on four occasions: thrice as an active participant and once as a passive participant. In each instance, the term is used to make a general statement about an undefined group. Despite the mention of several Canadian events in the last few years that the GC has labelled as ‘terrorism’ via the media, this document falls short of using the word to describe the people involved in those events. The perpetrators are often suppressed, or removed, in favour of nominalized verbs like ‘the shooting’ or ‘the attack’. There may be a legal reason for this; as a few of the cases are still before the courts at the time of this writing, this document may not be able to legally claim that these individuals are terrorists. One example of this is the reference to the shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City in Ste-Foy, Quebec, an event in which no terrorism charges have been laid (Page, 2018). The day after the event, Prime Minister Trudeau said, “Make no

mistake—this was a terrorist attack” (Minsky, 2017). However, this report refers to the event as “a reminder that attacks perpetrated by those who espouse extreme right-wing views can occur in Canada” (Public Safety Canada, , 2017, p. 7). This appears to shift the government’s position away from classifying the event as a terrorist attack.

6.1.2.1 Passive construction and suppression

My data includes 40 instances of clauses with a passive construction, or 17% of all clauses. Of these, nearly half (19) fall into the category of Canadians—and to break it down further, it is overwhelmingly law enforcement or the GC who have been passivized. Contextually, 12 of those instances are mental or verbal processes associated with suspecting or charging an individual with a crime, as previously discussed, and 15 are subjects that were suppressed from the sentence. The suppression of a social actor is a useful strategy for minimizing responsibility for a potentially unpopular position or action (Machin & Mayr, 2012), but the majority of these clauses seem to situate the GC or law enforcement in presumably favourable contexts—the general population would support their efforts in these kinds of situations. In Western crime reporting, however, it is common to emphasize the offending individual—“a man was arrested”, for example—because our cultural context dictates that the one to do the arresting is a police officer; perhaps this is simply a convention that the authors have chosen to adopt.

Of the remaining 21 passive clauses, 16 refer to ‘violent extremists’, ‘terrorist groups’, ‘lone attackers’, and other terms that fall into the ‘terrorist’ category. However, 11 of those 16 participants are suppressed from the clause. Given the variety of terms used to describe ‘terrorists’ in this document and the lack of definition for any of them, it may be beneficial to let the audience infer their own interpretation of the sentence rather

than clearly categorize an individual as a terrorist, extremist, lone actor, or something else. By leaving space for the reader to make assumptions about the type of individual who has been suppressed, if they give them any thought at all, the document may be encouraging a particular understanding of these individuals as ‘terrorists’ since the report is about the terrorist threat.

6.1.3 Summary

A transitivity analysis of selected clauses within the text unsurprisingly reveals that the GC positions itself as having more material power than terrorists. However, a closer look at the variety of participants and the types of processes used to discuss terrorism indicate a conflict between the legal definition and the political conceptualization. This conflict does not positively advance terrorist discourse; instead, readers are left to assume that the events and individuals mentioned in this document must be terrorism and terrorists, even if legal proceedings have not demonstrated this to be the case. Finally, from this analysis emerged potentially contradictory messaging about the true ‘terrorist threat’: while material processes for Canadians portray acts of physical violence as the threat most deserving of action, the overwhelming theme of mental and verbal processes for terrorists suggests that they hold considerable power in their ability to radicalize Canadians. The broader implications of these findings will be examined further in the Discussion chapter.

6.2 Intertextual Analysis

Discourse is “a dynamic interaction among writers, readers, and other texts” (Selzer, 1993, p. 173). When we read a text, we make connections to words and ideas we have heard before; the author may help us make those connections with explicit citations, but the reader may or may not always recognize these references. To understand the 2017

Report's place within its discourse practice—that is, the second level of Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework that considers the choices the author made to accomplish a task—I will use the theory of intertextuality. Intertextual analysis examines how certain words or statements in a text are influenced by and interconnected with words and statements from other texts (Selzer, 1993; Bazerman, 2004). In my analysis, I will compare the four editions of the report from 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017 for three categories of explicit intertextuality: named terrorist groups and individuals; named terrorist acts or events; and named governing documents (including plans, frameworks, strategies, policies, legislation, and laws). I will refer to this portion of the analysis as “intra-file intertextuality” (Bazerman, 2004, p. 89) as it draws on multiple reports produced by the same government department. I will then return to the 2017 *Report* to examine presupposition, which is when the text producer assumes a shared understanding of previously established knowledge (Fairclough, 1992b, 1992c). The ideas introduced in this analysis will be explored in the Discussion chapter.

6.2.1 Intra-file intertextuality

The *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* was first published in 2013 as the result of a commitment made by the Conservative Government in *Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada's Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (Public Safety Canada, 2013). The Strategy presents Canada's approach to counter-terrorism and states that the annual report will “inform Canadians of the evolving domestic and international threat environment” (Public Safety Canada, 2012). These reports have continued even though the Strategy is not mentioned in the 2016 and 2017 editions; however, the Strategy is presumably still effective as it is referenced on Public Safety Canada's website as of the

time of this writing. Stylistically, the reports have changed in structure and content, but all four contain some variation of the following topics: Ministerial Forward; Executive Summary; information about terrorism events and developments from the past year; and information about a government response to the terrorism threat.

To conduct the intra-file intertextual analysis of the four reports, I read each report and recorded explicit references to named terrorist groups and individuals, named terrorist acts or events (excluding ‘plots’ or ‘attempts’, as previously discussed), and named governing documents. Table 5 presents a basic count of the three categories I selected for intertextual analysis.

Category	Report Year			
	2013	2014	2016	2017
Named terrorist groups/individuals	28	48	25	16
Named terrorist acts/events	7	10	31	34
Named documents	9	12	12	14

Table 5 Count of named items by report year

6.2.2 Contextualizing the numbers

Before exploring the explicit intertextual references in these reports, I wanted to know whether the fluctuations in Table 5 were significant. To do that, it is important to understand how they fit within the global and Canadian terrorism context. For instance, while 2014 reflects a significant increase in the number of named terrorist groups and individuals compared to 2013, it may reflect a general increase in the number of terrorist groups identified by the Canadian government, or an increase in named terrorist events may be due to an increase in terrorist events worldwide. Below, I have briefly outlined how the subjects named in the reports can be contextualized within the broader reality of those subjects.

6.2.2.1 Named terrorist groups and individuals

As of May 2018, there are 53 listed terrorist entities as established by the *Anti-Terrorism Act* (Public Safety Canada, 2016b). The list “is a public means of identifying a group or individual as being associated with terrorism”, and while it is not a crime to be on the list, “the entity's property can be the subject of seizure/restraint and/or forfeiture” (Public Safety Canada, 2016b). Individuals are not included on the list. While it is not easy to determine how many entities were on the list at the time of publication of each report, the annual numbers can be established by reviewing published copies of the *Canada Gazette*, which publishes the Acts passed by Parliament pertaining to amendments to the Regulations Establishing a List of Entities. Based on my review of the *Gazettes*, Table 6 reflects the estimated number of entities listed at the end of each calendar year (Government of Canada, n.d.).

<u>Year</u>	<u>Count</u>
2012	43
2013	49
2014	54
2015	54
2016	53
2017	53

Table 6 Number of listed terrorist identities by year

6.2.2.2 Named terrorist acts and events

I consulted the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which is maintained by the University of Maryland and contains information on over 170,000 terrorist events from 1970 to 2016. Unfortunately, data is not yet available for 2017, but the GTD is referenced in the

2016 *Report*. I narrowed the Canadian results with the following search criteria (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2016):

1. The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;
2. There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience than the immediate victims; and
3. The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law.

These criteria were applied as they align with the *Criminal Code* definition of a terrorist act. Additionally, I applied the following criteria:

1. Ambiguous cases were excluded, since the reports do not mention ambiguity; and
2. Unsuccessful attacks were excluded, since my data does not include attempted or foiled attacks.

