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Drawing a Line in the Snow: the Geopolitical Place-making of Canadian Security Policy

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Drawing a Line in the Snow: the Geopolitical place-making of Canadian Security Policy

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Abstract

Critical geopolitics has grown to be one of the more vibrant sub-disciplines in geography through the implementation of theories and techniques of postmodernism and poststructuralism. These theories and techniques have opened new questions and subjects to the scope of inquiry of critical geopolitics. Fundamental to the discipline is the notion that discourses of power are crucial to shaping the understanding of objects and concepts. This notion can be applied to geography in the scripting of global spaces as a political construct: spaces are defined in a political manner. Rather than spaces existing as they are described, spaces are constructed and produced by the discourses surrounding them. Similarly, security is a discursive subject such that its definition and formation are based upon the discourses that imply vague notions of what security means. Key to understanding security as a construction is the notion of terrorism, which is a signifier to the construction of security. Because notions of terror and terrorism are products of discourses, security can be established in a similar constructive form as it operates to mitigate the threat from terrorism. This thesis focuses on the concept of security as a geographic and geopolitical construct. Through an examination and deconstruction of Canadian security policy, I argue that the conceptualization of security is an act of geopolitical place-making as spaces are defined as secure and insecure through a discourse dominated by those in power. This argument is developed through an example of the notion of terrorism, itself a political construct, which highlights the geopolitical nature of constructing security and insecurity.
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All views proposed in this thesis are that of the author’s alone and do not represent that of the committee members, Department of Geography, the University of Cincinnati, or any other person associated with this project. All errors and oversight that are in the document are of no one else’s doing other than my own.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is always ‘out there’, or at least the media tells us so. It blares across the twenty-four hour news channels. There is something out there and we must be scared. One day it could be a shark attack, the next it could be a suspicious package appearing without a return address, then it could be the H1N1 Influenza Virus that has spread over the world and thousands of tourists have been quarantined in their hotels because they might infect the rest of the population. All could get pushed aside when a new audiotape from Osama bin Laden announcing Al Qaeda’s plan to attack the drinking water systems in the United States is released. Eventually, the image of Chicken Little running around and screaming that the “sky is falling, the sky is falling” is brought to mind when news stories break surrounding the threat du jour. Powerful, believable, and credible experts flash across our screens claiming exclusive knowledge about the very real danger that these threats pose to our security. But what if it was just an exaggerated grand show as elaborate as a Hollywood blockbuster or Broadway hit?

Without belittling the very nature of these threats and to better understand the geographic and geopolitical nature of the threats, we acknowledge that they must come from and must happen somewhere. This is central to the very nature of the threat: it is geographically located and thus it can be rationalized and internalized as being from somewhere. This is a geopolitical practice of scripting threats. The process of geographically locating threats creates certain knowledge about them and the danger
they pose to ‘our’ security. More often than not, these threats are ‘constructed’ in a manner separated from our specific location, creating a notion of separation between the threats to security and our security.

This notion of construction rests upon the development of social construction which focuses on the “social context of inquiry, rather than the world which is investigated, determines – constructs – knowledge” (Barnes 2000). This ontology concentrates on the idea that knowledge is “always relative to its social setting (there are no absolutes), and the outcome of an active process of fabrication rather than the discovery of a reality pre-existent and fully formed” (Barnes 2000). Rather than appealing to a view of the world as one sees it, social construction goes beyond the basic descriptions and engages with the formulation of object as constructed through the social setting.

This research examines the construction of security within Canadian security policy. This thesis aims to critically engage with the conception of security from a geographic and geopolitical perspective in order to offer a more complete critique of security policy, as opposed to a simple overview of the security policy and the geographic location of the threats. Through an examination of Canadian security policy, I argue that the conceptualization of security is an act of geopolitical place-making as security and insecurity are constructed through a discourse. This argument is developed through an examination of the notion of terrorism, itself a political construct, and highlights the geopolitical nature of constructing security and insecurity. Chapter Two reviews the literature surrounding the concepts of critical geopolitics, critical security studies and the geopolitics of terrorism, all which are integral to understanding the proposed arguments.
Chapter Three focuses on the methodology of this study, which is a poststructural critical discourse analysis focusing on the use of both security and terrorism in the documents from the Canadian government. Chapter Four is the case study, which analyzes the Canadian security policy from two lenses, a political and a geographical lens. After I examine the use of the term “security” and its dichotomous opposition “insecurity” using the two lenses. I employ the term “terrorism” and “terrorist” in security documents to highlight the construction of the terms, and the geographical implications of that construction. Chapter Five is a critical reflection where I will touch upon issues that have emerged that center on my positionality as the researcher in relation to the subject.
LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on the three main themes that situate my research in the discipline of geography. Specifically, I focus on critical geopolitics, critical security studies and an examination and a conceptualization of terrorism and terrorists. Each of these themes is important for understanding the geography present in this research.

A History of the Development of Critical Geopolitics

The Beginnings of Critical Geopolitics

The academic pursuit of critical geopolitics is a development within political geography that began in 1992. The idea of a critical geopolitics came from the work of Gerard Ó Tuathail and John Agnew in an article in *Political Geography Quarterly* in 1992. This article centers on the idea of geopolitics as a discourse, rather than the previous conceptions of the discipline as the balance of power politics, a concept which reestablished the subject in the broader spectrum of geography (Ó Tuathail 1996). The idea of discourse as the basis for geopolitics came from a reading of French philosopher Michel Foucault’s *Power/Knowledge* where he examines the importance of power relations within the production of knowledge (Foucault 1980). It is from this work of Foucault that the foundation of critical geopolitics was established. Ó Tuathail and Agnew began with the premise that geography and geopolitics are products of this
power/knowledge relationship (Ó Tuathail 1996). Their main argument was that geopolitics “should be critically re-conceptualized as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft ‘spatialize’ international politics in such a way as to represent it as a ‘world’ characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992).

The conceptual basis of critical geopolitics came from four theses proposed by Ó Tuathail and Agnew. The first of these thesis is that geopolitics is a comprehensive study of statecraft, not simply limited to the work of an elite group of statesmen, but open to the everyday images of foreign policy within each person (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992). This meant that every conception of foreign policy has an implicit and explicit geographic and geopolitical background which is created in the discussion of specific areas. Ó Tuathail and Agnew focus on the ideas of “Western” and “Islamic” as being products of a specific thought process of foreign policy when these issues are discussed (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992).

The second thesis is that there are two types of geopolitical reasoning: practical and formal. The former is the “reasoning by means of consensual and unremarkable assumptions about places and their particular identities” mainly practiced by statesmen and military commanders, while the latter is “reasoning of strategic thinkers and public intellectuals (such as those found in the ‘geopolitical tradition’) who work in civil society and produce a highly codified system of ideas and principles to guide the conduct of statecraft” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992). The most common form of geopolitical reasoning is of the practical typology where it is “a common-sense type which relies on
the narratives and binary distinctions found in societal mythologies” (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992).

Their third thesis was that any study of geopolitics and geopolitical reasoning must include the production of geographic knowledge within a state and about the world in general (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992). This focuses on the production of knowledge about the world as shaped within the power relations of a specific space:

Geographical knowledge is transformed into the reductive geopolitical reasoning of intellectuals of statecraft. How are places reduced to security commodities, to geographical abstractions, which need to be ‘domesticated’, controlled, invaded or bombed rather than understood in their complex reality? (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992)

The premise of this argument is that geopolitics in its classical form of state competition abstracts the complexities of the world in its analysis and that critical geopolitics would offer a more nuanced version of the world, which would be sensitive to the complexities of space and territory.

The final thesis from the work is that states that have operated in the core of the modern world political system created, maintained and influenced the representation of international political space (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992). This thesis argues that states within a hegemonic position of power in the world have a “disproportionate influence” over the representation of political space in the world (Ó Tuathail and Agnew 1992). Those in power shape political space as they deem fit and within their vision of the world. This view is unquestioned and unchallenged because of the position of power from which this view emanates.

With their work, Ó Tuathail and Agnew essentially dissected the ideas of classical geopolitics through a postmodern critique of the basis of the previous century
of geopolitical thought (Ó Tuathaní 1996). This created a situation where geopolitics was “[reconceptualized] as the problematic of the social inscription of global space by intellectuals of statecraft” (Ó Tuathaní 1996). This newly constructed idea of a critical geopolitics was key to the rich literature that abounds within the study of geopolitics these days.

At the same time that Ó Tuathaní and Agnew were working on their conceptualization of geopolitics as a discourse, another author, Simon Dalby, was working in the field of dissident international relations theory and seeking to connect that work to the development of critical geopolitics. Dalby’s work focused on the idea that states should not be reduced to containers as they have been considered in the majority of the international relations literature for the cold war and the post-cold war world (Dalby 1990). Dalby situates the study of critical geopolitics and his academic support of the discipline with the work of Ó Tuathaní as an intellectual encounter with the proposed positivist approach of John O’Laughlin and Herman van der Wusten. O’Laughlin and Van der Wusten (Wusten and O’Laughlin 1986, Wusten and O’Laughlin 1987) proposed an analytical-empirical approach focusing on the military and economics of international conflict, which made their focus the state and its behaviors of the utmost importance to geopolitical research (Dalby 1991). On the other hand, Dalby supports the view of Ó Tuathaní whose premise is that “the uncritical and unanalyzed assumptions built into [O’Laughlin and Van der Wusten’s] concepts of peace and violence leads them to accept many of the contemporary political arrangements as a given” (Ó Tuathaní 1987).
Refining Critical Geopolitics

Another part of the development of critical geopolitics comes from the article by Klaus Dodds and James Sidaway on locating critical geopolitics. They argue that critical geopolitics engages with representation, authority, power and knowledge in ways that cannot be realized under the traditional focus of geopolitics as the ideas of states and competition (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). They focus on the connections between critical geopolitics and postmodernism, feminism, postcolonialism and theories in political economy (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). The development of critical geopolitics has focused primarily on the work of Foucault and his notions of power/knowledge within discourse. They cite a quotation from Foucault’s 1976 interview with the editors of Hérodote:

The longer I continue, the more it seems to me that the formation of discourses and the genealogy of knowledge needs to be analyzed, not in terms of types of consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics and strategies of power. Tactics and strategies deployed through the implementations, distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organization of domains which could well make up some sort of a geopolitics where my preoccupations would link up with your methods… Geography must lie at the heart of my concerns (Foucault 1980).

This is where the connection can be drawn between the work of Foucault and the focus of critical geopolitics. As Dodds and Sidaway point out, forms of power/knowledge operate both geopolitically and spatially, where each concept is connected to a geopolitical identity that is constructed from the discourse of power (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). In addition to the work of Foucault, Dodds and Sidaway focus on the contribution of Edward Said’s Orientalism in the terms of the connection of a constructed geopolitics to a specific identity. The work of Foucault and Said form the basis of understanding from the point of view of Dodds and Sidaway since they offer a
way of conceptualizing and unpacking the imagery and power/knowledge discourse within the study of critical geopolitics.

Dodds and Sidaway (1994) also explore the technique of deconstruction, as proposed by Jacques Derrida, as a key feature to the study of critical geopolitics. One of the foci that they mention is the deconstruction of the texts within geopolitics, to reveal the spatialized nature of these statements and the people who make them (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). Predicated upon the work of Dalby, the authors cite the deconstruction of the notion of security as exposing the conventional mode of thought about a geopolitical concept.

In addition to the deconstruction of certain terms and the ideas that go along with them, Dodds and Sidaway connect critical geopolitics with geopolitical economy. They accomplish this through an analysis of the trend at the time to examine the nature of post-Fordist economies and the geopolitical implications of these economic policies (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). The authors see the importance of this work as a method of providing “some theoretical and empirical opportunities for grounding elite geopolitical reasoning within the material circumstances that elites sought to reproduce” (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). This is an important realization as the analysis of critical geopolitics can be combined with an economic system and the interrelation of the two offers new dimensions for critical geopolitical research.

Dodds and Sidaway close their article with a prospectus of the discipline of geopolitics that is being “deconstructed and reconceptualised” as it moves towards critical geopolitics. One conceptual idea is the idea of a distinction between formal and popular sites of geopolitics. This would offer, they propose, a way that “critical
geopolitics ‘comes home’ to investigate further how the local and the national are themselves constituted through the experience and imagination of the foreign” (Dodds and Sidaway 1994). The authors call for the inclusion of feminist literature within geopolitical research. Finally, the authors call for an examination of what critical geopolitics is seeking to achieve. Dodds and Sidaway felt that there was little focus to the research being produced beyond a critique of the world system, and that a more focused look to critical geopolitics would be a beneficial project to further the discipline (Dodds and Sidaway 1994).

A decade after Ó Tuathail and Agnew’s (1992) paper, Dodds presented a review of the sub-discipline and the main themes within the work. Dodds identified four major research agendas within Anglo-American critical geopolitics: 1) geopolitical practices, or the connections between geographical and political reasoning that affects world politics; 2) a revisiting of the history of geopolitical ideas and their contexts; 3) the popular representations within geopolitics; and 4) the connection of the world structure to the practices of states and statecraft (Dodds 2001). These research agendas connected critical geopolitics to the questioning of the ‘political’ and ‘geographical’ within the study of political geography that took place at about the same time (Dodds 2001).

Dodds offers some new research directions as ways to continue to expand the study of critical geopolitics. First is the need to incorporate the non-Western and non Anglo-American geopolitical imaginations and to involve these imaginations with the study of critical geopolitics. Second, Dodds identifies the need for a connection between post-colonialism and the geopolitical imaginations of the post-colonial states that would give greater insight to the examination of questions that come out of these
ideas of post-colonialism. Third, Dodds proposes a re-examination of the role of the state in geopolitics. With the calls over the decade about a globalizing world, there was discussion that states would someday disappear as they would not be needed, but after a decade when states were supposed to wither away, they have not done so and therefore still catch the attention of the people studying and writing critical geopolitics. Finally, Dodds recommends an engagement with military affairs for critical geopolitics. In the past, there was a reluctance to engage in an examination of military practices, but this is an area that critical geopolitics should engage with due to the importance of geography to the actions and abilities of the military (Dodds 2001). This last call, the engagement with military practices by critical geopolitics, has been realized in many forms, whether an examination of the role of geography in war and peace (Flint 2005), the consideration of violence in a geographic and geopolitical context (Gregory and Pred 2006), or the reinstitution of colonial practices by military measures (Gregory 2004).

The primary text of critical geopolitics, and the piece that is most crucial to studying the subject is *Critical Geopolitics* (Ó Tuathail 1996). Ó Tuathail establishes the groundwork for the study of critical geopolitics by focusing on the meaning of geopolitics. He establishes that there has never been a consensus of its definition or its boundaries of research, including a distinction between the geopolitics of the Germans as being bad and the Anglo-Americans being good (Ó Tuathail 1996). Ó Tuathail points out that this confusion over the scope and meaning of geopolitics is not a negative since “to declare something meaningless or imprecise is to assume to know the final state of full meaning and precise use of concepts that are imagined to be stable and
homogenous” (Ó Tuathail 1996). The uncertain definitions of geopolitics leads to the idea that geopolitics should be seen as a 20th century concept that is a meeting point for ideas of ‘international politics’ (Ó Tuathail 1996).

Another concept and idea that Ó Tuathail focuses on in his book is that of perspectives, the geopolitical gaze, or the way in which a person views the world will orient his/her understanding of how the world is represented in geopolitical statements. The act of seeing and surveying has, for the most part, had an important connection between those with power and those not in power (Ó Tuathail 1996). The perspectivism that is present within geopolitics is that there is a certain way that the world is viewed and that way is constructed from a power structure, which informs a vision of the world.

Critical Approaches to Traditional Geopolitics

The work of Ó Tuathail also includes critical approaches to geopolitics by other geographers and political scientists. The importance of these critical approaches is two-fold. First, they provide an insight into the relationship of identity and coherence between the state and the citizens and second, the critical approaches themselves have to be considered within the structures of the time in which they were written, creating a situation where the authors, in their critique of geopolitics, are actually practicing geopolitics themselves since they are working within the structures and conceptions of geopolitics (Ó Tuathail 1996). Ó Tuathail focuses on the work of Karl Wittfogel, Isaiah Bowman, Yves Lacoste, Richard Ashley and Simon Dalby as providing particularly compelling critiques of the geopolitics of their period. Each one “presents inscriptions of geopolitics that are distinctly different yet that reveal certain common difficulties” (Ó
Each of these critiques has three common themes. First is recognition of geopolitics as a discursive and contextual practice. Second is recognition of the structure of the Cartesian perspectivism of how geopolitics is constructed and employed. Third is the care taken when the term geopolitics is used because of the previous connotations of the word and its connections to its usage in the past (Ó Tuathail 1996). A brief overview of the critiques is necessary in order to understand how they fit into the study of critical geopolitics and offer critiques of geopolitics of the period.

Karl Wittfogel was a member of the German Communist Party in the 1920s and 30s and engaged in a critique of the work of Ratzel and other critics of Marx and Engels. Wittfogel focused on Ratzel’s ignorance of economics on the state’s relationship with the land. Wittfogel claimed that geopolitics was “an organic ideological compliment to the bourgeoisie-democratic practice” (Wittfogel 1985). The most important contribution of Wittfogel is that he offered a critique of geopolitics from within a Marxist framework, and not from geopolitics within Germany as many of his contemporaries were doing at the time (Ó Tuathail 1996).

Isaiah Bowman, a preeminent geographer in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s argued that the leadership of the United States needed to have a worldly perspective on the world. His work at this time however was less a scientific work than a propaganda appeal to a distinction between geography and geopolitics. The latter, in reference to German geopolitik, was seen as being a pseudoscience where the study of geography had been perverted and corrupted (Bowman 1942, Ó Tuathail 1996, Smith 2003). This work is inherently engrained within the structure of the geopolitics of the
time as Bowman was offering a different vision of the world, and had to justify it in a way that would permit the difference between Anglo-American and German geopolitics.

The work of French Communist geographer Yves Lacoste is situated among the radical critiques of the decolonization, which was common at the time of his writing. His work is significant to the study of geopolitics because of his sustained consideration of the meaning of geography and geopolitics as political tools (Ó Tuathail 1996). Lacoste recognized that geography was a social discourse and included more than just a statesman view of the world. The discourse surrounding geography was everywhere, from the grade school teacher to the mass media on television and films. Geography was also a strategic form of knowledge, which is part of the state’s apparatus of control (Lacoste 1976, Lacoste 1984, Ó Tuathail 1996). Lacoste connected the ideas of geography, knowledge, and territorial control which all served the established power of the state, through administration and military apparatuses.

Richard Ashley is more commonly known in the field of international relations, but his work has been cited as a catalyst for the growth of critical and dissident international relations. Ashley argues that the work of dissident international relations can come only when one has cut all ties and becomes a stranger to a country, language, sex, and any sovereign ideas of man (Ó Tuathail 1996). This dissident international relations is founded in the supposed hard boundaries of identity and stable values between states that have been overlaid on top of uncertainty, disorder and the turmoil of the globalized world (Ó Tuathail 1996). There are limitations to the consideration of these ideas and how they are mobilized for study. Dissident international relations theory is typically confined to the theoretical purviews of international relations. While claiming to be
critical and opposed to the traditional work in international relations, this new idea is restricted to the framework of international relations theory (Ó Tuathail 1996). It takes shape from an examination and critique of the classical international relations theory texts, rather than a deconstruction of the discourses within them. Another limitation is the ease with which dissident international relations can be easily inserted into the modern thoughts of international relations without much concern since it operates from within the framework of the traditional international relations theory (Ó Tuathail 1996). If this work is to provide a reasonable alternative to the theories proposed in international relations, it must move beyond what has been typically offered in the terms of power politics and statecraft.

Finally, Ó Tuathail reviews the work of Dalby’s research on spatial exclusion. Dalby’s work highlights the importance of the Committee on the Present Danger as a geopolitical force. The CPD was established from a group of President Gerald Ford’s “B-team” of intelligence analysts who believed that the Soviet military threat was underestimated by the Ford Administration (Ó Tuathail 1996). The work is concerned with “the geopolitics of geopolitical space; how a series of particular security discourses established an ideological space from which to dominate, exclude and delegitimize other discourses”, and how these are applied to the Soviet Union as an Other in the United States security strategy (Dalby 1990, Ó Tuathail 1996). While being critical of the ambiguity of Dalby’s use of geopolitics, it is worthy to note the praise of Ó Tuathail when Dalby has effectively utilized the ideas of critical geopolitics to illuminate the importance of rejecting “the politics of grand detachment, the illusion of the Archimedean point from which the whole world can be grasped in favor of critical
disputations of the designations of reality specifies by hegemonic discourses” (Dalby 1990, Ó Tuathail 1996)

Conclusions

Critical geopolitics is of utmost importance to understanding the political and geographic nature of the world around us. Critical geopolitics is at its most basic, a questioning of the assumptions of the political statements and positions of the governments and people in power. Through this, geographers have been able to examine what many have taken for granted in the world, whether that is the current nation-state system, the dominating discourses of western centric views of the world emanating from those claiming to know the ways that the world acts as a whole, and the basic understanding of concepts that had for so long been unquestioned and assumed to be the natural order of things in the world. These assumptions go unquestioned for the vast majority of the time since for the longest time, there was a lack of theoretical understanding and vocabulary to tackle these assumptions. The development of poststructural philosophy presented the theoretical basis upon which critical geopolitics could build its work and it offered the most significant critique of the assumptions of the world.

Significant to this is what Ó Tuathail described as the importance of the deconstruction of the term geography into its parts: ‘geo’ – earth, and ‘graph’ – writing (Ó Tuathail 1996). At its most basic definition, geography is little more than the combination of writing and earth, or most specifically, how the earth is written. What is written about the earth is a product of the Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge:
those that have power are able to create and justify the knowledge that people have of the world. In this case, that knowledge becomes a common sense assumption of the way that the world works.

The importance of work in critical geopolitics lies within its ability to question what is typically considered unquestionable, to claim as “unnatural” that which is assumed to be “natural”, to rip apart the notions of common sense as little more than a constructed idea of the world by those in power.

As such, the next section will detail the subject of critical security studies, emanating from the work of David Campbell, Ron Walker, and Simon Dalby. This section will take the concepts of critical geopolitics and use them in examining the ideas behind security with a directive of answering the questions of ‘security for whom?’, ‘security from what?’ and more importantly, ‘security from where?’.

Interrogating Security: Critical Security Studies

The subject of critical security studies is a critical engagement with the concept of security from a political perspective. The basic tenets of the subject are security for whom, from what and from where. This has taken the subject from a specific definition only in terms of a military engagement within the framework of international politics, to a broad range of scales and definitions of security from personal to the state, and topics from the military to the economic and environmental. This section will survey the literature of critical security studies on two fronts: the dissident international relations perspective of critical security studies which examines the perspective of security in international relations and the geographic nature of security, which highlights the work
of Dalby. This will provide a basis of understanding the concept of security and the problematization of the very basis of the subject of security.

**International Relations, Hobbes, the State, and Security**

Security studies, as a subject of study, has centered on the idea that there is one meaning for the term security. Based in the definition set forth by Stephen Walt, security studies and the notion of security was constrained to the most strict and rigid definition of military forces and engagements with foreign powers (Walt 1991, Krause and Williams 1997). This definition of security studies is rooted in the prominence of realist theory within international relations, based on the work of Morgenthau, Waltz, and Mearsheimer. At its core, realism is a state-centric theory about how the international system operates. The system operates with an assumption of anarchy where states are constantly at conflict with other states, with the ultimate goal of the state being the accumulation of hegemonic power over the other states in the world. There is constant conflict between states, which are seen as rational actors with the ultimate aim being the survival of the state by any means necessary (Morgenthau 1948, Waltz 1959, Mearsheimer 2001). Relying upon the Hobbsian conception of the state of nature, the realist theories of international relations come to define security as something that will come only from the state: the state is both the cure and the cause of security (Walker 1997). The critique of realism in international relations stems from the idea that

claims about political realism are an historically specific consequence of contradictory ontological possibilities expressed by the principle of state sovereignty, and not, as is so often asserted, an expression of ahistorical essences and structural necessities (Walker 1995).
What Walker provides for us here, then, is a critique of realist international relations theory as the basis of the study of security. By abandoning the traditions of international relations theory as being a product of the ontological structure of the world and not the descriptive practice that it claims to be, we are free to focus on the broader concept of security within international relations, and free to delve ever deeper into the work of critical security studies.

The most obvious starting point would be that of the philosophical basis of the thoughts of security study: Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. The philosophical premise of Hobbes’s work centers on the state of man, which is inherently dangerous and threatening. To be secure, man must give up freedoms to the sovereign power (in this case the Leviathan) in return for the protection from the threats of the anarchic world that surrounds him. Robert Gilpin sums up this crude overview, as he quotes Thomas Hobbes speaking to his patron, the Second Earl of Devonshire: “‘It’s a jungle out there.’ Anarchy is the rule; order, justice, and morality are the exceptions” (Gilpin 1986, Campbell 1998). This conception of the world is a rather bleak and pessimistic view of the world, where the only security that is possible comes from the state. This reasoning is key to a realist’s perspective of the world and international politics. Since security lies within the state, the state is a necessary institution. Significantly, Hobbes ignores any insecurity that might come from the sovereign as the lesser of the evils compared to the state of nature without the protection of the sovereign (Walker 1997).

Hobbes’s view, however, is very open to critique on his concept of the state of nature. For Hobbes, the state of nature is anarchic and dangerous where only sovereign power acting with the power from the subjects is able to provide security.
There is very little outside of a theory of the ‘natural state’ of humans that would indicate this theory is nothing more than an assumption on which Hobbes bases his work, with the ultimate goal being the justification of the sovereign state. This assumption of the natural condition of human existence cheekily plays into Hobbes’s conceptualization of the need of the state to provide security (Walker 1997). More clearly stated, the state of nature is not an unproblematic reality, but “a sanction, a threat, a discourse of danger” (Campbell 1998). Essentially, the state of nature is little more than “shock therapy” to show the subjects the need for the sovereign power over their lives (Johnston and Hobbes 1986). As such, the basis of society as a protection from the anarchic state of nature in Hobbes’s view requires the institutionalization of fear by the sovereign in the position of power (Campbell 1998). Not only is this position of Hobbes a tenuous one at best, but also its significance to the broader spectrum of international relations and security studies must be questioned. If the state of nature is non-existent beyond a threat or a discourse of danger, then it would stand to reason that the state is not the only provider of security and that simply protecting the subjects for their loyalty is not the only definition and conceptualization of security.

It is important to note that the state as the central figure in security has been the single focus of security studies, “not because conflict between states is inevitable, but because other forms of political community have been rendered almost unthinkable” (Walker 1997). This condition has become so ingrained in the thought processes that simply studying security is “to engage in a discourse of repetitions, to affirm over and over again the dangers that legitimize sovereign authority that is constituted precisely as a solution to dangers” (Walker 1997). Walker notes that there are two ways to counter
Identity and Difference

This idea of difference is key to the discussion of security. Mirroring a similar vein of thought as critical geopolitics with an implicit difference between a constructed here and there separated by little more than perspective and the vision of the author, this difference centers on an implicit we/they distinction. More specifically, it is an implicit discussion of identity, “a condition that has depth, is multilayered, possesses texture, and comprises many dimensions” and it “cannot be reduced to any single spatial or temporal source” (Campbell 1998). The concept of identity is significant to the portrayal of danger and security. It is key that we are able to identify “who ‘we’ who are insecure are” (Dalby 2002). As soon as there is an identifiable us, then there can be an identifiable them whom are the source of our insecurity. Identity as us, is only created through a process which ultimately creates them; the process of establishing an identity
as ours at the same time creates their identity as not ours, but different. Significantly, this is, as Campbell illustrates, “the problematic of identity/difference”: nothing exists before or outside of the process” (Campbell 1998). Identity/difference is such a distinction that there cannot be an us without a them. It is also important to note that the creation of an us can be done not by defining what the term means, but through the definition of what we are not, such that by creating a them, we have defined who we are not, and therefore created our own grouping.

Not only is there a creation of identity/difference in defining an us/them dichotomy of the world, but also more importantly, there are geopolitical discourses and the creation and construction of boundaries between the essential portrayals of us and them, self and other, here and there. The discourse of security studies has been under scrutiny for the vast part of the last decade since the ending of the cold war. There are now a preponderance of subjects and definitions that might either need to be secured or are the focus of security, from the economy to the environment and all semblances of problem (Dalby 1997, Dalby 2002). Significant to this is the idea that security in the cold war sense, has outlived its usefulness and has been replaced with the wide ranging topics and foci that are common-place in concepts such as security (Dalby 1997). What this has done in effect, in an analytical and rhetorical sense, have made “claims about security increasingly have an air of slovenly imprecision… notions of national security, most notoriously have invoked realities and necessities that everyone is supposed to acknowledge, but also vague generalities about everything and nothing” (Walker 1997). The mosaic of life today, both within academic disciplines and the broader global society, has come to form a “landscape in which claims about security…threaten to
encompass both everything and nothing” (Walker 1997). Security has become something that is constructed within discourses and is subject to the debates surrounding its scope, breadth and depth as both a subject and as an object.