For simplicity's sake, I decided to conduct my search by calendar year. Table 7 presents the number of terrorist incidents matching the above criteria by year, both globally and in Canada. Of the 15 Canadian events identified by the GTD between 2012 and 2016, 4 resulted in fatalities (3 in 2014, 1 in 2016) and an additional 5 resulted in injuries (2 in 2015, 3 in 2016). Six events had no fatalities or injuries.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Global Count</u>	<u>Canadian Count</u>
2012	6104	1
2013	8604	1
2014	11879	3
2015	10282	5
2016	9020	5

Table 7 Number of global and Canadian terrorist incidents by year

6.2.2.3 Named documents

It is also important to reflect the political context within which these reports were written. The October 2015 federal election marked a change from a minority Conservative government to a majority Liberal government. This is likely the reason why a 2015 version of the report was not published. It also helps to explain why some documents referenced in 2013 and 2014 do not appear in the 2016 and 2017 versions, as each government prepares its own strategies and tables its own Acts. Even so, the change between years is not dramatic; the increase in documents referenced in 2017 is likely related to the extensive legislative changes being made to Acts related to national security, including the introduction of new Acts.

6.2.3 Results of Intertextual Analysis

6.2.3.1 Named terrorist groups and individuals

The number of listed terrorist entities has remained fairly consistent since 2014, but 6 groups were added in 2013 and 5 in 2014. The number of named groups in the reports proportionate to the number of listed terrorist identities was at its highest in the 2013 and 2014 *Reports* and dropped by nearly half between 2016 and 2017. Table 8 summarizes my data and the listed terrorist entities by year for additional clarification.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Count of Named Individuals</u>	<u>Count of Named Groups</u>	<u>Count of Listed Terrorist Entities</u>
2012	-	-	43
2013	1	27	49
2014	14	34	54
2015	-	-	54
2016	2	23	53
2017	4	12	53

Table 8 Named terrorist individuals and groups versus listed terrorist entities

Before turning to the potential reasoning for naming these groups and individuals, let us first consider the historical context. The number of global terrorism incidents peaked in 2014 (see Table 7), marking it as a particularly violent year. In 2014, Daesh was a relatively nascent organization gaining traction online and employing increasingly brutal tactics to spread its message; tens of thousands of extremist travellers arrived in Syria to fight in their civil war; and Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 female students in Nigeria (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2015). Since the 2014 *Report* was uploaded to Public Safety Canada’s website on August 29 of that year, we can assume that it was likely finalized and approved that same month. Compared to the number of named groups, however, the 2014 *Report* explicitly references only 10 terrorist events, 4 of which are from the first half of 2013, and two of those were also mentioned in the 2013 *Report*. The number of named individuals is also an abnormality in the data. Most of the individuals were killed or presumed dead, according to the document, but some are alive and awaiting trial or at large. Half of those who are named are presented in a graphic as “extremist travellers with Canadian connections”. The nature of the Canadian connection is unclear.

Logically, of course, the terrorist groups associated with the terrorist events listed in this report should be named. Twenty-six of these groups, as with the named

individuals, are listed in a graphic titled “Select Terrorist Entities Listed by Canada”; many of these are not mentioned in the body of the report. Why, then, does only this edition of the report name terrorist entities that were not active enough to merit space within the report itself? The first list of terrorist entities was established in 2001, so it is not necessarily a novel concept developed between the first and second reports. Perhaps this is a case of “more is better”: the 2014 *Report* is 13 pages longer than the 2013 *Report* and nearly twice the length of the 2016 and 2017 versions. In the process of evaluating the format of the report, and in light of the increase in global terrorist incidents, the authors and reviewers may have opted to include as much information as possible in order to reflect the perceived threat (or, indeed, to construct a threat). However, as noted in Table 7, there were only 3 terrorist incidents in Canada in 2014: 2 occurred after the report was published, and 1 occurred in June 2014.

Since this report is about the terrorist threat *to Canada*, suggesting that the information within is provided because of direct implications for Canadians and the country, this increase in named terrorist groups may be a way of artificially elevating the risk. By selectively naming many more terrorist entities than were realistically a threat to Canada that year, the perceived level of danger increases. A more troubling interpretation might be that this ‘naming and shaming’ of individuals is a way to stoke fear of the Other. Of the 14 named individuals, 3 have English-sounding names and 1 has a French-sounding name; two of these had “violent extremist views” and travelled to Syria, and two were alleged al-Qaeda adherents involved in the attempted pressure cooker bombing of the British Columbia Legislature Building in 2013—later ruled to be a case of entrapment by the RCMP (Kassam, 2016). The remaining 10 names could be classified

as ‘foreign-sounding’ by a typical English- or French-speaking Canadian. By listing only foreign-sounding names alongside English- and French-sounding names associated with al-Qaeda and the Middle East, the document could be inviting the reader to infer one of two things (or both): ‘since this type of extremism stems from Islam, perhaps Islam is a threat to Canada’; or, ‘since all of these ‘foreigners’ have been implicated in violent extremism, maybe foreigners are a threat to Canada’.

Finally, as I mentioned in my transitivity analysis of the 2017 *Report*, I theorized that certain individuals were named because they were deceased and others genericized because they had not been convicted of a terrorist act at the time of publishing. Unfortunately, this theory does not appear to apply in my intertextual analysis: for example, the Ottawa shooter is named in the 2014 and 2017 *Reports* but suppressed in the 2016 *Report*. Those named in the 2014 *Report* include several who are alive and had not been convicted of a terrorist act at the time of publication. The 2016 *Report* only individualizes two terrorists, one living and one deceased terrorist group leader, while the 2017 *Report* individualizes one deceased terrorist group leader and three deceased Canadian extremists. While this theory does not apply to all of the reports, I might be able to claim that it applies to those produced by the Liberal government (particularly since it is extremely unlikely that the well-known living terrorist group leader would ever be convicted of a terrorist act in Canada), though it is a difficult claim to make based on only two reports.

As mentioned above, GTD identified a third terrorist incident in 2014 that occurred before the report was published, but it was not included in the 2014 or any subsequent report. I will discuss this exclusion further in the next section.

6.2.3.2 Named terrorist acts or events

The Canadian events in the GTD count include several that were not mentioned in the reports, including two instances of mosques set on fire; an assailant who attacked RCMP officers in Moncton in 2014, killing 3 officers and injuring 2 others; an assailant who injured 30 Syrian refugees in Vancouver with pepper spray in 2016; and two assailants (classified as ‘Muslim extremists’ by the database) who opened fire on a nightclub in Calgary in 2016. The latter event is an interesting exclusion as it mirrors the shooting at an Orlando, Florida nightclub in 2015 and the shooting at an Istanbul nightclub in 2016, both of which are mentioned in at least one report. While I am not able to address the absence of all of these events from the reports, the exclusion of the Moncton shooting is particularly notable: it happened in the same year as the attacks in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu that are mentioned in the 2016 and 2017 *Reports*, and it resulted in more fatalities and injuries than either event.

The analysis conducted by Carver & Harrie (2017) that I summarized in my literature review was based on the media response to the Moncton shooting compared to the Ottawa shooting. In sum, they found that the media portrayed the Moncton shooter as a ‘gun nut’ who was mentally unstable, and the Ottawa shooter as an ‘Islamist terrorist’ who had been radicalized. However, both had clear and stated targets. The Ottawa shooter had recorded a video stating his foreign policy and religious motives; he was posthumously labelled a terrorist. The Moncton shooter stated after his arrest that he had hoped to start a rebellion against the Canadian government, which he viewed as oppressive and corrupt; he was charged with first-degree murder and attempted murder, but no terrorist charges.

Why was the Moncton shooting, a prominent Canadian event labelled as terrorism by the GTD, suppressed from all of the reports? Even if we accept the unlikely scenario that the 2014 *Report* was nearly finalized when the event occurred (three months before the report was published), the two other named terrorist events of 2014 were both mentioned in 2016 and 2017. It is not as though the reports exclusively mention events with a Canadian connection that are directly related to identifiable terrorist groups, though they comprise the vast majority of examples. Admittedly, it is not until the 2017 *Report* that we find an explicit reference to a non-terrorist-group-affiliated event: “the shooting at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City” (p. 7), which it attributes to extreme right-wing views. This again brings us back to the idea of manipulation; the Moncton shooting is identified in the GTD and appears to parallel other acts that were included in the reports. We should therefore expect to see it mentioned in a report on the terrorist threat to Canada, even though the perpetrator did not face terrorism charges. The shooting at the mosque in Quebec is a very similar situation, except that it *was* included: we expect to see it listed because it is in the GTD, the Prime Minister called it “a terrorist attack”, and it appears to meet the criteria for a terrorist act, even though the perpetrator does not face any terrorism charges. What changed between 2014 and 2017?

One possible reason why the Moncton shooting was not included in the 2014 *Report* is that it did not fit the narrative the Conservative government was constructing. As I mentioned in the previous section, named individuals in the 2014 *Report* were either associated with Al-Qaeda or Daesh, had foreign-sounding names, or both in order to Other both Islam and foreigners. The assailant in the Moncton shooting has an English-sounding name and was not associated with any religious ideology. While all of the

reports acknowledge that terrorism can stem from a variety of ideologies, the mosque shooting appears to be the first explicit reference to a terrorist event without any ties to ideologies professed in the name of Islam—other than the notable fact that a mosque was the target of this violence—despite evidence from the GTD that other such events have occurred in Canada.

Additionally, we know that concerns about right-wing extremism began to hit the mainstream media in 2015 and 2016. The inclusion of the mosque shooting in the 2017 *Report*, therefore, may have been as a result of growing political pressure to acknowledge that acts of terrorism are not limited to a particular ideology or methodology, nor are they limited to fitting within the restrictive definition established in the *Criminal Code*. Given the Prime Minister’s statement after the event, we could also assume that it was included *because* of this statement, despite the lack of terrorism charges. Regardless of the reason, I posit that only contributes to an already murky understanding of what constitutes terrorism based on politically convenient narratives. As I alluded to in my transitivity analysis and concluded in the previous section, I suspect that the inclusion of individuals in the 2017 *Report* who do not face charges of terrorism—and, in fact, are not referred to as ‘terrorists’ in the report—is a way of artificially inflating the perceived threat of terrorism for political purposes.

6.2.3.3 Named documents

The number of documents named in the reports is fairly consistent, beginning with 9 documents in 2013, 12 documents in 2014 and 2016, and 14 documents in 2017.

Interestingly, only the *Criminal Code* is named in all four documents. We would expect to see the *Criminal Code* since it enshrines all of the legal definitions related to terrorism.

However, we might also expect to see references to the *Anti-terrorism Act*, which established terrorism as a distinct type of criminal act. It was only mentioned in the 2017 *Report* in the context of 2015 amendments to the *Act*. The 2013 *Report* does mention the *Combating Terrorism Act* passed by the Conservative government, which renewed expired provisions in the *Anti-terrorism Act* and introduced new types of terrorist crimes.

One notable exclusion from the 2014 and 2016 *Reports* is the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This constitutional document guarantees certain political and civil rights to Canadians and those in Canada, including the right to freedom of expression and religion, the “right to life, liberty and security of the person”, and the right “to be presumed innocent until proven guilty” (Constitution Act, 1982). I have opted to list these three aspects of the *Charter* as they appear to fundamentally engage with the *Anti-terrorism Act* and the *Criminal Code*. The Ministerial Forward of the 2016 *Report* alludes to the *Charter* by mentioning the “need to safeguard our values, our rights and freedoms” (p. 2), and the 2014 *Report* references the Government’s “respect for the rule of law and human rights” (p. 42). Whether its explicit exclusion from two editions of the report was intentional or an oversight, it is worth examining; as a constitutional document, it can overrule regulations like those found in the *Criminal Code* in court. We should expect our government, whether Conservative or Liberal in stripe, to acknowledge the *Charter* in these reports, especially in light of the additional powers afforded to law enforcement when a crime is considered terrorism (*Anti-terrorism Act*, 2015).

The absence of the *Charter* led me to briefly consider the purpose of these reports. What are they trying to accomplish—is the goal to demonstrate how Canadians’ rights and freedoms are protected in the face of terrorism, or is the goal to demonstrate

how Canadians themselves are physically protected and kept safe in the face of terrorism? To gain some initial insight, I conducted a simple word count. The word ‘safe’ and its derivatives (‘safety’, ‘safeguard’) appear in relation to Canada or Canadians once in 2013 and 2014, 11 times in 2016, and 15 times in 2017. In comparison, the word ‘rights’ appears in relation to Canadians 7 times in 2013, once in 2014, 5 times in 2016, and 9 times in 2017—peaks that correspond to the 2013 and 2017 mentions of the *Charter*. While the goal of the earlier reports is not explicitly a demonstration of safety, this certainly appears to be the case after the change in government. In order to determine if this is a sound conclusion, I will also consider the types of documents that are referenced in each report and how they may relate to the goals of each government.

In addition to terrorism-specific legislation and policy, such as the *Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act*, the *Combating Terrorism Act*, and *Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada’s Counter-terrorism Strategy*, the 2014 *Report* reveals a focus on chemical and nuclear weapons. References include the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Chemical Weapons Convention, International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and the *Nuclear Terrorism Act*. All were mentioned in the context of weapons of mass destruction in Syria and 2013 efforts to force Syria to dismantle its supply, and so seem to be mentioned to acknowledge Canada’s role in global events.

However, the more pertinent theme in the 2013 and 2014 *Reports* is the mention of documents related to immigration. These include the Beyond the Border Action Plan, *Protecting Canada’s Immigration System Act*, *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy*, which includes a

section on border security (Public Safety Canada, 2013). When considered in conjunction with the above conclusions on naming terrorist individuals and the fact that none of these documents are mentioned in the 2016 or 2017 *Reports*, this seems to again reinforce the idea that the Conservative government was pushing an anti-immigration narrative at the time—or at least a narrative of suspicion of immigrants. While they are not necessarily unusual inclusions in a discussion about the terrorist threat to Canada, they do implicitly underpin the notion that the terrorist threat is one that originates outside of the country—that it begins with an Other who infiltrates our safe and peaceful nation. In fact, this has rarely, if ever, been the case since 2001 (National Consortium for START, n.d.).

On the other hand, the referenced documents in the 2016 *Report* seem to lean quite heavily on the theme of international collaboration. There are many references in 2016 to the United Nations, such as UN Security Council Resolutions 2178 and 2253, Regulations Implementing the United Nations Resolutions on the Suppression of Terrorism, and the United Nations Al-Qaeda and Taliban Regulations. Perhaps this is because the Liberal government had been in power for less than a year at the time of publishing and was still developing its own approach to terrorism. This seems to be supported by the absence of any explicit reference to new Canadian policy or legislation that year.

Dependency on the United Nations disappears in 2017 and is replaced by documents supporting a security theme: Canada's National Security Framework, the Cyber Security Strategy, the *National Security Act* (a bill that includes the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act* and the *Communications Security Establishment Act*, both named in the report), *Secure Air Travel Act*, *Security of Canada Information*

Sharing Act, and Strong, Secure, Engaged (the Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces defence policy). As noted above, the word ‘safe’ and its variations appears most frequently in the 2017 *Report*. The document repeatedly makes clear that its focus is on citizen safety and security, a finding that I also highlighted in my transitivity analysis.

In order to provide additional support to the arguments I have proposed above, I will turn my attention to the role that presupposition has played in the development of the 2017 *Report*.

6.2.4 Analysis of presupposition

As I described earlier, presupposition is “a taken-for-granted assumption found in communication” (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 222). Presupposition is inherently intertextual, since the speaker is assuming that the listener has existing knowledge of a word or concept. In CDA, presupposition is used to identify ideas that may not be based on a commonly held, incontrovertible truth (Machin & Mayr, 2012). I have selected three broad examples that are pertinent to the whole text, either due to the subject of the presupposition or due to its recurrence: a shared understanding of terrorism and its derivatives; the ‘fundamental’ nature of Canada and Canadians; and the need for securitization. I will explore each of these presuppositions in turn by providing references from the text and by drawing on my own knowledge of the documents and the political and legal context.