Significant to the discourse of security is the concept of the Other, from the work of Edward Said (1979). His work is premised around the perceived superiority of western cultures in comparison to non-western cultures, which are seen as backwards, uncivilized, and savage. These ideas are inherent in the media, government and academic work as a means of justifying the actions of the western cultures toward nonwestern cultures (Said 1979). This line of reasoning is influential and informative to further the work of critical security studies as the definition of the Other emerges as a relationship between those with power and those without power, for it is those with power who can institute the divisions of us and them, here and there, self and Other (Dalby 1990). It is this Other that is created to be the perpetual enemy of the established power, one that must be dealt with and is the focus of the discourse of security (Dalby 1990). The Other as a subject of security is seen as a challenge to the Western mode of life and must be dealt with because of the insecurity that it brings with it (Dalby 1990). This creation of the Other is also a means of the established discourse of spending to establish a technologically advanced armed forces that must be ready at all times to defend against the potential threat from the Other and could manifest into something larger and more dangerous (Dalby 1990). In essence, the Other has been established as being foreign as a result of the political nature of discourse: if something is not known or understood, it can be classified as being foreign and should be treated differently because it is not of a similar make up of the Same (Campbell 1998).
Ultimately, this discourse leads back to those that have the power to construct and shape the knowledge and discourse that surrounds security, which ultimately leads this critique back to the state as the primary power holder in the world of global politics.

The state has been shown to not occupy the significant stature that it has in the past, but is only a part of the broader discussion of security. Thus, the state is still, for lack of a better frame of reference, the signifier to the established concept of security. The majority of the rhetoric that is given to us as security messages comes from those in positions of power. The process of security itself revolves around the ability to specify a threat and to mobilize actions against that threat, which can only be done by those in power (Dalby 2002). As mentioned previously, this ability is seen by the constant need for a perpetual military force which provides the necessary security from the external threat of the Other (Dalby 1990).

The political nature of the Other as foreign is key to an ongoing process of the creation of discourses of danger. The idea is that danger in any form is constructed through the differentiations between the Self and Other, here and there, us and them. Foreign policy, as the politics of dealing with those who are deemed to be different and therefore ‘foreign’ to the established discourse, is at its most basic consideration, a key part in the discourse of danger. Since the definition of something as being ‘foreign’ in the same mechanism creates that which is not ‘foreign’, this discourse of danger, as thought of in foreign policy is key to securing the identity of the state (Campbell 1998). The identity of the state – and the identity of those who belong to the state – is secured through the discourse of danger, which is produced by those with the power to construct and shape knowledge about those that are different and ‘foreign’.
There will be little change to this discourse of danger, such that it secures not only the identity of the state, but also the significance and standing of the state in the international system as well. The articulation of danger is both a signifier of the power held within those who establish the discourse, but also serves to be the raison d’être for the state (Campbell 1998). The state is itself the generator of the discourse of danger, and, at the same time, the beneficiary of it. This establishes the state as the representative of the citizens to provide security from the threats from those persons or things that are different or ‘foreign’ to the ‘domestic’ establishment. Beyond this, states have no prediscursive foundations of their being: states are without an ontological foundation (Campbell 1998). Their only reason for their being is to secure those subjects from the threat posed by the foreign Other (Campbell 1998). If the state succeeds in its established goal of securing and eliminating difference, then there is no reason for the state to exist: its ultimate goal of providing security renders itself useless because of its condition of lacking an ontological foundation (Campbell 1998). Ultimately, the state continues to exist not because of its work to provide security, but because of its inability to establish security (Campbell 1998). This leads to a situation where the discourse of danger, such that there is a ‘foreign’ threat to the established ‘domestic’, perpetuates the existence and meaning of the state to the world system.

Construction of Boundaries and Borders

In addition to the discourse that is present, there is also a significant point to be made about the establishment of boundaries and borders, both real and imagined, in the process of establishing these identity/difference schisms. Security is innately based
on the ability to create and maintain borders, both real and imagined between the constructed divisions and differences of the Self and Other (Walker 1997). This insight of Walker is key to the development of the idea of creating borders as key to critical security studies.

For the majority of the time, borders are simply a delineation of territorial claims, but this concept of a border acts as a sterilized and generalized vision of the way the world operates. Yet the borders that we have established are done so in such a manner to delineate that, which is the same and that which is different. Because of this, borders are the sites of danger. Danger can come from an external threat, a violation of internal boundaries, the space close to a border (Douglas 1984, Campbell 1998). If this is indeed the case, there is a logic that would follow, as Campbell states, that “were there no borders, there would be no danger”, such that there would be no differentiation between the Same and Other (Campbell 1998). The representation of the difference is done in such a manner that the border becomes the site of disease, filth, and contamination (Campbell 1998). The creation of these borders are more and more becoming the site of the difference between those with technology, and those who do not have technology (Dalby 2002). The creation of borders in this sense is not limited to a political border, but can also be established between the private and public spaces, where the private is seen as safe and secure, clean and orderly, while the public is seen as threatening and lawless, dirty and unkempt (Dalby 2002). This is tied back into the previous discussion of the importance of discourse to security. The public sphere is portrayed to be more dangerous and native than that of the private sphere. However, this discourse is simply a reminder that security is inherently political. The private
sphere is more dangerous in reality than the public sphere, but the prevailing discourse constructed within the structure of power creates the image that the public sphere is more dangerous (Dalby 2002). This creation of the borders and boundaries are significant to the basis of creating difference. As mentioned before, if there were no borders, there would be no difference. Without difference, there would be no way to define the foreign from the domestic. Without this ability, there would not be a threat to security. But since the world does operate with borders, there are situations of threats to security based on borders.

Those that reside outside of the borders, the foreign spaces, exist in spaces that are constantly viewed as potential threats to the security of the domestic space. These spaces in which the Other resides are significant because of their importance to the state and its ultimate goal of security. The political response is the marginalization of the spaces where the Other exists (Dalby 1990). This establishes security through the discourse of danger by keeping the Other spatially separated from the Same. This very process of the exclusion of the Other and the inclusion of the Same is at its most basic and fundamental, a geopolitical process. By creating the borders that exist between the Same and Other, there has been an attempt to create a specific and determinate differentiation between spaces for the political benefit at the expense of a certain group. Security is supposed to come from the practice of geopolitical exclusion, but in the process it renders itself open to the world for the way that it achieves the ultimate goal of creating the separation.
Conclusions

Critical security studies is at its heart a discursive practice, much in the same light that critical geopolitics can be examined through the relations of power that exist. By asking the questions of security for whom, from what and from where, critical security studies delves into the very same theoretical framework present in critical geopolitics: those with power decide what must be secure and what we must be afraid of, thus creating a discourse of danger. This discourse of danger establishes a difference between us and them, friend and enemy, clean and dirty, the Same and the Other. This practice is inherently based upon the geographic notion of drawing borders and boundaries between things. By creating these boundaries between Us and Them, Same and Other, security creates a geographic notion of Here and There, Inside and Outside, Domestic and Foreign. Establishing these distinctions of geographic notions is the essential geopolitical moment. Crucially, geopolitics is about the writing or scripting of global space by those in power. Following from Foucault’s notion of Power-Knowledge, those who have the power, create, maintain and support their vision of the knowledge of the world, and the knowledge of the threats that must be handled to become secure. The delineation of space as domestic and foreign, here and there simultaneously creates a notion of us and them, Same and Other that copies the delineation of space. Ultimately, the concept of security becomes at its most essential, a question of geopolitics: who needs to be secure, what must be secure and from whom is this security being enacted is meaningless without a geographic and geopolitical base from which to understand the problematization of security.
Balaclava not included: The Geopolitics of Terrorism

The concept of terrorism is one that has yet to be defined by any single definition. Much like the concepts discussed above on geopolitics and security, terrorism is a politically contested concept that bends and sways to the whims of those who hold political power. This review of the concept of terrorism will focus on the ideas of constructing terrorism in addition to creating security around terrorism, as well as presenting a geographical connection to terrorism.

Conceptualizing Terrorism

First, as with the concept of geography that is constructed form the terms geo and graph as the importance of critical geopolitics, the term terrorism has its roots within the term territory, as Elden (2007) points out from the work of Connelly (1995). As territory is taken from the Latin noun terra meaning land or terrain, there is a similar version of the word territorium, meaning a place from which people are warned. This has connections to the Latin verb terrer meaning to frighten away. What this means is that there is a common root between the terms terror and territory (Connolly 1995, Elden 2007). With territory being an essential concept in geography, there is a distinct connection between the idea of terror and geography.

But what is terrorism? What is it about this term that in the recent times has grown to be the ultimate fear factor to the general public? Of all the politically contested concepts, very few could approach the very nature of the concept of terrorism. The old axiom holds very true here: “One person’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter”. Despite my reservations in using that axiom based on the distinction of a simple
dichotomy between terrorist and freedom fighter such that there is a simple either/or scenario, the axiom does validate terrorism as a politically constructed and contested concept. As such, attempting to define terrorism is fraught with all the dangers of a political minefield set on a hair-trigger, puns intended. As such, it will be best to first delve into the conceptualization of what terrorism is. For this, Allan Pred offers a conceptualization of terrorism as being that of “those deeds and statements, materials practices and discourses, those enacted policies and pronouncements, which are meant to terrify” (Pred 2007). This conceptualization of terrorism is an exceptional conceptualization for this section as it proceeds to delimit not only actions, but also statements, as producing terror. And not only non-state actors, but also states and governments are capable of creating terror through actions and words.

This distinction between states and non-state actors has been key to the development of the idea of the terrorism as a conceptual distinction between state-based terrorism and the more modern trans-state terrorism (Flint 2003). While the former was conceived of in a manner that seeks a legitimacy of a specific goal and target, that of establishing a state, the latter is envisioned as religiously based and defined as being senseless and aimless (Flint 2003). This distinction of the identity of a terrorist has thus been shaped such that the conceptualization of terrorism and a terrorist is limited to non-state and transboundary actors.

This distinction forms the lines of thought that are central to the conception of creating the notion of common sense through the work of the Italian Philosopher Antonio Gramsci. His later work, written while he was imprisoned for advocating the work of Karl Marx, focused upon the concept and creation of hegemony, and
established a method of thinking about the construction of hegemony from a position of power by establishing the notion of ‘common sense’, or a sense that is common to all individuals who are under the influence of those in power. This construction of common sense identifies certain beliefs, concepts, thoughts and opinions as being “natural”, “rational” and “reasonable” (Gramsci 2000). Those signifiers that do not follow along with the reasoning and rationality of the ‘common sense’ are thus condemned as being “irrational”, “unnatural”, and “unreasonable”. In short, Gramscian notions of common sense allow us to examine terrorism as a constructed concept within a ‘common sense’ legitimization process of the world. One such example hearkens back to the notion of states and non-state actors and terrorism, specifically the conceptions of violence that take place when one thinks of the constructed notions of ‘common sense’. Thus notions of violence associated with terrorist attacks are signified as being “irrational”, “horrific” and “immoral”. If this is true, as the media suggests through their portrayal of terrorists acts, then there is a much deeper connection that can be made though this notion of common sense. Since the common sense belief of terrorist violence is that of irrational, horrific, and immoral, there must then be a view of violence that is “rational”, “moral” and “civilized”. Since terrorism and its associated violence are connected to the conceptualization of these actors as being non-state, the alternative is state actions and actors, whose violence is conceptualized through the notion of common sense as being the opposite of the conception of the violence of terrorism: state actions of violence are conceived as “rational”, “moral” and “civilized” (Flint 2006).

But what exactly is the notion of common sense constructed around terrorism and specifically the topic of what is terrorism? Cindi Katz (2007) attempts to create this
common sense construction through her work on banal terrorism. Terrorists, she argues, are produced and reproduced in the everyday lives of citizens as being “an antimodern, angry, jealous, zealot; a heartless brainwashed agent living in a ‘sleeper cell’, who infiltrates and takes advantage of ‘the freedoms’ of ‘our’ everyday life even as he would destroy them” (Katz 2007). This conception of terrorism is centered on a ‘common sense’ idea that is racist and ignorant, with the assumptions behind it being that of associating anyone with brown skin to the idea of terrorists living among our mists (Katz 2007). Katz extends this notion of common sense such that we are exposed to terrorism in such ways that it becomes normal and everyday, much in the same way that there is a normalization of the recognition of the common sense notions of terrorism and more specifically a terrorist because of the construction of the idea of terrorists in the practice of everyday life (Katz 2007). The entire notion of the terrorist is that it is reproduced such that it becomes common sense that anyone who has dark skin and dresses in headscarves must be looking for the soft underbelly of Western society to attack, and will stop at nothing to destroy the very foundations of Western life.

This notion of terrorists living among us is central to one of the key notions of terrorism. Insofar as the construction of terrorists in our common sense is done such that there is an ignorance of one of the points of terrorism: that is its “unpredictability, the unexpected, unanticipatable registers of its space-time” (Katz 2007). This is key to understanding terrorism. While terrorists may be constructed to live amongst us, there is a significant ignorance of those who construct the identity of terrorists towards the specific nature of the actions of terrorism. While it may not conform to our notions of space-time, it is in this difference that their actions are significantly expanded upon. It is
the notions of unpredictability and unexpected that is key to the significance of the actions of terrorists.

Through this conception of space-time, terrorism does not fit easily into the conceptions of the world that are deemed common sense. But it is this very point where terrorism becomes successful: it is done through its unintelligibility with the common sense conception of the world as a certain way (Katz 2007). The incongruencies of the space-time conceptions with that of the common sense and that of the terrorists allow for the significant nature of terrorism to take hold. For if they were to engage in a space-time that matches our common sense conceptions of the concept, then their acts would be reduced in their significance and value. It is the nature of unpredictability in an increasingly regulated, disciplined, and controlled world that allows the success of terrorism’s actions to become significant.