6.2.4.1 A shared understanding of terrorism

The 2017 *Report* uses a wide variety of terms related to terrorism: radical ideology, extremist, violent extremist, threat, extremist travellers, radicalize to violence, politically-

motivated violence, violent acts, terrorist acts, terrorist attacks, counter-terrorism, and so on. However, the 2017 *Report* does not provide definitions for any of these terms. This is a clear example of presupposition: by failing to provide any context for why these terms are used, the document assumes that the reader will interpret these words in the same way as the author intended. As I suggested in my transitivity analysis, the reader may be left to assume that ‘terrorist’, ‘violent extremist’, and ‘radicalized to violence’ as descriptors of an individual are synonymous. While it is possible that the report intends these terms to be interchangeable as a result of stylistic choice, we can also assume that some readers will conclude that they are not entirely equal.

Had I not read the earlier reports, I would have called this absence of definitions a glaring omission. However, some explanations are scattered throughout the documents. The 2013 and 2014 *Reports* define what it means to ‘list’ a terrorist entity; the 2014 *Report* defines ‘terrorist act’, ‘extremist travellers’, and ‘radicalization to violence’, and provides some context around ‘violent extremism’; and the 2016 *Report* defines ‘inspired attacks’ and ‘directed attacks’. This may suggest that the documents contribute to a developing narrative that the audience is intended to follow from the beginning, but it also presupposes that the audience *will* read all of the reports in order to build the required context. Regardless, many of the terms have not been defined, and as I explored in earlier chapters, the definition of terrorism is already fraught with debate and uncertainty. If this document presupposes a particular understanding of terrorism, in particular the *Criminal Code* definition referred to in 2014, then we must again return to the fact that named events were included in this report that have not met the legal criteria for a terrorist act.

6.2.4.2 The fundamentals of Canada and being Canadian

The report also uses presupposition to discursively construct an idyllic image of what Canada and Canadians are. It presents several examples of presupposition, of which I will discuss two; first, the Message from the Minister concludes with the statement, “This Report helps underscore the importance of staying vigilant and working together to ensure that Canada remains a fundamentally safe and peaceful nation” (p. 2). This statement presupposes a number of things: first, that Canada is vigilant; second, that vigilance and collaboration are important qualities that can ‘ensure’ an outcome; and finally, that Canada *is* a safe and peaceful place already. Additionally, there is a statement on page 20 about ensuring that the National Security Framework is “consistent with societal values”. The report makes two additional references to “Canadian values”. Here, the text simultaneously presupposes that Canadians share a single set of values, and it seems to make an intertextual reference to the ‘Canadian values’ immigrant screening proposal that formed part of the Conservative party’s election platform in 2015.

These kinds of presuppositions are not uncommon; they are political fodder that we are accustomed to reading and hearing about our country and ourselves. Even so, it is important to challenge the idea that these presuppositions are commonly held, that they are true, and that they are harmless. As much as they serve a well-known narrative about Canadian identity, they also silence parts of our collective identity that may be less favourable. Would those involved in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls agree that Canada is fundamentally safe and peaceful? What are Canadian values, exactly, and do they always respect the constitutionally protected rights and freedoms defined in the *Charter*? Who decides the point at which

Canada becomes ‘fundamentally safe and peaceful’, and who polices whether a Canadian’s values are ‘correct’? These presuppositions, besides presupposing concepts that are already poorly defined, foreground positive characteristics of Canada, Canadians, and the government while minimizing the inherent tensions that exist in such politically charged claims.

6.2.4.3 The need for security

Perhaps the most prominent example of presupposition in the 2017 *Report* is that Canadians need to be protected from a variety of threats. Examples of this can be found throughout the report: “professional security agencies use a full array of tools and powers to *keep us safe*”; “the Government of Canada is committed to *protecting the safety and security of its citizens*”; “Canada's security and intelligence community works together to help *safeguard Canada and Canadians*”; and “Bill C-59...sets out a wide range of measures to enhance Canada's national security and *safeguard Canadians' rights and freedoms*” are a few examples (emphasis added). This appears to be a form of securitization. Put simply, securitization is when an issue is presented by a political figure as a threat that requires extensive measures to protect citizens; typically, these issues are presented in the context of, for example, immigration policy, expanding the powers granted to law enforcement and security agencies, and, of course, terrorism (Vultee, 2010). In this report, the text presupposes that we need things like a full array of powers and the new national security legislation presented in Bill C-59 in order to be safe, essentially positioning ‘the terrorist threat’ as a justification for this securitization. We

also saw securitization in the 2014 *Report*, which I stated used immigration policy in a terrorism context to defend the Conservative agenda.

While I expected to find that protecting citizens from terrorism is a priority in this report based on my earlier count of the word ‘safe’, the final example above also presupposes a need to protect Canadians’ rights and freedoms. This seems to be an attempt to acknowledge concerns of what the *National Security Act* (2017) may introduce, such as loss of privacy, mass surveillance, and new intrusive powers being granted to intelligence agencies (McSorley, 2018). However, it is curious to suggest that this *Act* is needed to “[safeguard our] rights and freedoms” (pp. 4, 20) when our rights and freedoms are already protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

6.2.5 Summary

This intertextual analysis examined three types of explicit references in the four editions of the *Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*: named terrorist groups and individuals, named terrorist events, and named documents. I then returned to the 2017 *Report* to consider the role that presupposition may have played in postulating a shared understanding of terrorism, the ‘fundamental’ nature of Canada and Canadians, and the need to securitize Canadian rights and freedoms. My findings here generally support the conclusion that emerged from my transitivity analysis: that the number of named terrorist groups, individuals, and events in these reports, along with the strategic inclusion and exclusion of certain events and individuals without terrorism charges, can represent an artificially elevated risk of terrorism in Canada in order to justify political activities. I found that the 2014 *Report* may have used the document to securitize immigration policy,

while the 2017 *Report* appears to use presupposition as a path to securitizing *Charter*-protected rights and freedoms.

Additionally, the reports seem to use presupposition to construct the Canadian identity and individualization to construct the terrorist identity; this analysis typically frames those with both identities as a Canadian terrorist rather than a terrorist Canadian. Finally, this analysis demonstrated that we have yet to find a clear picture of what constitutes terrorism in the Canadian context; while various definitions are scattered throughout the reports, they fail to construct the reports in a way that is consistent with the legal characterizations they provide. As previously discussed, this may be a manipulative tactic used to present evidence of the need for securitization. The implications of these findings and their relation to my transitivity analysis will be explored in the Discussion chapter.

7 Chapter: Discussion

As I contextualize my findings within the broader sociocultural practice—that is, how the reports fit within the cultural context of terrorism and political discourse—I will address the main research questions that guided my study:

1. How does the Canadian government discursively construct ‘terrorism’ in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*?
2. How has the discursive construction of terrorism evolved since the first edition of the report in 2013?
3. What is the discursive construction of terrorist identity in the reports?

To answer these questions, I began by analyzing the text itself using transitivity and proceeded to consider the text within its discourse practice with intertextual analysis. In this chapter, I will first summarize my findings as they relate to these research questions, then I will discuss how these findings fit within the sociocultural practice of politics and terrorism.

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

In order to answer the above research questions through Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework, I conducted an SFL transitivity analysis on 230 clauses found in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* to analyze the level of the text. The key findings from this analysis are:

- A military theme in material processes is prominently found in clauses in which ‘Canadians’ are the active agent but is also present in clauses in which ‘terrorists’ are the active agent. This reinforces the construct that terrorism is a war to be fought, but also that the military is a necessary component of

protecting Canadians and democracy. Though the same theme is used for terrorists, the reader is likely to apply a negative interpretation associated with violence and death. This is an example of an ideological square: our militaristic actions are for a good cause, but those of our opponents are destructive and a threat to our freedom.