The success of terrorism is not only measureable in the action itself, but also the effect of the acts upon the population. Terrorism is not always about the specific act or action that occurs, but is also in the “dull thumping” of insecurity as constructed by those in power that can be brought to the surface for the political benefit of those in power to bring forth through either the passive recognition of the threat or of the enthusiastic consent of specific politics meant to counter the actions of terrorists (Pred 2007). This is another key to the conceptualization of terrorism that I will bring up later, but it should serve to signify the position of terrorism as being a politically constructed concept, whether this is through constructing the common sense idea of what a terrorist is, or the unlimited nature of terror in the thought processes of the individuals.
Geographic Perspectives of Terrorism

It is important here to include the specific advantages of studying terrorism through a geographic perspective. Flint proposes three comparative advantages of geography: the consideration of geohistorical context, geographic scale, and territoriality (Flint 2003). Significantly, the geographic scale of terrorism allows for a more nuanced look than what is offered from the field of international relations. Following the logic of Mary Kaldor’s *New and Old Wars*, we see that there has been a shift away from state to state conflict and that many actors now are seen as being non-state or trans-state actors, and thus fall beyond the scope of traditional international relations theory (Kaldor 2006). What geography can offer is its ability to examine the different scales of a specific problem or a specific structure that is the focus of study. The change in geographic scale of terrorism, that of non-state or trans-state actors, requires a change in scale that “disrupts the mainstream state-centric social science” conceptualization of problems in international relations (Flint 2003). As is the nature of geography, scale as a concept is changeable and not a static concept as is proffered in international relations theory (Agnew 1994). This allows geographers to move beyond a strict vision of the world in terms of states, or individuals, or an international framework as is common in international relations. With the contributions of geography established, we can move into specific geographic aspects of terrorism.

One geographic aspect of terrorism can be that the actions are meant in such a way to expand the geographic scale of a conflict or a reaction beyond that which is currently in use (Flint 2006). One such example is the connections of the actions of Al Qaeda on 11 September 2001 to the broadening the scale of the conflict. The motives
of Osama bin Laden were not primarily to attack the Western conception of the world, but to broaden the scope of the conflict between himself and the house of Saud, in essence attempting to destabilize those in power by changing the scale of the conflict (Dalby 2008). What the goal of this is to change the scale and scope of the conflict, such that it changes the power relations present in the conflict in terms of the knowledge presented (Foucault 1980), but also challenges the constructed notions of ‘common sense’ by those in power by removing the power that the dominant class holds over those marginalized groups (Gramsci 2000). The only way that certain groups can have their view heard is to change the geographic scale of their conflict, and one such way is to engage in an act of terrorism to dramatically broaden the scope of the conflict and attempt to draw more attention to the issue present.

There are the similarities between terrorism and multinational corporations along the lines of networks and structures. It is easy to see the benefits of the interconnected nature of the world via the internet and technology. Anyone can get news or connect to individuals all over the world. This is a compression of space-time in the way that lives are lived. It would seem obvious that while many have the perspective that these are only done such that only good comes from these actions, but in reality these are open to the benefit of everyone, not just those in the West or with that mindset. As Katz points out, the “central circuitry of capitalist globalism is shared in sobering similar ways by international terrorist organizations and multinational corporations” (Katz 2007). The interconnected nature of the globalized world is not just for those who use it for profit, but can also connect to promote terror through their actions [the assumption here is that
capitalism and globalism are done in the name of the betterment of all of humanity, not just for the profit of those in the developed world.

Also, geography can provide a distinct look at the spatial aspects of terrorism. In reaction to the Al Qaeda actions on 11 September 2001 in New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania, the public has reduced the very nature of the attacks to a temporal moment: 9-11. The ignorance of a spatial concept has turned “the new Pearl Harbor into a simple date” (Elden 2007). This is key to the geographic understanding of the acts of terrorism: the spatial component that is all too conveniently lost from the conceptions of terrorism in the minds of most Americans. By eliminating the spatial component of the action, there is a reduction of the specificity of the action in such that the action is now less specific and can be consumed by a wider audience for a specific political purpose. Previously, terrorist actions in the United States were known by their spatial location: the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, World Trade Center bombings that occurred in 1993. It is interesting that the geographic nature of these events were significant to their memory, such that place is important, but the spatial aspects of nine-eleven have been ignored.

Another geographic element of terrorism is that the symbolic nature of terrorism promotes the targeting of specific places for specific reasons. For example, the terrorist actions of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols in Oklahoma City were against the representation of the “local physical embodiment of the federal government that they viewed as an ‘occupying force’ violating the freedoms of the American people” (Flint 2006). Additionally, Flint proposes the change in mentality of the Palestinian suicide bombers to target public spaces such as night clubs and markets (Flint 2006).
Terrorism is concerned with the significance of the target of the actions of terrorists. The spatial significance, a specific geographic notion based on the construction of the importance of a space, is key to understanding the acts of terrorism from a geographic perspective. Even the actions of 11 September can be seen to have a specific focus of targeting the World Trade Center and Pentagon, symbols of the global economic power and military that has solidified the economic power within a specific geographic location (Smith 2002). The geographic importance of place and space is critical to understanding the purpose of terrorism.

Finally, there is the notion of terrorist actions as being altruistic. The actions of terrorism are done in such a way that they are speaking for a marginalized group within a specific geographic space (Flint 2006). Most often, this is seen as being a motivational point for a specific national group that deserves to have a better deal in the political structure of not only the specific state, but also the world. In order to address the grievances of these groups, an external actor is needed to assist with the cause of the people who are being repressed. One such example would be that of the Palestinians and the actions of states and non-state actors to attempt to force the creation of a Palestinian state. The national connections within the Nation of Islam are present here as the external actors seek to provide assistance to the statist goals of the Palestinians.

At the same time, the nationalist fervor can work in the similar way when mobilized against a terrorist or terror related activities. Since terrorism and terrorists are politically contested terms, they can be utilized to mobilize a nationalist reaction against these forces. The nationalist identity, that of a geographical collective identity based on
the connection to a specific territory, is cemented within the naming of terrorism and terrorists as threats to the collective identity (Coleman 2004). In an increasingly diverse collection of communities and peoples that make up specific nations, this naming of terror is done in such a way to coagulate a porous nation (Katz 2007). One such process is the definition of ‘homeland’ that must be protected against these threats, which demands a collective action of those within the territory to bring themselves together in the name of protecting their home lands, thus the formation of nationalism around the threat of terror (Katz 2007). Yet, this allows for the mobilization of the population into defensive postures to defend the nation against a threat that is without a coherent and concise definition. A situation then comes that forces the population to be ever mobilized against an omnipresent threat that lacks definition and clarity. This mobilization is done through the nationalist connections that require an action to protect a specific way of life (Katz 2007). The geographic elements of terrorism allow for a nuanced and detailed look at the multitude of complex processes and constructed realities that surround the actions of terrorism and terrorists.

Constructing Terrorism

Having established the geographic elements of terrorism, it is important to return to the eight hundred pound gorilla in the room: the construction of terrorism as the threat to the state. In the paragraphs above, the notions of constructing terrorism and terrorists for a political gain were established. Now we can engage with this concept of constructing threats and enemies within the context of terrorism. In essence, this is simple fear mongering that is done to construct a common enemy and threat by creating
a series of Others that that are created through the discourse of those in power (Pred 2007).

By establishing the creation of terrorism as a threat to a state, there is a geographic notion that is at play through the conceptualizations of enemies and threats. Since the state is thought of as the provider of security, there is a geographic notion of inside/outside being paired with the dichotomy of secure/insecure when threats are present. However, the conceptualization of a terrorist threat within that stable dichotomous relation is done through blurring the distances involved in the conception of a threat (Coleman 2004). The threat from terrorism, as constructed, is that the enemies of the state who were once distant and removed from the immediate geographic threat now are enlarged into global threats that could strike anywhere, at anytime and target any person (Dalby 2004). I would posit that this is a construction of terrorism as the omnipresent threat to a society by those in political power.

An aspect of this construction of an omnipresent threat is primarily centered on the violence that is associated with the act. First and foremost, it is important to recognize that the violence of these actions are for the spectacle; they are performative in their meanings (Whitehead 2004, Thrift 2007). It is important that each and every single action of violence comes with its own “carefully constructed freight” (Thrift 2007) such that there is always a method behind the madness, a rhyme and reason for the violent action. It is here that there are problems associated with this type of violence, for most are unable to accept that the actions of violence as a phenomenon are able to stand on their own and have their own reasons for existence without being derived from other phenomena (Thrift 2007). For if there is always a separate phenomena for which
violence is ascribed, such as a historical claim that was never settled to the satisfaction of all parties or a traditionally marginalized population, then there cannot be a complete understanding of the true nature of the violence: it is a spectacle that draws attention.

In this spectacle and attention, the constructive narratives about the phenomena become important. The instance of naming terrorism as Coleman indicates in reference to 11 September and American policy is such that not only does constructing something as terrorism suggest an assessment of a geopolitical threat, but also an instance of geopolitical place-naming, or geo-graphing (Coleman 2004). The very essence of what Ó Tuathail indicates in his work on critical geopolitics is at play: the scripting of global space as being insecure or a threat to a specific territory. These actions are a way of constructing an external threat of violence against which the citizens must be defended (Coleman 2004). This creates an alien Other that state apparatuses can be mobilized against, despite the ambiguities that surround the term and defining the nature of terrorism (Coleman 2004).

Similarly, the spectacle of the attack of 11 September had left a rather unique space: that of an unknown rhetoric that did not follow a script, whether that is the news reporters or the political leaders in shocked silence (Smith 2002). These open spaces of understanding were left open for those political leaders to fill with their own take on the “specificities of events and responses to this new geopolitical situation” (Dalby 2004). In doing such, political leaders could take advantage of the very nature of the open discursive and political spaces and create narratives of their own in terms of specifying friends and enemies, their spaces and our spaces, and a distinction of hostile and friendly places and people (Dalby 2004). Ultimately, this here is a geographic
notion of writing global space: defining places as insecure, dangerous and hostile in response to terrorist actions is key to defining a geographic space that is secure, safe and friendly. Through political and discursive functions, the political leaders used the situation of the spectacle of terror and violence to solidify the divisions of territories from each other.

With the introduction of territory into the discussion, we can now see that there is a connection between the very basis of establishing territory, or bounded space, and the construction of terrorism as a violent action. There is a concept of territory as a bounded space of exclusion and this separation is created through violent actions and “maintaining it as such requires constant vigilance and the mobilization of threat” (Elden 2007). The continued establishment of the nation-state system is such that there is a creation of a constant threat towards the state that is constructed that requires the mobilization of the population. This is reminiscent of the literature mentioned above in critical security studies in the mobilization of a threat that legitimizes the function of a state.

Within this discussion of a state, it is important to recognize the incongruencies within the geopolitical imaginations of the individuals in power. The construction of terrorist actions by those political elites is such that, in a discussion of Al Qaeda and militant Islam, is two fold. First, there is the construction of these groups as multinational networks working in diffuse networks that span the globe, allowing the terrorists to attack anywhere at anytime. The alternative conception is that the terrorists as occupying specific and particular locations that can be targeted for attack by a conventional military force (Elden 2007). The very nature of constructing terrorism is
done such that they can be nowhere and everywhere in the representation of threat, and then located specifically for the targeting of the threat. The terrorists can be the omnipresent threat that needs to be stopped, or the specific target for the military adventures of the state.

Key to the construction of a terrorist is the use of the media as key to presenting an image of terrorists. As such, the understanding of the use of the media is best understood in the context of François Debrix’s notion of “tabloid realism”, the constructing of images in the media for the entertainment value and the spectacular stories that they can build their dreams or get angry about, not to hear about the boring nature of everyday life (Debrix 2004). This presentation of the images is part of the “desire to condition the public to certain beliefs and attitudes through the dissemination of a popular but often paranoid political discourse” is part in parcel to the nature of life today (Debrix 2004).

This concept can be illustrated through two scenes. First, the rational of the perpetrators of the attacks of 11 September was at first one of cowardice. Imagine the gall of people to not stand up and fight fairly with the global power. However, the rhetoric changed to one of the madness of these individuals (Dalby 2004). Fighting a fair fight seems to be something that many are accustomed to, whether it is boxing or the traditional images of a war being fought between two armies. In the end, the rhetoric of madness plays with the desires of people to be entertained, shocked and awed in such a manner that it creates a population that wants more and more of the rhetorical distinction between the civilized and the crazed Other.
Second is the distinction of suicide bombers. Their effectiveness lies both in their ability to target the everyday spaces of public life, but also in their spectacle value for the portrayal of madmen attacking the civilized world though the attention of the mass media (Thrift 2007). There is a significant connection between the nature of the media and the violence that comes from the phenomena of suicide bombers. Not only is there a great deal of death and destruction, but there is also a crazed madman who has taken the lives of the civilized through a conscious decision to strap a bomb onto himself and detonate it. The media are key to the state’s ability to develop a construction of terrorism and terrorists.

If this threat from terrorism can be constructed by the state at the whim of those in power, what then is the method of securing a space against a terrorist action? This final subsection explores the methods of security in dealing with terrorism. In stating the obvious, perhaps, states are much easier to target than a terrorist because of the specific geographic location and the consideration of the elements that go along with a state, such as an army and a defined central authority (Elden 2007). We can also insert security in place of target and the effect produced is similar. But beyond this somewhat simplistic idea of security coming though the targeting of insecurity, there are specific features of security that must be brought into light for the benefit of the conceptualization of terrorism.

The Puzzle of Securing Spaces against Terrorism

The omnipresent and everyday nature of terrorism is offset by the omnipresent and everyday nature of securing spaces against terrorism. These concepts are directly
related. Terrorism, the constructed concept, inherently causes an insecurity that has to be dealt with in some way, shape, or form (Katz 2007). This ever-present nature of security, while being comforting to some, brings along the concept that requires its presence in the first place, terrorism. Through creating security as routine in our lives, so too is terrorism routinized through the practices of security, such that there is the ever-present notion of a terrorist amongst the population (Katz 2007). The relationship produced by terrorism as insecurity and security as reaction is a symbiotic one in that they both are present when one is present.