- A propagandization theme is found in 70% of terrorist mental and verbal processes: while Canadians hold more material power, terrorists hold more mental and verbal power through their successes in radicalizing others. The document therefore seems to disproportionately focus on Canada's response to the physical threat compared to the threat of access to terrorist messaging.
- The use of participants and inclusive pronouns in the report constructs an ideological square in which 'good Canadians' will identify with the 'we' that represents the Government and its actions, and 'bad Canadians' are negatively represented in their alignment with 'terrorists'.
- A combination of suppression, nominalization, lexical cohesion, and the inclusion of individuals and events that have not garnered terrorism charges clouds the picture of what is meant by 'terrorist' in this document. This is further complicated because no definitions have been provided for 'terrorist' or any similar terms. Instead, this document recategorizes several types of criminal actors as 'terrorist', then relies on a politically convenient understanding of 'terrorism' as it is used in the media, not in the *Criminal Code*.

I then conducted an intra-file intertextual analysis on the entirety of the 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2017 *Reports*, focusing on instances of named terrorists and groups, named terrorist events, and named documents. I did an additional intertextual analysis on the 2017 *Report* to identify instances of presupposition. From this analysis of the texts at the level of social practice, I arrived at the following key findings:

- The 2014 *Report*'s increased individualization of 'terrorists' and intertextual references to immigration policy simultaneously Other minority communities and securitize immigration as a threat to Canadian safety.
- The suppression of the Moncton shooting from the reports, particularly when considered in tangent with the inclusion of the Quebec City shooting in 2017, further complicates discussions of what terrorism means in a Canadian context.
- The 2017 *Report* uses presupposition and intertextual references to certain documents to securitize both Canadians and their rights and freedoms. Presupposition is also used to build an idealized version of Canadian identity that foregrounds positive aspects of Canada and its values and silences dissenting voices who would argue against claims of fundamental peace and safety.

With the above findings in mind, I will now discuss my analysis as it relates to my research questions by considering the broader sociocultural context in which it is positioned.

7.1.1 How does the Canadian government discursively construct ‘terrorism’ in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*?

As I pointed out in the historical literature review, Canada’s legal definition of terrorism is quite restrictive compared to the definition used in other Western countries, since proof of a political, religious, or ideological motive is required. Many have been critical of this requirement, suggesting that it unfairly targets individuals associated with a religion—Islam in particular—because those beliefs are typically structured and documented (Bell, 2018). This is because the law is written in such a way that it precludes any ‘lone wolf’-type assailants from receiving a terrorist charge; there must be evidence that the act was committed on behalf of an ideological group (Ostroff, 2017). The 2017 *Report* explicitly states, for example, that “the extreme right-wing is not an ideologically coherent group” (p. 7), instantly excluding any act committed on behalf of the extreme right-wing (or any other group the GC considers ‘ideologically incoherent’) from terrorism charges in Canada. This may help to explain why the 2014 Moncton shooter, motivated by right-wing ideology, was not included in the reports and the 2014 Ottawa shooter, motivated by Canada’s foreign policy and his religious beliefs, was mentioned in two reports. Since investigators can point to a ‘coherent’ ideological group in the latter case, it merits the ‘terrorist’ label—though, as I explain in my discussion on the Canadian terrorist below, the posthumous use of this label without a legal conviction seems to engage the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Even if I accept this reasoning, it directly contradicts why the 2017 Quebec shooter is included in the 2017 *Report*. This is why we must consider the sociocultural context, the third level of Fairclough’s framework for critical discourse analysis. The

inclusion of this event is intentional, which means it must be driven by some ideological purpose. My transitivity and intertextual analysis both support the idea that this and other information is included in the *2017 Report* because of a need to construct a narrative demonstrating a greater terrorist threat than may exist. This is particularly important for the latest issue of the report because of the new powers and authorities being proposed in the *National Security Act (Bill C-59) (2017)*. The report may be using its platform to justify to the Canadian public why these new powers and authorities are required. In the process, it is also securitizing Canadian citizens and their rights and freedoms as a way of further demonstrating the apparent value of Bill C-59.

This report also contributes to an ongoing discursive construction of terrorism that began in 2001. Within this sociocultural context, the document supports and reinforces the idea that terrorism requires a political or military response (Jackson, 2005; Zulaika and Douglass, 1996). The political response is found both in the existence of this report and in the new national security legislation being proposed, which necessarily implicates action from law enforcement and security agencies. The military response has been a central part of the narrative since immediately after September 11, 2001, when the media likened the terrorist attacks in the United States to an act of war (Nacos et al., 2011) and the Bush Administration subsequently branded their response to the attack as ‘the war on terror’. Though the Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National Defence did not feature prominently in this report, I did find a notable military theme in the material processes used to describe both Canada’s and terrorists’ actions. This normalizes the narrative that ‘terrorism’ is a war to be won, the need for military engagement (Jackson, 2005), and ultimately the need for military and security spending.

7.1.2 How has the discursive construction of terrorism evolved since the first edition of the report in 2013?

The 2017 *Report* is the fourth in a series of annual reports with the same title, published because of a commitment initiated in a 2012 GC counter-terrorism strategy. In the previous chapter, I contextualized the period covered by these reports by providing statistics on global and Canadian terrorism incidents. In Canada, a total of four people were killed and five injured as the result of terrorism events identified in the GTD from 2012 to 2016 (National Consortium for START, 2016). Realistically, this is an extremely low number of casualties for one type of crime in a four-year period, and yet it is enough to merit considerable political attention with these reports. This could be attributed to the role fear has played in constructing a modern understanding of terrorism (Giroux, 2006), though this fear has been growing for years; as I mentioned in my literature review, approximately 75% of Americans in 1987 considered terrorism a ‘serious’ or ‘extreme’ threat despite only 17 attributable deaths in America at the time (Zulaika and Douglass, 1996, as cited in Jackson, 2005).

The 2013 and 2014 reports were produced under a Conservative government, and the 2016 and 2017 reports were produced under a Liberal government. As such, we should expect to find some differences in each government’s approach to terrorism discourse. Notably, I found that the Conservative reports, in particular the one published in 2014, seemed to implicitly connect immigration policy with the terrorist threat. As I alluded to in my intertextual analysis, this is an example of the securitization of a certain political agenda, in which a subject not normally associated with security is presented as a threat requiring additional oversight (Vultee, 2010). Associating legal immigration with

an increased threat of violence and crime is not a new strategy, but it could be a useful way of portraying all immigrant cultures as a threat to ‘Canadian values’ or ‘Canadian identity’. It also reinforces the existence of an “ideological square” in which Canadians are innocent and immigrants are guilty (van Dijk, 1998, p. 33). As controllers of the narrative, the government is able to shape public opinion so that the Self—Canadians and the government—play the role of victim and hero, respectively, and the Other—those ‘non-Canadians’ who commit terrorism—are villainized (Karim, 2010).

The 2016 and 2017 editions of the reports abandoned this approach, but instead implicitly connect security policy with the terrorist threat. This was primarily accomplished with explicit intertextual references in the reports, but my additional analysis of the 2017 *Report* identified the presupposition that Canadians and their rights and freedoms need to be protected. This is a noble assumption, but it does not seem to be defensible based on the terrorism statistics described above. This is not to say that the threat is nonexistent, nor that Canadians should not be protected. However, it seems as though this document leans heavily on ‘the terrorist threat’ as a justification for new laws and security measures in a manner that is disproportionate to observable ‘terrorist’ incidents in Canada. Further, it suggests that these new measures will “[safeguard our] rights and freedoms” (pp. 4, 20). I assume the intent is to suggest that the *Act* will not infringe on rights and freedoms, but the deliberate intertwining of *Charter*-defined rights with this legislation securitizes Canadians’ rights and freedoms and presupposes—or at least constructs a presuppositional narrative—that the *Charter* is somehow insufficient.

My analysis supports the idea that securitization has become a normalized approach for justifying a political, legal, and/or military response to terrorism.