These security measures that aim to stop terrorism are seen as a response from the government in the face of an ever-present threat. In reality, any measure of securing a space against a terrorist action is doomed to fail. By its very nature, terrorism is broad and is subject to interpretation. As such, this leaves many actions that could be considered terrorism. Any security measures taken will be unable to provide complete security from the wide swath of actions that could be considered terrorism (Katz 2007). What is attempted, however, is that there are certain spaces that are deemed worthy of being secured against terrorism. These spaces have the full compliment of protection, from security personnel on duty to architectural features that scream out “security!” for all to see. But what does this leave for other spaces that are not deemed important enough to be the subject of the vast apparatuses of security (Katz 2007)? There is a central contradiction between these two images of spaces that are conceptualized. Through the nature of making certain places secure and others left insecure, there is paradox created surrounding the nature of security: we feel secure from the threat of terrorism by the sight and knowledge of specific places being as
secure as a military bunker, and this is supposed to carry over into the other spaces that are left without any notion of security being in place. Any attempt to secure all spaces from terrorism would be a logistical nightmare because of the multitude of economic, political, military and social resources necessary to actually achieve the necessary level of security, whatever that may be, in all spaces.

Finally, in attempting to secure a space against a terrorist threat presents a problem in that attempting to secure a state through a national security policy which has the ability to create terrorism, and in doing so creates the source of insecurity, ultimately produces insecurity rather than security (Dalby 1997, Coleman 2004). The very nature of establishing a policy of security against a terrorist threat will lead to more insecurity on the part of the population. If there is a threat from a terrorist action, the very nature of the threat is that it can be from anywhere and strike at any time. The way of coping with this threat is by creating a state of constant vigilance through the manipulation of the fears of the population in order to allow for the government to counter the potential of the threat.

Conclusion

Terrorism is a vague concept that has a different meaning, shaped from the views of academic study, the evening news, or the tabloid headlines that we see while we wait at the local supermarket or corner store. The very nature of the concept is such that it is constructed by those in power. This acknowledgement, however, does not ignore the geographic implications of the actions of terrorism. It is through a geographic lens of study that a more intricate and nuanced view of terrorism can be examined.
Without these considerations, the understanding of terrorism is, at best, only partially due to the specific concerns of geography in dealing with scale, territory and space.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The concepts of critical geopolitics, critical security studies and the geography of terrorism have one common theme. They are constructed within the discourses that surround their formation. Critical geopolitics, as the writing of global political space, focuses on the discursive formation of political space. This comes from understanding the power/knowledge relationship found in the statements. The ideas of critical geopolitics mesh with critical security studies as the critique of the basis of security as the construction of Us/Them, Here/There dichotomous formations that are spatially located and separated by boundaries. The geography present within security studies is the very separation between identities and the discourses that construct the conflicts between the different identities. These center on the construction of boundaries and borders between the dichotomous pairs and ascribe locations to those pairings. Terrorism, as a concept, is constructed within the discourses of power relations. The use of the term terrorism is entirely dependent upon the discursive power structure that labels certain actions as being terrorism, while at the same time legitimizing other actions. This research is situated around these concepts to build on the ideas and arguments that are presented in the analysis section.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The methodology behind this work lies within the broad spectrum of qualitative research. Focused within hermeneutics, my work utilizes poststructural techniques and critical discourse analysis of Canadian governmental documents that address the issues of security and terrorism. This methodology was chosen because of the nature of the research and the direction that was chosen required the poststructural and critical discourse analysis to unpack the languages of the texts regarding security, which presents a much more detailed and intricate view of the subject. This section begins with an overview of the primary texts that are utilized in the case study, as well as the supplemental texts that assist in the development of the arguments presented. Following that is a discussion of qualitative methods in geography and the issues of bias, situated knowledge and critical reflexivity when completing qualitative research. That is followed by an overview of the work of critical discourse analysis within geography and important contributions to geography. Finally, the methodology of my research is presented.

The primary documents that I use in this work are the 2004 National Security Policy, the 2006 Canada First Defense Plan, and the collection of public reports from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) from 2001-2008, the most recent report available. The 2004 National Security Policy was published by the Office of the
Prime Minister of Canada, at that time Paul Martin, that established the national security policy of Canada. This is the most recent official document from the government published on the security strategy of the government. The 2006 Canada First Defense Plan is a military specific plan, focusing on the future funding of the Canadian Forces. It was published under the auspices of Prime Minister Steven Harper with the aim of establishing a reliable source of funding for the military forces. Even though the document is primarily focused on military spending and plans, the military is a critical player in the security of a state, and is therefore a rational choice of documents to examine. Finally, the annual public reports from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service from the years 2001-2008 are used to help construct the security environment and the nature of the constructions of both security and terrorism. These documents are aimed at being a public year-in-review for the department that is the Canadian equivalent of the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States. The years represent the time after the 11 September 2001 attacks, which focused the attention of the agency on terrorism, and that is the main lens used to explore the Canadian security policy. There was a change in publication date for these documents, from the end of the year to an end of the first quarter publishing time for the annual public reports from the CSIS. Therefore, the documents from 2001 to 2003 are all a single year, but starting in 2004, the publication dates changed and this is noticed in the titles of the documents from 2004 to 2008.

In addition to these documents are the supplemental works from the Canadian Military Journal, published by the Department of National Defense, that offer a vision of the security policy of Canada. While not serving as the primary source material, these
will offer a different view of the security policy of Canada because of their separation from the official documents of the state agencies.

There are three main types of research in qualitative geography: oral, textual, and participatory. First, oral methods in qualitative research involve any method working with the words of a person, including interviews, autobiographies, biographies, focus groups, and a broad reaching survey of random participants (Winchester 2005). Second is the use of textual analysis, or the examination and scrutinization of texts. Most texts fall into three main categories: creative texts, such as poems, fiction, art, and music; documentary texts, such as maps, newspapers, government documents; and landscape sources, such as a retailing street, or the landscape of suburbia symbolizing social status (Winchester 2005). Written texts are often examined for the underlying discourses legitimizing social structures. Also, textual analysis can involve the examination of semiotics, or the language of signs (Winchester 2005). Third, there is participant research, where the researcher is fully immersed in the research environment. This can range from just a passive presence where the researcher tries to be as inconspicuous as possible, to the pro-active researcher who actively participates with the subjects in the activity (Winchester 2005).

Good qualitative research produces “‘thick’ description [that] take the reader to the centre of an experience, event, or action, providing an in-depth study of the context and the reasons, intentions, understandings, and motivations that surround that experience or occurrence” (Geertz 1973, Mansvelt and Berg 2005). Qualitative research brings the reader to the point of view of the author and allows the reader to engage in a more descriptive and positional view of the research topic that they may not
have examined previously, even if they have a general working knowledge of the subject material.

Qualitative research is often criticized because of the suspected bias and subjectivity inherent within the research produced using these methods. As such, it is important to address these biases so that they are known to the audience, including my own background and relationship to the research (Winchester 2005). This method is a more objective way of researching a subject than to operate from a statement of objectivity, since these statements of objectivity hide the subjective persuasions that operate within all research questions and explanations (Winchester 2005). Claims to objectivity by positivists center on the researcher as distanced, impartial and universal to the subject of their research. Qualitative methods, and the post-positivist approaches to research, are just the opposite: the focus is on contextuality, partiality, and positionality (Mansvelt and Berg 2005). These three concepts allow for a more nuanced and detailed look at the very heart of the research problem as well as offer a different view of the subject.

The discussion of bias and objective/subjective research is little more than the construction of the dichotomous pairing which preferences the former over the latter: masculine/feminine, us/them, objective/subjective. As such, the objectivity that is present in this research project is one of situated knowledge, or the acknowledgement of my position as the research in relation to the subjects that I am studying. More importantly, the conclusions of research are not made from an objective position outside of the research, as the all-seeing and unattached positivist might claim, but that the conclusions must come from somewhere and from someone (Mansvelt and Berg 2005).
Thus, knowledge has a geographical and temporal specificity that must be acknowledged (Mansvelt and Berg 2005). A claim to objectivity in producing knowledge, as is the case with a positivist approach to research, is ultimately flawed because there is always someone, somewhere at sometime conducting and producing the research.

Since the positioning of the researcher is important to the presentation of the research, there must be some form of accountability that the researcher must take in their work. This is done through the implementation of the concept of critical reflexivity, or the self-conscious and constant critique of the researcher and the research process (England 1994, Dowling 2005). As a researcher, there must be a constant check on – and acknowledgements of – the influences of our personal values on not only the subject, but also on the process of the research. As such, the choice of the qualitative methods that one chooses to use is a reflection on the personal beliefs and values of the researcher (Winchester 2005). Since this is the case with qualitative research and specifically in the importance to postmodernism, for lack of a better umbrella term, it is important that this work include my reflections and reactions to the subject matter as a way of clarifying not only my views on the subject, but also my positionality as the researcher to the subject.

Within the broader scope of qualitative research, this work sits within the frame of postmodern and poststructural work, specifically that of critical discourse analysis. Since the 1970s and 80s, there has been a significant advancement in human geography from the schools of poststructural and feminist schools of thought (Winchester 2005). These schools of thought bring new processes and dynamics to the
study of geography. Feminist geographies, as the first main force behind the recent methodological developments in human geography, are primarily concerned with the underlying importance of gendered views of the world. While it may not necessarily be the imposition of a masculine view of the world, feminist geographies offer a different view of a problem that is more nuanced and personal because of the position of the researcher. The powered and gendered relations between subjects and even between the researcher and the subjects are important in a feminist methodological approach in geography.

Poststructuralism, as the second force, can be thought of in two distinct ways. First, it can be thought of as the temporal movement after structuralism, such that it occurred after the structuralist period. Second, it can be thought of as the philosophical critique of the basis of structuralism and the scrutiny of underlying structures, for example the (re)production of power, subjectivity and identities through structures of governance. Poststructuralism, as the interrogation of structures, is traditionally used in the analysis of texts - discourse analysis - that attempts to present the underlying notions that are present within texts. This is a similar to the study of hermeneutics as the basis of “interpreting the meaning in language, texts and visual representations” (Waitt 2005). The difference is that poststructuralism focuses more upon the representation and relations of power and subjectivity, whereas hermeneutics is focused on the broader concept of interpreting meaning within texts. These two fields have driven human geography over the last two decades because of their consideration of power within the structural set up of the world.
Following on the ideas of poststructuralism, critical discourse analysis is the primary method that I used in this thesis. There are a few key aspects of critical discourse analysis that must be clarified. First, there is this notion of ‘critical’ work and the implications of using the term that might have a negative connotation that goes along with its work. ‘Critical’ in this case is meant to be “understood as having distance from the data, embedding the data in the social, taking a political stance explicitly, and a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research” (Wodak 2001). These ideas of critical theory are aimed at creating a sense of “enlightenment and emancipation” as they “not only describe and explain, but also to root out a particular delusion” (Wodak 2001). Also, critical theory must be seen as attempting to create an “awareness in agents of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests” (Wodak 2001). The use of the word critical indicates that there is more than what meets the eye in what is being presented. In critical theory, it is the very nature of the method to be skeptical and shrewd in terms of what the research aims to uncover and the method of answering the questions.

A similar nature surrounds the use of discourse analysis. The primary use of discourse analysis is centered on the use of language. In particular, there is a distinct connection between the use of language and power, significantly the use of language as a social practice (Wodak 2001). Discourses can be conceptualized as a grouping of ideas and a structured way of thought, which can be identified through textual and verbal communications and located within broader social structures (Lupton 1992, Powers 2001). Discourses are all about language, both textual and verbal and the implications of power on the social relations that are present in everyday life (Powers...
In doing so, the critical nature of discourse analysis undertakes an attempt to "make explicit power relations which are frequently hidden and therefore to derive results which are of practical relevance" (Meyer 2001). These power relations are found both in and over discourses, a significant conceptualization when dealing with critical discourse analysis (Jäger 2001).

Because of this, critical discourse analysis is as much a theory as it is a method, since it is a theoretical perspective on the use of language signs (Fairclough 2001). It is here that some of the assumptions of critical discourse analysis must be acknowledged and addressed, as done so by Kress (1989): First, language is a social phenomenon; second, institutions and social groups, in addition to individuals have specific meanings and values systematically expressed in language; third, texts are suitable elements of language; fourth, readers and listeners are not passive recipients to the language and texts; and fifth, there are similarities that exists between the languages of science and the languages of institutions (Kress 1989, Wodak 2001). Each of these assumptions point to the importance of the recognition of language as being socially produced and subject to the power structures that are present. It is also interesting to note that there is a distinction made that the readers/listeners are active recipients of the language of which they are exposed. These assumptions are important to recognize before undertaking a critical discourse analysis and should be clarified in the scope of the research.

In addition to these assumptions, there are three generalizations that can be overlain to all discourse analysis. First, all meaningful texts and statements have some effect on the world, second, there are common themes that can be identified as unifying
effects within the statements being analyzed, and third, there are rules and structures that underpin and govern discourses (Waitt 2005). These generalizations are key to conceptualizing discourses and their use in research, both in geography and in the other social sciences. The combination of the assumptions mentioned above and these generalizations allow for a greater understanding of the importance of discourses in research.

Discourses themselves are productive in that they always produce something (Kendall and Wickham 1999). Discourses are the intersection of language and power that operate within structures that have produced, and reproduce, the very power relations that are active within the subject of critical discourse analysis. It has been argued that discourses produce reality (Jäger 2001). This is through the nature of discourses as a productive action that there is a specific discourse surrounding a specific object.

It is here that we again pick up the subject of geography. If discourses are productive through language, texts, and signs, it can be argued that geographical knowledge is a product of discourse. As such, the very discourses that shape geographic knowledge have an effect on the way that people think and act (Waitt 2005). It is here that the etymology of the word geography can be examined more closely. Geography is concerned with the discourses that deal with space and spatial variation across the earth’s surface. Since discourses are created through language, geography can be seen as the creation of global space through language. Geography is a product of discourse and therefore it is logical to study the subject from the lens of critical discourse analysis to more fully understand the power relations and structures that are
present in geographical statements that are made. This idea of discourse is central to
the creation of geographic space.

This thesis is centered on the poststructural application of critical discourse
analysis to statements from the agencies of the central government in Canada. The
use of this method will attempt to uncover the underlying structures of the statements
that the government makes in regards to security and terrorism. In the following
sections I focus on the subject of security and terrorism, while presented in vague
generalizations, as having different meanings that are politically constructed by those in
power. The use of poststructural theory and critical discourse analysis are the most
efficient and most pertinent methods for examining the use of the terms ‘security’ and
‘terrorism’ by the government of Canada and the agencies of the government.

My case study centers on the construction of the concepts of security and
terrorism primarily by the government of Canada, but also through the inclusion of some
works from the popular press and journals, specifically the Canadian Military Journal.
This case study is divided into two parts, both of which follow the structure set forth in
the discussion above. I begin with the deconstruction of the term security in Canadian
politics, specifically that of national security, and how security is produced in Canada.
Then I examine the creation of insecurity and the localization of insecurity. Following
the consideration of the term security, I next delve into the conceptualization of
terrorism. Within this conceptualization, the nature of the terrorist is constructed such
that they are both everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The terrorists are
omnipresent in their threat, but can be located in specific places when the need arises
to target them. Also, through this construction, terrorists and their threat are routinized
in the everyday lives of people, while at the same time being constructed as novel and extreme in their actions. This is followed by an examination of the geographic constructions of the locations of terrorism as they affect different regions of the world to show the varying nature of the constructions from vague generalizations of the threat to specific groups that affect specific locations.
This case study focuses on an examination of the two following research questions. First, how is the concept of security constructed in Canada? Second, what is the conceptualization of terrorism in Canadian security? The first research question aims to establish the use of security within the context of the statements from the government of Canada. The second research question operates as a variable to examine the construction of security.

A Line in the Snow: Security in Canadian Terms

Security, as discussed above, is a politically variable concept. The very definition of security has changed in the lexicon of every-day usage. As Ron Walker states, “claims about security increasingly have an air of slovenly imprecision… notions of national security, most notoriously have invoked realities and necessities that everyone is supposed to acknowledge, but also vague generalities about everything and nothing” (Walker 1997). With this in mind, I can now begin to deconstruct the conceptualization of security, specifically that of national security in Canada.

The definition of security, specifically national security must be established. The National Security Policy of Canada, most recently published in 2004 by the Office of the Prime Minister of Canada, defines national security as
[dealing] with threats that have the potential to undermine the security of the state or society. These threats generally require a national response, as they are beyond the capacity of individuals, communities or provinces to address (Canada 2004).

There is both a geographic and political specification in this conceptualization of security. First, national security is geographically constructed to be at a scale that is “beyond the capacity of individuals, communities, or provinces” (Canada 2004). Thus, the threats that require the conceptualization of security at the national scale are established to be those “beyond the capacity” of the individual, community, and provincial geographic scales. With this specificity of geographic scale, there is the political construction of the threat. Security here is conceptualized to deal with “threats that have the potential to undermine the security of the state or society” (Canada 2004).

Harkening back to the quotation from Walker (1997) above is accurate in its prediction: security is ‘slovenly imprecise’. The conception of national security of Canada draws on an assumption that there is a potential threat out there that must be defended against for the protection of the nation. This conception is such that there is a constant need for defense against an ambiguous threat.

The government of Canada has identified three core national security interests for the government to focus on:

1) protecting Canada and Canadians at home and abroad; 2) ensuring Canada is not a base for threats to our allies; and 3) contributing to international security (Canada 2004).

It is interesting to note the geopolitical nature of these statements. First, these claims are to national security, which can be read as meaning the security of a nation, or a grouping of people who share a common language, culture, history, and/or economy. While in the quotation of the paragraph above defines national security in the
geographical scale being wider than the individual, community and provincial scales, here national security is no longer at an identifiable geographic scale of the state, but now the conceptualization of the nation of ‘Canadians’.

There is a geographical ambiguity because of the fluid character of the use of national security, as well as the nature of constructing the security around a group of people. In one sense, the government of Canada conceptualizes ‘national security’ as being at a scale larger than provincial, which would indicate a reference to the state, or the nation-state, while in another sense, ‘national security’ is conceptualized as protecting all of a particular nation. The second core interest of national security is a link between national security and the connection to allies. The link between national security and allies indicates the collective nature of the world today, that of the globalized world. The third core interest is that of national security being linked to “promoting international security”. It is interesting that there is a conceptual link between national security and international security, such that there is a connection between the different scales, from nation-state to international. National security is constructed at a scale under or beneath the international - global - scale.

Having identified the conceptualization of national security in the security policy of the Canadian government, we can now examine the vision of the world outside of the boundaries of Canada. The global security environment is described as follows:

As all Canadians know, we live in an increasingly interconnected, complex and often dangerous world (Canada 2004).

From this quotation, much like the previous one, there is an appeal to an assumed knowledge of the world. In this sense, it is assumed that the Canadian public sees the world as being “increasingly interconnected, complex and often dangerous” (Canada
First, there is the noticeable appeal to the trends of globalization and the shrinking space-time in the world. Second, the notion of complex could indicate that the issues at hand, those dealing with security, are above and beyond the comprehension of the citizens. It could also mean a recognition of the shrinking space-time and the effects of this on the traditional thought processes. Finally, there is a recognition of risk in the world, which could lead one to conclude that the complexity described is both a response to not only the threats to security, but also the decreasing space-time that is present in the globalized world today.

The outside world is characterized by a certain view in terms of security and insecurity. The world is conceptualized as

\[ a \text{ dangerous place, even if the relative safety of life in Canada sometimes obscures just how dangerous it is} \] (Canada 2004),

and that

\[ \text{Canadians live in a world characterized by volatility and unpredictability} \] (Canada 2006).

The world is seen as being a dangerous space that threatens the “relative safety of life in Canada”. We observe that Canada is conceptualized as being a secure and safe place, but the world outside of Canada is dangerous, unpredictable and volatile. This very construction of insecurity as being outside of the boundaries of Canada is a key moment of reference to both critical geopolitics, but also in critical security studies, because of the construction of security and insecurity. The scripting of Canada as secure is a moment of geopolitical place-making: Canada is safe and secure. This constructs the opposite and dichotomous pair of security: insecurity as external to the boundaries of Canada. This is a geopolitical construction as well, writing global space to
define security and insecurity. In dealing with the concept of security, there is a lack of
the definition of security and the threats that pose the insecurity to the state. Because
of the imprecision of the term ‘security’, ‘insecurity’ and its synonyms are similarly
imprecise to indicate an assumed knowledge of danger that resides outside the
boundaries of Canada.

The 2000 Strategic Overview of the Directorate of Strategic Analysis Policy
Planning Division of the Department of National Defense of Canada gives a more dated
view of the global security environment. This view is that there are six main
assumptions regarding the ‘global security environment’. First, the United States would
remain as the hegemonic power through its military and economic strength. Second,
key states in Europe and Asia will have a measure of influence over their respective
geographic regions. Third, adversarial regimes will seek out weapons of mass
destruction and support terrorism to cause insecurity to both their neighbors and the
world. Fourth, humanitarian crises will force a more concentrated look at the nature of
peacekeeping and protecting individual security in the face of issues of state
sovereignty, Fifth, the nature of warfare is changing through the introduction of new
military technology and techniques of asymmetrical warfare. Sixth, current conflicts will
be aggravated by demographic and resource factors (Jakubow et al. 2000).

Even though this is a somewhat dated view of the world, there is still the potential
for the geographic and geopolitical specificity to be pulled out of the vision. First, there is
the admission of the United States as the global power through its military and
economic factors, but there is also a regional aspect that there would be certain
European and Asian states that would have an effect on their regions. There is a
geographic specification that the more powerful states lie in the Northern Hemisphere and that the states in the Southern Hemisphere would not have an influence on the global power structure and security environment. Second, while there is a specificity in the nature of “key states in Europe and Asia”, there is a more ambiguous recognition of the “adversarial regimes” (Jakubow et al. 2000) in the iteration of the security environment. It seems that adversaries were classified as being regimes, a centralized group holding power, as opposed to more amicable states, the geographic representation of territorial divisions. It is interesting to note that adversaries were identified as those in power, and not the state itself. To define the state as being adversarial would indicate that there would be a problem within the established nation-state system, rather than just the leadership in place that is governing a territory.

With this discussion of the conceptualization of ‘national security’ and the ‘global security environment’, there must now be some consideration for the role of the government in the security of a territory. This is conceptualized that

\[
\text{there can be no greater role, no more important obligation for a government, than the protection and safety of its citizens} \quad \text{(Canada 2004),}
\]

and

\[
\text{defending Canadians from threats to their safety and well-being is a critical role for government} \quad \text{(Canada 2006).}
\]

It is interesting to note the geopolitical nature of these statements. Rather than defending a defined space or territory, the role of the government is the protection and security of ‘Canadians’, or the people. In this case, ‘national security’ is conceptualized as security for the ‘nation of Canadians’, rather than security for the state of Canada. It can be argued that in securing the ‘nation of Canadians’, the government is in essence
ensuring its control by emphasizing its biopolitical control over the people (Foucault 1978): power and control are exercised over people, not over territory. In doing so, the space that the people occupy is under the control of the government. This conceptualization of the role of the government in security is such that securing people is the most important factor, rather than securing territory.

Whenever there is a discussion of government and security, it seems that there must always be a conflict between the rights of the people and the degree of security that is provided by the government. The very first paragraph of the National Security Policy addresses this point:

There is no conflict between a commitment to security and a commitment to our most deeply held values. At their heart, both speak to strengthening Canada (Canada 2004).

The most deeply held values of Canadians are that of a deep attachment to democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and pluralism. Our way of life is based on an openness to ideas and innovation, and to people from every part of the world – a commitment to include every individual and every community in the ongoing project that is Canada – and a steadfast rejection of intolerance, extremism and violence (Canada 2004).

This justification establishes the notions of security, specifically that of national security, as integral to protecting and strengthening the values that Canadians hold dear. In doing so, the essence of security is equated with values of Canadians such that there can be no argument about a security policy restricting the values of the individual because security strengthens Canada. The problem from this emanates from the lack of a clear definition of security, and what this ‘security’ is securing. Without a definite definition of security and insecurity, claims that there is no conflict between security and the values of Canadians are just as vague. If the government can define insecurity,
then those in power can define security in a manner that would not cause a conflict between the values of Canadians and security.

Within the structure of the federal government of Canada is another agent active in the structure of conceptualizing security. The Canadian Forces are also integral to the conceptualization of security and insecurity in Canada. The military is viewed as

\textit{a vital national institution essential to the security and prosperity of Canada} (Canada 2006).

The strength of the military is important because a strong military

\textit{will translate into enhanced security for Canadians at home as well as a stronger voice for Canada on the world stage} (Canada 2006).

The military plays a significant role in the conceptualization of security in Canada. One such role is that of the military as

\textit{“essential to the security and prosperity of Canada”} (Canada 2006).

As discussed above, the notion of security is imprecise in its usage and conceptualization by the government of Canada. It draws upon a generalized assumption of a vague threat to the integrity of the nation, i.e. ‘Canadians’, that is beyond the scale of the provincial and individual measures of security. The notion of “prosperity” is as imprecise as security. Prosperity is a term that appeals to an assumed knowledge and value of the world that most everyone wants to achieve. In situating the role of the military as integral to security and prosperity, the actions of the military are seen as working towards the betterment of all Canadians, not only to make them more secure, but also more prosperous.

Second, there is the notion that a strong military not only “[enhances] security for Canadians at home as well as a stronger voice for Canada on the world stage” (Canada
Again we see the appeal to the notion of “security for Canadians at home” (Canada 2006), not an appeal to security for Canada the territory, but for Canadians and their homeland. The importance of this is again the biopolitical nature of control over the people, such that there is a concerted effort to identify control over people, and thus the control over territory, as opposed to control over territory, and thus control over people. Secondly, we can see that the military provides for “a stronger voice for Canada on the world stage” (Canada 2006). Whereas the previous statement focused on the conception of Canadians and their homeland, this identifies with the political state of Canada, rather than the nation of Canada. This geopolitical and geographic shift from the nation to the state highlights the different contexts of the statements.

When identifying security and insecurity, the government identifies with the nation of Canada, appealing to the assumptions of the generalized enemy. On the other hand, when dealing with promoting Canada’s voice, one specific group speaks for the vast nation of Canada.

The security of Canada is important not only to the government and the military, but also to the geographic region in terms of the global economy and the security of the region. The globalized economy, and its hegemonic situation within the United States, forces Canada to have a different view of security than if it were in another geographic location. By securing space, whether through a discourse of security or the actual securing of space, Canada not only offers protection to its people, but also “ensuring Canada’s continued access to the all-important US market” (Delvoie 2005). Security here is used in a sense to allow Canada to access the United States’ markets for economic benefit or prosperity. This rationale follows on the idea that a strong military
providing for the prosperity of Canadians. The access to markets in the United States allows for the continued prosperity for Canadians in the globalized world. One such way to guarantee this access is through the performance of securing spaces. Since security is a constructed term, declarations and theatrics surrounding security make certain the markets remain open and flowing, allowing for the prosperity of Canadians. By declaring Canada as secure, the government of Canada maintains its perception of a secure geographic location adjacent to the United States allowing Canadians and Canadian goods to the markets.

How is insecurity constructed? Since national security appeals to a vague generality that forms a threat, the construction of insecurity is similar in these conceptualizations of security that were addressed above. This is a reasonable method because insecurity operates as the opposite of the dichotomous pair of security: if something is not secure, it is insecure; if something is not insecure, then it is secure.

According to the National Security Policy of Canada, the main threats to Canada are listed as followed: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed and failing states, foreign espionage, natural disasters, critical infrastructure vulnerability, organized crime, and pandemics (Canada 2004). Of all of these threats, natural disasters are the only threat to Canadian security that exists without some direct measure from the government to deal with the insecurity from that threat. It is argued that the conceptualization of natural disasters presents threats posed from an assumed agent beyond the scope of humans, and therefore a threat that cannot be secured. However, this ignores the incredible impact of human control on the natural environment and the implications this has for the conceptualization of security (Smith 2006).
The threats to Canada are different than those to many other states in the world: they are “less clear, less proximate, less imminent” than those of other states, such as the United States and its position as the military and economic power, or that of India and Pakistan over a border dispute (Munton 2003). As such, it is important to recognize that the threats to Canada are different because of its position in world politics.

These threats to Canada are typically conceptualized in a geographic nature: the threats “do not respect national or international boundaries” (Canada 2004). The threats facing the government of Canada operate similarly to the conceptualization of the threats as new wars, because they no longer come from other states that have definable borders and boundaries, but now are from transnational groups without a geographic territory (Kaldor 2006). The geographic and geopolitical importance of this emerges from the consideration of threats being outside of the typical conceptualization of the bounded nation-state system.

This insecurity must come from somewhere: everything has a position in space and time. As discussed above, Canada constructs itself as a secure space: the world is “a dangerous place, even if the relative safety of life in Canada sometimes obscures just how dangerous it is” (Canada 2004). As such, insecurity cannot be identified as emanating from Canada, so it must have origins outside of Canada. The causes of insecurity all emanate outside of Canada and are brought into the territory of Canada to cause insecurity and threaten Canadians. Because of this, the state maintains its claims to security, even since these threats are operating in Canada.