Unfortunately, these reports failed to clarify what constitutes ‘terrorism’, which means that the reader is likely to apply their own ideological construction of the term—regardless of whether that construction aligns with the definition the reports intended. Though some definitions are provided in earlier versions, the intertextual references to certain events and individuals implicitly support a *political* understanding of terrorism, which seems to be flexible based on the circumstances, rather than a more rigid legal interpretation. However, even this political understanding is inconsistently applied in order to support a particular narrative: events identified in the GTD that a reader would interpret as right-wing extremism were not included in any report until 2017, and some events and individuals that were included do not meet the Canadian legal benchmark for terrorism. That this document fails to consistently apply the terms it uses may be intentional, then, and these inclusions and exclusions are strategically manipulative in order to justify government priorities and budget increases.

7.1.3 What is the discursive construction of terrorist identity in the reports?

While this document is titled the *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*, the words ‘terror’, ‘terrorist’, and ‘terrorism’ appear only 44 times in the selected analysis. By contrast, the words ‘extreme’, ‘extremist’, and ‘extremism’ appear 35 times; ‘individuals’ (referring to Canadians who travel to participate in violent extremism or to people who may radicalize) appears 22 times; ‘lone actor/attacker’ appears 4 times; and ‘assailant’ appears one time. This represents a wide variety of terms used to describe particular individuals and groups that are not defined in the document, but these descriptors (and others) still seem to be used strategically.

I suspect that this variety of labels is used as a political convenience; with the

restrictive *Criminal Code* criteria for labelling something a ‘terrorist act’, it is undoubtedly easier for the GC to call a Canadian an ‘extremist’ (or any of a number of other synonyms within the ‘extremist’ family of terms) than it is to call them a ‘terrorist’. Many readers of these documents would likely consider ‘violent extremist’ to be a term that is implicitly connected to terrorism. The media commonly uses the term ‘lone actor’ or ‘lone attacker’ to refer to an individual who may adhere to a particular ideology but, at the time of committing an act, was not under the direction of a leader associated with that ideology. While more distant, one could accept that these terms may fall under the umbrella of ‘terrorism’. An assailant, however, is typically associated with more conventional criminal activity. It is worth questioning why so many types of criminal actors are evoked in this document that asserts to be about the ‘terrorist threat’. As I have already suggested, recategorizing a broad variety of criminal actors as terrorists is a convenient way for the GC to artificially inflate the nature of the terrorist threat. My historical literature review also highlighted that this strategy of recategorization began in the 1980s (Jackson, 2005); this is an intentional pattern that has persisted in political discourses about terrorism for more than 30 years.

This recategorization of criminal actors is a useful political tool, particularly when combined with the GC’s self-portrayal in this document. The GC presents itself as powerful and able to accomplish the goals it sets; the high proportion of material processes compared to other processes enforces this view. Curiously, we can also look to the militaristic lexical chain of material processes the GC uses to describe its actions; it is safe to compare the GC’s counter-terrorism approach to military concepts because Canada’s definition of a terrorist act specifically excludes any act committed during an

armed conflict. Therefore, any violent action taken by Canada, within Canada, can never be considered a ‘terrorist act’. By broadening the scope of individuals who can be considered terrorists, the GC is justified in identifying itself as a much-needed defender of Canadians’ rights and freedoms. In doing this, the GC is discursively constructing a narrative that Canada is under siege, making it easier for Canadians to accept spending increases in law enforcement and security agencies.

We also see that the *2017 Report* is more likely to construct those associated with terrorism as engaging in mental- or verbal-based processes compared to Canadians. As mentioned above, this technique is useful for constructing an individual as having less agency; mental processes in this document include ‘inspire’, ‘promote’, and ‘empower’. However, while the use of mental processes in a text can be used to induce empathy in the reader (Machin & Mayr, 2012), that is not the case here. In most contexts, words like ‘inspire’ and ‘empower’ have positive connotations, but here they are intended to evoke disgust or anger; their use suggests that those who are inspired or empowered by terrorist phenomena are weak-willed or uncritical thinkers, and that those who do the inspiring and empowering are evil.

Perhaps this dichotomous connotation that applies to both the inspired and the inspirer is intentionally used when the subject turns to domestic terrorism—should we feel sympathetic towards a normal Canadian like us who was duped by the wiles of violent extremism (“it could happen to anyone”), or should we feel angry to discover that terrorists have such influence here at home (“we need to silence their hateful propaganda”)? I would posit that it is beneficial to the GC for readers to have either or both of these reactions—the former supports funding for community counter-

radicalization and the latter supports funding for law enforcement and security agencies, all of which are mentioned in the report. Of course, my analysis also introduced the idea that the report presents physical violence as the greatest terrorist threat facing Canadians, but these mental and verbal processes instead indicate that terrorists are powerful in their ability to radicalize Canadians. Community and social services committed to counter-radicalization are identified in the document, but the report places the greatest focus on physical security, not the susceptibility of those around us to radicalization.

7.1.3.1 The Canadian terrorist

As mentioned earlier, the 2017 *Report* explicitly names two perpetrators—individualized from all other references to Canadian ‘terrorist’ events. Common knowledge of the Parliament Hill attack and the vehicle ramming attack in October 2014 informs us that the two named individuals were killed by law enforcement. Since they died during the attacks, they were not charged with committing a terrorist act, and they no longer have a voice to defend themselves in court. Instead, they have been convicted in the courts of public opinion and political strategy. This is not to suggest that their actions were in any way justified, and few would argue that these were not heinous crimes. However, the Canadian legal system is built on the principle of ‘innocent until proven guilty’. If we believe that every Canadian has the rights outlined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1984), then we believe that even the most criminal among us have the right to a fair trial in which the burden of proof rests on the prosecution. As a constitutional document, the *Charter* supersedes other legal rulings should an individual suggest that their rights have been violated. Including them as examples in this report may set a

dangerous precedent for how we label Canadians associated with a terrorist event prior to issuing any legal conviction.

A number of Canadians were individualized in the 2014 *Report*, which I identified in my intertextual analysis as an example of Othering. This interpretation is supported by many policies implemented or planned by the Conservative government at the time, such as more restrictive immigration policy, the controversial ‘no-fly list’, requiring newcomers to remove their niqab when taking a citizenship oath, and the infamous ‘Canadian values’ citizenship screening proposal touted during the 2015 federal election (Lenard, 2015). Further, the named documents in the 2014 *Report* included several related to immigration policy that were not found in any other edition of the report. This again feeds into the idea that the Conservative government at the time was securitizing immigration as a threat to Canadian safety and values; the subsequent decrease in named groups and terrorists in 2016 and 2017 after the Liberal government was elected may be further evidence that this Othering was an intentional policy decision. Interestingly, Karim (2014) suggests that this type of Othering aligns with the idea of the ‘homegrown terrorist’; though that term was not used in the 2014 *Report*, it is notable that the named Canadians had both ‘foreign-sounding’ and ‘Canadian-sounding’ names, but all were associated with Al-Qaeda or Daesh. This implicitly reinforces the Other aspect of the Canadian terrorist identity, suppressing the idea that “some of the causes of deviance may find their sources in the Self” (Karim, 2014, p. 168). Instead, this focus on the Other allows the report to make its case and blame the “inherently violent characteristics of their alien heritage” (Karim, 2010, p. 173).

The 2017 *Report* also demonstrates considerable variability in how it treats Canadian individuals associated with terrorism. On one hand, the ‘terrorist’ actor is overwhelmingly suppressed in passive sentence constructions and instead the event is nominalized. This text uses nominalization extensively to refer to “a shooting” or “an attack”, which leaves the reader without a concrete actor responsible for these actions that instead take place on their own. Since this is a technique that obscures responsibility for an action, it is typically considered a favourable tool for those in control of the discourse (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In this case, however, it is another way of embedding Canadian attacks into this document that may not necessarily have a legal terrorism element. Their inclusion suggests that the political and media narratives surrounding these events were persuasive enough for the average reader not to question this framing. The combination of assigning a terrorism conviction to deceased Canadians and nominalizing other categories of crime, leaving the reader to infer that they, too, fit the definition of terrorism, further entrenches duelling legal and political discourses of terrorism in Canada.