Specifically, there is the concern over secessionist violence, which is a prime example of this conceptualization that is active in Canada. It is constructed by its
discourses to emanate outside of Canada, and therefore, the insecurity that comes from 
this form of violence is brought into Canada by the groups of people who are aligned 
with the secessionist groups (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2001, Canadian 
Security Intelligence Service 2002, Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003, 
Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005). Also, the only times that a terrorist 
act has hit Canada, the Air India and Air Canada bombings in 1985 have been 
attributed to “immigrants [bringing] their communal grievances with them to Canada” 
(Holloway 2006). The conceptualization of insecurity is that it is brought into Canada 
from outside of the boundaries, thus maintaining the conception of Canada as a secure 
space.

The conceptualization of security in Canada is vague and contains many 
geographical and geopolitical assumptions as I have detailed above. Security, 
especially that of national security, is such that it is defined through an appeal to a 
threat that everyone knows must exist. The geographical nature of national security is 
that it encompasses threats that are beyond the scale of the province, community, and 
individual, so therefore the scale of the threat is at the national level, and under the 
umbrella of national security. National security is conceptualized and used in two 
distinct ways by the government of Canada. First, national security is the security for a 
nation, a group of people with a set of common values, myths, languages, and/or 
economies: the security of Canadians, the grouping of people, is one focus of national 
security. Second, it is the security of the state; a bounded territory centrally governed: 
the state of Canada is conceptualized as being secure and safe, while the outside world 
is seen as being dangerous and the source for whatever insecurity is present in
Canada. Finally, the government and the military play a significant role in the conceptualization of security and insecurity in Canada. Through the power held in these institutions, security and insecurity are shaped and molded into the form of the day. Whatever security is, the government and the military will be there to provide for the security. In addition, they will provide for the well-being of Canadians, protecting them from the insecurities that lurk beyond the borders of the state.
The Terrifying Terrorist: Conceptualizing Terrorism in Canada

Having discussed the notion of security and its use and conceptualization in Canada, our attention turns to the investigation of a source of insecurity. As detailed above, and similar to the concept of security, the conceptualization of terrorism and terrorists is a politically contested concept. The concept of the terrorist forms a perfect “straw man” for which an enemy can be constructed and maintained to provide an enemy for which a population can be rallied. As I shall point out, the conceptions of terrorists and terrorism are at the very heart of geopolitics, specifically the underlying aspects of *geo-graphing* that identify spaces of insecurity because of the perception of terrorists, thus causing a geopolitical moment of defining us/them, same/other.

This section focuses primarily on the construction of terrorism and terrorists in government documents. This section draws heavily on the conceptualization of terrorism theorized by Katz’s banal terrorism and Debrix’s tabloid realism to internalize the conceptualization of terrorism and a terrorist into the population.

Since 2001, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Canadian version of the CIA, defined the greatest threat to Canada as an act of terrorism. In the 2001 report, written against the backdrop of 11 September, the issue of terrorism was constructed as such:

“The public safety and safeguarding against the possibility of a terrorist attack occurring in, or originating from, Canada were already the highest priorities of the Service, with Sunni Islamic extremism being the lead investigation within the Counter Terrorism program”, and “The Service’s first priority is public safety and preventing a terrorist act occurring in or originating from Canada” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2001).

In the report for 2002, terrorism was viewed as
“Safeguarding the public against the threat of terrorism remains the Service's first priority, with Islamic extremism being at the top of the list in the Counter Terrorism Program” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002).

In the 2003 report, it was a similar refrain:

“The most significant threat to Canada is that posed by terrorism” and that “the many tensions across the world, stemming mainly from terrorist activities, continue to have potentially serious consequences for Western nations and put their security resources, including those of CSIS, under great pressure” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003).

In the report for 2004-2005,

“the Service’s highest priority in 2004–2005 was to safeguard against the possibility of a terrorist attack occurring in or originating from Canada” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005).

The report for the year 2005-2006 was very similar to the reports of years past:

“The threat of terrorism from religious extremists posed the most immediate danger to Canada and Canadians in 2005-06” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2005-2006).

Nearly identical wording can be seen in 2006-2007 report:

“The threat of terrorism from extremists posed the most immediate danger to Canada and Canadians in 2006-07” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2006-2007).

And a similar statement was seen in the 2007-2008 report:

“Investigating possible terrorist threats to Canada and Canadians - both domestically and abroad - remained the primary (but not exclusive) focus of the Service’s operational activities in 2007-08” and that “the terrorist threat remains the primary preoccupation for CSIS and its domestic and international counterparts” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

Since the intelligence community, the threat of a terrorist attack is seen as the most significant threat to the security of Canada, it would be a prime example for examining the way that insecurity is constructed.

Terrorism is the most important threat because of the conceptualization of the
threat to the security of the people and the state. With the bombings in Madrid in 2004 and other attacks before that, they serve as “a stark reminder of the risks of terrorism and the vulnerability of open, democratic societies to it” (Canada 2004). Open and democratic societies are seen as being at risk and vulnerable to terrorism because of their values. Therefore, it would follow that a major threat to all democratic societies, or at least those that would claim to be democratic, is the threat of a terrorist attack.

Canada is seen as being threatened by terrorism because of the nature of its political system. Terrorists are also conceptualized as “often well-educated, more operationally adept and technically sophisticated” and that they are “less predictable, willing to forge alliances of convenience and to use extreme violence, with large-scale destruction, to achieve their aims” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2001). The geographical conception of terrorism has changed with the changing structures of the international system: “geographic constraints on the spread of terrorism have become almost non-existent” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2001). Rather than stemming from one specific geographic location, terrorism is conceptualized as spreading over the earth without a geographic constraint to its rampant growth. These conceptions, from the risks to democratic society to the rampant spread of its ideals, suggest that terrorism is very much a constructed concept. With the construction of the concept, the threat associated with the concept of terrorism is also a construction.

The threat from terrorism has been conceptualized as four key types that could attack Canada: religious extremism, separatist movements, domestic extremism, and state-sponsored terrorism. These were first laid out in 2002 and continued through the 2004-2005 version of the CSIS’s annual report and serves as a key point for
understanding the nature of terrorism as the government and the intelligence community in Canada conceptualizes it. Each one of these groups will offer insight into the construction of the threat posed by terrorism.

Religious extremism is terrorism that is conceptualized in Canada as being primarily connected to Al Qaeda and Islamic extremism as read in the national security policy: “including that practiced by a network of groups known collectively as Al Qaeda, remains a threat to Canada” (Canada 2004). The characterizations of this type of terrorism are as follows:

“Islamic extremism being the most serious threat at present” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002).

“Sunni Islamic extremism remains the primary focus of the CSIS Counter Terrorism program. Since the September 2001 attacks, the Sunni Islamic terrorists' pattern of multiple coordinated bomb attacks against civilian targets has become tragically familiar” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003).

“The stated goal of Al Qaeda and similar groups are to eliminate western influence and secular forms of government in Muslim countries and to establish theocratic states adhering to what most commentators see as a radical and distorted interpretation of Islamic law and history” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005).

The conception of terrorism from religious extremism is a myopic view of the scope of religious actions. Primarily, the construction of religious extremism is situated within Islamic countries and is primarily concerned with the brand of Al Qaeda. There is not a concern for the actions of other religions or other geographic locations.

The second classification is that of the violent secessionist movements. This form of terrorism is proposed to “pose risk to Canadian citizens. Major secessionist movements from other countries have been active in Canada in a variety of ways” (Canada 2004). This type of terrorism is conceptualized in the reports as
“Sikh extremism and separatist movements in Sri Lanka, Turkey and other countries” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002).

“The actions of militaristic separatist movements in foreign countries” and “Secessionist violence continues to rip apart various communities, and these conflicts often find their way into the multicultural fabric of Canadian society” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003).

“Secessionist violence in different regions of the world can affect Canada’s ethnocultural communities” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005).

The geographic specificities of this type of terrorism was Sikh extremism and similar movements in Turkey and Sri Lanka (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003), and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and the PKK in Turkey (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005). These groups all have a reputation for violence and also have been implicated in having action in Canada, thus linking the violence associated with these groups with the conception of insecurity being brought into the state from outside of the boundaries.

The third classification is that of domestic extremism. This type of terrorism is deemed to be “not very prevalent in Canada, [but it] has in some cases resulted in violence and has threatened Canadians including immigrant communities and religious minorities” (Canada 2004). Domestic extremism is conceptualized in the national security policy as having a connection to the two previous types of terrorism mentioned above: terrorism associated with religious extremism, and the potential impact of secessionist violence. Within the CSIS, this type of terrorism takes on many different forms, which can be seen in the reports:

“including, but not limited to, certain elements of animal-rights, anti-globalization and white supremacist groups” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002).
“violence can originate from any number of domestic radical groups ranging from the neo-Nazi movement to the violent fringe of any number of single-issue groups such as the ecological, animal-rights or anti-globalization movements” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003).

“prepared to resort to violence to achieve their goals. Among these are neo-Nazis and violent fringe elements of single-issue groups from the ecological, animal-rights and anti-globalization movements” and “homegrown terrorists, including the Front de libération du Québec in the 1960s and 1970s, and Direct Action, responsible for the 1982 BC Hydro and Litton Industry bombings” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005).

There is a concern for neo-Nazi groups, as well as the “violent fringe” of anti-globalization, ecological and even animal-rights groups as using terrorist actions for their benefit. The conception of domestic extremism does not include any mention of religion as the cause of the extremism. These groups mentioned in the CSIS documents are constructed as the Other, as they are different from the ideas and goals of the general population. This division creates a constructed division between the groups and the general population. The groups, identified as the separate to the general population, threaten the Canadian way of life and thus are classified as threats.

The last type of terrorism is that of state-sponsored terrorism in the world. This type of terrorism is conceptualized as “a serious problem and [it] contributes to a more dangerous world that affects Canada’s security and prosperity” (Canada 2004). Again, we can see the notions of security and prosperity cropping up in the conceptualization of terrorism in the national security policy. In the intelligence community, state-sponsored terrorism is one of the more delicate subjects with which to deal with because the very nature of state-sponsored terrorism accuses another state of supporting terrorism. This is illustrated in the reports:
“exemplified by the current regime in Iran” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2002).

“the threats posed by states which, as a matter of national policy, support terrorism. Several states continue to provide various means of support for terrorist groups, including funding, training, or the provision of a safe haven” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003).

In the report, there is a mention of Hezbollah as an example of a group sponsored by state actions. Finally, in the 2004-2005 report, there is no explicit mention of state-sponsored terrorism. What did appear, I would suggest in its place, was a new section focused on terrorist activities in Canada.

Over time, all but one of these sections detailing the types of terrorism and the specificity of the nature of the type of terrorism became more generalized, with the exception of religious extremism, which became more focused on radical Sunni Islam and Al Qaeda as opposed to the other conceptions of the religious extremism. Contrasting the increasing specificity of religious extremism being focused on Al Qaeda and Sunni Islam is the consideration of state-sponsored terrorism that progressed from using Iran as the example to the more general description of terrorism. One possible reason for this, in the view of the CSIS, is the shift in terrorism from being an instrument of political ideology to a religious ideology (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2003). This conception, however, creates a division between political and religious ideologies. In essence, this division categorizes the actions and aims of terrorism from a political conception that might have some relevance and point, into a structure of thought that relies upon religion for its justification, and therefore the view can be discounted in such a way that it is just religious fervor.
The very definition of terrorism is one that varies with the aims of those in power. The construction of terrorists is key to understanding the nature of threats, real or perceived, to the security of Canada. In this construction of terrorism, the notions of banal terrorism and tabloid realism are important. This is the construction of terrorism as a part of every day life, while at the same time, satisfying the created image of the terrorist as present in the minds of Canadians through the use of tabloid realism.

The idea of constructing banal terrorism employs the ideas that terrorists are constructed in such a way that they are internalized in our everyday lives. This is done through placing terrorists everywhere and nowhere at once. It is worth quoting at length the construction of terrorists that reside within Canada and the seriousness of the threat that these individuals hold to the very nature of Canadian life:

“Other factors contribute to the seriousness of the threat: persons trained in terrorist training camps as well as veterans of campaigns in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya and elsewhere are known to reside in Canada; Canadians who have travelled to Iraq to fight in the insurgency may return home with new skills and new motivations; a relatively large number of terrorist groups are known to be operating in Canada, engaged in fundraising, procuring materials, spreading propaganda, recruiting followers and conducting other activities; terrorist groups continue to intimidate and exploit Canada’s immigrant and expatriate communities, sometimes through front organizations; Canadian residents and citizens are known to have planned operations against foreign targets, and to have personally participated in them; and terrorists in Canada have conducted preliminary reconnaissance against potential Canadian targets” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2004-2005).

Each one of these conceptions place the terrorists within the boundaries of Canada, while not providing any more detail beyond the conception that terrorists are on Canadian soil. Each of these factors discussed above place people who have been active in terrorist groups, or are planning terrorist activities, within the everyday life in Canada. The notion of the terrorist has been generalized into the everyday life of the
Canadian citizen. These individuals are constructed to operate within Canada, and as such, this construction of insecurity demands a response in the face of the threat posed by these individuals. The state must construct the notion of security through the protection from insecurity that is created.

The notion of finding insecurity in Canada is a geographic inconsistency to the construction of Canada as a secure state. Security was established as being inside of the boundaries of Canada, while insecurity was external to the boundaries. However, insecurity in terms of terrorist attacks are constructed such that they form from within space that is secure. If the state is as secure as the discourses suggest, then there would be no threats from within the state. There would be no threat from the terrorists who may operate in Canada because they would not be there. The construction of banal terrorism in Canada is inconsistent to the discourses of the security of the state.

While the construction of terrorists living amongst the population is a prime example of the notion of banal terrorism, the construction of the terrorists themselves plays on the tabloid realist view that originates from the construction of images that intend to shock and awe individuals. The images are constructed in a way that the response of the public is to have an outward reaction to the image, whatever the reaction. The construction of terrorists from the 2004-2005 annual report is again worth quoting at length:

“In 2004-2005, terrorists continued to: display a willingness to die for their cause(s); augment their ranks, largely as a result of the conflict in Iraq; launch attacks globally, including in countries not previously targeted; target “soft” (i.e. non-military) targets, with the aim of killing as many people as possible; demonstrate outstanding operational security, highly effective planning skills and the ability to run operations in several countries simultaneously; exploit and intimidate immigrant communities; attempt to acquire more lethal weapons, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear devices; further refine their use of the Internet, particularly Internet news media, as a
The construction of terrorists in this manner is done such that it plays upon the fears of the public to illicit a response against the threat posed by the constructed enemy. The attribution of actions of terrorism is seen as being extreme because of the construction of these acts in such a way that they are different and dangerous to society as a whole. In constructing these agents as extreme and dangerous, the very nature of the terrorist is created to work within the tabloid realist nature of the world. Terrorists are constructed as being fantastic and shocking, without the concentration on the actual reasons and motives behind the actions of these groups. In establishing this construction, the notion of the terrorist has been constructed as the primary instance of insecurity.

The construction of the threat is based in the comparative actions of the state and the military, thus raising the question of whether or not a state could participate in terrorist activities. Since the conception of terrorism is such that those in power construct the discourses surrounding the idea, this construction of discourse is limited in the ability of attaching the label of terrorism to specific actions. Those that have power are ultimately the ones that have the ability to construct the knowledge in the discourses surrounding terrorism. In this case, the power in the CSIS, as the leading intelligence service in Canada, allows the organization to establish a distinction between the actions of a terrorist, and the comparative actions of the government and the military. While the actions may be similar, the discourses surrounding these actions are not: one is an evil
action, that of the terrorists, and the other is an action that is good and benevolent, that of the state.

While the construction of terrorists as being extreme and being constructed within the everyday lives of people is a key indication for identifying the construction of insecurity, there has also been a recent attempt to construct a geopolitics of the nature of the threats posed by terrorists to the different world regions from the Canadian perspective. This was done in the most recent report of the CSIS (2007-2008). This is a conception of geo-graphy: writing global spaces as they relate to insecurity from terrorism. In Europe,

“terrorist-related incidents and support networks remained a primary concern in 2007” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

East Africa, where

“the presence of Al Qaeda and militants who support its cause continued to pose a serious security threat in the region” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

East Asia and the Pacific were under the threat of

“the Jemaah Islamiya terrorist network, which espouses - through violence - the amalgamation of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Southern Philippines into a regional Islamic state remained a serious threat to Western and regional interests” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

In the Middle East and North Africa, Iraq was identified as

“the country most affected by terrorist attacks, many attributed to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other affiliated terrorist groups in the region” and that “Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria and Morocco also suffered terrorist attacks in 2007” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

The threat from transnational terrorist groups in Central and South America

“remained low in 2007-08, but regional conflicts continued in several countries” such as the FARC and ELN in Columbia and the Shining Path in Peru (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).
Canada is grouped with other western democracies, which were threatened by

“individuals within its borders who support the use of violence to achieve their political goals” (Canadian Security Intelligence Service 2007-2008).

The geopolitical and geographic specificities that are expressly noted in the conceptions above: Western democracies, such as Canada and those in Europe have a generalized and vague notion of the threat posed to them by the actions of transnational terrorists. At the same time, the other regions of the world have specific threats that have been identified, such as the actions of Al Qaeda in Iraq and East Africa, and Jemaah Islamiya in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Working from the notion that terrorist groups are conceived as being transboundary and multinational agents, while at the same time having a geographic location that can be targeted (Elden 2007), the threat posed to the West and specifically Canada is a vague conception that is everywhere and nowhere at once, while the regions that are seen as underdeveloped and lack the power to change the discourse have the specific group and the geographic location of a state, making the targeting easier. This is a prime example of the geopolitical construction of insecurity from the threat of a terrorist as being located in specific spaces that are deemed as insecure, thus creating the notion of insecurity as the vague threat to the secure world that demands a reaction from the state.

The conceptualization of terrorism in Canada is constructed in many different ways, but all have an influence on the way that the terrorists are perceived. First, the notion of terrorism is considered to be the most dangerous threat to Canada and the people of Canada by the CSIS. This happens without a definition of terrorism being presented to orient the discussion of terrorism or its use in the documents. What is
presented however is a classification of four types of terrorism that are conceptualized in the documents in Canada. These types are religious extremism, separatist movements, domestic extremism and state-sponsored terrorism. Each of these types has a discursive foundation that establishes the different categories that terrorism can be divided into. The notions of banal terrorism as the construction of terrorism as omnipresent and constantly around is seen through the presentation of terrorists as operating and living in Canada. The concept of tabloid realism as the production of terrorism in fantastic and eccentric ways plays on the desires of the public to be entertained. This is found within the documents as terrorists are constructed as being eccentric, fanatical, and different than the general population. Finally, the geographic nature of terrorism is seen through the production of terrorism as specific when the discourse focused on terrorism in specific regions, but in vague generalities when focusing on other regions. Canada is conceived in a similar notion as Western democracies that are threatened by an indistinct terrorist who could be anywhere and strike at anytime. On the other hand, regions such as East Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia all had a specific group that threatened a specific territory. This is a key geopolitical notion of scripting space, as there are locations where terrorists are specifically located for targeting, but in other locations they are constructed to be everywhere and nowhere in particular.
Chapter 5

Critical Reflections

As part of the recognition of subjectivity in this work, I focus on my positionality as the researcher in relation to the subject of my research. My previous research focused on the nuclear policies of Canada and Pakistan situated within the political science literature; the Canadian Rangers as a form of biopolitical control by the Canadian government; the policies of Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper as aligning with a neo-conservative worldview in terms of constructing a threat to Canada. Prior to this thesis, my research was on the military spending of the Canadian Forces in the face of both modern and post-modern threats and was refocused into the literature of critical security studies, and the construction of a threat to the state, primarily conceived as terrorism.

The view I took was that the notion of security and insecurity is a construction and this lead to something beyond a simple illustration of the threats to the state and the state’s reactions to these threats. With the notion of security being a political construct, a more detailed look at the nature of the security policy was completed. Rather than a simple overview of the security policy, the engagement with security as a political construct allows for the nuances of contradictions of security to be brought under examination.
In addition, there must be a consideration to my position as an American citizen, working at a university in United States conducting the research on security policy of the Canadian government. This created an artificial distance between the subject and me, a distance that could allow me to be more objective in my work and present the critique in a dynamic manner. This separation, however, did not give me a greater claim to objective research than had I completed research on the security policies of the United States. I could argue that the security policy of Canada is more difficult to grasp and understand because of the artificial distance through not having the first-hand knowledge of the implementation of the policies on Canadian soil, and is more of a detraction from the work since I cannot personalize the very nature of the security policy beyond the reading of documents. I would suggest that if this were a critique of a security policy of the United States, it would have been completed in a similar tone.

Ultimately, whenever research is conducted that involves a policy or action with a political theme, there is always a question over its interpretation and its usefulness. While it would be a great stretch for suggested policy recommendations to the Government of Canada, the work is aimed at presenting the geographical and geopolitical ambiguities that have been either overlooked or taken for granted in the construction of the security policy. This would offer a more concrete vision of the world, rather than being based on ambiguities and assumptions of the way the world works. Another potential implication is that the government itself would lose legitimacy because of the potential for it to be seen as making up other threats, rather than the very real nature of some threats that must be guarded against.
Where does this leave me, as the researcher, with the concept of security? Well for one, my view has been changed. What I thought would be a relatively easy concept with which to deal with, has in fact forced me to look beyond a simple conception of security as that of the nation-state level, remnant from my bachelors degree work in political science, to now question the importance of security at the broad scope of scales that are present in the world in 2009. I find that once security is removed from the study of political science, the very nature of the term becomes more personal. Security is a concept that is developed at all scales and by each individual agent that is at play.

The scales of security offer a wide breadth of subject matter for study. While this work was primarily based on the deconstruction of Canadian security policy, or the national security policy of Canada, the implications of security are at all scales. Because of the scope of the research, I was unable to (de)construct security in any other context except for that of the national scale, something that would be left for future research. The research did not delve into other notions of security, such as economic, personal, or environmental that would have had a different perception on security, but would also offer a more complete view of the construction of security in Canada.

Second, this research has forced me to be more cognizant of the construction of security and more importantly, the construction from the danger that is out there in the world. As soon as we are forced to look beyond a collectively assumed notion of danger, the very concept of security and danger become more and more vague. Since the very nature of security is an appeal to a commonly assumed danger, once that
danger is identified and the structure underneath it exposed, it is no longer as menacing and dangerous.

Finally, the work on terrorism has been a sharp and poignant reflection on society today. The construction of a terrorist is based on nothing more than power and the exercise of that power. Because the term terrorist lacks a definite definition, the term can be constructed and illustrated at the will of those in power. With this perception, there is a different perspective on the world because of the understanding that much of what we know of the world is constructed from discourses that are shaped and influenced by those in power. With that in mind, it is easier to be critical of the subject of terrorism and its utilization for the political gains of those in power.

Looking ahead, this study does offer many possibilities for further research. The methodology and the selection of documents can be used for any other state in the world. In addition to this, the study of Canadian security at the national level can be further examined in both the time frame, prior to the years of the focus of this study (2001-2008), and breadth to focus on the other threats to the security of Canada. In addition, the focus of security can be changed to look at environmental, economic, human, and/or social security within the scale constructed by this document. Also, the scale of the research can be changed (personal, community, provincial) to examine the use of security – as broadly or narrowly defined by the research – at the different scales present in Canada or any other country.
In this thesis, I have argued that the conceptualization of security is an act of geopolitical place-making by defining spaces as secure and insecure, illustrated by the deconstruction of the notion terrorism and its importance in the security policy of Canada. The construction of terrorism acts as the signifier to the construction of security in a method that allows spaces to be considered secure or insecure, while at the same time the nature of the construction appeals to an assumed image of the terrorist and the assumed notion of security as a ‘common sense’ notion to everyone.

Security is first and foremost a constructed concept that appeals to everything and nothing at the same time. We know that there is something out there, but we cannot concretely define what that thing is. While it was much easier during the cold war to conceptualize the enemy Other as the Soviet Union, even that was fraught with constructing the enemy in such a style that they are the exact opposite of the way we saw ourselves.

The type of security, national security in this work, was an ambiguous use of the term national from the standpoint of whether the term was used in connotation with the group or people or with the territorial state. This is a key moment in the construction of geopolitical place-making since the meaning of these terms indicates a difference between a grouping of people, and a territory. Both of these have different meanings and implications for the security policy and the relaxed interchange of these terms is an
indication that the concept of security, as espoused at the national level, is not as
definite as one might expect.

In addition to security as a vague concept at the national level, the geopolitical
place-making was seen through the rendering of spaces as secure or insecure, the very
nature of this process is a geopolitical act. This act defines a boundary between that
which is secure and that which is insecure. This division is a crucial part of the
Canadian security policy in that it defines Canada as a secure space, while casting the
world as the insecure space. In addition to that, most insecurities that are found in
Canada are reasoned to have come from outside of the state and were brought into
Canada, thus preserving the notion of Canada as a space of security.

The concept of security ultimately rests on a question of security from what? The
very basic point of security is the protection from some danger, some threat to
something with which must be countered. But it is precisely that ambiguous point that is
the center of security. Because security is all about securing something from something
else, the something else can be anything that people want it to be. The very nature of
security is that it is a vague notion that appeals to some idea of being safe from some
threat. That threat is an assumed knowledge of danger that is present in all of us. The
nature of the threat is undefined, but we all have an assumption that something is ‘out
there’.

The vague notion of threats is never more apparent when dealing with terrorism.
The concept of terrorism is, by its very nature, a constructed concept. Those that have
the power are able to construct the discourses that surround the conceptualization of
the term, and therefore control the definition and use of the term. Only through the discourses is one group labeled as a terrorists.

Part of the construction of terrorism is through the concept of banal terrorism. The terrorist threat is constructed in such a way that the terrorists are everywhere and, therefore, the insecurity from the terrorists is also everywhere. This has been generalized in the everyday practices of people through the construction of terrorists. As was illustrated above, the terrorists are constructed such that they are part of the social fabric of Canada and have the potential to strike at any time.

Another part of the construction of terrorists is the appeal to the fantastical ideas of terrorists as being extreme and uncivilized. As mentioned above, this conception was such that the terrorists were constructed in such a manner that they were seen as being extreme and different from the normal population. This plays into the conception of constructing insecurity in such a manner that there is a constant threat that will resort to anything to attack and to cause the most damage to society that must be defended against.

The geographical conception of terrorism is important to the construction of terrorism as the threat. In the construction, terrorists are first and foremost constructed as being everywhere and nowhere. This means that the terrorist groups are made to be omnipresent and as such, the threat from them is conceived in the same way. Only the terrorists suddenly have a location when they are the targets of a specific action. The example of the construction of terrorists being located in a specific place is seen in the description of the location of terrorist threats in the specific regions of the world.
Canada is affected by a vague notion of terrorist actions that might happen, but other regions have specific groups that are located in a specific place.

This ability to target a certain group at a certain location, but not in other groups and locations is a prime example of geopolitical place-making. The locating of terrorist groups in specific geographic locations labels these places as those that are insecure. Thus when a location is not given, as in the case of Canada and other Western democracies, the space is not directly threatened by a terrorist group, and therefore is more secure than other spaces. This construction of spaces as secure and insecure is the very nature of geopolitical place-making.

The common theme that has run through this research has been that of the construction of security and insecurity as an act of geopolitical place-making. This process is an important part of the basis of critical geopolitics in that it is not beyond the questioning of the rational of labeling places as secure or insecure. In doing so, it is meant to shape the public’s opinion towards a constructed view of the spaces that are safe and those that are not safe. This is the critical moment of geopolitical place-making, as the ability to define the conception of space is a discursive production by those in power. This discourse constructs the process that people think about a certain place and therefore, it is critical to understanding the definition of spaces as secure and insecure.

Finally, this process can be summed up in the methods of geo-graphing space. Since the combination of geography and politics – geopolitics – is the writing of global political space, whether this is the actual method of constructing spaces for a political goal or the creation of a map for a political purpose. The government of Canada,
through its security policy, engages in the geo-graphing of political space. It defines
spaces as secure or insecure, thus creating a boundary within the conceptions of
space. In the end, these conceptions are crucial to the perception of territories as being
both safe and secure, or as being unsafe and insecure. The very nature of the policy is
that the construction of security and insecurity is centered on the geopolitical place-
making of spaces as either secure or insecure. This construction is at the very heart of
geo-graphing political spaces and gets to the very heart of the construction of the world
around us today.