7.2 Summary

This chapter has presented the sociocultural explanation of why the event has been described and presented the way it has been. In short, we see that the 2017 *Report* uses a variety of techniques to artificially inflate the threat of terrorists and terrorism to Canadians, following the trend of earlier editions of the *Report* and, indeed, a 30-year precedent of terrorism discourse. The reports produced under a Liberal government securitize Canadians’ rights and freedoms while justifying new security legislation, and those produced by the Conservative government securitize immigration policy. Terrorists

are conflated with other types of criminals—or suppressed altogether—for political convenience, leaving readers to assume that these reports are painting an accurate picture of the terrorist threat to Canada. The definition of the words ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorists’ seems to be malleable to suit the political agenda of the day. Having discussed my findings in this chapter, the next chapter will conclude my study.

8 Chapter: Conclusion

This study investigated how ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorists’ have been discursively constructed in Canada. To focus my investigation, I asked the following questions:

1. How does the Canadian government discursively construct ‘terrorism’ in the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada*?
2. How has the discursive construction of terrorism evolved since the first edition of the report in 2013?
3. What is the discursive construction of terrorist identity in the reports?

I used critical discourse analysis to analyze a series of government-produced reports about terrorism to understand the linguistic choices the author(s) made and the political strategies that may have influenced those choices. Transitivity analysis helped me deconstruct the 2017 *Report* to understand the actors and processes associated with Canadians and terrorists, and I used lexical cohesion to analyze patterns in the verbal processes. An intertextual analysis of all four editions of the report revealed how ‘terrorism’ has changed between governments; suppression, ideological squaring, individualization, and securitization are the main tools that helped me interpret the discursive evolution of this concept.

In summary, the 2017 *Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada* constructs an unclear discourse surrounding the risks of terrorism to the country. A transitivity analysis of selected clauses within the text unsurprisingly reveals that the GC positions itself as having more power than terrorists. However, a closer look at the variety of participants and the types of processes used to discuss terrorism indicate a conflict between the legal definition and the political conceptualization. This conflict does not

positively advance terrorist discourse; instead, readers are left to fill in the blanks with pre-existing notions of terrorism. The reader is also left to assume that the events and individuals mentioned in this document must be terrorism and terrorists, even if legal proceedings have not demonstrated this to be the case, and that the events and individuals who were excluded do not meet the legal *or* political threshold for terror. Combined with a lack of clearly defined terms and minimal focus on terrorists' ability to radicalize Canadians, this strategic manipulation is used to artificially inflate the physical threat of terrorism to Canada. This is a useful way to justify government priorities, budget increases, and security legislation.

Further, all of the reports support the 'war on terrorism' narrative that has permeated discussions on the topic since 2001. We can see this through the notable lexical chaining of military terminology in material processes for both Canadians and terrorists in the 2017 edition, but more concerning is that both federal governments have used securitization to rationalize their political agendas. In 2014, we saw that the report used Othering in order to securitize immigration policy, and the 2017 *Report* used presupposition to securitize Canadians' rights and freedoms (and therefore the *Charter*) in defence of the new powers and authorities being proposed in the *National Security Act* (2017). This, too, demonstrates the political usefulness of manipulating information to fit a purpose.

While it is easy to assume that our political party of preference, if we have one, works in the best interests of all Canadians, these findings suggest that someone will always be silenced in the discourse: whether we perpetuate ideals about the very nature of Canadian-ness that suppress dissenting voices or propose that there is a 'best' way to be

Canadian that minimizes diversity of tongues and cultures, we reveal our bias towards one ideology at the expense of another. These ideologies, and the ones summarized above, were made apparent with CDA. A critical look at the discursive construction of terrorist ideology in Canadian political writing is underrepresented in the literature, but the present research may help communicate why this kind of investigation is important and useful. Rather than accept naturalized political narratives as truth, we can use CDA to examine not only *what* the language is, but *how* it is. My hope is that this research reinforces that we can and have made mistakes in our political and legal conceptualizations of terrorism, and that its politicization complicates our discussions about it. I think we are already seeing positive changes in the media that question how governments decide who and what is included or excluded in the discussion; my findings can offer some evidence that the questions are worth pursuing.

8.1.1 Limitations and future research directions

I believe that, through the course of this study, I have made a meaningful contribution to the academic literature on the discursive construction of terrorism in Canada. However, this investigation had its limits. Since the bulk of my research focused on a single government document, I cannot claim that my results are generalizable. Similarly, though I tried to consider multiple points of view in my analysis, it is lacking: my interpretation is not finite, and a more comprehensive analysis of a variety of texts, including speeches, reports, legislation, and media coverage, could have provided a richer analysis.

Admittedly, I have limited knowledge of the political and legal environment in Canada, and so my observations do not necessarily account for the multi-layered machinations of public policy. While I did examine all four annual reports issued on this subject, they

were produced within a period of five years, making it difficult to extrapolate any trends that a greater range of documents could identify. The use of corpus linguistics to examine terrorism terminology would have introduced a quantitative approach, and there are many other CDA tools I could have used to enrich my results. Finally, my interpretations were based on what I assumed would be the perspective of a typical Canadian reader of the report, though that is incredibly difficult to define.

Additional research on this topic is needed, both to augment these findings and to continue to challenge the discursive constructions on terrorism that exist in Canada. A deeper dive into some of the legal concerns surrounding new terrorism legislation and existing legal definitions would be a nice way to more fully explore the modern sociocultural context of this document. A questionnaire to gather insight from a cross-section of Canadians on their understanding of ‘terrorism’ would have helped to triangulate my findings. Future research on this topic could include a discourse-historical approach to the evolution of terrorism discourse in Canada, or a more extensive CDA exploration of the intersect of Canadian and terrorist identity.

Appendices

Appendix A Examples of Analysis

A.1 Excerpts of transitivity analysis, original text

The Government of Canada	is committed to protecting	the safety and security of its citizens	in this ever-evolving environment.
Senser	Pr:material	Goal	Circ:location

Consultations	were held	from August to October 2016,	and gathered	feedback	from Canadian citizens, experts, academics, business leaders, and all levels of government.
Goal	Pr:material	Circ:loc	Pr:material	Goal	Circ:manner

We	have witnessed	an increase of low-sophistication, high-impact terrorist attacks	around the world.
Behavior	Pr:mental	Behaviour	Circ:location

Extremist groups	continue to use	technology and social media	as a means to recruit	followers	and promote	their ideology.
Agent	Pr:material	Range	Pr:verbal	Receiver	Pr:verbal	Verbiage

Thousands of individuals worldwide	have been motivated	to act	in the name of the ideology they espouse
Phenomenon/Actor	Pr:mental	Pr:material	Circ:cause

by travelling abroad	to support	Daesh's cause	and engage in	terrorist activities.
Circ:manner	Pr:material	Phenomenon	Pr:material	Goal

Most recently,	a police officer	was stabbed	and several bystanders	were injured	in Edmonton.
Circ:location	Goal	Pr:material	Goal	Pr:material	Circ:location

Terrorists	also intend to develop	cyber attack and cyber exploitation capabilities,		but to date,	they	have shown	little ability	
Senser	Pr:mental	Phenomenon		Circ:extent	Agent	Pr:material	Range	

to successfully launch	high-impact operations.
Pr:material	Goal

These individuals	are referred to as	extremist travellers.
Token	Pr:relational:intensive	Value

Rather than openly promoting outright violence,	those holding extreme right-wing views	often attempt to create	an online culture of fear, hatred and mistrust		by exploiting	real or imagined concerns when addressing an online audience.
	Actor	Pr:material	Goal		Pr:verbal	Verbiage

Terrorist groups	are continually adapting	in an effort to find new ways of committing attacks.
Actor	Pr:material	Circ:cause

In some cases, individuals	who	are in the process of radicalizing	to violence		can be redirected away from	a path
Receiver	Senser	Pr:mental	Phenomenon		Pr:verbal	Verbiage

that,	if continued,	could lead to	terrorist activity.
Senser	Circ:extent	Pr:mental ¹⁵	Phenomenon

The Government	is also working	to address	violent extremism online.
Sayer	Pr:material	Pr:material	Goal

¹⁵ In its literal sense, 'lead' would be a material process. I analyzed this sentence according to the 'path' metaphor, which is figurative; 'lead' would therefore be a mental action.

As the threat	from terrorism	continues to evolve,	Canada's response	must continually adapt and change	to keep Canadians safe.
Senser	Circ:cause	Pr:mental	Actor	Pr:material	Goal

The Bill	is aimed at ensuring that	Canada's National Security Framework	achieves	two vital objectives simultaneously--keeping Canadians safe and safeguarding their rights and freedoms.
Senser	Pr:material	Actor	Pr:material	Goal

In particular,	we	have seen	the increased use of vehicles and knives	in attacks,	such as the attack
	Senser	Pr:mental	Phenomenon	Circ:manner	Actor

that took place	recently	in Edmonton,	in which five people	were injured;	and in New York,
Pr:material	Circ:location	Circ:location	Goal	Pr:material	Circ:location

in which eight people	were killed	and several more	seriously injured.
Goal	Pr:material	Goal	Pr:material

The principle threat to Canada	continues to be that posed by	violent extremists	who	are inspired by
Range	Pr:material	Actor	Senser	Pr:mental

violent Islamist ideology, and terrorist groups such as Daesh and al-Qaeda,	to carry out	an attack	in Canada.
Phenomenon	Pr:material	Goal	Circ:location

While Canadian extremists	have travelled	in the past	to support terror groups	in many countries (e.g. Afghanistan, Somalia),
Actor	Pr:material	Circ:location	Circ:cause	Circ:location

Syria and Iraq	currently maintain	the highest concentration of Canadian extremists.
Token	Pr:relational:intensive	Value

A.2 Excerpts of transitivity analysis, active voice

Active Participant	Process Type	Process	Participant Type	Passive Participant
*The Government of Canada	material	is committed to protecting	goal	the safety and security of its citizens
Canada	material	faces	range	a continuing and evolving threat of terrorism
*[[the government]]	material	held	goal	consultations
*[[the government]]	material	gathered	goal	feedback
(a full array of tools and powers)	material	protects	goal	our rights
Canadians	mental	have become all too familiar with	phenomenon	the tragic consequences
[[law enforcement]]	mental	suspects	phenomenon	the majority (of those who have returned) to have been engaged in combat
Terrorist groups such as Daesh and al-Qaeda	material	execute	range	elaborate attacks
lone actors or terror cells	material	are increasingly using	goal	low-sophistication, high-impact methods to carry out attacks
*[[extremist groups]]	mental	motivate	phenomenon	thousands of individuals worldwide
*[terrorist groups, such as Daesh and al-Qaeda]	mental	inspire	phenomenon	violent extremists
Violent extremists	verbal	boast about	verbiage	battlefield victories
Violent extremists	verbal	promote	verbiage	intolerance
Violent extremists	verbal	justify	verbiage	attacks based on violent beliefs
*[[Someone]]	material	stabbed	goal	a police officer
*[[Someone]]	material	injured	goal	several bystanders
who (Canadians)	material	cannot leave (-)	range	the country
(Canadians)	mental	could feel compelled	Phenomenon	to carry out a domestic attack

Legend	
[passive]	Canadians
(subject provided in previous clause)	Terrorists
[[Ellipsed subject AND passive]]	Canadian terrorists
	past simple tense

* Indicates a clause that is also presented in Appendix A.1 for comparison.

A.3 Abbreviated table of intertextual analysis for 2017 Report

Named Terrorist Groups and Individuals	Named Terrorist Acts	Named Documents
Aby Sayyaf Group al-Qaeda Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) al-Shabaab Boko Haram Daesh Daesh-West Africa Hizballah Right-wing extremism the 'Baqiya family' the extreme right-wing	the shooting...in Quebec City a police officer stabbed, bystanders injured in Edmonton [attack] in New York the attacks in Brussels in 2016 defacing...websites DDoS attacks Hackers posted...on websites drove van into pedestrians [Barcelona] attacks in France attacks in Germany attacks in Belgium attacks in the UK Shooting at a night club in Istanbul	<i>Anti-terrorism Act, 2015</i> Canada's National Security Framework <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> <i>Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act</i> <i>Communications Security Establishment Act</i> <i>Criminal Code</i> Cyber Security Strategy <i>Federal Terrorism Response Plan</i> Global Affairs Canada's framework <i>National Security Act, 2017 (Bill C-59)</i> <i>Secure Air Travel Act</i> <i>Security of Canada Information Sharing Act</i> Strong, Secure, Engaged Terrorism and Violent Extremism Awareness Guide
Abu Mohammad al-Adnani Martin Couture-Rouleau Michael Zihaf-Bibeau Tamim Chowdhuri	attacks in Yemen the attack on a Russian charter plane the attack in Hurgada in July 2017 the attacks in Sousse (June 2015) a large truck...detonated [Somalia] attacks...in Mali attacks...in Burkina Faso attacks...in Cote d'Ivoire in 2016 attacks and kidnappings in Nigeria attacks and kidnappings in Cameroon attacks and kidnappings in Chad attacks and kidnappings in Niger a siege of Marawi City terrorist attack at a bakery in Dhaka attacks occurred in Russia attacks occurred in Kazakhstan attacks occurred in Kyrgyzstan attacks in Canada 2015 Charlie Hebdo attack the attacks...in Tunis Two Canadians...were abducted	
		<p style="text-align: center;">Legend</p> Named individuals Named in previous edition of report

Appendix B Definitions

B.1 Definition of a terrorist act in the *Criminal Code of Canada*

PART II.1

Terrorism

Interpretation

Definitions

83.01 (1) The following definitions apply in this Part.

[...]

terrorist activity means

- a) an act or omission that is committed in or outside Canada and that, if committed in Canada, is one of the following offences:
 - (i) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2) that implement the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft*, signed at The Hague on December 16, 1970,
 - (ii) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2) that implement the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation*, signed at Montreal on September 23, 1971,
 - (iii) the offences referred to in subsection 7(3) that implement the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14, 1973,
 - (iv) the offences referred to in subsection 7(3.1) that implement the *International Convention against the Taking of Hostages*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 17, 1979,
 - (v) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2.21) that implement the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, done at Vienna and New York on March 3, 1980, as amended by the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, done at Vienna on July 8, 2005 and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, done at New York on September 14, 2005,
 - (vi) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2) that implement the *Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving*

International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation*, signed at Montreal on February 24, 1988,

(vii) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2.1) that implement the *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation*, done at Rome on March 10, 1988,

(viii) the offences referred to in subsection 7(2.1) or (2.2) that implement the *Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf*, done at Rome on March 10, 1988,

(ix) the offences referred to in subsection 7(3.72) that implement the *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 15, 1997, and

(x) the offences referred to in subsection 7(3.73) that implement the *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1999, or

b) an act or omission, in or outside Canada,

(i) that is committed

(a) in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause, and

(a) in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public, or a segment of the public, with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act, whether the public or the person, government or organization is inside or outside Canada, and

(ii) that intentionally

(A) causes death or serious bodily harm to a person by the use of violence,

(B) endangers a person's life,

(C) causes a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or any segment of the public,

(D) causes substantial property damage, whether to public or private property, if causing such damage is likely to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of clauses (A) to (C), or

(E) causes serious interference with or serious disruption of an essential service, facility or system, whether public or private, other than as a result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of clauses (A) to (C),

and includes a conspiracy, attempt or threat to commit any such act or omission, or being an accessory after the fact or counselling in relation to any such act or omission, but, for greater certainty, does not include an act or omission that is committed during an armed conflict and that, at the time and in the place of its commission, is in accordance with customary international law or conventional international law applicable to the conflict, or the activities undertaken by military forces of a state in the exercise of their official duties, to the extent that those activities are governed by other rules of international law.

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